



WHERE IDEAS GROW LARGE

Hennessey, Okla., April 14.—Trust a new country, peopled by the most enterprising people in the world, to do things on a large scale. The towns are large, the farms are large, the ideas are large, and the people large in hospitality, enterprise, enthusiasm and optimism. Kansas has a great reputation for enterprise, but one can almost feel the difference when one crosses the invisible line which separates the state of Kansas from the soon-to-be-state of Oklahoma. There is no appreciable difference in topography, but there is an undefinable something that gives notice of the change. And when one strikes the first real town in Oklahoma he knows he has struck a new country. It was only a decade ago that the country watched with breathless interest while a hundred thousand American citizens scattered along the Oklahoma line prepared to dash into the new territory in search of homes. Search the wide world as you will, you will never find another hundred thousand people who equal that land seeking multitude in all the qualities and characteristics that go to make up a fine citizenship. It was not surprising that such a people have built so well. Enid is situated in the old "Cherokee Strip," and a few years ago was little more than an Indian settlement, with a few white people thrown in. Today Enid has 18,000 people, every one a hustler, and is paving miles of streets, putting in an electric street railway, building factories and putting on metropolitan airs. Enid people are awfully busy. Between jumps, however, Enidites will take time to tell you that their town is the second largest in the new state, and if they can make it the first they are going to do it.

From Enid on through the new state one finds big towns on every side. Kingfisher, El Reno, Chickasha, Oklahoma City, Guthrie, Okmulgee—O, what's the use? Every town in the new state is a good one, and each one is going to be better. But Oklahoma City is the wonder of them all. The chances are that the average easterner is of the opinion that Oklahoma is peopled largely by Indians, and that Oklahoma City consists of a lot of shacks, more Indian teepees and a big sprinkling of sod houses and dilapidated tents. The Wanderer who writes these lines knew better than that, for he has lived in the west so many years he is afraid to recall his early recollections. But he was surprised when he saw Oklahoma City. That such a magnificent metropolis could have been built in such a short span of years astonished a man who has seen towns spring up in a night. Here is a city of 40,000 people, with magnificent business blocks, elegant residences, fine hotels, mammoth wholesale houses, miles of paved streets, electric car lines, both urban and interurban, every public utility, splendid schools, numerous fine churches—and a people who are as full of ginger as an egg is full of meat. And ten years ago Oklahoma City was a mere village in a country peopled by homesteaders, among whom were a lot of "sooners."

But if these magnificent young cities were a surprise to even an experienced westerner, the farms were a revela-

tion. They are invariably well improved. The residences are always cozy and often palatial. The visitor sees no dilapidated farms, no rotting machinery exposed to the elements, no broken-down fences and hingeless gates and no sad-eyed and hopeless people. At least the Wanderer did not; and he went around quite a bit.

The other day he was driving about the country and met a negro who was driving a good team hitched to a wagon in which were a plow and some other farm implements.

"Many negro farm hands in this section?" queried The Wanderer of his driver.

"Not many. That man is a farmer. Owns a half-section of as good land as there is in the territory; got a lot of stock, a good fruit farm, and money in the bank."

"Rather unusual, isn't it?" queried The Wanderer.

"Not at all. Within twenty-miles of Hennessey there are more than 200 negroes who own their farms and who are rapidly accumulating wealth."

Then came the story of a negro farmer who came to Hennessey last fall to consult with a banker about selling his wheat.

"If you can hold your wheat until next May or June you will probably make money by it," said the banker. "If you can't hold it that long you would better sell now, for the price now is better than it is likely to be in December or January."

"O, I can hold my wheat all right," said the negro farmer. "I can hold it longer than next June if I want to. I don't have to sell it."

"How much wheat have you?" queried the banker.

"I've got over 5,000 bushels," said the negro. "And besides raising that wheat I sold ninety bales of cotton-off my place this year, and I got an average of \$50 a bale, too."

"Must have cost you a lot for help," said the banker.

"Didn't cost me a cent outside of my own family, sir. I got a mighty good wife and thirteen children, every one of 'em big enough to work, and they all work."

The Wanderer did not find any discussion of the "social equality" question going on down here. The negroes are too busy making money to think about it, and the white people are the same way. As one negro farmer put it when questioned by The Wanderer: "Financial equality is what I am most interested in, sir."

The negroes have separate schools in the territory, and they are proud of them, as they have reason to be. They are as good as the white schools, and are in charge of negro teachers who are desperately in earnest in their efforts to elevate the race.

Oklahoma is a great fruit country, and as a result there are a great many fine fruit farms. But there is one eleven miles southeast of Hennessey that bids fair to become famous. It is owned by a young Missourian named Elmer Bumps. It contains 9,000 bearing fruit trees, fifteen acres of blackberries, twelve acres of grapes, and strawberries, dewberries, and other berries too numerous to mention. As a sort of side issue Mr. Bumps will raise ten acres of tomatoes this year for the new canning factory at Hennessey. Mr. Bumps is one of those

"scientific farmer" fellows. He thinks Wizard Burbank the greatest man in the world, bar none, and he will travel miles to get hold of a new idea in fruit culture. All peach trees look alike to The Wanderer, but Mr. Bumps knows them apart as a mother knows her children. Same way with apple, plum, cherry and apricot trees. When a fruit tree gets "sick" he knows just as well what to give it as a doctor does when called to prescribe for a sick child—and often better.

About the middle of June the fruit season will begin, and from then until the first of October the Bumps farm will resemble a small city, and it will be like Creede was in the old days—"Day all day in the daytime."

And there ain't no night in Creede. First will come the blackberries, and thousands of crates will be picked and shipped. Then comes the early peaches and apples, the plums, cherries and other early varieties. Mr. Bumps will be the busiest man imaginable for the next three months, and the visitor will look on in astonishment and wonder if there are enough people in the whole world to consume all the fruit picked and shipped.

There is no between seasons on a big fruit farm like this. Just now spraying is in progress. Not one of your dinkey little hand sprayers, but a big power machine that shoots the medicated liquid with the force of a fire steamer and searches out every microbe and bacillus that happens to be perched on tree, twig or leaf. Usually spraying is done three times, the last time after the fruit is well formed, as it is now. While this is going on men are at work raking out between the rows of trees and vines, wiring up grapes, cultivating and a thousand and one other things. If you visit the Bumps farm right now you will find it as neat and as trim as any housekeeper's kitchen—no weeds, no rank grass, no deformed trees, no straggling vines—everything trim, clean and inviting. There are 5,000 peach trees on this farm, most of them of the Alberta variety, noted for their size and quality. They are the best shippers in the whole peach family, which is as numerous, almost, as the Smith family. Then come 3,000 apple trees, and finally about 1,500 trees divided among the plum, the cherry, the nectarine, the prune and the apricot. It takes lots of posts to brace up twelve acres of grapes and provide adequate fences for such a big orchard. Mr. Bumps cuts them from his own farm. One big building on the farm is used for packing the fruit. It is built from logs cut from the farm. So is the chicken house, and several smaller buildings. A huge windmill forces water to a dozen handy places about the farm. A rural carrier delivers mail within a couple of rods of the Bumps dooryard in the forenoon, and a telephone line puts him in instant communication with every part of the country. The country school house occupies a neat little plot cut off the corner of the Bumps quarter section.

Six years ago Mr. Bumps bought the quarter section he now owns for \$4,000. It then contained but 4,000 fruit trees. He has added over 5,000 to the number, and set out the blackberry and grape fields. He would treat as a good joke an offer of \$20,000 for the place today. When The Wanderer left the fruit farm Mr. Bumps said:

"Now be sure and come back when the fruit is ripe. We'll show you real fruit."

The Wanderer is going to accept the invitation. He is accustomed to the sight of fruit growing in crates and tasting like silver dollars. What he wants to see is thousands and thousands of fruit trees in full bearing and be able to reach up and pluck and eat without reaching down and "digging up." It will be a novel sensation.

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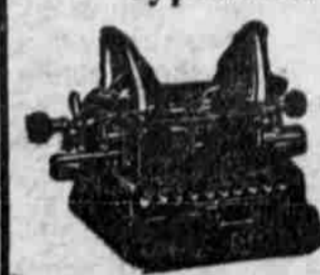
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