

From the Bruce Peel Library, online, newspapers searched « Bugnet” 1905-1935

The Edmonton Bulletin, February 28, 1918

Home Grown Apples and Fruits for Alberta Orchards

Crab apples home grown by Rich Valley Homesteader; Garden Experiments succeed

Geo. Bugnet of Rich Valley, Taps Resources of Government of Northern Hemisphere to assist development of his farm garden, 60 miles northwest of Edmonton- Came from Paris but enjoys homesteading.

The achievement in the growing of fruit and ornamental trees by George Bugnet, on his homestead at Rich Valley about 60 miles northwest of Edmonton, is of more than ordinary interest. Before locating on his homestead, when that district was first settled by the plucky pioneers of Onion prairie, he was a newspaperman in Paris, France. He has now one of the grandest farm gardens and orchards in Alberta.

He says that in the matter of trees, the chief difficulty is to know which kinds have a chance to succeed in Alberta. He tapped the resources of the chief governments of the northern hemisphere in his effort to solve the problem of fruit production for Alberta, and in the following paragraphs some very helpful details are given as a result of his successful experience.

So far, he has found that no standard apple can be really recommended for Northern Alberta. He feels sure that his way of going step by step is the best, for the average farmer, and the cheapest.

A Parisian Homesteader

Some twelve years ago, when Geo. Bugnet settled in what is today the western half of Rich Valley, there was not a house for miles around. He had a young wife, a baby, a pony and \$5 in his pocket. Inside of him bubbled all the hopes of a green old-country Frenchman, who had been in the newspaper business, but was now the proud possessor of about ten words of English and of a year-old agricultural experience recently acquired as a farmhand, partly at Letellier, Manitoba and partly at St. Albert, Alta.

Today houses are plentiful around. His wife is young yet, seven other babies have been born since, and the \$5 must have been the twin of the inexhaustible five cents of the Wandering Jew. But that is a common tale, told everywhere in the west.

A farm that is different

What is different on Geo. Bugnet's farm is something that perhaps not find its duplicate anywhere in Alberta.

In France, as many letters of the boys overseas have testified, the shabbiness of the poorest farm is redeemed by the picturesqueness of the surroundings, flowers, trees or shrubs. Accordingly, the young French settlers, man and wife, felt all at once an imperative need of making the wilderness - - which was then known as the Onion Prairie, blossom forth all the hardiest and rarest specimens of the vegetable world.

They at once applied to the Indian Head Experimental Farm for seeds and plants, received a generous supply of both, and put them in a patch of ground well worked with the spade. That was the spring of

Transcription from Edmonton Bulletin, Juliette Champagne

1906. Everything came out nicely. Next winter was the famous one, terribly hard, but rich in snow, and during which the rabbits fared even worse than the Prussian Guard at the battle of the Marne. The baby seedlings did not mind it a bit and made good progress during 1907 and 1908. But then, the next winter, the rabbits popped off from everywhere, thick as shells in a barrage, and chewed everything down to the ground.

Not Down-hearted

This was a heart-breaking experience, but since Verdun, it is now known that Frenchmen have more perseverance than they were credited with. Nothing daunted, and having experienced that the first selected plot was exposed to a monthly frost, they built a new log shack on the southeast side of a low hill, the top of which was plowed, and they erected a fence of chicken wire stretched tight, with one barb wire on top, and another half way up. Since that, no rabbit, chicken, pig, calf or anything had any chance to come and help themselves inside.

Entanglement Around Garden

To protect the new garden, a wind-break of the quick growing Siberian Old-man (*Abrotanum Tobolskianum*) and Manitoba Maple was planted on the west side. Later on, were added: On the north side, a hedge of Siberian crab apple; on the south hedges of Pembina (high bush cranberry) and Hazel nut on the east, Saskatoons, black cherry and red cherry. For this purpose, the wild black cherry, if trimmed properly, is by far the best. But every hedge, if too open can easily be improved by planting along a good climber which will mingle with it such as the native large flowered blue Clematis (*C. Verticillaris*), which when given a rich soil, will produce a dense growth of vines, covered with blossoms throughout the season. The hazel nut, particularly is very friendly with that clematis, even in their wild state.

Then a lawn was sown, facing the house. Around the lawn were kept, or added, the best of the wild native shrubs of Northern Alberta, such as hawthorn, buffalo berry, western mountain ash, which is found in Rich Valley; canoe birch, jack pine, balsam fir, white spruce, etc. all of which can hold their own if properly cared for, against almost any imported stock.

Home-grown apple jelly

The fruit trees which had survived the onslaught of the rabbits, were transplanted in the spring of 1910 to the garden in rows, going north and south, 25 feet apart; the trees 12 feet apart in rows. Of these trees, the Siberian Crabs started first, four years ago, to give an abundance of small apples, excellent for jelly. Between the trees were planted some currants, red Dutch, and white grapes, and six varieties of raspberries, a sure crop every year; some Compass cherries, of which the fruit is caught regularly by Jack Frost long before maturity, and some Sand cherries, which are loaded every fall with large fruits, some of them nearly as good as the average old country cherry.

Each succeeding year they received from the experimental farm many seeds and plans, and one can find today inside that chicken wire almost every variety offered for sale by the western nursery men, and a few besides.

Seed from World O'er

For our French friends were not to be satisfied with the natives and too well-known foreign beauties. Shamelessly, explaining their ambition, they applied to Mr. Vilmorin, Paris, France, to W. T. Macoun, Ottawa, to Dr. Sargent, of the Arnold Arboretum, Boston, Mass., U.S, to the Royal Gardens of Kew, England; to the Botanical Gardens of Lausanne, Switzerland, and before the Bolsheviki were there, to the Imperial Gardens of Petrograd, asking everywhere for seeds of flowers, trees and shrubs ripening in the very far north, or at the highest altitudes in the mountains. And from everywhere came a generous response, so generous that they had more than they could properly handle. They at once sowed in rows, just as is done with onions or carrots, the shortest-lived seeds, and kept on sowing year after year the toughest of the tribe. The newly born seedlings were cultivated for a year or two, the plan being to give them a fair start, and after that, catch as catch can the survival of the fittest.

Among the vegetable progeny brought up in that Spartan way, and seemingly rejoicing under the climate of Northern Alberta, can be seen some beautiful varieties very rarely seen with or even quite unknown in the west, such as: Japanese cherry (*Prunus Grayana*), Siberian Almond (*Amygdalus Sibirica*) Siberian Birch (*Betula Ermani*). Rose flowered Siberian Locus (*Halinisdendron Argenteum*), Golden Clematis (*Clematis Tangutica*), Siberian Broom (*Cytisus Clongatus Sibiricus*), the only one really hardy in the west and a few rare Honeysuckles (*Lonicera Coerulea*, Kamtschatica, *Dependcus*) and Lilacs (*Syringa Amurensis*, *Villosa*, *Emodi Rosea*) and Roses, among which a double dark red Mandihourian very sweet scented, and some European Mountain Ash, and the hardy coral fruited Elder (*Sambucus Raemosa*) which leafs out eight or ten days before any of our native trees and grows in the rocks on the top of the Alps, and some larches, pines and firs from Northern Siberia. There are also a good many perennial flowers, a little everywhere around the house.

Enjoys Homestead Life

After that one might believe that Mr. Geo. Bugnet and family are gardening from early dawn till deep darkness. But he will readily tell you that he is not a very early riser, that he does his gardening and tree planting first thing in the spring, having his soil prepared during the preceding season, and that he can start seeding his grain as early as any of his neighbours; which neighbors, besides seem to have caught a spark of this enthusiasm – very likely during one their numerous pilgrimages in his garden – for one might find here and there in Rich Valley and elsewhere, quite a few of his vegetable products even strawberries which do very well if kept clean.

There is one common garden plant which Mr. Geo. Bugnet is surprised to see so neglected in the west, the useful asparagus. It can be grown as easily as rhubarb, but in the early spring it is necessary to hill up the soil all along over the rows to protect the new shoots from frost at night. With that little precaution, it is possible to have an unfailing supply of the earliest, and at the same time most healthful vegetable in Alberta.

.....

The Edmonton Bulletin, **December 18, 1920** (City Edition) page 15, Item Aro1505:

Hardwood and Fruit Trees are Possible in West says Alberta's Luther Burbank

Geo. Bugnet of Rich Valley has developed many new and hardy strains of Trees and Fruit – says there is no reason why ash, oak, maple, basswood, etc. cannot be grown here.

By J.F.B

Beautiful shade trees and ornamental shrubs, stately oaks, ash and elm trees; all kinds of small fruits and even apples - in fact practically all of the hardwood trees that grow in Ontario and British Columbia, growing all over central and norther Alberta, making the country homes more beautiful, the city parks the most picturesque spots in the world and supplying all the needs of hardwood for the province. This is the vision that Geo. Bugnet of Rich Valley hopes to make a reality. At the first thought it might appear to be an utter impossibility, yet Saunders produced the Marquis wheat, and Burbank the seedless plum and the spineless cactus. The putting into practice of such a scheme is undoubtedly something to the undertaken with great trepidation, yet considering what has been achieved by such as Burbank, Saunders, Hanson and others in producing new forms of fruits, farm crops and trees, the idea of afforesting the new treeless sections of central and Northern Alberta, with hardwood trees, may not be as impracticable and impossible as it may at first appear. At any rate, so satisfactory have been the results of the experiments conducted by the author of the idea during the past ten or twelve years, that he has not the least doubt as to its feasibility.

Started in 1906

Geo. Bugnet, editor, author and scientist, came to the West from Burgundy, France in 1905. Being something of a naturalist, it did not take him long to discover that although in certain sections of Alberta, as far as temperature and precipitation were concerned, were the same as in sections of Ontario and British Columbia and some parts of Manitoba, yet in Alberta there were no hardwood trees, and fruit such as apples could not be grown. This also applied to Northern Saskatchewan. There were certain differences of climate he discovered, and it could not be expected that an oak tree from the East transplanted in Alberta would grow successfully. The season here is shorter. A study of a map of Canada showing the tree zones indicates that Central and Northern Alberta as well as Northern Saskatchewan is so situated, and all the conditions are such, that it would be almost impossible for seeds to be carried to this area by the natural agencies – birds, wind and water. On the West, there is the barrier of the Rocky Mountains, on the south there are the great plains stretching from Nebraska to the Red Deer river, a distant too great for birds to cover and carry seeds, and no hardwood seed would grow if dropped in this steppe. On the East, there is a similar condition and the streams all flow from west to east, eliminating any possibility of seeds ever being carried to this area by water.

Individuality of Trees]

Mr. Bugnet also discovered that there is a great difference between individual plants and trees. In Manitoba, he found a plum tree, seven or eight inches in diameter that ripened fruit before August 15th. This was earlier than most plums in Manitoba ripened and he says may be the only plum tree that

Transcription from Edmonton Bulletin, Juliette Champagne

ripened fruit at that date. However, that led to the conclusion that some trees of a certain variety might mature fruit, or deciduous trees shed their leaves, earlier than others of the same variety. If this was true, it remained for him to find by selection, an individual tree whose bark ripened early enough in the fall so that the tree would not be killed by early winter frosts.

Tried out theory

Accordingly, to try out his theory, he secured seed from various seed houses and experimental farms as well as seedlings and planted them on his farm at Rich Valley. He grew thousands of seedlings of ash, various other hardwoods, as well as fruit trees, and as he had expected he found his theory was correct. One seedling out of a hundred or a thousand might start to grow earlier in the spring and this one would mature earlier in the fall and as a result would not suffer from the early winter frosts. This one he would keep and observe, while the hundred or the thousand of the same variety that did not show a tendency to mature earlier in the fall were all discarded. He continued in this manner until 1910, the date which really marked the beginning of his real investigations. He knew by this time what he was after, it only remained for him to find it.

The next step was to import new and hardy varieties from those parts of the world where the summers were as short or shorter than they are here. He had seed sent to him from all parts of the world. From Petrograd he received some two hundred and fifty varieties of seed, from Tibet between fifty and sixty varieties of seed gathered from trees growing at an altitude of over 12,000 feet. He actually scoured the whole world for seed and gathered in all several thousand varieties of strains. Those seeds he seeded on his farm north of Lac Ste. Ann, where the soil is rich and moist but the frosts early. The seedlings were closely observed for a period of two to three years and notes taken on time from all the promising individuals and as soon as it was known that any certain tree or shrub would prove hardy enough or had the characteristics which indicated suitability to this climate, it was kept and the entire remainder dug up and put on the scrap heap. He only wants one tree of each variety, or in case of trees or plants that are not self-fertilized, a male and female of each variety, and discards the rest. If these individuals prove successful, then by a process of propagation, if "like produces like" then he can multiply to any number.

Individual Selection

To the scientist this manner of selection is known as "individual selection." It is dealing merely with one individual, and each individual, says Mr. Bugnet, like a person, has a distinct personality, has definite characteristics, which if the strain be true, will be transmitted to the offspring from generation with but slight variation. If, however, the individual that is being dealt with is a hybrid, then in order to obtain a true type or strain, according to the Mendelian law, there must be a process of selection until a true type has been established.

A Hundred New Varieties

At the present time Mr. Bugnet has growing on his farm practically all varieties of trees and shrubs native to Canada and over a hundred varieties that have never been seen growing in any other place in

Transcription from Edmonton Bulletin, Juliette Champagne

the dominion, and all are of hardy strains. The University plans next year to secure seedlings of several new varieties from him and test them out. From his experience he says there is no reason why we cannot grow elm, ash, oak, basswood, cedar, sugar maple and all other useful and ornamental trees anywhere in central and northern Alberta. By himself he cannot do all the necessary selecting, grafting and breeding require to give Alberta all these advantages, but it is a work he suggests that could be easily taken up by the experimental farms, and they could take advantage of the work that he has already accomplished. He is not doing this work for any financial gains, nor he says, for the glory but for the satisfaction of accomplishing that which he set out to do.

A Beauty Spot

At the present time his farm is one of the beauty spots in the district, and the interest that people who know this scientist are taking in his work may be judged from the fact that any fine Sunday during the summer there is a regular pilgrimage to view the work that is being conducted there.

An illustration of the difference in habits and adaptability to this country that exists in Scotch pine may be gained from the results obtained from the seed secured directly from Vilmorin in Paris and seed collected in the Riga forest near Petrograd. Seed secured from both of these places was planted under the same conditions. Last year the fall was very wet and winter a severe one. The trees grown from the seed from Vilmorin lost all of their needles, except for a small number of branches at the top of the tree, while the trees grown from the seed from Petrograd are still in a good thrifty condition, and as for shape and beauty are far superior to the others.

In small fruits Mr. Bugnet has had some very satisfactory results. By carefully selecting he has secured a strain of Sand cherries that are very hardy and yield excellent fruit. From one tree he has multiplied this strain of cherries until at this time he has between two and three hundred trees. A strain of Manitoba plums has proven quite hardy for the last ten years, yielding well, and he expects within two or three years by grafting and selection to produce a strain that will ripen before August 15th.

By crossing cultivated varieties of strawberries with wild strawberries he originated a new variety, as yet not named. This variety yields heavily and in flavor is superior to either the wild or the cultivated varieties of strawberries. It is somewhat smaller than most cultivated varieties and the yield is heavy, but is too soft for shipping. This variety is absolutely hardy. To use his own words, "almost as hardy as grass." Unfortunately, Mr. Bugnet does not know the exact pedigree of the variety. He made several crosses between the wild varieties and hardy varieties received from Dr. Saunders, at Ottawa, and this particular cross, like Saunders' cross of Marquis wheat, was an accident of which there is no record.

Mr. Bugnet has also developed several strains of currents, raspberries and other small fruits, but he says these are not worth mentioning. Anyone with ordinary skill can grow them, and for this reason to him they are not of great importance. At the present time he is growing Siberian almonds, from a strain he has developed and has had some very good results. He has been working with apples, but from his experience believes it useless to waste time trying to grow the ordinary varieties. He is working with the Siberian crab, and when he has found a suitable strain will by grafting on hardy variety of apples, produce, he believes, an apple for this country.

April 1, 1922, *The Edmonton Bulletin*

New Strains and Varieties of Hardy Shrubs and Fruit Developed by Alta. Farmer

Georges Bugnet of Rich Valley is Second Burbank – Has Imported Seed of Hundreds of Trees, Shrubs and Fruit from All Parts of the World – Has Produced new Variety of Strawberries, Early Maturing Strain of Plum and Improved Strains of Cherries.

By J.F.B.

With the object in view of developing hardy strains and varieties of trees, ornamental shrubs and fruit suitable to the climatical conditions of Western Canada, Georges Bugnet, a farmer in the Rich Valley district some forty miles northwest of Edmonton secured seed of hundreds of different varieties and tested them out on his farm. He started this work some twelve years ago and since that time by selection of hardy individuals and by cross breeding has been successful in developing several strains and varieties particularly of shrubs and fruit that are superior to anything previously grown in Alberta.

Among the varieties and strains produced by this second Burbank is a new variety of strawberries, a hardy strain of wild plum suitable to Alberta, strains of cherries and currants and even crab apples. Horticulture has been Mr. Bugnet's hobby for a great many years and he has made a scientific study of all of its many branches. His work is conducted along well-defined lines with a definite objective in view, and accurate records are kept of everything undertaken.

Mr. Bugnet was raised in France, in the province of Burgundy. When he first came to Alberta and took up a homestead the one thing above all others that he found lacking were trees and shrubs, which do so much to beautify the home and give it an air of permanence. He also found that there were few suitable varieties of trees and shrubs to be found in this country and upon making this discovery immediately began to formulate a scheme whereby suitable and hardy varieties could be developed and having a plan in mind immediately began to carry it out.

Imported Seed

A thorough study of the climatic conditions existing in Alberta led Mr. Bugnet to conclude that the afforestation of the now treeless parts of the province and the development of hardy strains and varieties could not be brought about by importing stock from Eastern Canada and the U. S. The length of the season and the altitude are the two principal factors to be considered and accordingly his first step was to import seed from countries where the season was as short and the altitude as high, but the climate not necessarily as cold. As a result of a considerable correspondence and expense, seeds of hundreds of different varieties of trees, ornamental shrubs and fruit was secured from countries in practically all parts of the world. Some of the seed was obtained from high altitudes in the Swiss Alps, from different parts of Siberia, from the Imperial gardens at Petrograd and many other places. This seed was sown by Mr. Bugnet on his farm at Rich Valley, out in the open so that the young plants would be subjected to all the elements. This was to make sure that anything that grew was absolutely hardy. After the plants were two or three years old, all of the plants that showed any indication of being unsuited to the climatic conditions were discarded. The plants that proved suitable to the climate were kept as parent stock and multiplied by cuttings and seed.

Transcription from Edmonton Bulletin, Juliette Champagne

By this process many varieties of trees and fruits native to other countries have been found to be hardy in Alberta. By crossing and grafting of some of the hardy varieties of fruit on some of the native fruits, Mr. Bugnet has developed varieties bearing fruit of excellent quality.

Progress Slow

In small fruits Mr. Bugnet has probably attained his greatest success with strawberries having developed a new variety of excellent quality as a result of a cross between the native and a cultivated variety. The fruit is superior in flavor to either the native or any of the cultivated varieties and is nearly equal to the Senator Dunlop in size. It has the disadvantage that it is too soft for shipping any great distance, but because of the fact that it is a heavy yielder makes an excellent variety for the kitchen garden. An indication of the prolificness of this variety can be gained from the fact that Mrs. Bugnet often picked enough berries for a meal for a family of ten without moving from one spot in the patch.

The variety of cultivated strawberry used in making this cross is not known. Mr. Bugnet made several crosses using the Bederwood, Senator Dunlop and South Dakota, but unfortunately a record of this cross was not kept.

Plum Ripens in August

A strain of wild plum that ripens in August, developed by selection of the native Manitoba plum has proven to be a good yielder and well suited to the climate. Mr. Bugnet has some twenty large trees of this strain and nearly a hundred small ones.

In order to get a large cherry and to improve the quality, the Compass cherry was crossed with the red, black and sand cherry. The results have been very favorable but as yet no variety has been developed that is superior to any of the varieties grown.

Crab Apples

Two pails of apples were grown on the trees developed by a cross between the wild Siberian crab and some of the old standard varieties which were secured from Dr. Saunders of Ottawa. The apples, however are only about an inch in diameter and to increase the size, Mr. Bugnet has made a cross with this variety and the Petrograd crab which is larger with the object in view of increasing the size. Mr. Bugnet has practically all of the native varieties of small fruits found in Canada in his garden and for the most part has found that they respond well to cultivation. In most cases, the yield as well as the size of the fruit is increased by cultivation. Mr. Bugnet has also grafted several of the cultivated varieties of small fruits on the native fruit with good success. The Japanese cherry when grafted on the root of the black cherry gives good results as does the Ash grafted on Saskatoon roots. The hawthorn grafted on the Saskatoon root also does well.

Very little is to be gained by the way of hardiness through grafting, but the plants make much more vigorous growth than they do on their own roots. On the other hand, deep rooted plants do not do as

well as shallow rooted plants and in case of trees, when some of the deep-rooted varieties are grafted on shallower rooted varieties, the tree often grows much better on its own root.

Weeping Caragana

In ornamental shrubs one of the most outstanding plants in Mr. Bugnet's collection is a weeping caragana. Bred of the *carragana artoroscens* secured from Siberia, when planted, produced a number of different types of plants including one plant of a distinctly trailing habit. Cuttings from this trailing plant were grafted on an upright form of carragana and the result is a weeping carragana similar to the weeping willow.

The halemodendron, a shrub similar to the carragana but has smaller leaves and pink blossoms when grafted on a carragana root makes about ten times the growth than on its own root and as an ornamental shrub Mr. Bugnet says is superior to the caragana.

The Edmonton Bulletin, April 13, 1923, Page 12, Item Ar01204

Arboriculture Experiment is Satisfactory

Georges Bugnet Tells of His Work in Fruit and Tree Planting

The Bulletin has already written at various times on the experiments in fruit, forest and ornamental trees and shrubs made by Mr. Georges Bugnet of Rich Valley, and he has here submitted some of his findings in regard to western arboriculture.

Mr. Bugnet's creed is as follows: The little success we had comes from the reason that this problem has not been seriously tackled. If apples and plums have already been produced in Alberta; if some forest and ornamental trees have made good here, this is, he believes rather pure luck, after a great deal of costly trials. However, this little success proves that it would be possible to obtain much better results if really systematic and special efforts were brought into play.

All varieties of trees, says he, which are found profitable in this or that region, be it Canada, United States, Europe or anywhere have been either produced in that same region or imported from localities with a similar climate. This is a rule that has probably no exception. Instead of observing this rule, we have tried to break it repeatedly by importing trees from warmer districts. Sometimes luck favored us. Among these imported trees, a few were found that came, if not directly, at least indirectly, from countries which have a rigorous climate. Some found, in a few favored spots in our province, congenial locations. Some, too, may have been of hardier individuality, as an instance, among forest trees in Edmonton, one can see at the Hon. F. Oliver's residence two beautiful elms, 33 years old. Nevertheless, if you consider the time and money wasted, the result is rather poor. This policy of breaking the laws of nature should be reversed, it could never pay.

Transcription from Edmonton Bulletin, Juliette Champagne

Anybody who has made a study of the geographical distribution of plants on this globe is aware that there are many places with a climate worse than ours, where are found many useful trees and shrubs which would make a great addition to our natural resources. For instance, the White Cedar (*Thuja Occidentalis*) is native near Rupert river on the shores of the Hudson's Bay where even our own varieties of trees find difficult to thrive. It is found in the mountains and high plateaus of British Columbia, where the climate is no better than here. Nevertheless, Albertans will rather buy it directly or indirectly, from southeastern nurseries.

It should be about time to develop as has been done for wheat, hardy strains of briars and shrubs. This can be attained by getting for each variety of trees or shrubs, the hardiest specimen found growing, not where the seasons are warmer and longer, but where the climatic conditions are similar to or colder than ours.

Since 1911, almost nothing has been done on this problem by the experimental farms. As long as Dr. W. Saunders lived, many experiments were conducted, out of which came the very important, but by no means final, Bulletin No. 47 (Trees and shrubs tested in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta). Issued in 1904 and now nearly twenty years old. But since the appointment of a new director, money was mostly spent in erecting cow palaces (this is Mr. Bugnet's expression) and showing the poor ignorant farmers how to raise profitably 2 to 4 cent beef. Luckily, says he, farmers have more sense than official experts. It is to be hoped that the new government will bring again, especially in horticulture and forestry, a really progressive policy.

As to his present work, Mr. Bugnet says: This past season has brought new and useful conclusions. Everyone remembers the late frost of the sixth of June. I had been during the last part of May, cross-breeding many varieties of trees and shrubs, especially of apples and plums. That frost ruined most of my work. This might seem discouraging to some people. For my part, not at the time, I admit, but later on, I found it a blessing in disguise. Take the plum, for instance, up to that frost, I had taken for granted that the Manitoba plum was the only safe one to use for foundation stock in order to obtain a good hardy plum. Well, my Manitoba plum tree had been covered with blossoms during the second part of May. I had been cross-breeding on them with the pollen of my best Sand Cherries of the Compass cherry (in early June), Japanese plum, etc., and even with the pollen of the native pin and choke cherries. Some of these crossings seemed to have been successful and the fruit was forming. I had done the same kind of work on the native pin cherry and other trees of the plum and cherry family. When the frost came, the newly formed fruits on the Manitoba plum, native cherries etc. were entirely destroyed. All my work went to nothing. But the saying: "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good" was again confirmed. Among the varieties of Rosaceae Prunae (plum family), the Sand cherry and the Compass cherry, which are really plums rather than cherries and are late blossomers, escaped with very little injury. They seemed almost frost-proof. Luckily, I had done a little cross-breeding on the Compass cherry and gathered in early September, fifteen cross-bred fruits out of which seed may come something worthwhile for the North-West. In this case it will be interesting to watch the issue. The Compass cherry, thought its blossoms showed almost complete immunity against the spring frosts, is only half-hardy in winter. But the pollen used for cross-breeding came from winter-proof varieties. The resulting seedlings may provide a plum tree hardy in winter, later flowering, immune from spring frosts and early ripening. The fruit may be of good size and quantity. If such is the case, Alberta will have in a few years, a plum worth speaking about. At any rate, this year taught me what parents to use for breeding. It was a great lesson."

Edmonton Bulletin, March 11, 1922

*Taken from **Uncle Tom's Corner**: a page devoted to children, a club for which the children who contributed would receive an award, a star, and move up a level. There was a board composed of children. The Bugnet children contributed to it, and this reveals a bit of their family life, education and upbringing at Rich Valley. This contribution by Georges Bugnet was unusual; at this time, Bugnet was still signing his works as Henri Doutremont. (JC)*

A Message to you from Mr. Georges Bugnet:

Dear Children: Once upon a time there was, in a little street of a little French city, a meat shop and a butcher, its owner. I remember the man very well, because he was so thoroughly a butcher that you couldn't make him talk about anything but the meat and the meat trade. Sometimes I tried to speak about the weather. "Yes", he would say, "This is a cool day, meat will keep fresh." Or "Yes, this is too warm a day, meat will spoil fast."

Now, most of us, even the broadest-minded men and women, are just like this butcher, "talking shop" all the time. I mean that we, in this vast universe, where we live, after all, very short days, see only the human corner in it. It seems as if our civilization has become a disease, and, like diseased persons, we think and talk only about our health.

Luckily Uncle Tom has found the best cure. He has opened to you a Nature League. You, dear children, are yet in a good and natural state of health. You are not yet obsessed with economic, social and purely human problems. Money is not yet your god. You can be interested in something beside your own self, you can yet find happiness and lots of fun just by inquisitive and sharp looks in the waters of a stream or lake, or- your belly to the ground - in a square foot of grassy landscape.

There is where you youngsters beat us, your elders. With very rare exceptions, grown-up people have lost that faculty of deep admiration for the immense world of grasses, flowers, trees, insects, beasts, fishes, which share, jointly with man – more important, probably, than man for the general welfare of it – this planet, this Earth of ours.

Like Jack Horner, you cannot escape the human corner. You belong to it. You will become man, and man is a reasoning animal. It is interesting and very good to develop in yourself the animal power of observation; to become as sharp as a fox in detecting smells, sounds, and the minute details in sight around you. But in spite of yourself, the WHY of everything will stare you steadily in the face.

There is the great danger.

Like the Sphinx of old, which devoured those who could not answer its questions, this WHY of the things is yet devouring many people, not in the flesh to be sure, but by crushing or killing their mind or soul. You must be very careful before you answer any "why." Try to see all the things in nature, not as you want them to be but as they really are not with selfish purpose. But with a very observant and detached mind. Do not believe things only when they are useful to you, but try to see if they fulfill their own law

Transcription from Edmonton Bulletin, Juliette Champagne

and what is the WHY of that law apart from the human shop and the human utilities. Do not take for granted that man is the god of the universe. The hard fact is, that, apart from his faith in an immortal soul, he is a very short-lived speck of dust on the surface of a very small globe.

In this young province of ours, dear children, you have a very rare opportunity. Unlike so many children of other countries, you are not brought up in a grey nest of stone, amidst a tangle of narrow and evil-smelling streets, with a landscape of rigid and tall chimneys under a sky clouded with smoke, and among an overcrowded and consequently dissatisfied humanity. Nature here is everywhere at your door, in her yet wild and natural order. Go to Her. Try always with childish candour, to understand her ways.

You may hear many grown-ups around you talking of the natural resources of our province. Dear children, and the best natural resources of your land are open to everyone. Just open your eyes. Look sharply at things. Use your brain honestly, and you shall extract, with lots of fun and free of charge, a wealth, greater than tons of gold. - Henri Doutremont