

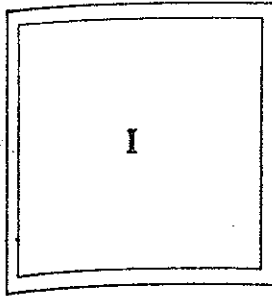


The POOR MAN'S CHANCE

By JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD

Illustrated with PHOTOS

Setting forth OPPORTUNITIES by which a man with SMALL CAPITAL may become a man with BIG CAPITAL



IF there was a gold mine in your back yard or on your farm you'd hustle to work it, wouldn't you? You wouldn't eat, or sleep, or drink until your spade had begun to toss up earth. You'd work like ten men, and you'd dream of the work nights. And *why?* Because you're after *gold*—the yellow metal. If it was in a cruder and less romantic form you wouldn't work so hard, and that is why—to-day—there is a 'gold mine' not so very far off from every hustling, brainy, ambitious young man in the United States."

These were the words of John D. Rockefeller, recently spoken on the subject of "opportunities." And he finished with, "The times of our greatest gold and silver discoveries, of our Yukons and our Californias, are gone, but the times of our more valuable 'discoveries'—discoveries of gold in other forms—have just dawned. Fortunes are easier made to-day than yesterday."

Mr. Rockefeller, who has devoted a long life to successfully grasping "golden mines of opportunity" gave no specific directions as to just where a few mines might be found, but he hit the nail squarely on the head just the same. The modern fortune-hunter does not carry a six-shooter at his belt and a diploma for accuracy in its use notched in the butt of it. He dislikes bloodshed, loves good dinners, goes to theaters and, as frequently as not, owns an automobile. Perhaps he strikes a "mine" in the midst of a crowded street, or he hits upon it while listening to a Sunday sermon in church. It was there, while bowed in prayer, that one of the most valuable keys to wireless telegraphy came to its inventor.

Last year the country saved about forty million dollars in the utilization of what, up until a few years ago, was known as "waste," and of all the fields which Mr. Rockefeller might name there is probably none which offers greater opportunities at the present time to men of very small as well as large capital, than this. The utilization of wastes is not an entirely new idea. It has attracted a great deal of attention during the past six years, especially, and its "wonders" have been exploited many times—the wonders, for instance, of coal tar by-products, of ink made from the rusty hoops of old barrels, of silk ties made of the limbs of trees, and of the remarkable utilization of everything from hoof to tail in our slaughter-houses. A book might be filled with a list of the things now made from one-time worthless materials. It is interesting reading, and one wonders if the day of magic is at hand. But thus far there has

been very little that is *helpful* in these printed lists. They have shown what can be done, and what is being done, by the *big fellows*, but that is all. The smaller fortune-hunters have not been started, a fact which has given rise to a suggestion in Congress, for the establishment of a "Utilization of Waste Products" department for what might be called the education of the masses.

It has been estimated that a hundred million dollars could be saved, or made, each year by the utilization of wastes instead of forty million, and that such a department would within a few years be as valuable as the Department of Agriculture, which has worked a revolution in the farming methods of the nation. This department would be of value not only to the large manufacturers and producers, who are the sole "waste product" utilizers of to-day, but would open mines of profit to thousands of merchants, wholesale men, small dealers and manufacturers, and would open up, as well, new fields for men of either small or large capital. It would show wholesale dealers how the thousands of bushels of fruit which spoil on their hands each season could be made to pay the wages of their working forces; how the great dry goods merchant could add a good percentage to his profits by "utilizing" in various ways, and it would show where new by-product businesses could be started and carried on at a profit in every city. It is pointed out that practically the *only* "utilization of waste" business with which the mass of people are acquainted, and in which they take a part, is that of old paper and old rags!

In the employ of the Canadian Government, the writer spent a part of last year in a study of the situation between the north shore of Lake Superior and the Pacific coast. The history of the States has taught Canada that the conservation of the "surface wealth" of a country is a tremendously important matter, and the government is making great efforts to profit by our mistakes. In spite of these efforts, millions of dollars are being thrown away each year in western Canada—millions of dollars which American capital and American brains could save.

It may seem a little exaggerated when I say that a hundred fortunes could be made to-day in Canadian *sawdust!* What Michi-

gan, Wisconsin and Minnesota were in the lumbering world three or four decades ago, immense areas of Canada are to-day. For hundreds of miles east and west of the Superior shore the sawmill is the life of almost every town settlement. Mountains of sawdust lay everywhere. Sawdust is a nuisance, is carted away at large expense, is a white elephant on the lumbermakers' hands. If a man should appear to any one of the lumber manufacturers to-morrow, and say, "I will contract to take all of your sawdust for ten years," the owner would be delighted to give it to him for hauling it away. There are not only thousands, but millions of tons of it. The mills do not burn it in their furnaces, as many American manufacturers are now doing, because they have more wood trimmings than they can use.

Money in Sawdust

HOW can this sawdust be used? Easily enough, and profitably enough, too. A method has now been found whereby sawdust is easily and cheaply moulded into briquettes as hard as wood itself, and capable of producing a heat as powerful as that of coal. Special kinds of furnaces are now being made for their use, and in these furnaces a ton of sawdust briquettes will give a heat value only 15 per cent. less than that of a ton of coal, and the briquettes can be made to be sold at from two to three dollars a ton. Light, of a fiercer inflammability than either coal or coke, and burning to almost no ash, these briquettes could be sold cheaper than wood for use in thousands of city homes. In France it has been proved that sawdust can be turned to extremely profitable use in another way. A few years ago white pine that now sells for eighty and a hundred dollars a thousand feet could be purchased for fourteen dollars a thousand. All good lumber has advanced in price in the same way, and as a consequence good furniture brings a price that would have staggered the people of a generation ago, notwithstanding its ease of manufacture. By mixing sawdust with glue-water and soluble glass, and hydraulically pressing it, a beautiful artificial wood is made, which in France is called *bois durci*, and which possesses a beauty of appearance found only in ebony, rosewood and mahogany.

To-day the "paper question" is one of

national importance. It is estimated that out a hundred times as much paper is produced in this country as is consumed. The paper industry is responsible for the rate which will less a few years, while, because of nothing less than this country and Canada are producing an enormous quantity of straw, after the harvest. Last year I personally saw a million tons of straw burned at a sand acre farm at Dundas, in Ontario. The loss and the coast! For the wheat grower with burning stacks, in those stacks, in those which are in the States. Scattered fields the burned loss, as it would soil, but burned "winrows," it d to the soil under

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OPPORTUNITY the utilization found in Canada man with small richest in those I frankly wish a thousand or two a little of what "waste timber" sawmills I have great railroads. for lumber from about an unjust in Canadian forest been the demand been the business the rage with the big ones during. As a consequence largely foreign claims on home years' homestead on the land 160 acres, and

national importance. It has been pointed out a hundred times that the newspaper, magazine and popular novel reader is responsible for the going of our forests at a rate which will leave us pretty nearly treeless a few years from now. And meanwhile, because of what we can class as nothing less than ignorance, the people of this country and Canada are coolly destroying an enormous paper supply each year. For straw, after a brief process, is paper. Last year I personally saw thousands of tons of straw burned by farmers on the Canadian prairies. I saw fifteen thousand tons burned at one time on the ten thousand acre farm of a man named Meilike, at Dundurn, in Saskatchewan. Twenty million tons were burned between Winnipeg and the coast! For weeks the prairies in the vast wheat growing regions were ablaze with burning stacks at night. The value of those stacks, in paper, would be tremendous, and the figure would be doubled by those which are burned in our own Western States. Scattered evenly over the grain fields the burned straw would not be a total loss, as it would be of some assistance to the soil; but burned as it is, in huge stacks, or "winrows," it does more injury than good to the soil under it.

Waste Timber Land

OPPORTUNITIES for making money in the utilization of wastes are not only found in Canada, of course, but for the young man with small capital the Dominion is richest in those opportunities just now; and I frankly wish that I might impress upon a thousand or two of these young Americans a little of what can be done in Canada's "waste timber" lands. The hundreds of sawmills I have mentioned, the building of great railroads, and the increasing demand for lumber from every point has brought about an unusual and interesting condition in Canadian forest lands. So great has been the demand, and so profitable has been the business, that lumbering has been the rage with the little fellows as well as the big ones during the past six or seven years. As a consequence thousands of settlers, largely foreign, have taken up settlers' claims on homesteads, working their three years' homestead duties solely for the timber on the land. A homesteader will take 160 acres, and pre-empt another 160, and

after he has skimmed over his land, taking off only the best and most profitable of his timber, he is ready to "move"—that is, to sell his homestead and take up another. By the time he has worked his three years and has received his deed from the Government, he has made a snug sum with ties, pulp-wood and logs, and is willing to sell for a song in order that he may begin all over again. These "cut off" homesteads are still covered with small forest timber, and in the States would be considered very valuable. Ten years from now, when Canadian timber will be worth four or five times what it is now, these "waste" homesteads will be worth fortunes. In the immense areas of rocky and untillable country along the north shore of Superior these second-class timber lands can be picked up at from two to four dollars an acre, and so confident is the writer of their future values, that he has already invested in fifteen hundred acres of them, and the writer, be it definitely understood, is a "small capital" man. Over hundreds of square miles east, west and south of Port Arthur, second growth birch, from three to six inches in diameter, grow so thick that they run from three to four thousand trees to the acre. Birch is one of the hardest and most valuable of woods, being a competitor of oak for flooring. A few years hence this second-growth, or "waste" timber land, will be the most valuable land in Canada, and to-day it may be picked up in small pieces by the small investor for almost nothing. If it was in large blocks the young American with a few hundred or a few thousand dollars would have absolutely no chance. The big timber interests know what the future of this second growth is to be, and are quick to secure the large tracts, but it does not pay them to take on the smaller pieces. And each of these smaller and isolated sections, and there are thousands of them, means a snug little fortune to the man with a small amount of money.

In the United States there are hundreds of ways in which money is made in the utilization of wastes—most of them thus far being in the hands of moneyed men, like millionaire manufacturers, packers, steel producers, and so on. The "poor man's opportunities" have not yet been taken advantage of. To-day, for instance, there is scarcely a city of any size in the United States where a man with from two to five

thousand dollars at his command could not set up a by-product factory in waste fruit that would pay him large dividends on his money. Every wholesale dealer, every small store man and corner fruit stand proprietor loses a large percentage of his fruit. Each day there could be collected from them thousands of pounds of decaying fruit, or fruit so near the "danger line" that they would gladly sell it for practically nothing. This fruit is valuable, some of it almost as valuable as when sold for sound fruit. When putrid and rotting cheese, reacting on sugar, or distilled rancid butter, treated with alcohol and sulphuric acid, yields an acceptable oil of pineapples; when the waste corks of Paris, caught in the grating of sewers, are gathered and transformed into vinegar; when a stench may be turned into the sweetest of perfumes, and vile smelling fusel oil into oil of apples, oil of pears, and oil of grapes, it is no wonder that "waste" fruit, containing the real, instead of imitation "oils", should be valuable. What a large wholesale fruit merchant has carted away from his back door as "waste" would pay the salaries of his employees if turned into vinegar, flavors and "oils," and each of these by-products would be up to the highest standard of the Pure Food regulations, for decay in fruit is a chemically harmless change.

In another way there are opportunities for small capital in the sheep-raising districts of the United States and Canada. Not many years ago gold "wash" was a waste; to-day it yields a treasure. It has been found now that when a sheep is washed the dirty water which has cleansed the wool is of considerable value, and that it will yield a "wool fat" fifteen per cent. as great as the wool on the sheep. From this fat five valuable products are secured, used as the bases for ointments, cosmetics and fiber lubricants. In France this by-product is called "suint," and in that country "sheep washing" has given birth to an industry which is almost unknown in this country, although a method for extracting the fat from the wash water has now been patented in the United States. Experiments have shown that from sixty to eighty cents worth of fat can be secured to every hundred pounds of wool that is washed, and that this can be secured *twice a year* from the same sheep. Most of the great sheep breeders do not shear their animals but sell them to

Eastern buyers "with the wool on." If a few enterprising opportunity-seekers would go West and wash these sheep they would find themselves opening up a paying industry.

Twine from Wild Grass

IN only a very few cities of the world is garbage made of value to-day. What the "wastes" of the American housewife may be made to yield in cash has recently been demonstrated by Paul Bruet, a German, in London. Bruet says that he started on \$1,200. He began burning garbage in large vertical cylinders, surrounded by steam jackets, and evaporated the seventy-five per cent. of water in the garbage. The fatty substances were dissolved, and as a result of the process he produced a fertilizer which is worth fifteen dollars a ton. So successful were his first operations that he started a small company on a capital of \$10,000, and last year this \$10,000 investment made a profit of *sixteen thousand dollars!* The fertilizer question is a big one in the United States to-day, and there is a steadily increasing demand for it—so great a demand, in fact, that a thousand fortunes might be taken out of American cities and towns each year in manufactured fertilizer and still not lessen that demand.

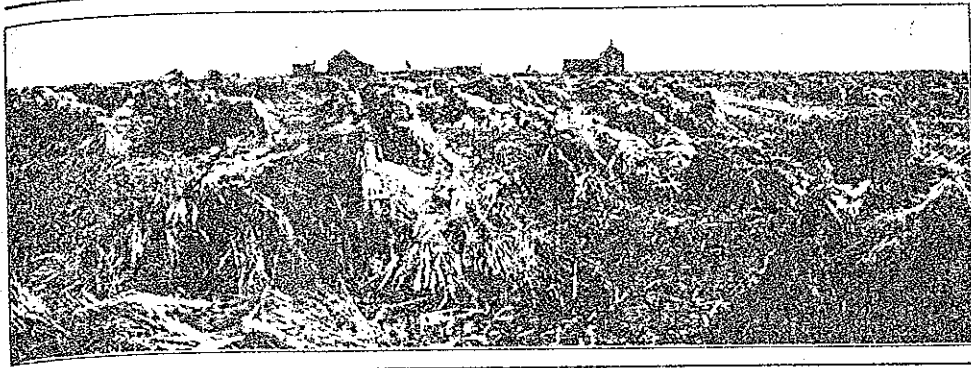
In many places throughout the United States, and especially in the Canadian northwest, there are splendid opportunities for the wide-awake American to make money in the establishment of a new kind of twine making factories. Farmers are now using a hemp or jute twine for binding their grain, at the enormous cost of from \$120 to \$180 per ton. It is now found that an excellent twine can be made from ordinary marsh grass and from the common "wire grass" which grows abundantly over millions of acres of western country. An Iowa man was the first to go into the business. He built his small twine factory on the edge of a large waste of marsh land, and last year made over a hundred tons of the twine, which he sold for \$75 a ton, cutting the trust prices in half and still making a very large profit. It takes less than two tons of the grass to make a ton of the twine, and as the manufacturing process is not an expensive one it is not difficult to see the opportunities which this new industry offers. The twine problem is one that has been



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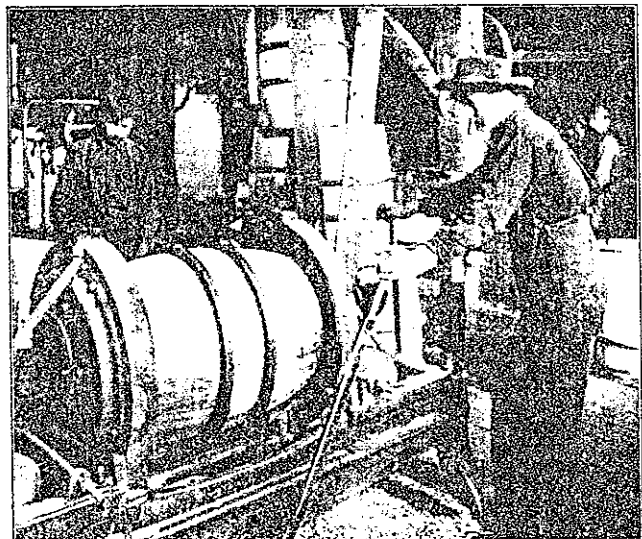
FORTY-FIVE BUSHELS OF WHEAT TO THE ACRE. MILLIONS OF TONS OF STRAW—
PAPER IN THE CRUDE—ARE BURNED EVERY YEAR



SOME PEOPLE MAKE MONEY BY UTILIZING THE WATER IN WHICH SHEEP ARE
WASHED, AND OTHERS BY MAKING USE OF WASTE RAGS

made a national issue, and as a man in Calgary recently said to me, "There is enough wire and marsh grass in this country to put the binder-twine trust out of business." This man makes the twine for his own 15,000 acres of grain land, and finds a quick market for the rest of his product among neighboring farmers. He now has a scheme under way for building several factories in good marsh grass localities. Marsh grass will go at least four tons to the acre, so that a 100 acre bit of marsh will yield about 220 tons of twine—a sufficient product to make a factory of this kind a big money maker.

Along the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Gulf of Mexico millions of tons of sea-weed are cast up by the waves. It is often four and five feet in depth, and in France, where some of it is now being used, it is found that it will gather best where large stones are placed within tide-mark on sandy shores. In this country there is as yet little thought of putting sea-weed to use, and yet it is one of the richest and most productive of all "wastes." One ton will produce eight pounds of iodine, large quantities of chloride of potassium, four to ten gallons of volatile



BARRELS ARE MADE FROM TALL STUMPS. CANADIANS CUT TREES ABOUT 12 FEET FROM GROUND. IN A FEW YEARS 50 ACRES OF THESE STUMPS WILL BE WORTH MUCH MONEY

oil, three or four gallons of naphtha, and 250 to 400 pounds of sulphate of ammonia. Only about 70 per cent. of the total mass is actual waste, and the remaining 30 per cent. in each ton is worth between \$25 and \$40. The highest value is reached when it is turned in gelose, or vegetable isinglass.

Science, the wizard of the century, touches with his fairy wand the black, viscid coal-tar from the gas retorts, and from the 140 pounds of gas-tar in a ton of coal Science to-day makes aniline dyes numbering over *two thousand* distinct shades. Of medicines, antiseptics, hypnotics and fever-allaying preparations it furnishes quinine, antipyrine, atropine, morphine, exalgine, somnal, salol, chloral-amide, hypnol, and a host of others. It furnishes perfumes—heliotropine, clove, queen of the meadows, cinnamon, bitter almonds, vanillin, camphor, wintergreen and thymol. It has given to the world bellite and picrite, two powerful explosives. It supplies more than twenty flavoring extracts; is the housekeepers' ally, with benzine and naphtha, the insecticides; supplies the farmer with ammonial fertilizers, and has given to the photographer his two developers, hydroquinone and likonogen. It yields paraffin, creosote and pitch; material for artificial paving; saccharin, a substance 300 times sweeter than sugar. It

gives us lampblack, material for red inks, lubricating oils, varnish, rosin, almost our entire supply of ammonia, and other things whose names would fill a page.

Not many years ago, when a "beef" was killed 40 per cent. of the animal was waste. To-day nothing is lost "but its dying breath." The blood is used in refining sugar and sizing paper, or is manufactured into door-knobs and buttons. The hide goes to the tanner; horns and hoofs become combs and buttons; thigh bones, worth \$80 a ton, make handles for brushes; fore-legs go into collar buttons, parasol handles and "jewelry." Water in which the bones are boiled is reduced to glue; dust from sawing bones is food for poultry and cattle, and the smallest bones are made into boneblack. Each foot yields a quarter of a pint of neat's-foot oil; the tail makes soup, while the brush of hair at the end of the tail goes to the mattress maker. The undigested food in the stomachs of freshly killed animals, and which it formerly cost Chicago packers \$30,000 a year to remove and destroy, is made into paper.

It is true, as Mr. Rockefeller says, that to-day "there is a 'gold mine' not so very far from every hustling, brainy, ambitious young man in the United States,"—and many of these "mines" may be found in the utilizing of "wastes."

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