

**TEN ACRES ENOUGH; A
PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE
SHOWING HOW A VERY SMALL
FARM MAY BE MADE TO KEEP A
VERY LARGE FAMILY. [1905]**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649718832

Ten Acres Enough; A Practical Experience Showing How a Very Small Farm May Be Made to Keep a Very Large Family. [1905] by Edmund Morris & Isaac Phillips Roberts

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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EDMUND MORRIS & ISAAC PHILLIPS ROBERTS

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Univ. of
CALIFORNIA

TEN ACRES ENOUGH

A PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

SHOWING

HOW A VERY SMALL FARM MAY BE
MADE TO KEEP A VERY LARGE FAMILY

WITH INTRODUCTION BY

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BUSINESS HANDBOOK," ETC.



NEW YORK
CONSOLIDATED RETAIL BOOKSELLERS

1905

W. S. P.

INTRODUCTION.

What Jethro Tull* did to improve tillage, the author of "Ten Acres Enough" did to prove that intensified agriculture on small areas could be made not only to support a family, but to yield a handsome profit, and health, freedom and happiness as well. It has taken two centuries for the most advanced farmers to appreciate Tull and his teachings. It has taken nearly half a century in this progressive age to appreciate and to put in practice, in a feeble way, the fundamental principles which underlie all our dealings with Mother Earth as set forth in this modest volume of two hundred pages.

If one totally ignorant of the principles and practices of the various operations necessary to bring to perfection the many plants with which Agriculture has to do, were limited to two publications, I would advise him to purchase "Horse-Hoeing Husbandry" and "Ten Acres Enough."

"The mistaken ambition for owning twice (often ten times) as much land as one can thoroughly manure or profitably cultivate, is the great agricultural sin of this country," says the author. In California where this is being written, this mistaken

* Born 1680, died 1740.

ambition prevails to an alarming extent. Too often, farmers have become soil robbers. This state appears to excel all others in its haste to fitch from the land every valuable timber tree, every pound of nitrogen, every vestige of humus that can be extracted at a present profit however small, with apparently no thought of the future productivity of the land, the future welfare of the farmer, or the permanent prosperity of the community.

I have made a careful study of the conditions of agriculture in the Santa Clara, San Jose and Sacramento Valleys, and I am irresistibly led to the conclusion that the great ranches must be broken up into small holdings before permanent prosperity can come to the farmers of the Pacific Coast. On a recent visit to a ranch of several thousand acres, where things appeared prosperous and the cattle looked well bred and well fed, I could not refrain from asking the impolite question, "Does it pay?" The reply was: "We have been here ten years; have put in -- dollars, gotten up at two in the morning to get the milk delivery wagon started in time, have four hundred head of cattle and thirty horses, and if I should sell out to-day, I would not have a lollar clear profit."

A few days after, I called on my college graduate friend. He has just ten acres all in fruit—peaches, apricots and prunes—all of which he will dry, as transportation is uncertain and expensive and the eastern market for undried fruit precarious. Again I asked, "Does it pay?" He replied: "Well, we

have three children, my wife and I have worked hard except in the six weeks harvesting time, we have a comfortable living, some spare time, and on an average secure a profit of about three hundred a year after allowing a modest interest on the investment. The orchard is not yet in full bearing and we should do somewhat better in the future and vastly better when the well is bored and a pump provided for irrigating once or twice yearly." In this locality, land suitable for fruit is held at one hundred and fifty to two hundred dollars per acre. Where the planted orchard has been in bearing for two or three years, that is, produces two-thirds of a crop, it sells at eight to nine hundred dollars per acre. If well and pump are added, the value is increased to one thousand or eleven hundred dollars per acre.

These two cases are typical, not exceptional. After becoming acquainted with the inner life of the owners of these holdings—for there are really only two kinds, small fruit and vegetable holdings, and large cattle, sheep, grain and hay ranches—one does not hesitate to choose between them.

It all amounts to this: No one should control more arable land than he can maintain in a high state of productivity, the four great factors of which are, good seed, suitable moisture, abundant available plant food, and rational tillage. In a large majority of cases where failure, or partial failure of an abundant crop is observed the meagre results are due to a partial lack of one of these fundamentals. The

vicissitudes of weather have little effect, if varieties and species of plants adapted to the locality are selected, if the plants are neither hungry nor thirsty, and if they are comfortably grounded in old Mother Earth.

Then the joy of seeing happy plants and animals grow strong and produce "some fifty, some an hundred fold!"—"Twere worth ten years of city life, one look at their array!"

Again and again the author of "Ten Acres Enough" recounts the happiness of observing Nature's modes of action at first hand, the pleasure of discovering now one, now another secret of soil or plant. How he revels in plain food and peaceful slumber after a day of intelligent effort in God's first Temple under the open sky! He consulted with his neighbors often. Sometimes he "went by the field of the slothful and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding," and, lo! he "saw it was all overgrown with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof and the stone wall thereof was broken down." Then "he saw and considered it well and looked upon it and received instruction."

It did not take long for him to discover that slothfulness and ignorance were the cause of the untidy condition and meagre results of these plantations which were duplicates of the one described by Solomon. So he piled his table high with the best agricultural literature and spent his evenings at home reading it. For years he and his wife and daughter were close students. When it could no longer be

said that they were ignorant; they all put on plain clothes and worked—worked as only an intelligent servant works for a kind master—and the Master gave ample reward when the harvest time came. Reader, go and do likewise!

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