CHAPTER XIII

THE FUTURE OF WAR GARDENING

The Fruits of Peace to Spring from the Seeds of Victory

COMING events, we are told, cast their shadows before. Among the prophetic shadows now hovering over us is a finger of cloud which points to vital changes in the business of feeding the world. Indeed, these changes are already taking place. In part they have taken place, but many of us, being of those who have eyes yet do not see, are still unaware that the old order has changed and that the new order of things has come to pass.

No other single occupation born of the war has affected a greater number of people than has gardening. Starting from a mere nothing before the United States entered the war, this form of service grew in less than two years into a new occupation, which numbered its followers by the millions and, in the number of people employed, exceeded any other branch of gainful occupation with the single exception of actual farming.

The fact that such a vast number of American citizens took up this work shows that they appreciated the merit of it, and this is one of the reasons for the confident prediction that war gardening has come to stay. It is something that the world will not willingly let die. Home food production will continue because it has been found worth while; and, like other things
which this war has demonstrated to be of value and benefit to mankind, it will last.

War gardening will permanently establish itself because its peace-time value will fully equal its war-time worth. This will be true at all times, but more particularly during the first five or ten years of the great reconstruction period. During that period the matter of food production will be of the most pressing importance. It will be on a par with many of the other enormous reconstruction problems which face the world. It will require the continued application of broad thought and effort. There will be no decrease in the demand for food; in fact that demand will really be greater, much greater, than it was during the days of actual conflict.

This will be true because the coming of peace means the restoration of the freedom of the seas, and freedom of the seas means a restored commerce. German savagery and the frightfulness of unrestrained submarine warfare have largely driven the world’s ordinary commerce from the seas; and much of that commerce was traffic in foodstuffs. For decades, even centuries, Europe has been dependent upon the remainder of the world for food to eke out its own inadequate supplies. Before the war, for example, England, according to the United States Food Administration, produced but one-fifth of her own foodstuffs, while France raised one-half of hers, and Italy produced perhaps two-thirds of what she consumed. What was true of these nations was true of the remainder of Europe. Unless food could
Under the supervision of skilled home demonstration agents of the United States Department of Agriculture, and other teachers, many groups of girls throughout the country have made excellent records in conserving garden products. Here are shown Miss Julia E. Brekke, home demonstration agent, and the canning team which won first prize at the Clinton County Fair at De Witt, Iowa.
be obtained from foreign sources, hunger was sure to visit practically every European nation. The shutting off of commerce by German piracy has meant starvation, literal starvation, to multitudes of innocent persons.

The restoration of commerce means that all these starving nations will send their ships to America for food, food, and still more food. The number of these innocent neutral victims of German savagery is put by the United States Food Administration at 180,000,000 persons! Russia, too, is disorganized and starving, and her population numbers 160,000,000!

If figures never lie, the burden we must carry in time of peace, as indicated by statistics, is truly appalling. When the war began we were feeding our own 100,000,000 people and sending abroad a relatively small and constantly decreasing surplus. To our 100,000,000 we had to add the 120,000,000 people of the Entente allied nations. Speedily we found that our claim that America was "the granary of the world" was an empty boast. Merely to provide food sufficient to enable our allies to eke out their own stores taxed us to the utmost. Only through decreased consumption, by having recourse to wheatless and meatless days, by lessening our use of butter, milk, sugar, and other exportable foods could we send enough to keep our allies from actual starvation.

During the three years preceding the war, our exports of meat were just short of an average of 500,000,000 pounds a year. In 1917 we shipped abroad
2,000,000,000 pounds—an increase of 400 per cent. In the same way our exports of butter in 1913 totaled slightly more than 3,500,000 pounds. In 1917 we exported, in round numbers, 26,750,000 pounds. Before the war our shipments of cheese averaged 2,500,000 pounds. In 1917 they exceeded 66,000,000 pounds. Our exportation of condensed milk jumped from 16,500,000 pounds to 259,000,000 pounds.

If the feeding of our 120,000,000 allies made such a drain on our resources, what will happen now that 180,000,000 starving neutrals also come to us for food; when Russia’s helpless 160,000,000 thrust their hands across the sea to us, even as the sinking Peter appealed to Christ, saying, “Save me or I perish”? Now that peace has come; now that Germany and Austria are again to be admitted to the society of nations, as eventually they must be, how can we prevent their hungry multitudes—another 100,000,000 souls—from also entering our markets and bidding for our food supplies? Already our former foes are begging piteously for food, and President Wilson has assured them that their appeals will be heeded.

Now that these things have come to pass, we must feed or help to feed, not 220,000,000 people as during the war, but an additional 440,000,000. In short, now that the war is ended and commerce restored, we must help to feed two-thirds of a billion of people!

Food Administrator Hoover recognized this condition as inevitable, and when the armistice was signed he was prepared to reckon with it. With the cessation of hos-
THE QUESTION IS: DOES IT "JELL"?

Mrs. Grace L. Ackley (second from left) is shown explaining the art of jelly-making to a group of other women of Hinsdale, Illinois. The Women’s Association of the Union Church found so much food-saving work to do that it appointed a chairman for every day in the week.
tilities he marshalled the food forces of America and proceeded at once to Europe to join hands with the food forces of England and the Continent to the end that starvation might be prevented. As one of his initial steps, before sailing, he asked that the war gardens of America be maintained and expanded. To the Victory Gardeners, he gave the impetus of his urgent plea for continued effort in the cause of food production.

The signing of the armistice caused complete and peremptory revision of the figures dealing with America's obligations toward meeting the world's demand for food. During the war we had to furnish food for France and Belgium, but they were a France and Belgium greatly reduced in area because of German invasion. Much of their territory and millions of their people were held by the enemy, shut off from their own countries and therefore compelled to depend in part on the invaders for subsistence. To-day these people are repatriated. Their restoration to citizenship has brought the obligation to feed them.

While the direct burden falls on France and Belgium, these countries must look to America for ways and means. By all the ties of international friendship, by a sense of gratitude for the part these countries played in winning the war, by geographical location and by inherent capacity to provide food, America is the one country able to meet the call. We must also provide for the smaller allied nations which have been under German oppression—Serbia, Rumania, Greece, the
Czechs, the Jugoslavs, the starving population of Northern Russia and the people of other countries in Europe. The revision of figures necessitated by the armistice gave new meaning to America's responsibility. The original pledge made by the United States was $17,500,000 tons of food to be shipped overseas during the year. This amount of food was 50 per cent. greater than that which was sent the year before. With Belgium and France liberated and millions in south central Europe clamoring for food, the United States undertook to increase its exports from $17,500,000 to $20,000,000 tons.

To meet the demands for food America has two sources of supply. Food can be raised only on the farms, by those who make a business of production, and on the lands of our cities, towns and villages. No other sources exist. The 40,000,000 acres of farm land under cultivation have already probably reached their maximum of possible production for the immediate present. It is obvious, therefore, that if we are to give the world more food the new supply which will make this possible must come from the only remaining source—the small gardens in our urban and suburban communities.

The changed conditions brought into being by the signing of the armistice caused the National War Garden Commission to continue its work with increased earnestness in 1919. The armistice caused hostilities to be suspended but it did not increase the food supply nor feed the hungry. The world's new demand for food made it imperative that the Victory Gardens meet and surpass the record of the war gardens. To do its share
RECEIVED CERTIFICATE NUMBER ONE

Mrs. Frank P. Brown, of Cincinnati, captured first honors with her war-garden display of canned vegetables at several exhibits where she was an entrant. She was awarded the first National Capitol Prize Certificate offered by the National War Garden Commission in 1918, to blue-ribbon winners in this class at fairs and exhibits all over the country.
toward bringing this about, to meet the urgent appeal of Mr. Hoover and to help feed a starving continent, the Commission realized that no relaxation was to be considered and its campaign for 1919 was on a broader and more vigorous scale than during the conflict.

This terrific demand for food will be not a matter of one season only. For years and years we must continue to supply unheard-of amounts of food. Indeed it would have been almost as easy to put Humpty Dumpty together again as it will be to restore Europe’s agriculture. The soil of thousands of acres has literally been blown away by high explosives. Practically all the lands in the embattled nations have decreased in producing power through poor handling, neglect, and lack of fertilizers during the war. And of the host of farmers that toiled to feed Europe before the war, millions now lie beneath the soil they tilled, and other millions, maimed and crippled, can never again turn a furrow or harness a horse. As long ago as 1916 the shortage of cattle, hogs, and sheep in Europe totaled 115,000,000 head; and without livestock to produce manures years must elapse before Europe’s production is restored to normal.

Since American farmers cannot produce all the food needed, American gardeners must continue and extend their merciful work of helping to supply the food needs of the world. Instead of lessening their efforts, they will be called upon to add as much as possible to their productive capacity because of the additional mouths to be fed. They are offered a new opportunity to help.
There is no question that the cultivators of our war gardens, now become victory gardens, will continue their labors.

For a decade or two before the war, there was deep study and much discussion of the problem as to how to check the exodus from the farm to the city; but argument and discussion availed nothing, and the exodus continued. In the "city farmer" has been found a partial answer to the stay-on-the-farm idea. Ambitious young men and women will not remain in the country where comforts are denied and where advantages of education and social life are few; but they will be glad to farm in the city. The victory garden has opened the way. By this means almost every one becomes a food producer.

Furthermore, increasing prices will make it desirable to the individual, and the growing demand for food will make it desirable from the country's point of view, that every one help to feed himself. The readjustment which must come out of the war calls for powers as Herculean as those it has been necessary to put forth during the terrible struggle against "Kultur." This reconstruction work calls for every bit of man-power that can be found. It is a question not of months but of years before this up-building is completed. In France, Belgium, Poland, Italy, Russia, and other European countries, the rebuilding of cities and churches, railroads and bridges, docks and roads, houses and barns, the remaking of trench-scarred and shell-torn farms, and many other big works, must be per-
INTERIOR OF A BANK, NOT A FINE GROCERY

This is a view of the war-garden exhibit, a sort of "county fair," which was held by the Paterson Savings Institution of Paterson, New Jersey, and which aroused a very lively and friendly competition among the city farmers of that place. The blue ribbon for the best canned products, and the National Capitol Prize Certificate, went to Mrs. F. H. Thoms.
formed. So we can look for no huge immigration after the war to solve our labor problem, and that problem is acute. There are no ruined cities to be rebuilt, or devastated farms to be restored in the United States, but there are innumerable construction tasks to be done that have been put aside during the war.

Thousands of miles of road—to mention a single task—will have to be completely rebuilt. The day of the heavy motor-truck as a means of transportation between city and city has come to stay, and for its accommodation there must be a strengthening of roads. This is one of the great tasks awaiting the army of men returning from the battle-fields. The construction of new buildings in our cities, checked by war-time need of material and men, must be resumed and lost time must be made up. Cities will need many improvements which will keep the workers of the world busy. In these and a hundred other ways there will be steady call for the men released from strictly war work.

All these facts point to the increasing value of the victory garden. It will be just as important a factor in the life of the nation and the community after the war as was the war garden during the conflict. The need for gardens will last for many years; and during that time, the value of gardening will have become so apparent that the movement will continue indefinitely. It will have become a habit fixed and firmly implanted in the hearts and lives of the people of the country.

In addition to all this, gardening has been found to be a health measure. It has been used in the rehabili-
tation of convalescent soldiers. Around the hospitals in Europe, almost since the beginning of the war, vegetable plots have furnished the means for providing easy and pleasant outdoor work for convalescents, which acted as a tonic to their shattered nerves and bodies. Similarly, at the hospitals and army camps in the United States this form of activity was employed to help in the rebuilding of disabled and convalescing soldiers.

In the great reconstruction work at the Walter Reed hospital, which lies in the outskirts of the nation's capital, a fifteen-acre war garden proved of much therapeutic value in the treatment of men suffering from various diseases. In addition to helping them regain their health and strength, gardening trained these men for the future and equipped them to make their own living and become valuable citizens of any community when they should leave active service. Part of the large war garden at Camp Dix, New Jersey, adjoined the base hospital; and potatoes and other vegetables were growing during the season of 1918 up to the very porches on which some of the invalids had to sit in their wheel-chairs.

Sailors as well as soldiers need fresh vegetables to eat, but they cannot grow vegetables at sea. To overcome this handicap a movement was started throughout the United Kingdom to give naval men a supply of fresh vegetables whenever they got to port. Navy vegetable rations formerly consisted of potatoes only, and a few dried or canned products which could be kept a long time and stored in small space. The new
GETTING THE WINTER SUPPLY READY
Under the direction of Mrs. Grace L. Ackley, the demonstration canning kitchen established in Hinsdale, Illinois, was a great success. Some women went for instruction, others took war-garden crops to have them canned there, while still others took their maids so that they might learn how to save food.
British organization soon had eight hundred branches and collecting depots throughout the United Kingdom. Headquarters were established in London, with Admiral Lord Beresford as president. The patrons included many prominent people, but its members ranged from the owners of large estates, contributing regular supplies weekly, to the small schoolboy with only a ten-foot plot to cultivate. Not long after the work got under way, 300,000 pounds of fresh vegetables and fruits were being furnished weekly to the British navy. In speaking of this work and its value, Rear Admiral Lionel Halsey, third lord of the Admiralty, said:

Those associated with the Vegetable Products Committee can happily feel that this work is of priceless value, for without a vegetable food the men of the fleet could not have so thoroughly performed their work in the past; nor will they be able to do so in the future without a continuance of this splendid work as efficiently and as generously as in the past. Its value may be realized when it is stated that these supplies are an invaluable factor in keeping the men in good health and fitness.

What is true in the case of the stalwart men of the British navy, is true of all other members of society, of high and low degree. There is need for vegetable food. The body is kept in better condition if it does not depend too largely on a meat diet. Victory gardening will add greatly to the proportion of greens which will enter into the diet of the American people.

The future of gardening, therefore, is assured. It is
such an important economic gain, and its benefits in other ways are so numerous, that the army of home food producers themselves will be its strongest and most ardent champions. Both by practice and by precept they will continue to spread the gospel of “Food F. O. B. the Kitchen Door.” Just as the army which has fought for justice, decency, and civilization will see to it that these principles are maintained in every part of the world, so the soldiers of the soil in city, town, and village, millions of whom have tested the worth of gardening, will be its future champions and defenders. It is in these ways that the seeds of victory will insure the fruits of peace.