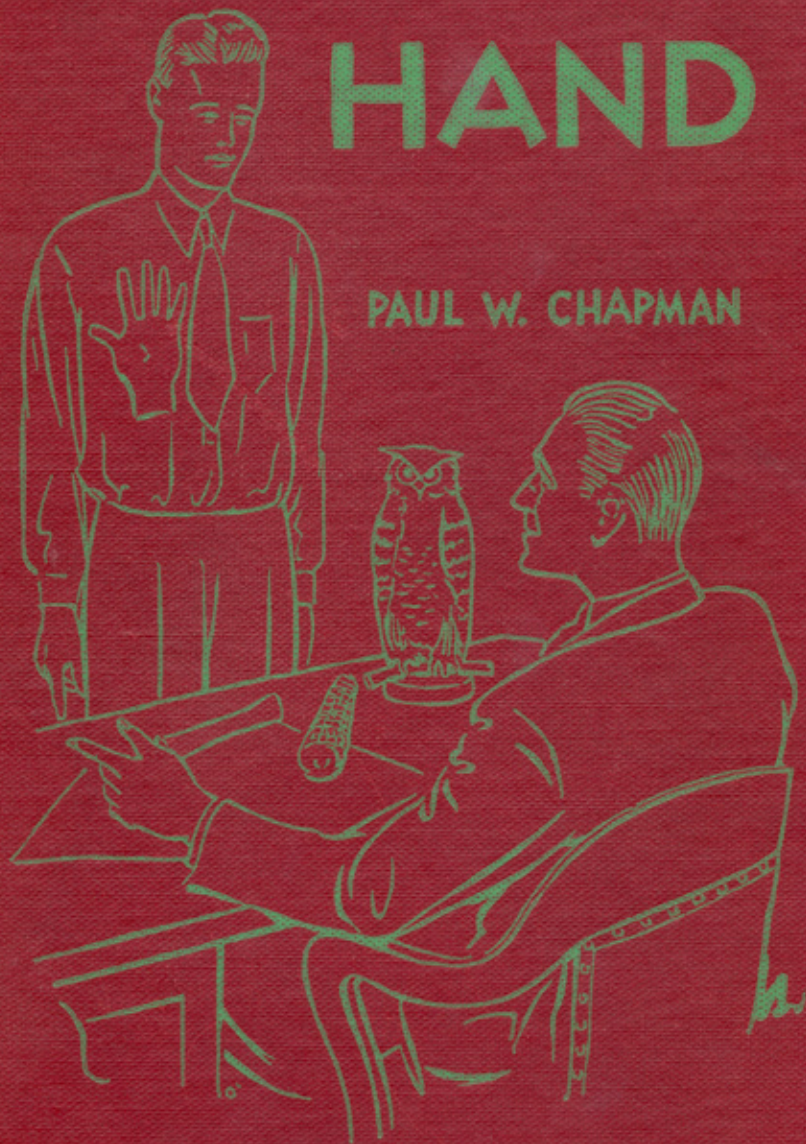


The GREEN HAND

PAUL W. CHAPMAN



THE GREEN HAND

A STORY OF THE F. F. A.

by

PAUL W. CHAPMAN

Paul W. Chapman



Fred appealed to them with all the fervor of one who wishes to acknowledge a debt of gratitude (Page #)

THE GREEN HAND

A STORY OF THE F. F. A.

by

PAUL W. CHAPMAN

State Director of Vocational Education for Georgia; formerly president of the American Vocational Association, the National Association of State Directors of Vocational Education, the Vocational Department of the National Education Association, State Supervisor of Agricultural Education for Georgia, State Supervisor of Agricultural Education for Missouri, State Adviser for the Georgia Association of the Future Farmers of America



CHICAGO

PHILADELPHIA

J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

DEDICATED TO

HENRY GROSECLOSE

the far-visioned cavalier from Virginia
who gave a new meaning to F. F. V.
and conceived the plan which
led to the organization of the
Future Farmers of America.

PREFACE

THIS story is fiction. I do not know Fred Dale, nor have I had the pleasure of meeting Walter Langford. Yet, having spent some time with them -- sharing their successes and disappointments, I feel that they are real people. If I never meet them in my travels one thing, at least, is certain -- I shall meet many teachers of vocational agriculture, who, like Langford are exerting a great influence for good in the lives of the boys with whom they come in contact. And I shall know boys like Fred who are not perfect but who, through the inspiration that has come into their lives after joining the F.F.A., are laying the foundation for successful careers. And these boys are so interesting! I already know hundreds of them.

I have taken the liberty to put real people in this story. Why not? There are John L. Butts of Miami and Henry Groseclose of Virginia. What is said about them is true. The yacht, for example, was built by the boys in the Dade County Vocational School. It was not the *Sally May*, however. There are others -- Senator Capper, Secretary Hyde, John F. Case -- all of whom

played the roles in real life which are assigned to them in this story.

My purpose in writing this story is to try to bring to others something of the feeling of enthusiasm which the Future Farmers of America have brought to me. Through the F.F.A. I see a chance for boys to develop that intensity of interest and degree of self-reliance which is essential to success.

PAUL W. CHAPMAN.

Athens, Georgia.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. AN INTERRUPTED BANQUET.....	1
II. THE DEER HUNT	17
III. CONVALESCENCE	31
IV. THE TRIAL.....	47
V. A NEW "GREEN HAND".....	63
VI. FUTURE FARMERS AS TOURISTS	79
VII. HOMEWARD BOUND	95
VIII. BORROWING MONEY.....	129
IX. FORMER CONTESTANTS MEET AGAIN	113
X. AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY	147
XI. STATE FUTURE FARMERS MEET	163
XII. A FINANCIAL CRISIS	183
XIII. NATIONAL F.F.A. CONVENTION	197

CHAPTER I

AN INTERRUPTED BANQUET

“LISTEN, Bill!” cautiously whispered the lad who seemed to be the leader of the group. “When the big guy with the blonde mop gets up to speak, you wait till he gets going good and then throw a couple of those six-inch salutes in the window right behind him. Understand?”

“Sure. I got you,” Bill replied in a subdued voice.

“And Tom, you hide around on the other side of the house and when things quiet down after Bill throws the firecrackers and they get started again you open up with your automatic.”

Tom and Bill laughed and slapped each other on the back, thinking of the consternation that would be created when the plan was put into operation.

“Shh!” warned Fred Dale, the boy who was working out the campaign. “Do you want ‘em to hear us and come out here and spoil everything?”

After that the boys were quiet for a few moments and concentrated on watching the scene within the schoolroom where the father and son banquet given by the Future Farmers of America was in progress.

"But what are you going to do?" Bill inquired at Fred. "Are we going to pull all the dirty work and you just sit here and enjoy it?"

"Don't worry about me," replied Fred, "I'm going to do plenty. Listen! Here's just one of my ideas. I'll hide behind this clump of pine seedlings and see what goes on after you fellows do your stuff. Then, if you all don't break up the festivities, I'll slip the 22's to Hank and he'll start a bombardment in the stove. I guess that'll make the banquet interesting in case the speeches get too dull."

The boys laughed quietly at this attempt at humor and settled down to await the beginning of the banquet.

They did not have long to wait. The activities going on in the assembly room of the schoolhouse were plainly visible. High school girls in attractive white aprons and jaunty caps to match were hurrying about the room. An atmosphere of anxiety was apparent in their serious manner. They were anxious to make a complete success of the first dinner service for which they had been given complete responsibility. Some were carrying plates laden with food to the table, others were filling the glasses with water, and two or three seemed to be inspecting and giving the final touches to the decorations. Presently these preparations were completed and

the girls retired to the doorway of the classroom which was temporarily serving as a kitchen.

The men and boys who were to be the guests at the banquet were gathered about in small groups. Most of them seemed ill at ease. Apparently they did not know what to do with themselves. Few of the men had been in the schoolhouse for years. In fact, the last visit of any of them had been during the political campaign of two years previous when the promise of a barbecue had lured them to listen to recommendations which the candidates gave themselves.

For the most part the conversation, what little there was, had to do with the price of cotton and the prospects for the hunting season. Cotton is always cheaper in the South at gathering time than anyone expects it to be. Either there is too big a crop made, the carryover is more than was anticipated at planting time, or the market is ruined by speculators. Take your choice -- one reason is perhaps as good as another. But the hunting was excellent. There seemed to be plenty of partridges, rabbits were a pest, and enough deer were roaming the pine woods and the swamps so that all the city Nimrods who were persistent could get a buck during the open season and the country folk could use their own judgment -- in case the deer were so numerous as to threaten too much injury to the fall gardens.

Presently the boys who were giving the banquet began to circulate among the groups asking them to come into the assembly room. Each boy was expected to see that his Dad was properly seated. Finally, all the guests were standing behind their chairs waiting for the proper signal. It came when Willard Henderson, the president of the Future Farmer chapter, asked that all join in singing, "America." After the first stanza had been completed, with the boys singing quite lustily and the dads mumbling the words in a desultory way, the Reverend J. Archibald Wilkinson of the Baptist Church from Dawnville, the county seat, returned thanks and the group sat down to enjoy the meal which had been prepared by the girls of the home economics department.

At the speakers' table were seated Willard Henderson, president of the Cedar Falls Chapter of the Future Farmers of America; Walter Langford, teacher of vocational agriculture in the Cedar Falls Consolidated School; Wilson Dominick, the county school superintendent; and Dr. Marshall Anderson, Head of the Rural Education Department at the State College of Agriculture and the man who had given Walter Langford the professional preparation for the position he now held. Seated on both sides of this group, who were to speak during the evening, were the trustees of the local

school and the members of the county board of education. It was a great occasion for the boys in the agricultural classes and for their fathers a very impressive one. Cedar Falls had never before attempted a formal banquet.

Any evidence of embarrassment which had been noticeable while the group was waiting for the call to dinner disappeared as soon as thanks had been returned. Everyone concentrated his entire attention on the fried chicken and the candied yams. Eating was an accomplishment in which each participant at the banquet was highly efficient. When the plates had been removed and a generous piece of lemon meringue pie had been placed before each of the guests, Willard Henderson, the youthful toastmaster with a freckled face and an unruly mass of red hair, stood up and rapped on his glass to get the attention of the group.

Willard was a fine looking boy in spite of his somewhat unkempt appearance. While only eighteen, he was more than six feet tall and weighed at least two hundred pounds. He was just the build of many of the famous football stars who have made the All-American team. Willard might possibly some day distinguish himself in athletics as have so many of the boys from the South, including such celebrities as Ty Cobb, Bobby Jones, Ed Hamm, W. L. (Young) Stripling, and John

Mack Brown. Had he chosen such a career, Willard too might have had his picture on the sporting pages and the rotogravure sections of the Sunday papers; but he had elected to become a farmer. With him the tilling of the soil was a game worthy of his best efforts. His ambition was to make good at the job of growing the best crops in the community. His records were written in terms of more and better work than his neighbors. That was why he had been selected as the first president of the Cedar Palls Chapter of the Future Farmers of America.

"Members of the Future Farmers, Dads, and Friends:" he began. "You all know that the Cedar Falls Consolidated School started teaching agriculture -- vocational agriculture -- when school opened in September. That was only two months ago, but we have already done many interesting things. The boys in the agricultural classes have organized a chapter of the Future Farmers of America. This is an organization that is nationwide. In nearly every school in the United States where vocational agriculture is taught, the boys in the classes have an F.F.A. chapter like ours. We're just getting started and don't know much about it ourselves, but we think it's a good thing and we are giving this banquet so that you may learn something of the work we plan to do. Professor Langford is the

teacher of Vocational Agriculture and I want him to tell you about it."

That was Willard's introduction of his instructor. It was direct and to the point, just like the boy who made it. Not very flattering, but country people don't like much flattery about anyone and certainly not home folks -- they know them too well. Professor Langford stood up. Like Willard he was tall. His hair was black and his skin tanned from constant exposure to the intense rays of the southern sun. He was strong and virile, the picture of perfect health. And there was something about his clear-cut features and the direct way in which he looked at anyone with his black eyes that made him a commanding character. The group became very still. The fathers of the boys in his classes looked at him with an attitude of respect not ordinarily accorded by farmers to most teachers. Too often the men teachers whom farmers have known have been somewhat effeminate.

Langford addressed his remarks to the fathers who were present.

"I hope you enjoy this banquet," he said. "It is the work of your boys and girls. They want you to have a good time, and the boys want you to learn something of the agricultural plans they are making. We haven't done much yet; but we have a fine group of boys. They are serious about the things they are attempting and

need your help and cooperation. I am as interested in your boy as you are and I want you to let me help him. I realize that I don't know everything about farming, but by working together I'm sure that we will achieve some worth-while results."

After briefly outlining the plan of the work for the year including the home project, or farm work, which each of the boys was expected to carry out at his home farm, Langford introduced his former college professor -- the guest of honor.

"It is impossible to estimate," he said in making the introduction, "what one man can do for a boy. He can change his whole outlook on life, he can fire him with ambition and determination, he can help him develop what talent and ability God has given him. Throughout the pages of history instances abound where one man has inspired the work of another. I mention this tonight in order that I may pay a well, deserved tribute to our guest of honor. While it may be of little interest to you, I owe to him any progress that I may make in life. I was without money and without ambition. He created in me the desire to go to college, and helped me to make the necessary money. He has done the same thing for dozens of other boys. I want you to know him. It is a great pleasure to be able to present to you my former college

professor, Dr. Marshall Anderson from the State College of Agriculture."

Dr. Anderson, the "guy with the blonde mop," arose and smiled most pleasantly. He acknowledged modestly the splendid introduction which Langford had given him and launched into his talk about the problems of farm boys.

"Education is preparation for life," he began. "This preparation is not complete without training for some occupation. Yet there are many boys who have never given this matter a thought. Why, I have even known boys who made fun of the idea of going to school. For example, I once met a thoughtless boy of this sort who--"

At this point Bill must have thought that "the big guy with the blonde mop" was going good, for he hurled two lighted cannon firecrackers into the banquet hall. Of course no one saw where they came from; they just appeared from the darkness outside and since everyone was giving rapt attention to the speaker the first intimation that the banqueters had of the presence of uninvited guests was when Dr. Anderson's address was interrupted by two deafening explosions.

BANG! Went the first salute, to be followed an instant later by another. BANG!

Half the boys jumped out of their chairs. Most everyone stood up. For a moment or two, it seemed, no one moved. Then several ran to the windows, foolishly thinking that they might see the person responsible for the interruption. But, of course, Bill was not in evidence. He had anticipated what would happen and had retreated to the cover of a pine thicket not far away.

When the boys discovered that the noise had been caused by the explosion of two harmless firecrackers most of them laughed. Boys can see a joke, even if it is on themselves. The men were not so tolerant. They were talking to one another and such words as “rascal” and “scalawag” occurred often in the conversation.

There was no doubt that the line of thought thus far developed at the meeting had been broken.

Dr. Anderson, aghast at what had happened, tried to appear perfectly at ease. He even attempted to be funny, thinking that it might aid in restoring the composure of his audience.

“Well,” he started out in that leisurely drawl which gives a Southerner some time to think when the conversation calls for clever repartee, “I thought for a moment that I was in some crime ridden city and that another gang war was starting, but I see that it was only one of the boys who wasn’t invited sending in his calling card so we wouldn’t forget him. That’s a great relief.

I always liked firecrackers either at Fourth of July or Christmas, but I lost my taste for all forms of artillery in the Argonne forest.”

Just why Dr. Anderson should have dragged the word artillery into his talk at this point is hard to say, but Tom, who was hiding on the other side of the schoolhouse apparently took this for his cue and opened up with his 16-gauge automatic

BANG-BANG-BANG-BANG-BANG!

The crowd was panic-stricken. Not one person remained in his seat. Several ran outside to locate the culprit, but before their eyes became accustomed to the dark, Tom was probably a quarter of a mile down the road.

Finally, when some semblance of order had been restored, and most, but not all, of the guests had returned to their seats, Dr. Anderson resumed his address. But there was no interest shown in what he was saying.

Two seats at the speakers’ table were unoccupied. One of these belonged to Wilson Dominick, the county school superintendent, and the other to Professor Langford.

If any of those who were curious about the absence of these prominent members at the assembly could have peeped into the office they would have found the two men earnestly engaged in conversation.

"I tell you, Langford," the county superintendent was saying, "Cedar Falls has a hard name and deserves it. They have the meanest boys here I ever heard of anywhere. Why, the rascals are always up to some devilment. I didn't say any' thing about it when we employed you, for I thought you'd find it out soon enough; and then you looked like you were big enough to take care of yourself and maybe straighten out some of the no-account boys in this place. But I want to tell you right now if you don't show 'em that you're the boss around here they'll run you out before Christmas like they have a lot of other principals who've tried it here."

"What do you think I ought to do now, Mr. Dominick?" Langford inquired.

"Right now you ought to find out who is raising all this devilment. If the folks sit down in there the rowdies'll be back -- you can count on that. But I'm going out and sit in my car so the scoundrels can't cut up the tires; that is, if they haven't done it already. And I'd go back to town if I wasn't interested in seein' if we can catch the scoundrels."

Superintendent Dominick was a nervous little man. He was greatly perturbed by the incident which. Langford had taken quite philosophically.

On the inside the meeting proceeded. The county superintendent crept out in the dark cautiously so that he might protect the tires of his car. Langford sat down in the deep shadows near the door, wondering what, after all, was the best thing for him to do. His natural inclination was to return to the banquet, but he feared that by so doing he would incur the displeasure of his employer, who felt that he should catch the boys who had interrupted the program.

While Langford was still debating in his mind what was the proper course for him to pursue, he saw a figure creeping stealthily toward the building. He stepped farther back into the shadows, feeling confident that he could not be seen.

The creeping figure came closer.

When it was within a few feet of the doorway, Langford stepped out quickly with the speed acquired when he played forward on the varsity team, and with vise-like grip grasped the extended arm of Fred Dale.

"My boy, come into the office," he said calmly, "I want to talk to you."

The county superintendent, sitting in his car in the dark, saw clearly what had happened. He knew Langford had one of the boys who had caused the trouble and he was anxious that some fitting punishment be administered as quickly as possible. Jumping out of his

car, he ran toward the building. As he did so, Hank Wetsel, one of the smaller boys who had been in and around the building all evening, came out. The superintendent ran squarely into him.

“What do you know about all this business, young fellow?” The superintendent screamed at the lad in a high piping voice.

“I don’t know nothin’,” responded the boy, trembling with fear and excitement.

“Yes, you do! I know it. Come now, tell me.”

After the third degree method had been applied a little longer Hank broke down and confessed.

“It wasn’t me,” he whined. “It was him.”

Hank pointed an accusing finger at Fred Dale and then proceeded to tell the superintendent the whole story about how Fred and the other boys whose names he gave had planned to interrupt the banquet and how Fred was at that time on his way into the building to bring some 22-cartridges to be put into the stove.

“Fred Dale, you ought to be horsewhipped,” shouted the superintendent shaking a warning finger under his nose. “You don’t go to school or I’d have it done, but I ought to turn you over to the law for disturbing a public meeting.”

By this time the loud talking of the superintendent had attracted the attention of the crowd inside the ban-

quet hall and many of them had come to the vestibule where he and Langford were standing with the two boys.

Langford was embarrassed by the turn things had taken.

He turned to Fred and said, “I’m sorry, I wanted to talk to you alone.”

“Well you won’t get the chance,” retorted Fred, jerking away. And as he vanished into the darkness, he called back, “I’ll get even with you for this.”



Was he still dreaming? Or was that a really big buck?

CHAPTER II

THE DEER HUNT

D R. ANDERSON was sleeping very soundly in his room at the Shelton Arms Hotel in the county seat near Cedar Falls when he was awakened by a knock on the door. For a moment he could not remember where he was or realize what had disturbed his slumber. But being a little nervous from his experience at the banquet the evening before, he sat bolt upright and listened. In a moment the rap on the door was repeated.

"All right?" he called out.

"Three 'clock, Boss," said the voice which he recognized as that of the Negro porter. "Is yo' awake?"

"Yes, George, I'm awake," he replied. "Is it time to get up already?"

"It shore am, Cap 'n. And I reckon it won't be no time a'tall till Mistah Langford 'll be here a-waitin' to eat a littl' bite wid yo'."

"Can I get some breakfast, George?"

"Yes, suh, Boss, yes, suh! Yo' jus' git into yo' cloes an' den come en down to de dinin' room. I'll jus' go an' be a-gettin' de breakfas' fer yo'all; dat is, provi-

din' yo.' don' go ter sleep again after I'se gene and lef yo'."

"You go ahead. I'm wide awake now."

"All right, suh. What's yo'all want fer breakfas', Cap'n? I reckon yo'all likes plenty of black coffee, some cere'l, bacon, eggs, and 'taters, and biscuits, and maybe some hot cakes and cane syrup?"

"I'm net feeling so well this morning, George, so. I guess that'll be enough," replied Dr. Andersen facetiously as he began getting into his hunting outfit.

The country around Cedar Falls was noted for the excellence of the hunting which it afforded. Years ago this had been discovered by the nation's rich men who can afford to own homes and hunting lodges in all parts of the country which offer special attractions at certain seasons of the year. Perhaps the activities of these visitors had an influence on the people who lived in the country which they visited, for the spirit of play permeates the South. Even these in moderate circumstances indulge. Langford, true to the hospitality which characterizes the region, had set the father and son banquet at the Cedar Falls Consolidated School so that it would fall the night before the deer season opened. He was anxious that his friend and former professor, Dr. Andersen, should have a good chance to get his one deer which the law allowed, before returning to the State College.

Since the best time to hunt deer is shortly after the break of day, it had been planned that Langford should meet Dr. Andersen by three-thirty in the morning in order that they might be on their stands by daylight.

Andersen, who had gone to college in Pennsylvania, had hunted deer in the North but this was his first experience in the South. He was anxious to get started. It was but a short time until he was dressed and down in the lobby waiting for Langford. Promptly at the appointed hour his car pulled up in front of the hotel and the two men went into the dining-room to enjoy the table rate breakfast which George had prepared.

They talked excitedly about the trip. George, who was waiting en them, was greatly interested in the conversation.

"Mistah Walter!" he said finally, addressing Professor Langford. "Didn't yo' say yo' ain't nevah ben deer shootin'?"

"No, I never have, George. You see, there were no deer where I was reared."

"Well, Ah do declar'! Ain't that somethin'. Ah'll bet yo' will hab a fin' time. An' yo'll get the fust ol' buck what pops up his head. Ah knows it. But if yo' wants to make certain an' hab nothin' else but good luck, Ah'll len' yo' my rabbitfoot."

"No thanks, George. I'll not need your rabbitfoot, I'm sure."

"Mebbe not, Mistah Walter, mebbe not. But Ah'se gwine to tell yo' one thing to do. When yo' kills your fust deer yo' got to bathe in de blood. Yo' mus' put dat down fer a fack. Don't nebber forget dat."

"Bathe myself in the blood?" inquired Langford. Both of the men laughed at the idea.

"Yes, suh, bathe yo'self in de blood. 'Kaze effen you don't der ain't no tellin' what bad luck 'll come to yo' 'fore you gits home."

"George, I'm not very superstitious, I guess. But if you'll give me another cup of coffee I'll be going," Langford said, indicating that he was not interested in hearing more about the hunting rites which George seemed to think were so essential. But George was persistent.

"Well, suh, lemme jes' tell yo' 'bout a gentleman jes' lak yo' who didn' know dat yo' had to bathe in the blood of the fust deer what yo' kilt. He went out early one mornin' -- jest lak yo' is goin' dis mornin' -- an' 'fore long he kilt hisself a fine buck. Lawd a mercy, but he shore was a beauty. Dis gentleman, he was ridin' a hoss 'kaze dey didn' hab cars in dem daze lak day does now, so he jest throwed dat buck on de hoss, bak o' de saddle, an' started home to de place whar Ah wuz stayin' -- yo' see he wuz de boss man's onliest son and he wuz powerful proud of him. But he didn't neber git home dat day. Me and de boss man, we waited fer him

till mos' mornin' and he neber come. So soon as we could see nex' mornin' we started out to fin' de boy. And what yo' tink? We foun' him dead. A big long leaf pine tree had done fell on his head. And den we done see dat he ain't neber bathed in de blood of dat buck-de fust one what he kilt."

"That's a sad story, George, but we'll have to go now. Help Dr. Anderson put his things in the car."

As the two started off, the faithful darkey called out to them, 'Don' forget what Ah done tor yo', Mistah Walter."

Langford and Anderson gave no thought to the parting admonition of George. They were too thrilled with the prospects of the hunt.

A dozen men and boys from the Cedar Falls community, several of whom had attended the father and son banquet, were to be included in the hunting party. The entire group was to meet at the artesian well near the edge of the swamp at four o'clock in the morning.

It was past three-thirty when Langford and his friend left the hotel. There was no time to lose. He stepped on the gas.

With twenty miles to go, even if one is in a hurry, there is time for some conversation. In a few minutes Anderson's urgent inquiries about the hunt had been answered and his thoughts naturally turned to the banquet of the evening before.

"Some evening we had," he volunteered.

"Wasn't it?" Langford replied, with his attention centered on a sharp curve in the road.

"What do you make of that kid, Fred Dale?" Anderson inquired.

"I hardly know," Langford replied cautiously as though he too were thinking about the same thing. "You see, I got to Cedar Falls about a month before school opened. Since they had never had vocational agriculture taught in the school, I made it a point to meet every man and boy in the entire district. I wanted to get together the best group of boys I could for the agricultural classes. I knew that many of the older boys had dropped out of school. I wanted to get them back, if possible, though I realized that this would be difficult. Fred Dale was one of these boys who had dropped out. I talked to him several times, but seemed to make no impression at least no favorable one. He finished the grade school several years ago. One fall he entered high school and stayed until about Christmas time, then it seems that he and the man at the head of the school had a difference of opinion so Fred licked him. Of course the trustees expelled Fred. It seemed to sour him on the whole proposition. He has never been in school since."

"And you think there is no chance to get him back?"

"No. I never got anything out of him -- just said he was through going to school."

"It's a strange thing," mused Dr. Anderson, "how indifferent so many country boys are to education. Less than half of them ever go to high school. I guess it's because most of the subjects taught in the average high school have so little relation to the interests and problems of farm boys."

They rode on in silence for a moment.

"I'm going to make friends with Fred yet," said Langford. "He's going with us today,"

"Going with us today!" exclaimed Anderson in astonishment.

"Yes. I asked him a week or more ago and he gladly consented. You see, he's been out of school for several years with nothing to do -- that is, nothing except hunting and fishing. There isn't anyone around here who knows this country we are going into today so well as Fred. He's a sort of a guide; takes a pride in his knowledge of the woods."

"But after what has happened will he go?"

"Yes. He'll go. I thought about that and so I arranged for some of his neighbors, and the folks he likes best, to stop for him this morning. I figure that it would take more than what happened last night to keep Fred out of the woods on the day that the deer season opens."

Langford was right. When they drew up at the artesian well at four o'clock, Fred Dale was one of the first persons they saw. He paid no attention whatever to the new arrivals, however, for he appeared to be occupied in examining his gun at the time when Langford approached him in an effort to express a friendly word of greeting.

The incident passed unnoticed except for the two involved. Everyone was impatient to get started on the hunt.

Hunting deer, or for that matter any other game, is carried on in a different way in every part of the country. The methods, of course, depend upon the conditions. In the South, deer are most often hunted with a large party. One group goes out behind what is known to be good feeding ground and drive the deer, so to speak, past favorable spots for other members of the party to get a good shot at them. This plan probably would not work so well in the Rocky Mountain region, where there is a vast expanse of unbroken wooded land. But in the South where the heaviest and thickest timber is usually found near the swamps or marshes, the plan works excellently. And most of the deer in the South are found in the Coastal Plain.

The party was soon divided. Most of the boys and a few of the men struck back into the swamp to get behind the territory where the deer were likely to begin

feeding at daybreak. The others, who were to occupy the stands, started in the opposite direction.

Langford had insisted that Fred go to place the men on the stands, particularly Anderson and himself since neither of them was familiar with the territory in which they were to be stationed.

Fred consented rather hesitatingly. He said he would much prefer to go with the party that was to drive the deer as that was a harder job. But since Langford insisted, they started out toward the stands.

There were only five in this group. Langford hoped that he would have an opportunity to show Fred that he bore him no ill will on account of what had happened the previous evening. He knew better, however, than to approach the subject directly for he realized that he was dealing with a boy of very sensitive nature, and one who would probably be a little skeptical about the motives of a school teacher. He resolved to make no reference to what had happened at the banquet, although he did so much want to apologize for what he considered the unwise actions of the county superintendent.

They trudged on through the woods.

Dr. Anderson, sensing the situation, engaged Fred in conversation. He asked about the trees and shrubs and found that the boy was familiar with all of them. He inquired about hunting and trapping and found the

youth growing somewhat enthusiastic as he talked about things with which he was thoroughly familiar.

"Fred," he inquired, "did you ever hear that a man had to bathe in the blood of the first deer he killed if he wanted to keep from having bad luck?"

"Sure," the boy replied laconically.

"Do you think it is true?"

"Don't know. Lots of folks think so."

"It seems to me it's about like knocking on wood, or holding your thumbs when you want somebody to win."

"I guess it is. Why did you ask?" the boy inquired.

"Well, we've got a tenderfoot in the crowd. Langford has never yet killed a deer in his life. Up at the hotel this morning the porter told him that when he killed his deer today, he must be sure to remember to bathe in the blood or he would have all kinds of bad luck. He even told us about a fellow who failed to observe the rite and was killed by having a tree fall on him."

The men laughed at the story, but Fred didn't seem to see any humor in any story that involved Langford. It was apparent that he still felt somewhat resentful to think that the teacher of agriculture was the man responsible for his exposure.

By this time the country over which the deer were likely to pass had been reached. One man and then another was stationed on a stand that would give him

an opportunity to get a good shot when the deer started to run.

Dr. Anderson was given what was considered the best position, since he was the guest of the community.

Fred and Langford were finally alone. They walked in silence. At last, they came to a little stream of running water on either side of which was an open space covered with a luxuriant growth of succulent grass.

"This is a good place," said Fred in a businesslike way.

"Suppose you stand on that elevation just above those cypress trees. It will give you a good view of the stream and the open spaces where the deer will stop to feed if they are not scared. You ought to get one here if you will keep your eyes open."

With this advice the boy had done his duty.

"All right, Fred, thank you," said Langford.

"How long do you think it will be before we see one?"

"You can't tell. Might see one any time; maybe never."

With this philosophical observation, Fred began to move on.

"Where are you going, Fred?" Langford asked.

"Over here a little piece -- not more than forty rods, I reckon."

Langford watched Fred as he moved out of sight in the thick underbrush. "A great boy," he thought, "if you could ever get to know him."

For a few moments Langford was very alert, as if he expected a deer to leap into view from any point of the compass. It wasn't long, however, until he became a little less vigilant.

Hunting and fishing require patience. Patience must be acquired -- like a taste for ripe olives. Few people have it naturally, but what a great thing it would be for the jaded nerves of modern men and women if they could acquire the attitude that makes hunting a pleasure when there is no game to shoot, or fishing an exhilarating pastime even when the fish are not biting. Then there's the optimism of the Nimrod who always expects to get a good bag, and that of every Izaak Walton who knows that next time he'll land the big one that got away. What a wonderful thing it would be if we could apply that spirit to our work. It would be the keynote of a successful career.

Suddenly Langford was startled out of a reverie. Was he still dreaming? Or was that really a big buck? Sure enough, it was alive. It moved. It was walking toward him on the grass in the clearing. It wanted to feed, but seemed apprehensive. Suddenly it started to run.

Langford trembled like an aspen leaf. He had never been so nervous. He raised his gun and fired.

The buck's tail dropped -- a sure sign of a hit. For an instant Langford thought the deer was going to fall. But he was mistaken. The wounded buck plunged into the woods.

In the excitement Langford failed to realize that the deer was making straight for Fred's stand. He didn't stop to think that Fred would get a chance to drop him. Instead he ran after the deer, hoping to get another shot.

The underbrush was so dense that the going was difficult. Langford ran as fast as he could. He tripped over a tangled mat of vines. Getting to his feet he raced on, encouraged by the fact that he could hear the deer only a short distance ahead. Any moment, he thought, there might be a chance to get a second shot.

Suddenly a shot rang out. Langford lurched forward. He tried to get up. It was impossible. He felt faint. He realized what had happened. Fred had shot him in an effort to get the deer. Then things went black, as a room does on a dark night when the lights are switched off.

CHAPTER III

CONVALESCENCE

IT WAS the morning following the deer hunt before Professor Langford regained consciousness. He opened his eyes slowly and with some effort. The sun was shining. He glanced around the room, which was plain and uninteresting yet radiated an atmosphere of cleanliness. The walls were painted a dull and unattractive gray. There was a tiny dresser, a straight chair that looked uncomfortable, and a small table beside the bed on which there were trays and bottles. In one corner was an art metal cabinet, which looked much like those in the locker room of the gymnasium at the State College.

“A hospital,” concluded Langford.

Any doubt was dispelled an instant later when an attractive nurse in a stiffly-starched, white uniform greeted him with a cheerful, “Good morning, Mr. Langford. I’m Miss Shaw -- Alice Shaw.”

“Oh! Hello, Miss Shaw,” responded Langford. “Where am I?”

“St. Mary’s Hospital.”

"What time is it?"

"Eight o'clock," the nurse replied, glancing at her wrist watch.

"Yes, but what day?"

"The day after you went hunting," said the nurse smiling. They both laughed, but Langford winced with pain as he attempted to move.

"You must be careful," the nurse cautioned.

"Tell me what happened, will you?" asked Walter.

"You were shot. Nothing serious, but it did take Dr. Whittle and Dr. Stewart a long time to find the shot in your side."

"And you mean I was unconscious just because I got a buckshot in my side?"

"No. What knocked you out was the shot that caused a slight scalp wound."

"How long will I have to stay?"

"Just a few days, if you develop no fever."

"Fine," said Langford with an appreciative glance at the big brown eyes of his comely nurse, and then added, "but this would be a delightful place to rest."

Miss Shaw busied herself with her morning tasks. After Langford had enjoyed a meager breakfast of orange juice and toast, the physician came in to see his patient and concluded that Dr. Anderson, who had been at the hospital ever since Langford had been

brought in, might see his friend. Presently, Dr. Anderson walked in ever so cautiously.

After a few words of greeting, Langford asked about Fred. What did he say? What did he think? Was everything all right? "And," concluded Walter, "I want to see him -- I want to talk to him. I want to tell him that it's all right."

"That would be fine, Walter. I wish you would talk to Fred. It would do him good. And then -- it might save him some trouble."

"Save him some trouble? What do you mean?"

"Well, you know, Walter, that the night before at the banquet when he jerked away from you at the door of the schoolhouse?"

"Yeah?"

"You remember he said he'd get even with you?"

"Sure. But what's that got to do with this?"

"I don't know that it has anything, but most of the folks who were on the hunting trip think that he shot you intentionally. They think he used that way of getting even."

"Ridiculous!"

"That's what I thought in the first place, but it seems that the boy has none too good a reputation and the more I talked with folks about it the more I concluded there might be something to it after all."

"Dr. Anderson, I'm sorry to hear you say that -- it's not like you. Here's the way it was, I'm confident. You see, I was running after that deer through a dense thicket. It was impossible to see more than a few feet ahead of where I was walking. I should have thought about that and called to Fred, but I didn't -- I was too excited."

"How did it happen that he placed you on a stand so close to himself -- and so far from the rest of the party?"

"It was my idea. I hoped that I might get a chance to talk to him during the day."

Dr. Anderson was silent. He wanted to believe in Fred, but love for his friend and former student, and the arguments of the folks in the Cedar Falls community had raised very strong doubts in his mind.

"Let me tell you something," continued Langford. "Dr. Whittle says that he has a friend who is a great deer and big game hunter. He goes everywhere -- to the Rockies, to Alaska, and even once he went to India and hunted over the same country that the Roosevelts did. He says that hunters frequently get shot. That's the reason why in some places they make everyone who goes into the woods wear a bright red coat and cap so they won't be shot at by other hunters who suspect that they are some prowling animal. Why, last fall in Colorado, so his friend told him, there was an ac-

cident much like mine. A man was carrying a deer and his friend just caught a glimpse of the deer hide and fired. The only difference is that the fellow in Colorado was killed. It was lucky that Fred was shooting buckshot in his 12-gauge shotgun, because it would have been sure curtains for me if he had been using a 30- 30 Winchester."

"Your theory of the accident is probably correct, Walter," said Dr. Anderson slowly, as if thinking. "I'll tell them about it; otherwise they may have Fred arrested today. They're hot about this -- and what happened the night before. I'll tell them what you think about it. So long -- hope you'll get along fine, as I know you will. Thanks for everything you've done for me since I've been here. I must be getting back to the college. Is there anything I can do for you before I go?"

"Yes. Will you send Fred here to see me?"

"Sure, I will -- right away. Good-bye."

Dr. Anderson walked out of the room in meditation. He didn't altogether agree with Langford's theory of the shooting, and wondered if Langford himself believed it. But then, he concluded, it was a fine spirit; there was really no other way out for a gentleman.

Langford, however, believed the theory. He had implicit confidence in the honor and integrity of Fred Dale.

It seemed a long time to Langford before Fred arrived, but finally Miss Shaw ushered him into the room. The boy was embarrassed.

"Hello, Fred," greeted Langford cheerfully.

"I'm awful sorry, Mr. Langford," the boy stammered. "I wouldn't have had it happen for the world."

"Of course not. I understand. But everything's all right. I'll be out of here in no time."

"I hope you will, Mr. Langford," said the boy with evident sincerity.

"Sure, I will. Let's forget about it."

"I'll not forget, because it was a terrible thing for me to do to you."

"Well, I'm not worrying and you mustn't, and it's nobody else's business," said Langford in an effort to relieve the boy of any feeling of remorse.

"Some other people may make it their business -- not that it matters what happens to me. I deserve it."

"What are you talking about, Fred?"

"Nothin', except I heard I was goin' to get arrested, because some folks thought I did it on purpose."

"They can't do it," said Langford positively, "I guess I'll have something to say about a thing like that. Sit down, Fred."

The boy seated himself in the uncomfortable chair. Several moments of silence elapsed. While Langford and Fred both wanted to talk to each other confiden-

tially, still there was a feeling of restraint which made it difficult to begin. They talked of trivial things -- the weather, the county fair, the prospects for a basketball team. There were periods of silence when Fred looked out of the window or around the room, and Langford studied the boy in an unconscious effort to fathom the depths of his reserved personality.

Fred Dale was tall. But unlike Willard Henderson, the president of the Future Farmer chapter at Cedar Falls, Fred was slender -- thin but sinewy. Where Willard reminded one of a football star because of his stocky build; Fred suggested a runner. He had the conformation of a thoroughbred, and the same nervous temperament. At times his coal black eyes sparkled, but ordinarily they lacked luster. Langford thought that this somewhat listless attitude was but an indication of unhappiness, of a lack of purpose, some disappointment, or the failure to become intensely interested in the things around him.

"If the fascinating personality and the keen and sensitive brain of that boy could only be put to work on some worth-while job," thought Langford, "he would accomplish wonders."

But could it be done? He wondered. And then throwing aside the banal questions which they had been tossing back and forth, he blurted out, "Tell me,

Fred, what have you got against going to school? Is there some good reason why you don't come back?"

"Yes, sir, there is," replied the boy with dignity.

Fred had a pleasing deep bass voice, wonderfully developed for a boy his age. Somehow it reminded one of a pipe organ, not only because of the tone quality, but also because of the volume and power of which one is always conscious even though the organist plays ever so softly.

"What is it, Fred?" Langford asked with evident concern. "Won't you tell me? Maybe I can help."

"I don't think an education does a fellow any good, that's all."

"Why do you say that?"

"Well, it didn't help my father. He had an education."

"How long since your father passed away, Fred?" asked Langford, who knew that Fred's father was not living.

"Four years."

"Tell me something about him, won't you?"

"His father, my granddaddy, was a planter before the war between the States. He had lots of land and slaves, but, of course, he lost all his property just like everyone in the South did who had anything. Granddad raised enough money to get Dad an education. He studied law. He set up an office, but never made

much of a success. Then he went into the mercantile and supply business, but was too easy goin' and folks didn't pay him. We got along fairly well -- 'till he went into bankruptcy. He didn't live long after that. Then we moved to the farm near Cedar Falls which Dad took in one time on a bad debt."

"They tell me your father was a very good man, Fred."

"Too good for his own interests, I always thought."

"People can't be too good, Fred, They can, of course, sacrifice themselves for others, just as missionaries do who go into foreign lands and spend their lives. There are people right here in our own country who do just as much for others, without any thought of themselves. But as I see it your father, in addition to being one of those good Christian souls who loved to do things for others, never got into the line of work that interested him most. You can't blame that on education. You see, education is like a piece of fine machinery; it's got to be used to be of any value. Law training is essential for those engaged in the profession of law. But it wasn't the vocation, apparently, for your father. Maybe he was what guidance counselors speak of as a round peg in a square hole. Doubtless there were many vocations in which he would have been very successful. If he had only been 'educated'

for work that he liked, everything would have been different.”

“He was interested in reading. Bought lots of books, and often wrote things -- just for the fun of it, I guess, for he never did anything with them,”

“There you are! He might have been a good newspaper man. But what about yourself, Fred? Don’t you think you ought to come back to school and begin to prepare for some vocation?”

“I don’t know.”

“Sure, you ought. You owe it to yourself.”

“I don’t care much about myself; guess nobody does.”

“What about your mother? Don’t you think you owe her something -- aren’t there lots of things that she’d like to have? And wouldn’t you enjoy making it possible for her to have them -- after all that she has done for you?”

Fred was silent,

Langford had discovered Fred’s trouble. He had plumbed the depths of a dissatisfied mind. Knowing that his kind-hearted Dad had not made what most people regarded as a success, the boy had decided to conduct his life in a totally different way. Where the father had secured an education, the boy ridiculed the idea of training being necessary; where the father had been considerate of others, the boy would prefer to

be indifferent. This, Langford knew, was not the final stage in Fred’s thinking, but merely a temporary reaction while he was groping to find a true philosophy of life -- one that would motivate his thinking and control his actions.

“What are you more interested in than anything else, Fred?” inquired Langford, anxious to push the matter while the youth was in a receptive state of mind.

“The woods, I guess.”

“And cattle?”

“Yes.”

“And crops?”

“Some.”

“Fred, there is no ‘reason why you would not make a good farmer. Did you ever think it would be a wonderful thing to have a fine estate like your grandfather?”

“Yes -- I have.”

“Well, since you’ve got to make a living on the farm now, why not join my agricultural class? And I know you’ll get a big kick out of being in the F.F.A.”

“What’s that?”

“The F.F.A.? That stands for Future Farmers of America. It’s a nation-wide organization of boys who are studying vocational agriculture in the high schools of the United States.”

“What do they do?”

"Oh, lots of things. But maybe you'd be interested in hearing how the F.F.A. got started. That will give you a better idea of the purpose of the association."

Langford settled down in a comfortable position to tell the story -- one that he enjoyed telling very much.

"Well, it was like this. One time there was a fellow in Virginia -- Henry Groseclose by name -- who got sick and was sent to a hospital in Baltimore. He was there a long time. And not being so very ill, he had plenty of time to think. Like most men, he thought of his job, which had to do with the teaching of agriculture in the high schools of Virginia. From his travels over the state, and from his many contacts, he learned that farming as a business was not so highly regarded as it had been in the earlier history of the country. This troubled him very much and he set about to try to find the reason. In his thinking he naturally drifted back into the history of which Virginia is so justly proud. He thought of George Washington. Of course, Washington was a farmer. As you know, he lived at Mount Vernon, which is on the Potomac River just a few miles below the national capital. Washington was not a 'dude' farmer as they say in the West, nor was he an agriculturist -- that is, a man who makes his money in town and spends it in the country. Washington was what might be called a 'dirt' farmer. He was an importer of pure-bred live stock. He kept accurate farm

accounts. He invented a 'barrel planter' which was really a grain drill, and his diary tells many interesting incidents which show the extent to which he was personally devoted to farming; for example, it tells in one place where the 'Father of our Country' counted the number of grains of wheat in a bushel so he could know just how much grain to sow per acre in his drill. Washington was proud to be a farmer -- or a planter, just as your grandfather was, no doubt."

Langford stopped to take a drink of water. Fred was listening attentively.

"Then," he continued, "there was Thomas Jefferson -- the man who wrote the Declaration of Independence. He was a Virginian, and a farmer. He invented the steel plow. He also terraced the steep hillsides of Monticello and made many improvements in the methods of growing crops.

"There was McCormick, the man who invented the reaper, which is regarded as one of the greatest inventions of all time.

"And of course you know about Admiral Byrd, the man who in recent years has not only flown across the Atlantic, but has also led expeditions to both the North and South Poles?"

"Sure," said Fred with enthusiasm.

"Well, you knew that he was from Virginia, no doubt, but did you know that the men in the Byrd fam-

ily have been farmers for generations? They have. And Admiral Byrd's brother is right now one of the biggest apple growers in the country. If you ever buy any vinegar at home it is possible that it was made from apples grown on the Byrd farm at Winchester, Virginia."

"I didn't know that," said Fred.

"It's true. And besides there is a long list of Virginia men who have become prominent as farmers, as well as statesmen and explorers. Henry Groseclose, in that hospital in Baltimore, thought of all these men. Then like a flash, he thought that all of the men belonged to the F.F.V. -- which for a hundred and fifty years has meant First Families of Virginia.

"First families! Farmers! Why is it, he reasoned, that more farmers can't belong to the 'first families' today? Of course, there was no reason. A man's job is just what he makes it -- no more, no less.

"Then he thought of the vocational boys in Virginia with whom he was working. Virginians. Boys preparing for the business of farming. Prospects, many of them; for perpetuating the F.F.V. -- Why, he thought, F.F.V. stands for Future Farmers of Virginia. Then his vision broadened to take in the nation and, logically, to F.F.A. -- Future Farmers of America. Why not try to inspire these boys with an idea? Why not train them

for leadership, not only in the vocation of farming, but in all the activities of citizenship?

"That, Fred, is the story of the beginning of the F.F.A."

"It is very interesting," said Fred, "and has the idea grown as Mr. Groseclose hoped it would?"

"Very rapidly. There are now more than 3,000 chapters like the one we have at Cedar. Falls. There are 50,000 boys in the association and it is growing every year."

"I would like to belong to it," said Fred.

"Fine. Then you'll come back to school?"

"Yes. I believe I will."

"I know your mother will be very happy."

"She will. Ever since you came she has talked about my going back and studying agriculture."

"And I know the boys will give you a warm welcome as a 'Green Hand' in the chapter."

While talking, Langford had noticed a group of men and boys gathering on the hospital grounds. Fearing that other visitors might interrupt his talk with Fred, he had hastened to complete the story of the beginning of the F.F.A. movement.

With Fred's promise to return to school, Langford was very happy. Knowing of the group outside, he was not surprised to have someone rap on his door. Miss

Shaw, who had come into the room while Langford was telling the story, opened the door.

“Is Fred Dale here?” asked the man, gruffly.

“Yes. This is Fred,” replied Langford, indicating the boy.

“Come with me, young fellow,” commanded the man, “I have a warrant for your arrest.”

CHAPTER IV

THE TRIAL

THE next session of the Superior Court was held just a short time after Fred’s arrest. He was to be tried on the charge of assault with intent to murder.

As to the probability of his guilt, the community was divided. There were those who had heard the threat “to get even” which Fred made at the schoolhouse the night of the banquet and who felt sure that the “worthless, good-for-nothing boy” had really intended to shoot Professor Langford. It would be easy, they said, to pretend that it was an accident. Others were confident that it *was* an accident. No boy, they pointed out, with such a trivial reason would deliberately plan such a terrible revenge. All awaited the trial with interest and anxiety.

Langford had completely recovered. The mere flesh wounds which had been inflicted healed quickly. There had been no fever and no complications. Within a week he was going about his work as if nothing had happened.

Fred, although he had had a premonition of his arrest, was shocked by the actuality. For a time he lived in a daze, as though he were unable to realize that this unfortunate calamity had come into his life. Later he was silent and morose, feeling that the influential people of the community were all against him. He suffered from what psychiatrists have come to know as an "inferiority complex" -- probably brought on in the first place by the realization that his father had not made a monetary success. What he really needed was a friend who would show him that every individual in the world is judged solely on the basis of his own worth and that the handicaps which come to a person through no fault of his own really make it easier to earn the esteem and admiration of his fellow men. Fred had such a friend in Langford.

As soon as Fred had been arrested, Langford, although he could not leave the hospital at that time, had set about to aid him. First he had tried to get the charge dropped by pointing out that he, the only person who had suffered in any way, had no desire to press charges against the lad. But it was apparent that there were influential citizens among the leaders of the community who wanted to see the boy brought to trial. Nothing that Langford could do to secure Fred's release seemed to be of any avail.

Failing in his efforts to get the charge against the boy dropped, Langford began to prepare for Fred's defense.

At the State University, of which the State College of Agriculture was a part, there was a School of Law. It was well attended. Southern boys take to the profession of law like ducks to water. Possibly this is because the vocation offers an opportunity to win a title that is held in high esteem -- that of Colonel, which is accorded to all Southern barristers who win even a moderate degree of success. Also, law provides a splendid background for engaging in politics, a game which all Southern gentlemen delight to play. Then law offers opportunities for frequent indulgence in oratory -- an art which has attained a development in the South comparable only with that of ancient Greece.

While Walter Langford was a student at the State College he met many law students. Among them was Jack Lindsey, who had set up an office in Dawnville, the county seat of the county in which Cedar Falls was located. Jack was just getting started in the practice of law and needed clients. While he was also in need of money, he was perfectly willing, at Langford's request, to take the case of Fred Dale without any prospects of remuneration.

After a talk with Langford at the hospital, Jack had arranged Fred's bail so that he would not be humili-

ated by being held in confinement while awaiting trial. They held many conferences at which Langford was present. All the details of the defense were worked out. The three were impatiently waiting for the case to be called.

As usual, when court was in session, the streets of Dawnville were crowded. There was not an unoccupied parking space within two blocks of the public square. Farther out, near the edge of the business district, horses and mules were hitched to racks. In each wagon or buggy there were bundles of "fodder," which meant that the owners had come to town to spend the day, and part of the night, if necessary.

Groups of men were gathered near the courthouse. Some were talking about the weather and the low price of cotton; others about the cases on the court docket. But, most of them were just listening; listening and whittling. Few had any business in town at that time, but attending court was to them as important a social occasion as a junior prom is to a fraternity freshman.

Inside the courtroom all was bustle and excitement. Lawyers were pleading cases; witnesses testifying; messengers running about with an air of importance. Judge Humphreys, a fat and pompous man, sat in the big chair on the raised platform.

No person in the entire assemblage seemed so busy as Henry Waller, the solicitor-general. He was the

public prosecutor and had more cases than any other lawyer in the district.

"And now, Your Honor," Waller said in addressing the judge, "I would like to call for trial Case No.105 -- The State versus Fred Dale."

Silence pervaded the room. This was the trial that most of the persons present had come to hear.

"Is the defense present and ready?" inquired the judge.

"Yes, Your Honor," replied Jack Lindsey.

Preliminary arrangements for trying Case 105 were soon made. A jury was selected. The solicitor began to speak:

"Your Honor and Gentlemen of the Jury: This is the case of the State versus Fred Dale. This young man is to be tried on the charge of assault with intent to murder. On Saturday two weeks ago, while on a hunting trip, Dale shot Professor Walter Langford at close range with a load of buckshot. Only the fact that none of the shot pierced a vital organ prevented the death of this young professor who came into this county to be the principal of the Cedar Falls Consolidated School. The State will show that this shot was fired at Professor Langford with malice and intent to kill. And as a penalty for such a crime the State demands the maximum sentence of ten years' imprisonment."

The first witness whom Waller called to the stand was Hiram Smithfield, a farmer.

After the witness had been sworn in and the preliminary questions answered, the solicitor asked, "Did you go deer hunting on the opening day of the season in the same party with the defendant?"

"I did," replied Smithfield.

"And was Professor Walter Langford in the party?"

"He was."

"And did the defendant place the men on their stands?"

"Yes."

"And where were he and Langford stationed, relative to each other?"

"They were right next to each other."

"And how close was the nearest person to either of them?"

"About a quarter of a mile, I reckon."

"And could any of the party see either of them?"

"No."

"Was Professor Langford shot that day?"

"Yes."

"By whom?"

"Fred Dale."

"How do you know who shot Langford?"

"Dale admitted it."

"Were you the first to reach them after the shot was fired?"

"Which shot?"

"The second."

"I was."

"Will you tell the jury what you found when you reached the spot?"

"Fred Dale was bending over Langford working with him in an excited way, but Langford was unconscious. I asked Dale what had happened and he said that he had hit Langford while shooting at a deer"

"Was there a dead deer near the two men?"

"Yes."

"How far away?"

"About four rods"

"Was the deer in the line between the two stands?"

"No. It was in some underbrush off to one side."

"Then it was apparent that Fred Dale had not fired at the deer, which had been killed by the first shot, but that he had fired at Professor Langford. Is that not correct?" snapped Waller.

"Your Honor, I object!" said Jack Lindsey, rising to his feet with one hand extended toward the judge.

"Objection sustained," stated Judge Humphreys. "Proceed with the examination of the witness."

"The witness is yours," said Waller to Jack Lindsey, with a sneering smile on his face.

There was a buzz of whispering in the courtroom. It was apparent that the crowd thought that Waller had very skillfully brought out the fact that Fred had shot deliberately at Professor Langford rather than at the deer which probably had been killed with the shot fired from the gun of the young teacher. The judge rapped for order.

"Mr. Smithfield," began Jack very calmly, "did you know where the two men in question were stationed before the deer was sighted?"

"I know what Fred Dale told me."

"That is fine. Now tell the jury whether Langford was shot at the spot where he was stationed by Fred."

"He was not. It looked like he was moving toward Fred's stand at the time the second shot was fired."

"Was Fred near his stand at the time you found them?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Then, apparently, Langford had run or walked toward Fred's stand, while Fred, apparently, had not moved? Is that correct?"

"Yes, sir! That's correct"

"That will be all," said Jack.

"You may come down," said the solicitor-general to Mr. Smithfield.

Waller followed his first witness by calling the county school superintendent to the stand. Wilson

Dominick told all about the banquet at the school-house the night that Fred had threatened Langford. He also told of the time a few years before when Fred had been expelled from school because he had whipped the teacher. He explained that in the time that had elapsed since Fred left school he had spent his time loafing and had been of little help to his widowed mother.

Things looked bad for Fred. Every witness called to the stand added evidence which seemed to point to his guilt.

The crowd in the courtroom began to nod knowingly to one another as much as to say, "I told you so, the boy is guilty."

Throughout the trial Jack Lindsey had been very calm. He did not cross-examine the witnesses who followed Mr. Smithfield. Finally, when the State had rested its case, he called "Spike" Bivins to the stand.

"Spike" was the community wit -- but nit-wit might have been a better term to describe the depth of his intelligence. "Spike's" only claim to distinction was that he went everywhere and saw everything -- that is, within the community. And he was always welcome. Just as in olden times the kings always allowed the court jester to be present at all social functions, so the people of Cedar Falls extended the same tolerance to "Spike" Bivins. There was something of the Tom Sawyer spirit in this tolerance, however, for "Spike" could

always be depended upon to do more than his share of such work as changing flat tires or cleaning fish.

"What is your name?" "Spike" was asked.

"Now, what's the use of you asking me that?" said "Spike" to the clerk, "with you knowin' me ever since Ol' Doc Scott carried you out to you' Ma's house in his little black satchel?"

The clerk continued, "We must have your name for the record."

"If you must know," continued "Spike," "it's Stonewall Jackson Bivins. You see the folks expected me to be a great fighter like --"

The judge rapped for order.

"How old are you?" asked the clerk.

"Well, there seems to be some doubt about that. You see it was set down in the family Bible, but since the house burned we ain't been able to find the book, and as near as we kin recollect, I was born about the time that William Jennings Bryan --"

The crowd in the courtroom began to laugh.

"Proceed with the examination of the witness," ordered the judge.

"How long have you known the defendant?" asked Jack Lindsey.

"You mean Fred?" inquired "Spike."

"Of course."

"Why, let's see, I've known him since one Halloween night when him and 'Slim' Perkins put our buggy on top of the barn."

The crowd in the courtroom roared with laughter. Judge Humphreys smiled for a moment himself and then demanded order in the court.

"Your Honor, I object to this foolishness," said the solicitor with impatience.

"I objected too," retorted "Spike," "but there wasn't nothing that could be done about it."

While the crowd was greatly enjoying the ridiculous replies of the witness, they began to wonder why Jack Lindsey had been so unwise as to put a half-wit on the stand when the case looked so bad for the defendant. But there was a reason, as they were soon to learn.

"Were you on the hunt at the time that Professor Langford was shot?" asked Jack.

"Yes, sir! I --"

"Did you bring in the deer that was shot?"

"I sure did, you see --"

"And did you dress that deer?"

"Yes, sir. I sure do love to dress deer."

"And did you find any shot in the carcass?"

"In the which, Mr.?"

"I say, did you find any shot in the body of the deer?"

"Yes, sir, I sure did. That deer was shot a plenty. Why I ain't never seen a deer what was shot up so much in all my life. Why, let me tell somethin' --"

"And what size were the shot that you found in the deer's carcass?"

"Well, sir, there was two sizes. The first shots I found in the hind quarter was No. 1's and then in the head and neck I found some double-oughts."

"That will be all," said Jack Lindsey with a triumphant smile. Waller did not cross examine the witness.

Jack Lindsey then called to the stand the hardware dealer who had sold Langford the shells loaded with No. 1 shot. He also exhibited the shells that Langford had in his hunting coat at the time he was taken to the hospital. They were the same in every detail. He showed also that Fred Dale was shooting shells which he had loaded with No. 00 shot at home. It seemed entirely clear that two shots had been fired at the deer.

There were other witnesses for the defense. Walter Langford told of his cordial relations with the defendant. Alice Shaw, the nurse from St. Mary's Hospital, told of the friendly visit that Fred and Professor Langford enjoyed at the hospital. Tom Grogan, one of the boys who had helped make the disturbance at the banquet, said that Fred was really sorry for what hap-

pened and had admitted on the way home that night that he thought Langford was a good sport.

With the examination of Tom Grogan the defense rested.

Jack Lindsey in his talk to the jury pointed out that the State had not proved intent, or premeditation, in the shooting; but that on the contrary he had shown very clearly that two shots were fired at the deer and that shots from both the guns of Fred and Langford had been found in the carcass. What had occurred, he said, was merely an accident; that hundreds of hunters are shot by their companions each year. He dwelt upon the pleasant relations which now existed between Fred and Professor Langford. He pleaded for an opportunity for the boy to return to school. He also emphasized the fact that Fred's mother was a widow, dependent to a great extent upon the labor of her eldest son.

In closing the case, Waller reminded the jury that Fred had threatened Langford that night at the schoolhouse. He pictured the boy on his way home that night planning his revenge. He explained that Fred's placing the hunters on their stands was the result of his deliberations. He called attention to the fact that the deer was not in the pathway between the two men when it was found, and suggested the possibility of both men firing their first shots at the same time. He dwelt upon the reputation of the boy and his previous conduct at

school. He asked the jury not to be misled by Fred's apparent desire to do better in the future, but on the contrary to give him the maximum sentence under the law.

"Mathematical certainty cannot be obtained in a legal investigation," said Judge Humphreys in charging the jury. "You have heard the evidence. Weigh it carefully and reach your decision. If you find the defendant guilty of assault with intent to murder, the penalty will be imprisonment -- from two to ten years. You may recommend the sentence, but the court is not bound by your recommendation. While assault with intent to murder is a felony, shooting at another is a misdemeanor punishable by a sentence from one to twelve months. You may, if you see fit, bring in a verdict on this charge. On the other hand you may find the youth innocent, in which event he will, of course, go free."

The jurors retired to determine the fate of Fred Dale. They would decide whether he was a convict and was to wear the garb of one who has committed an offense against society, or whether he was to be a schoolboy with the opportunity to prepare for a life of usefulness.

The courtroom was very still. Overcome by sorrow and humiliation, Fred's mother sobbed and wiped the tears from her eyes with a handkerchief that was

already moist. Fred sat staring at the floor. Jack Lindsey was chatting with a friend; Waller sorting papers, in preparation for the next case. Langford, with eyes fixed on the door of the room to which the jury had retired, was wondering what was taking place within. Would the jurors, he wondered, understand the actions of a boy who as yet had failed to find himself, or would they be swayed by the eloquence of the solicitor-general?

There was a knock on the juryroom door. The jurors filed in and slowly took their seats. "Have you reached a verdict?" the foreman was asked. "We have," he replied. A slip of paper was handed to the solicitor-general from which he read the verdict -- "Not Guilty."

Langford rushed to Fred to extend congratulations. The boy smiled. It was a great victory, but not the end of his troubles.



A jury was selected. The solicitor began to speak.

CHAPTER V

A NEW "GREEN HAND"

THE boys at Cedar Falls welcomed Fred back to school enthusiastically. If the truth were told, many of them regarded him as something of a hero. But Fred was humble. He realized that notoriety brings grief, not satisfaction.

Willard Henderson, president of the Future Farmer chapter, took Fred's application for membership and at a special meeting, called one afternoon after school had been dismissed, he was elected. The following Friday night was chosen as the time for his initiation.

Fred was not elected as a member of the Cedar Falls F.F.A. chapter without opposition, however. In every group of people there are usually a few with a "holier than thou" attitude who want to pass judgment upon the actions and motives of others. In this case it was "Red" Watterson. "Red," who was a member of the Junior class and the star forward on the basketball team, contended that the chapter should be more exclusive than to take in a boy with Fred's reputation, and that his worthiness should be proved by at least a year's exemplary conduct before his name was proposed.

A few of the boys hesitatingly indicated that they thought "Red" was right, but the majority agreed with Willard who contended that the chapter was not one that was socially exclusive, but was really to help boys develop those traits of character which would aid them in discharging successfully their responsibilities on the farm and at school.

Since Fred had put in an application for membership, it indicated, the president said, that he had the right attitude and that the chapter should not withhold the help and encouragement that he needed just at this time. He also pointed out that it was the ideals and the objectives of the F.F.A. movement which had, to some extent, influenced Fred's decision to return to school.

Most of the boys followed the leadership of Willard in this argument, not only because he was the more popular but because they wanted Fred to be a member of their chapter.

In the Future Farmers of America, there are four degrees of membership. When first taken in, the boys are known as "Green Hands." After serving a year and completing some definite accomplishments they may be raised to the rank of "Future Farmer." These degrees are the only ones conferred by the local chapters. The state association awards the third degree to that two percent of the members who through their work have shown themselves to be efficient farmers

and capable leaders. This rank, which in Fred's state is known as the "Planter" degree, is awarded only at state conventions. The coveted honor is that of "American Farmer" -- the fourth degree conferred by the national association at the annual congress. While many aspire to the distinction of holding this degree, few ever get the gold key surmounted by the eagle -- the symbol which marks the acme of achievement for farm boys in the United States.

The boys like to initiate new members; it is great fun. So the night that Fred was to be taken into the Cedar Falls chapter they were on hand early to make the necessary preparations. Many "properties" were needed to set the stage for the ceremony. All of these had to be put in place before the arrival of the candidate.

When Fred arrived at the schoolhouse he was taken into a little room which he recognized as the storeroom of the agricultural department. Here he was asked by the boys who attended him to remove his shoes and socks. A blindfold was placed over his eyes and after some preliminary maneuvers in which the Farm Watch Dog played a prominent part, he was ushered into the chapter room by two conductors, one on each side.

To the members of the chapter he presented an amusing sight. There he was, a big man almost six feet tall, with the legs of his trousers rolled to his knees, hoodwinked, and with the big cardboard "green hand"

pinned on his blue shirt. His conductors guided him, not by any personal contact, but with a hay rope which all three held in their left hands.

In a very gruff voice, the Farm Watch Dog said, "Do you realize that you are about to enter an organization that leads to the vocation of farming?"

Fred replied that he did.

Then the Watch Dog continued, "This is a national organization of farm boys. Will you strive to make it a better organization and use your ability to improve the vocation of farming?"

"I will," replied Fred seriously.

Then he was conducted to the president.

In a very serious tone of voice, but with an amused smile which Fred, of course, could not see, Willard said, "At this time we desire to impress upon your mind that this organization stands for and fosters better farming and the improvement of rural life. With this end in view you will be required to visit and pass through some of the farm buildings of an old neglected farm in this community. Its condition was caused by poor farming methods. There are too many such farms in our country today. While making this trip be ever mindful of conditions as you find them and pay particular attention to the advice of your conductors so that you may learn what farming practices to avoid in your future farming activities."

Then to the conductor, he said, "Lead the candidate to the neighboring run-down farm and when you have completed the tour bring him back to me."

All the "scenery" necessary to reproduce the run-down farm had been set up in the school shop.

First, there was a broken gate to be negotiated. Fred was told that the gate, which was being held in place by members of the chapter, would not open and that they would have to climb over.

This would not be much of a task for a farm boy under ordinary circumstances, but to watch the caution of a fellow who tries to do this stunt blindfolded and not knowing what to expect is funny.

On the other side of the gate was a mud walk. This was merely wet sawdust but to Fred's bare feet, it felt like the real thing. He was glad that he had taken off his Sunday shoes.

The old tool shed was the first farm building to be inspected. Fred was warned not to bump his shins on any steel plow beams and to watch out for hoe handles that might slap him in the face. Of course he could do neither, since he was not able to see. And the noises made by "stage hands" kept him in fear of some such accident as had been suggested, but he left the shed without personal injury.

The next ordeal was to pass through the old barn; but to enter, it was necessary to squeeze through a

narrow opening between two fence posts. With the way the two boys held the posts it was a tussle to get through, but he finally made it.

In the barn all was confusion. The passage was narrow and the animals, some of which the conductors feared might be vicious, were all loose.

After wading through the hay and other debris in the passageway, the candidate most certainly would favor the modern, well-ventilated and sanitary barn which the conductors recommended; just as he would a more conveniently arranged smokehouse after bumping his head on the sides of meat and sacks of food hanging from the low ceilings in the one which the candidates inspected on their tour.

By the time the journey was completed all the common practices of a neglected, run-down farm had been dramatized. It would be a great contrast with the new, modern, up-to-date farm which the candidate for the second degree would pass through -- all of which was to symbolize the personal progress of the candidate after his experience as a member of the F.F.A. for one year or more.

After this arduous tour of the old farm, Fred was brought back before the president, but before beginning the serious part of the initiation was allowed to put on his shoes and socks and the blindfold was removed from his eyes.

While looking at the portraits of Washington and Jefferson, he was told by the treasurer of their accomplishments as farmers and citizens and, before passing on to the secretary who told him of the nation-wide scope of the F.F.A., he was admonished to use his talents for the betterment of himself and his fellowmen.

The vice-president held before Fred a model plow and explained that it was the emblem of labor, which was essential to success in every walk of life.

Finally, Fred found himself standing before his instructor, Walter Langford, the adviser of the F.F.A. chapter. On the table before Professor Langford was an owl, and, looking at Fred, his mentor said most earnestly, "The owl is the time-honored symbol of wisdom. Knowledge properly weighed and digested, brings wisdom. Without education we are handicapped. The uneducated man cannot compete with the educated man, other things being equal. We are asking that you learn and that you so apply yourself to your studies that your brain, like Jefferson's, will direct your hands to do things that make life easier and happier on the farm."

The initiation proper was concluded with the presentation of the bronze emblem of the F.F.A. -- the cross-section of an ear of corn on which are found the owl as the symbol of wisdom, the plow as the emblem of labor, and the rising sun which suggests the new

day that will dawn in America when all farmers are trained for their work and all cooperate to bring about a higher standard of business efficiency in the conduct of farm business.

The boys gathered around Fred to congratulate him. As he shook hands with them, for the first time in his life he felt that he had some real true friends who were interested in his welfare. He was not aware of the fact that "Red" Watterson and a few of his particular cronies had opposed his membership. Nor did Fred notice that they failed to extend felicitations. It was well that he did not, for this would have destroyed what to him was the happiest experience of his life.

After the formal closing of the meeting the boys, as usual, had something to eat. This time it was lemonade and hot-dog sandwiches served buffet style. While eating their supper these young Future Farmers visited with one another as unreservedly as a group of Rotarians at a weekly luncheon.

"We better have a goodnight song, 'Slim'," suggested President Willard.

"All right, fellows!" replied "Slim" Carson, mounting a chair. "We'll sing the favorite song of the Future Farmers of America for our new member. Let's go and make it snappy."

Lustily, to that stirring tune of "On Wisconsin" the boys sang those words written for the F.F.A. by Joe Duck of Missouri.

Future Farmers of America,
Farm the better way;
Show the world just how to do it,
With our Dads we'll say
We must have better field crops,
Finer live stock, bred most carefully,
Earning while learning brings prosperity.

Fred's initiation was over. The boys left for their homes. He and Langford were alone.

"Is it too late for me to talk to you a little while?" asked Fred modestly.

"It's early yet, Fred. Let's sit down," said Langford reassuringly. "What's on your mind?"

"I was just thinking about our farm. It's not doing well."

"Well, Fred, you know there's a general depression now."

"Yes, sir. I know, but it's been permanent with us."

Langford waited. For the first time, Fred seemed anxious to take the man into his confidence.

"As a member of the F.F.A., I'm supposed to farm better -- like the words to the song," continued Fred.

"And I know you will, Fred."

"But how? What shall I grow?"

"What do you produce on the farm now?"

"Mostly cotton."

"Keep any live stock?"

"Not much."

"You've got some cows, I suppose?"

"One. But she's not much good."

"Any hogs."

"We feed out a shoat to butcher every winter."

"How about poultry?"

"Mother has a few hens."

"Sell any eggs?"

"No, sir, we just get enough for our own use."

"How much cotton do you make to the acre?"

"About a third of a bale."

"Do you grow any legumes?"

"What's that?"

"Soil improvement crops -- do you turn under any clover or vetch to enrich the soil?"

"No, sir."

"Do you practice any system of crop rotation?"

"I guess not."

"Who does the work on the place, Fred?"

"We've got a couple of Negro families."

"Well, Fred, I want to tell you about a system of general farming which I think should be practiced in this section today -- and for that matter I guess in every section, so far as the fundamental ideas are concerned. The plan that I have in mind was set forth fifty years ago in a speech made by Henry W. Grady. Every hear of him?"

"I don't think so," replied Fred.

"That's not strange, since you're so young; but there was a time when he was known throughout the nation. He was editor of *The Atlanta Constitution* -- and a mighty fine man, too, a man with vision far beyond his time. Why, what he said about farming way back there before you were born sounds just like what the agricultural colleges and the U. S. Department of Agriculture are saying today. And he was a great man in many ways -- level headed, calm, always controlled his feelings; a great speaker and editor.

"Why, one time he was in Boston attending a dinner given by the New England Society and right across the table from him sat General Sherman. You know who he was?"

"Sure. He's the guy who marched through Georgia."

"Well, at this dinner in Boston someone asked Grady what the Southern people thought of Sherman -- and what do you suppose he said? You'd never guess.

He just said 'they thought he was a little careless with fire.' Imagine that kind of self-control, can you?

"And Grady was devoted to his job. That's the reason he was an outstanding newspaper man. One time some people brought him a petition signed by the majority of the voters in the district asking him to go to Congress. And did he go? I should say not; he just told them that he had always written in his paper just what he thought and he was afraid that he couldn't continue to do that is he became a politician -- so he'd prefer to devote his efforts solely to his chosen vocation. Can you beat that? Fred, there's not many men in this country who'd turn down a chance to go to Congress when it is handed to them on a silver platter. No, sir, there're not many like that.

"Henry W. Grady saw through every problem. He advocated the cooperative marketing of farm products long before there was a "co-op" in the country. While he was an emotional man, like most great Southerners, he was logical. I like to contrast him with other great men. He grows by comparison. One very famous Georgian once said that he wished there was but one cotton seed in the world and he would eat that so the South might be freed from the curse of a one-crop system of farming. The statement was sensational, but not so wise as the one that Grady made on the same subject.

Then while Grady was encouraging the building of hotels in Atlanta and recommending the South as a great winter resort, another man whose name has gone down in southern history made a unique comment on the hotel situation.

"The progressive citizens of his home town decided that they ought to have a modern, up-to-date hotel. They decided to finance its erection through the organization of a stock company. When they approached the town's leading citizen he said, 'I can't see that we need a hotel. If any gentlemen come to town they can stay at my home and we don't want visitors of any other sort.' Well, this little town has never been bothered with visitors or tourists, for when the railroad came through the country it passed them by for the lack of cooperative spirit. Later the citizens floated a bond issue and built their own spur out to the railroad, but traffic on the line has never been congested.

"And Grady was a great orator, too. He went up and down the country telling the discouraged Southern people of their opportunities. He had a vision of the New South -- a vision which is now being realized just as he pictured it. Say, Fred, you ought to be a great speaker yourself. Ever make a speech?"

"No, sir."

"Well, you'll have to learn how. All members of the chapter have to make speeches. And maybe you

can win out in the speaking contest next spring. But let's see, we were talking about farming programs, weren't we? Sure. I'll read you what Henry W. Grady said about growing cotton. It's not long."

Langford turned to the bookcase in the office where they were sitting and pulled out a thumb-worn copy of *The Speeches and Writings of Henry W. Grady* and turning quickly to the passage he was seeking, read the following quotation:

"When every home-owning farmer in the South-land shall eat bread from his own fields, meat from his own pastures, disturbed by no creditor and enslaved by no debt, shall sit amid his teeming gardens, fields, orchards, vineyards, dairies, herds, and barnyards, with his money-crop a surplus crop, selling at his own time, getting cash and not a receipted mortgage -- then will be the breaking fullness of day."

"That's the ideal farming program, Fred -- that is, for general farming. No farmer can afford to depend solely upon one money crop. Why, did you know that wheat is cheaper now than it was when Columbus discovered America? And corn is selling for such low prices that in the Middle West they are talking of burning it for fuel. And cotton -- why this year's crop won't pay for the fertilizer bill in the eastern part of the South. Something's got to be done about that sort of thing. It can't go on.

"We've got to learn that there are other money crops than cotton. Every section ought to capitalize its natural resources. In the South we have mild winters. We ought to make them pay bigger dividends. Let's think it over -- maybe we'll get an idea."

"Maybe we can," said Fred hopefully. "And I want to thank you for what you've said. It's been very interesting and I know the ideas of Henry Grady will help me plan better"

"That's all right, Fred. We'll work it out together some time soon."

"Well, I guess I better be going. Good night."

"Good night, Fred."

As Fred walked along the road in the moonlight his mind was so filled with thoughts that they tumbled over each other in confusion. His feeling of inferiority had been replaced with the desire to accomplish something. He thought of the fine plantation of his grandfather and visualized the time that he would ride over his broad acres on horseback to direct the work of his employees. Then he thought of what a wonderful man Henry Grady must have been and what a great thing it would be to sway a vast audience with the force of one's eloquence and personality.

But his thoughts always returned to Langford. "He's been mighty good to me," he said aloud. "And

I'll be as good to him. I'm only a 'Green Hand' but I'll try to be the best one in the Cedar Falls Chapter."

CHAPTER VI

FUTURE FARMERS AS TOURISTS

AT the time of the Christmas holidays the Future Farmers of Cedar Falls decided to go some place. In the F.F.A. Section of *Agricultural Education*, the national publication devoted to vocational agricultural activities, the boys had read with great interest of the educational tours which many chapters had made during the summer months. Some had gone to the mountains, others to the sea; several had selected the nation's capital as the objective of their trip, and one group had gone to the New York produce markets to see how the commodities grown by farmers everywhere are distributed to the teeming millions who work in the skyscrapers on Manhattan Island. But regardless of where they had gone, all reported wonderful trips.

"There is no reason," said one of the boys at the regular December meeting, "why we have to wait until next summer to take a trip. We cleared enough money on our booth at the community fair to pay all the expenses and I move that we go on an educational tour during the holidays." A few "wisecracks" were

pulled about the *educational* features of the tour, but the motion was carried. The boys wanted not only to have a progressive chapter that engaged in all the recommended activities, but they also wanted to indulge in all the possible pleasures which the organization promised without spending too much time in anticipation of them.

The next problem was where to go.

"Fat" Nichols proposed a trip to Washington, D. C. He said that every citizen of the country ought to visit the Capitol and go through the Smithsonian Institution where they keep Lindbergh's plane -- "The Spirit of St. Louis" -- and to Arlington to see the tomb of the Unknown Soldier upon which, in the newsreels, they had seen a hundred foreign dignitaries place wreaths. He also reminded the members that Congress would be in session and that they might get a chance to sit in the gallery and possibly meet Senator Arthur Capper, the man who sponsored the national speaking contest for the Future Farmers of America. He even thought that the President of the United States might have his picture taken with them on the lawn of the White House.

"Fat's" arguments were good. The trip certainly seemed to promise some wonderful experiences, especially that part where he talked about the chance it would afford to visit Mount Vernon and Monticello.

But there was one drawback. It would be cold.

Charlie Hardin was opposed to the Washington trip. He said his aunt who lived there contended that Washington was the hottest city in the nation in the summer and disagreeably cold in the winter. He reminded the boys that they would have to travel in the open school busses and that they should seek a warmer rather than a colder country.

"It looks to me," continued Charlie, "like we ought to go to Florida at this time of year. All the rich go to Florida in the winter --"

"That is, all who can't afford to go to California," wisecracked Henry Allen, who was a moving picture fan.

The boys got a good laugh out of the wit of both the speakers. Thus encouraged, Charlie added, "For once in our lives we could be tourists. We could leave all our troubles at home; forget how hard we worked all last summer and get rested from the mid-term exams. We could even imagine that we belonged to the idle rich."

"Oh, yeah?" drawled one of the boys. "What would we use for money?"

The arguments for Florida won. The boys were excited. In their minds they already saw waving palm trees, beautiful yachts riding on azure seas, orange trees loaded with golden fruit, fish begging to be

caught, and possibly some of the beautiful girls whose pictures each winter adorn the rotogravure sections of the Sunday papers.

Walter Langford approved of the plan. The board of trustees gave the boys permission to use two of the school busses. Since both Langford and John Morris, secretary of the Y.M.C.A., at Dawnville, were going, the parents readily consented.

Several days were spent in preparation. Pup tents were borrowed from the "Y," provisions were secured and packed, fishing tackle was examined, and big signs for both sides of the busses were painted.

"FUTURE FARMER TOURISTS -- Cedar Falls Chapter F.F.A." read one of the boys proudly when the first sign had been completed, "I guess the folks will know who we are."

"They sure will -- we ought to get at least a couple of invitations to meals out of that. Maybe some of the F.F.A.'s of Florida will take us in, if we get broke," said one of the boys with that happy abandon which attacks folks as they are about to start on a pleasure trip.

On Monday morning the boys started. The day was delightful. It was one of those Southern mid-winter mornings which makes a hot breakfast the most appetizing meal of the day. By nine o'clock the sun was shining brightly and the tang of long-leaf pine burning

somewhere in the woods gave a wholesome fragrancy to the bracing atmosphere.

In South Georgia the majestic water oaks with their bright green leaves made one wonder if it could possibly be winter anywhere. The satiny leaves of magnolias glistened in the sun. Clumps of cypress - - the wood eternal -- dotted the landscape, indicating the low spots where water had stood before the land was cleared for cultivation. The cone-shaped "knees" which had once been thrust through the water to get air for the growing trees were no longer needed, but they remained to excite the curiosity of travelers who were making their first trip into the Southland. All the trees were festooned with gray Spanish moss, which waved slowly like banners in a breeze. It was a fascinating picture, which made one anxious to press on and explore the country which had been discovered by the romantic cavaliers of ancient Spain.

"Aren't you glad you came, Fred?" asked Langford.

"I guess so," replied Fred. But one could tell that there was still some doubt in his mind.

"Of course you are," urged Langford. "The trip will do you a lot of good, and who can tell but that we'll get some good farming ideas."

"It is wonderful, isn't it?" admitted Fred.

Of course, Fred was excited about the proposed trip, just as much as the other boys, but from the first he had maintained that he should not go. Taking Langford into his confidence, Fred had explained the financial difficulties which were hanging over their household. "I ought to stay home and see if I couldn't get some job to do," he maintained. "If I could make a few dollars they would help." Langford pointed out that there was little chance for him to make any money during the holidays and that the trip would take his mind off his problem for a while, so that when he came back he could face the new crop-year with greater courage. In the end he had, quite willingly, consented to accept the advice of his instructor since the trip was to cost almost nothing. It was a new experience to Fred, as to many of the boys. Never before had he been so much as one hundred miles from home. The sub-tropical scenery appealed to him very much.

Jacksonville was nice, but just another city like Atlanta, Birmingham, Nashville, Charlotte, or for that matter most other places which are commercial and railroad centers. But crossing the St. John's River brought a thrill. As the man on the toll bridge took their tickets the boys felt that they had bade good-bye to all that was familiar and were entering a wonderland awaiting exploration.

St. Augustine gave the first suggestion of what was in store for them. Near here Ponce de Leon had discovered the Fountain of Youth. The boys drank from the spring generously, but were scarcely old enough to realize how eagerly the Spanish explorer, and those who have followed in his wake, sought to regain that which once gone is lost forever.

There were the old city gates which had been erected for the protection of the first inhabitants of the city; and St. George Street, so narrow and quaint; the beautiful hotels designed by Stanford White, the architect; and the "oldest" house in the United States.

Down the ocean boulevard it was but a short distance to Ormond, where the rich men play golf. And then there was Daytona, the finest beach in all the world, where Seagrave, Campbell, and other Englishmen have brought their powerful racing cars and set new world's records.

It was a marvelous experience.

The journey down the East Coast was broken long enough to take in Lake Wales and Bok's Singing Tower.

As the boys sat around the camp fire at night, John Morris, the "Y" secretary, said, "Boys, how would you like to hear the story of Edward Bok the man who erected the tower we are to see tomorrow?"

"Let's have it," chorused the boys.

"Once many years ago", he began, "there was an island in the North Sea, just five miles off the Dutch coast, where many vessels were wrecked on a dangerous ledge of rocks. There were pirates who lived on the island and made a living by robbing these distressed vessels and murdering the passengers and crew who managed to get ashore. The government of the Netherlands decided to clean up the place so they sent a young, ambitious lawyer out there on the island to live. The island was a barren waste. The lawyer not only got rid of the pirates, but began to plant trees, shrubs, and grass on the island. Finally, it became quite attractive and the young lawyer brought a wife to the island. They worked together to make the island more beautiful. A number of children were born -- thirteen in all, and all were taught to love things that were beautiful.

"One day when the children were grown the mother called them around her and told them the story of how the island had been made so beautiful and exquisite that artists from every nation came there to paint pictures, and birds from all parts of the globe made the island their home. 'And now,' said the mother, 'as you go out into the world I want each of you to take with you the spirit of your father's work, and each in your own way and place, to do as he has done; make

the world a bit more beautiful and better because you have been in it."

"That woman was the grandmother of Edward Bok -- the man who has done more to make the American people appreciate beauty than any other man who has ever lived."

"Edward Bok was a great man. As a boy he lived in Brooklyn, without friends, influence, or money, but he had ambition. When a lad he wrote to the most distinguished people in the nation. And they answered his letters and allowed him to come and see them; even the President of the United States invited him to dinner. You boys should remember that all truly great men and women are easy to approach. Don't ever hesitate to seek the counsel of a famous man, for in nine cases out of ten he will be willing to help you."

"Bok finally became the editor of a great magazine. If you are ever in Philadelphia I hope you will go to see the wonderful mosaic by Maxfield Parrish -- 'The Dream Garden,' which is made of more than a million pieces of glass. This is but one of the many works of art which was created under the direction and the guiding hand of the Dutch boy whose grandfather changed a barren waste to an 'Island of Nightingales.' The singing tower was his last contribution to beauty -- he is buried here in a park, a sanctuary, where all the world comes to pay a tribute to beauty."

This story made the trip to the tower more interesting. And the boys were not surprised at the hour when the concert was given to find that in the parking grounds there were cars from every state in the nation.

But it was at Miami that the boys got the biggest thrill out of the trip.

On arrival in this magic city, where the Chamber of Commerce literature explains that it's always June, Langford decided that they would go to the Dade County Agricultural School and ask permission to camp during their stay.

This was easy. John L. Butts, who has been the teacher of vocational agriculture here for many years, was a charming host. He was glad to have visitors. He enjoyed showing them the beautiful grounds which his boys have landscaped, the slat house where they grow plants for sale, the rock garden with its overhead watering system, and the office of pecky-cypress which the boys built as a shop project.

If it seems strange to have an agricultural school in a great city, it might be explained that years ago "Lemon City" was out in the country, but Miami grew up all around it and now only the "oldest inhabitants" -- like Professor Butts -- can remember when Flagler Street had no need for traffic policemen and Coral Gables existed only in the mind of a real estate promoter.

But there was a need for agricultural instruction in Dade County. Each winter a hundred thousand visitors come to the city with good appetites and the desire to spend money for the fruits and vegetables which were "out of season" at home. Then there were the estates of America's playboys that had to be landscaped.

The boys from Cedar Falls arrived at a fortunate time. The Dade County Agricultural School, which offers instruction in many vocations, was making preparations to launch a yacht which had been built in the school shops.

The 52-foot boat, which had graceful lines and the finest and most exquisite of appointments, had been built for Luther McKay.

Mr. McKay' was one of the prominent realtors and civic leaders of Miami. Formerly, he had lived in Pittsburgh and had been identified with a large pickle company. But for some reason his health had failed, and long before Florida became a tourists' haven, he had followed his doctor's advice and moved to the land of eternal sunshine.

Among the people Luther McKay had met when he moved to Florida was Gordon Caldwell.

At that time Caldwell was a young man filled with ambition and worried for fear he would not make enough money to support his young wife and small daughter. But all financial worries were in the past

now. He had made a great success. As president of the Caldwell Soup Company, with headquarters in Kansas City, he was rated by financial agencies as wealthy.

The good fortune of Gordon Caldwell, he said, was due to his friend Luther McKay. Caldwell, in the days of their first acquaintance, was growing vegetables for Northern markets. Sometimes the price was high but more often the market was glutted and the shipments returned a loss. "What you need," McKay said, reverting to his experience in the pickle business, "is a method of selling your vegetables at any time you choose so as not to be dependent upon a market over which you have no control." His friend agreed with the principle but couldn't see the way out. "You might make soup," suggested McKay.

And make soup he did. A little experience showed clearly that products should be manufactured, not where they are produced, but where there are people to buy. This meant a move from Florida, so Caldwell had gone to the Middle West with its progressive farmers, its growing cities, and its liberal bankers.

Now, Caldwell spent his winters in Florida, selling soup and basking in the sunshine. And the little baby girl had grown up to be an attractive and charming young lady.

McKay had delayed the launching of his yacht until Gordon Caldwell and his daughter, Sally May, ar-

rived for the winter. In fact, the boat was to be named for the young lady who was to have the pleasure of christening it.

Promptly at ten o'clock on Friday morning they assembled to watch the launching of the *Sally May*.

There was John L. Butts, who was acting as master of ceremonies; Luther McKay and his wife; Mr. Caldwell and his daughter; the boys who built the yacht; the officials from the Miami Yacht Club; and the visitors from Cedar Falls.

Mr. Butts said a few words about the work of the boys who built the yacht. Gordon Caldwell extolled the virtues of his friend; McKay spoke of Miami as a yachting paradise; and the president of the Club commented on the beautiful lines of the new craft.

Then Professor Butts suggested that it would be appropriate to have a few words from the visitors from Cedar Falls. Of course, this was no surprise. Willard Henderson had been "tipped off" before the program started. He had "passed the buck" to Fred Dale.

Fred was very uneasy. The fact that he had to say a few words had spoiled the entire occasion for him. And now the time had arrived. He stepped forward.

"Friends," he began, "it was kind of you to permit us to be present at this most interesting ceremony." Then he stopped. Looking around at the group he became so self-conscious that for a moment he couldn't utter

a word. He caught the encouraging glance of Professor Langford and continued: "At Cedar Falls we're all landlubbers, so I can't say anything about boats -- but this one is beautiful, I think. I'd like to take a ride on it." With the close of this sentence he happened, quite by accident, to look into the eyes of Sally May. He blushed, and thought one of the boys snickered, but wasn't sure. This restored his confidence; he wouldn't be laughed at, not by one of his own classmates. So in a voice that showed no evidence of fear, he resumed his talk: "Coming to Miami has been the most inspiring experience of my life, and I'm sure that the boys for whom I am speaking feel just as I do. We had never dreamed that there was a world like this -- where people can have so much fun and where everything is so interesting. We appreciate very much what you have done for us. We can't stay much longer, but when we go home and get back to our work on the farm and at school we'll take with us many pleasant memories. I wish for the owner of this yacht many pleasant cruises and hope that the *Sally May* will always sail on the sea of Happiness."

Fred had surprised himself. He didn't say what he had prepared. He had in mind to talk about the boys who built the boat, but instead had poured out as best he could a little of the exuberance and inspiration which the trip created within his mind.

Sally May broke a bottle of ginger ale over the prow of the yacht and the ceremony of christening was over.

During the buffet lunch which followed the program Gordon Caldwell sought out Fred and extending his hand exclaimed, "Young man, I want to congratulate you. It is evident to me that you have some imagination and no man in the world can get anywhere without it. If I can ever be of any help to you, let me hear from you."

Fred walked over to where John L. Butts and Walter Langford were talking. As he sat down Professor Butts was saying, "Mr. Caldwell has been a great help to us in our agricultural work here. He has bought lots of plants from our boys. You see, we grow them from seed which Mr. Caldwell sends us, then we ship them to him, and he lets them out to farmers in his section who grow vegetables for him under contract."

"Does the plant business pay the boys well?" asked Langford.

"Yes, indeed; it's one of our best projects."

"I wonder," asked Fred, "if we could grow some plants for him."

"Why not ask him?" suggested Mr. Butts.

They did.

"Sure. I'd be glad for you to grow tomato plants for me," said Mr. Caldwell. "In fact, this is too far south to

get the best plants at the time of year I need them, and I'd been wondering where I could locate some reliable growers."

"How many would you need?" ventured Fred. "Oh, I could use about fifty carloads," said Mr. Caldwell, laughing.

Fred was confused. He had thought of plants in terms of a few bunches tied together like radishes.

"That's all right, my boy," said Mr. Caldwell, patting him on the back, "I'll take all you can grow -- all, in fact, that the whole bunch of you can grow."

Fred turned to Professor Langford inquiringly. "We had better talk this over a little among ourselves," suggested Langford.

"All right, do that and I'll see you tomorrow? McKay's going to drag me off to play a little golf now."

Just then Mr. McKay came up. "Fine talk you made, Fred," he said and then added, "And before you go I want to take you for a ride on the *Sally May*."

"Thanks," said Fred cordially. But he wasn't thinking about yachting. Instead his thoughts were back home with his mother and the farm. He had caught a vision.

CHAPTER VII

HOMEWARD BOUND

THE next morning Luther McKay called to say that his friend Gordon Caldwell would like to see Fred and Professor Langford and any of the boys who might be interested in growing plants for him. Mr. McKay had arranged a party on the *Sally May*. They would meet on the Yacht Club dock at ten.

As usual Fred was up bright and early helping with the breakfast preparations. To him it seemed a waste of time to sleep much in the midst of such beauty and excitement. By seven-thirty the camp work was done, and getting a chance to ride out to Miami Beach, Fred promised to meet the others at the Club.

In the early morning sunlight Biscayne Bay was beautiful. The water was fascinating. Sometimes it was a brilliant green and then in a moment a deep purple. In sharp contrast to the darker colors of the water, the white and mahogany yachts stood out like sentinels.

Sea gulls flew over the water and now and then swooped down to catch a fish. A lazy pelican sat on a piling looking comfortable and satisfied, like the old men who sat on the benches in the park. A speed boat raced by, sending up a spray of white foam. And on

the Bay were seaplanes resting daintily like the birds, while overhead the constant drone of motors indicated how air-minded are those who frequent fashionable resorts.

Yachting parties were making preparations for the day. Fred saw signs indicating that for fifty dollars a day many of the palatial boats might be rented for deep sea fishing. How, he wondered, could people afford to spend so much just to go fishing?

As Fred sped over the causeway he looked back at the city skyline. It was impressive. Much, he thought, like the entrance to New York harbor which he had often seen in the newsreels. The largest buildings on the Bay were hotels. Fred wondered how enough people could be found to occupy all the rooms. And the prices? He had understood that it cost at least six dollars a day to get a room in any of them, and there were some that were much higher. There must be many people in the world with money, he concluded.

Many ambitious sun, hunters were on the beach for a morning dip. Fred marveled at their costumes. There were women wearing pajamas splashed with bright colors, and girls whose scanty, sun-back bathing suits revealed slim, bronzed bodies. Old men, most of whom were too fat or distressingly thin, wearing ill-fitting suits waded cautiously into the surf. Funny looking old birds, thought Fred, but I guess they -- and

the others back home just like them -- are paying the bills which make the show possible.

Fred entered a bathhouse and put on a rented suit. It was fun to play in the ocean and feel the rush of the waves followed by the pull of the undertow. But this morning he sat down on the sand.

What a new and interesting world he had discovered. How different, he thought, from his home, his neighborhood, his county. There, folks were serious, here jovial; there, sadness seemed to characterize the people, here happiness. Fred realized, of course, that here he was observing people who came to play, while at home he saw them in all their moods. Yet there was a difference. He imagined that these people at Miami worked just as they played -- hard and enthusiastically. While at home most of the folks he knew saw work as mere drudgery, perhaps for the reason that they expected the reward to be meager.

And how much money, thought Fred, it must take to support a girl like the beautiful creature just passing by.

It never occurred to Fred that there could be people on the Beach in circumstances much like his own. It never dawned upon him that he too was part of the picture. To himself he was a stranger in a strange land; a poor boy who through accident had wandered into the domain of a rich and powerful ruler. He watched

a policeman half expecting him to say, "Young man, you'll have to move on -- this is private property and we can't have any outsiders here."

Yet Fred was not resentful. He knew that he had all the possessions of those about him save one -- money. He realized that back of all this pleasure-loving throng there were successful men. Someone had toiled that each person in the picture might play. He would work -- perhaps he would never be rich like Gordon Caldwell, but he would try to succeed.

Suddenly he realized that he would have to hurry for the ten o'clock appointment. Getting into his clothes, he caught a bus for the club.

As he swung off the bus he noted that Langford, Willard Henderson, and "Red" Watterson were waiting for him. Somehow, he was sorry that "Red" had come.

They boarded the yacht and while McKay was directing the crew, Caldwell began the business conference.

"Boys, I'm interested in this proposition," he began. "You want to make a success of the farming game, so they tell me, and if you expect to beat the game here's one thing you'll have to learn sell your stuff before you make it. 'Manufactured to order' -- that's the confidential motto of the Caldwell Soup Company. Our salesmen sell on long-time contracts. Why, we know

now just how much soup to make for next year's business. And it's a good thing we do. That's a safe policy -- it keeps down surpluses, provides steady employment, and increases profits. But now to business. You boys know my proposition. Are you interested?"

"Yes, sir," replied Langford, and all the boys nodded assent.

"All right. Let's get down to details," said Caldwell.

It was arranged that Langford would be the agent through whom all the business would be conducted. The seed would be consigned to him, and he would ship the plants. All the boys in the chapter who cared to do so might grow one or more acres of plants. And the men of Cedar Falls could get in too if they would agree to follow all the regulations.

The plan was soon completed.

It was an inspiration to do business with such a man. Fred contrasted Caldwell's dispatch with the way that local buyers at his home often haggled over price and quality.

Characteristic of a big business man, when Caldwell got through with a business deal, he wanted to quit talking about it, so rushed off to find McKay and talk about the new yacht or the golf tournament which they were managing next month in which many of the nation's outstanding professionals would take part.

Langford and the boys were left to their own devices.

Fred stood at the rail engrossed in the beauty of the pictures that were passing by.

"Pretty, isn't it?" asked a voice beside him.

He turned to look into the big sparkling eyes of Sally May. "It's wonderful," he replied. And from his gaze one might have suspected that he was thinking of her dark brown hair which was blowing in the wind.

Fred had not given much conscious thought to whether Sally May would be on the yacht, but as he looked into her eyes he knew that he would have been very much disappointed had he not had the opportunity to see her again.

"Are you through with your business?" she inquired.

"Yes," said Fred.

"Then it will be all right for us to talk?"

"Of course," said Fred happily, but with some embarrassment. "Shall we sit down?"

They stretched out on two comfortable deck chairs. That is, Sally May did, but Fred felt ill at ease in such a reclining position so turned sideways. He felt more comfortable, and beside he could see Sally May so much better.

Sally May was pretty -- about Fred's age. She was slim, tanned, and vivacious. In her white flannel skirt,

sport shoes, and white sweater with gold and blue stripes, she was very attractive. Fred had never talked with such a girl in all his life, so it was not strange that he could think of so little to say.

"How long will you stay?" he ventured. "Oh, Daddy and I will stay at least two months."

"And you?"

"We'll start back in the morning."

"Too bad. But you've had a good time?"

"The most wonderful in my life," said Fred with fervor.

"And you'll come back next winter, I suppose?"

"No. I'm afraid it will be a long time before I'll ever come back," said Fred with something of a sigh.

"I wouldn't be a pessimist," pleaded Sally May, with a bewitching smile. "Maybe you will."

"No, I can't."

"Why? I thought boys could do whatever they wanted to."

"You wouldn't understand."

"Perhaps I would. I'm Dad's pal you know. He tells me lots of things about men's problems."

Fred was impressed. He looked at Sally May and thought he'd tell her that money wasn't so plentiful with everyone as it was with her father. But then he thought better of that and merely said, "No. You wouldn't be interested."



Fred turned to look into the sparkling eyes of Sally May

"Indeed I would. Tell me something about yourself. What do you do at home?"

"Not much of anything, I'm afraid."

"Ah, go ahead, Fred. Tell her about yourself -- tell her about how you hunt deer," said "Red" Watterson, who had walked up behind them without Fred's knowledge.

"Oh please do," pleaded Sally May. "I'm crazy about hunting. Sometimes I go with Dad to his lodge in the Rockies and once he took me on a deer hunt and I saw one, really. But tell me, did you have good luck this season?"

"No. Terrible," said Fred as he gave "Red" as dirty a look as was possible under the circumstances.

"I think you're mean not to tell me," pouted Sally May.

"Maybe he'd rather tell you about what the solicitor-general said about him to the jury," taunted "Red," who resented the fact that the only girl in the party had shown a preference for Fred.

"What does he mean, Fred? Tell me, won't you?"

"I'm sorry but I can't," replied Fred, who wished he could tell her everything but who, in the presence of the leering "Red," was too angry to speak coherently.

"Then Mr. Watterson will, I know," said the young lady as she bestowed upon "Red" one of her bewitching smiles.

Fred had not failed to notice that she called "Red" Mr. Watterson. This gave him no little satisfaction.

"Sure, I'll be glad to," responded "Red" with an exultant grin at Fred.

Fortunately, perhaps, at this moment Sally May's Dad called her to help with the lunch. She left the boys at once but expressed the hope that she would get a chance to talk to "Red" after lunch.

As soon as she stepped inside the salon, Fred turned savagely to "Red" and snapped, "You'll pay for those dirty cracks -- and pay plenty. If I wasn't any more of a gentleman than you are I'd whip you right here."

"Help yourself any time you think you're lucky," returned "Red" with a superior air. Fred was left alone, trembling with rage.

At lunch the two boys of course had no chance to talk to each other alone. In fact, they were not together again until the yacht had docked at the club.

The return trip was delightful for every member of the party except Fred. He had nothing to say. Under the circumstances some of the remarks of Gordon Caldwell were amusing.

"This F.F.A. organization," he said, "is a great thing. It will not only make farming a kind of game so that a fellow will go after it with the same zest that he would football, but it will teach him how to get along

with his fellowmen which, after all, is the greatest lesson in life that there is to learn."

"Yes, sir," agreed Professor Langford. "It gives an opportunity to develop self-reliance, honesty, habits of thrift, and all the other worth while characteristics and habits which are valuable to farmers and other business men. It helps the boys control their tempers. They learn too that they can't always have their own way about everything. You see the majority always rule."

"Red" laughed. Fred looked very solemn.

By mid-afternoon the group had returned to the camp. Langford asked the boys to make all possible preparations for leaving early in the morning on the return trip. Then he decided that he would like to pay his respects to Professor Butts and his wife who had extended the F.F.A.'s from Cedar Falls so many courtesies. John Morris decided that he ought to drop in to see the secretary of the "Y" before leaving town. Both men left with the promise to return in ample time for the evening meal.

Fred watched their departure eagerly. He knew better than to start a fight with either of the men in camp. But as soon as they were gone he rushed over to "Red's" tent and demanded, "What do you mean by pulling those dirty cracks before Sally May?"

"What's Sally May to you?"

"She's a lady, for one thing."

"Then why didn't you tell her?"

"If you don't know, I'll teach you." With this Fred swung a right that caught "Red" flush on the chin. He fell back against the tent ropes. As he got up he picked up a tent stake and rushed madly at Fred.

"Stop," yelled Willard Henderson to "Red." The enraged lad didn't even hear, but one of the boys stuck out a foot and tripped him. "Red" plunged forward on his face. Before he could get up Willard and several of the boys were holding his collar, his arms, his legs. Others gathered around Fred.

"What is the trouble?" demanded Willard.

"Plenty," said Fred. "He insulted me on the yacht today."

"Insulted nothin'. You can't insult a bum like that," snarled "Red."

Willard and the boys heard the story. It was evident that there was a feeling of bitterness which had been growing since "Red" had opposed Fred's election to membership in the chapter.

"If you insist on fighting," concluded Willard, "you'll have to prove which is the better man in a manly way. And besides, we can't have two of the leading members of our chapter not working together for the best interests of the bunch. So you can fight, but we'll see that it is done right and with boxing gloves from the Dade County School gymnasium."

It was decided that the fight would go five rounds. A square was marked off on the sand. Seconds, a time keeper, and other officials -- including a lookout -- were selected. Willard was to referee.

"All right. Let's go," said Willard.

Fred rushed out of his corner like a madman. He caught "Red" with a smashing left to the face before he was in a standing position. His eye began to swell and blood poured from his nostrils. It looked like Fred's fight. He didn't get in another blow during the round, however, and in the meantime "Red" was pounding his body with short punches. When the bell rang they were in the center of the ring. It was Fred's round.

When the second round started "Red" was the aggressor. He was out of his corner with a bound. With savage right and left punches to the body he pushed Fred around the ring. Fred could not cover up. He didn't know how. And the superior weight of his opponent gave him a slight advantage. Fred was shifter on his feet, though. With a lot of fast foot work and a feint with his left Fred got in a good lick to the chin. It stopped "Red" for a moment. Fred followed up his lead. But the round was over. It was even.

By this time all the boys in camp were crowded around in a close circle. The referee had trouble keeping them out of the ring. Even the lookout had forgot-

ten to give his sole attention to the approach of unwelcome visitors.

The fighters were breathing hard and sweat was streaming from their bodies. Both were stripped to the waist. "Red's" eye was almost closed. The bell rang for the third round.

They met in the middle of the ring and exchanged blows. Fred missed; then hit a glancing lick to the face. "Red" bore in with blows to the chest and stomach. The referee warned him not to strike below the belt. "Red's" eye was closing and bothering him. He threw back his head every time he got a chance. Fred pushed his advantage and landed one on the chin. He stopped his opponent for an instant. Then "Red" came back stronger than ever and breaking down Fred's guard pushed him around the ring at will. The round ended in a clinch. It went to "Red" by a big margin.

As Fred retired to his corner his body was blood red and he was struggling for breath. "Red" seemed to be in better condition, but his face showed the punishment he had taken from Fred's powerful right uppercuts.

The members of the chapter were excited, although they said little. There was no yelling. No one took sides. It was a fair contest. Between the two participants there was a feeling of mutual resentment which

was shown in the intensity of their efforts. No punches were pulled; there was no stalling for time.

The bell rang for the last round.

"Red" jumped up with an elastic step. He was on his toes. Fred was slow. It was evident that he was in pain. "Red" began swinging with both arms. Fred put up no effective resistance. He clinched. The referee pulled them apart. He clinched again. "Throw in the towel," someone yelled to his second. This infuriated Fred. He made another valiant effort but to no avail. As he uncovered, "Red" landed the punch that stopped the fight. Fred dropped on the sand. There was no use to count him out. He was through.

When Langford and Morris got back, it was evident to them that something had happened. The boys were too quiet. Then "Red's" face told the story -- or at least part of it. The rest of the facts concerning the fight were supplied by Willard who said he had done what he considered the best thing.

Fred knew what was going on when he saw Willard talking to Professor Langford. As soon as they had concluded their conversation, Fred sought his instructor.

"I'm sorry," he said, "if you think I did the wrong thing."

"I don't know, Fred," countered his adviser, "what was the trouble?"

"Watterson insulted me by making insinuating remarks before Miss Caldwell, and not only that but he's doing the same thing all the time at school. I'd put up with it just as long as I could. Of course, I'd just as soon told Sally May all about it, but now what will she think about me?"

"Fred, I don't know. But you and 'Red' as members of the same chapter ought to get along together. Did you shake hands and make up after the fight?"

"No, sir. We didn't say anything"

"You would be perfectly willing to forgive him, would you not?"

"You want me to be honest, don't you?" inquired Fred.

"Of course," replied his instructor.

"Well, I don't know whether I could or not."

"Not if he apologized and promised never again to make an unfriendly comment?"

After thinking the matter over for several minutes Fred finally replied, "Maybe I could if he meant it."

Fred supposed that Professor Langford would talk with "Red" and then later that he would learn the results of their conference. He did. "Red" came to Fred and asked forgiveness. The boys shook hands.

The next morning the boys broke camp and started on the homeward journey. They left the East Coast and started out over the Tamiami Trail.

For more than fifty miles there was not a curve in the road. There were no towns, no houses, nothing that man had constructed -- except the road. It was said to be a dreary country, but the boys found it fascinating. Millions of birds were feeding in the swamps -- there were herons, white egrets, secretary birds, ducks, geese, and hundreds of smaller species. And hundreds of people were fishing in the water on either side of the highway.

"Let's sing," suggested one of the boys.

"What'll it be?" asked "Slim" Carson, the song leader.

"Happy Days Are Here Again," shouted one of the boys. "There's a Long, Long Trail," called out another.

"We'll sing 'em both," said "Slim"

"And I move," said Fred, "that we extend a vote of thanks to Charlie Hardin for suggesting the Florida trip."

"Second the motion," said the chapter in chorus.

CHAPTER VIII

BORROWING MONEY

NO matter how delightful the trip, getting home always brings a thrill of pleasure.

As soon as Fred opened the gate on returning from Florida he called out to his mother who was sitting on the porch! "Hello, Mother! How are you?"

"All right, Fred. I hope you had a nice time," said his mother looking up from her sewing.

"Wonderful! Gee, but the country where we went is beautiful. And you ought to see the ocean at Palm Beach and Miami. It's not like the water around here at all, but is purple and green and almost every color in the rainbow. And oranges -- you never saw so many in your life, they're just lying on the ground by the bushels. And say -- I'm going to make some money. I'll bet you could never guess how?"

"No. I'm sure I couldn't."

"We're going to grow tomato plants for the Caldwell Soup Company. We met Mr. Caldwell and he's the finest man you ever saw. He said he'd buy all the plants we could grow."

"That's good, Fred, I'm glad to hear you have a chance to make some money, for goodness knows we need it," said his mother with a sigh.

"Anything wrong, mother?" inquired Fred as he perceived a note of anxiety in his mother's voice.

"No, nothing special, but since you've been gone I've sold the cotton. And what do you think we got a pound for it?"

"What?"

"Five cents."

"You mean only twenty-five dollars a bale?" asked Fred in astonishment, who could remember when it sold for two hundred.

"That's all," said his mother despondently. "And the money is all gone. We'll have to borrow some to make a crop this spring."

"How much do you think we'll need?" inquired Fred.

"I can't tell yet, and what's more I have no idea where we'll get it."

It had indeed been a disastrous year for the cotton growers of the South. So critical had the situation been that many state legislatures had been called in extraordinary session to enact some legislation that would alleviate the condition. One governor had proposed that all the cotton states pass a law that for one year no cotton be grown. For a time this radical idea caught

the public fancy, but soon the opponents of the plan pointed out so many reasons why this was unwise that the effort was abandoned. Instead, several states enacted laws requiring the farmers to make material reductions in the acreage planted to cotton. Psychologically, of course, such laws have some value but to the wise farmer they merely serve to show that a balanced system of farming is the only safe one to follow in times of prosperity as well as of depression.

To Fred and the other boys, growing tomato plants at one dollar a thousand seemed like a way to make money that was to be duplicated only at the United States mint. But when they got back to school and began to study the project carefully they discovered that it would cost something to grow the plants and get them ready for shipping. When the cost figures were finally compiled, most of the boys decided that they could grow but one acre. It seemed that it would be impossible for them to hire the labor required to pull and pack a larger crop.

Fred, however, was ambitious. He knew that it was almost impossible to expect any net profit from cotton the next year so decided that he would make tomato plants the major cash enterprise in the farm program.

Talking the situation over with his mother, Fred decided that they would need about five hundred dol-

lars to finance their farming operation for the coming year.

"Do you think we can borrow the money from the bank?" Fred asked his mother.

"I don't know Fred," said his mother thoughtfully. "Mr. Smith has been very nice to us since we've been here, but times are hard you know and I'm sure it will be difficult. Suppose you go and see him in the morning."

The next morning Fred went to the Merchants and Farmers Bank at Dawnville to see Warren Smith, cashier.

Mr. Smith listened to his story attentively although he had probably heard a number very much like it. When Fred had finished the banker said, "I'm sorry but we can't finance you for next year, Fred."

"You won't take a crop mortgage?" inquired Fred timidly.

"No. Prices are so uncertain. They keep going lower every day. Did you know that wheat is cheaper than it has been since reapers were invented?"

Fred shook his head.

"Well it is," continued the banker. "And corn is so cheap that in the Middle West they are burning it for fuel in some places. We can't afford to loan money on crop prospects for next year."

"But," objected Fred, "I'm going to make tomato plants my major cash crop and I've already got them sold at a guaranteed price."

"I know, but that is a new crop here. How do we know that it will be a success?"

"Well, of course, we don't. But Mr. Caldwell is a big business man and he says that he's got to have a climate a little later than Florida to get these plants ready at the right time and he ought to know what he's talking about since he's been in this business for years." Fred felt that this was a very convincing argument.

"Why doesn't he finance you?" inquired the banker.

"Well, it seems hardly right to ask him, especially since some of the money is to be used to grow other crops on the farm," said the boy.

The banker said nothing more. It seemed that the interview was over so far as he was concerned. But Fred ventured another question. "You wouldn't loan us the money on our land?"

"I'd like to, son, but it's out of the question," stated the banker. "We have so much land on hand now that we don't know what to do with it. It's lying idle and we are paying taxes on it. We wouldn't consider land as security -- not at this time."

"Well, I'm sorry, Mr. Smith," concluded Fred, "I'm sure that my plant enterprise will work out all right."

"I hope it will, son, and I'm sorry I can't help you but I've got my orders from the board of directors and they refuse to loan money on farming operations for next year unless they are secured by gilt-edge collateral."

Fred left the bank rather discouraged, but felt that there must be other places where he could get the money on such a promising farm program as he had outlined.

He was disappointed to learn, however, that borrowing money in times of a severe depression is not easy. He discovered that all the big insurance companies that had formerly loaned money so liberally on farm land had discontinued such loans.

The Intermediate Credit Bank which the Congress of the United States had created to aid farmers informed Professor Langford who made inquiry through the bank at Columbia, South Carolina, that they had no plan for loaning money on any such crop as the one which Fred had in mind to grow.

Knowing that the Cotton Cooperative Marketing Association loaned money to farmers through a subsidiary known as the Growers Supply Company, Langford asked if they could advance Fred the money and was informed that their loans were made only for the financing of cotton crops.

In talking with his neighbor Bill Nix, who was a member of the county board of education and one of the best farmers in the community, Fred learned that Judge Cason, a retired lawyer who was now rated as a capitalist on the income tax books of the Federal government, had recently loaned some money to a few farmers in the Cedar Falls community. But he would only loan, Mr. Nix explained, where he could get a first mortgage on the land.

Fred went home and explained the situation to his mother. She was not surprised to learn that the effort to borrow money had proven so futile.

"But we can get the money from Judge Cason, Mother," explained Fred. And then he added, "I'm sure we can for Bill Nix said that he was loaning money to some of the folks around here and taking a mortgage on their land. We don't have a loan against ours so we can give him a first mortgage. I'll go and see him in the morning."

"I'm not so sure, Son, that I want you to see that man," said his mother thoughtfully.

"Why, what do you mean, Mother?" asked Fred earnestly, for he had learned to detect when his mother was thinking of something of importance.

His mother did not answer at once. She sat looking into space. Fred knew that her thoughts were in the past. He waited for her to speak.

Henrietta Dale -- that was her name -- looked old. Her hair was streaked with gray. There were heavy lines across her forehead, and deep wrinkles around her eyes. Her skin was tanned from exposure to the weather. Yet there was something fine about her face. Undoubtedly in her youth she had been a very charming girl; not beautiful in the same sense that Dresden china is beautiful, but attractive on account of her vitality and strength of character. Had she not been a brave soul, it would have been impossible for her to have gone through the recent years without losing her fine spirit of optimism.

Had Mrs. Dale lived in the present generation when women are so much more independent of men than they have been before she would, no doubt, have been a business or professional woman; but when she married Fred's father there was only one acceptable career for women. But she had managed the farm quite successfully; done as well, in fact, as most of the men in Cedar Falls. To rear a family of four children is no slight responsibility. But now Fred was eighteen, Mary fourteen, John nine, and Estelle five. All of the children were pictures of health and were a joy and satisfaction to their mother. She had been happy recently in spite of financial worries for she felt sure that better times were coming, especially since Fred had

begun to take a real interest in the farm. But now she was thinking of troubles of long ago.

"What is it, Mother? Won't you tell me?" pleaded Fred.

"Of course, I will," said his mother. "But I just wanted to think a little." Fred thought he saw her wipe tears from her eyes.

"Fred, you know that your father failed in business and that he went into bankruptcy?" said his mother.

"Yes."

"Well -- he borrowed money from Judge Cason once."

"What did that have to do with his failing in business?"

"It had most everything. Your father was one of the most popular men in the county at one time. He had been so kind to everyone that all the people liked him very much. Why, a dozen men made him the manager of their estates and the guardian of their children and he devoted so much time to helping them and looking after their troubles that he failed to realize that he might some day have troubles of his own. He had borrowed ten thousand dollars from Judge Cason when he expanded his grocery business and put in a general line of provisions, feed, and farm supplies. All the business was done on credit and in ordinary seasons most of the people paid their bills and he got along fairly well.

But when you were too young to take much interest in business conditions there was a period of depression like the one that we are passing through now and people couldn't settle their accounts in the fall as they usually did. At that time, the note which your father owed Judge Cason fell due, and he of course couldn't pay it. So the Judge threatened to sue your father and finally forced him into bankruptcy."

"But," asked Fred, "I don't see how that helped Judge Cason. If Dad couldn't pay the note how did forcing him out of business get the money?"

"It didn't get all the money, but when the business was settled up it paid about fifty cents on the dollar. The main idea was that it put your father out of business at a time in his life when it was almost impossible for him to get another start."

"But still, I don't see how that helped the Judge," insisted Fred.

"You know what a fine store and a marvelous business Allen and Wells have, don't you?" asked his mother.

"Yes."

"Well, Judge Cason owns that business. He started it at the time your father failed and he has made a fortune out of it."

"Oh, I see," said Fred thoughtfully.

Now for the first time Fred understood why his mother had always taken such an interest in the great department store which had almost a monopoly on the business for that section of the state. It might have been his father's. It might some day have been his.

Fred had never understood his father's problems. He was too young at the time his father died. He knew only that his father had not made a financial success and that the family had been deprived of many of the luxuries which they would have enjoyed. Now he began to see that there are many factors, aside from personal effort, which determine the success of a man in business. To a great extent they are victims of circumstance. The story had given Fred a new vision of his father's fine character.

"Do you want to go to Judge Cason and try to borrow the money, Fred?" asked his mother. Fred was silent. He hardly knew what to say.

Finally he asked, "Do you think there is anyone else who would let us have it?"

"No one that I know of," replied his mother.

Without telling his mother anything about it Fred had just realized that Judge Walde Cason was an uncle of "Red" Watterson, the boy who had been the only member of the F.F.A. chapter not to treat him with respect and friendly consideration. To place himself under any obligation to "Red" or any of his relatives was

most embarrassing. For a moment Fred was in favor of giving up all thought of going to the Judge for the money. But then he thought of how much he wanted to try out the farming program which he and Professor Langford had worked out. It would be cowardly, he thought, not to go on in the face of a little opposition.

"Don't you believe I can make the money from my plants and pay back the loan?" Fred asked his mother with some hesitation.

"It looks like you could since you already have them sold to a reliable company."

"Then I don't see why we shouldn't undertake the project, and I don't know of any other place that we can get the money for we have tried every one that I can find out anything about."

"All right," said his mother, who wanted to encourage Fred, "I'll go with you in the morning to see Judge Cason."

The next day Fred and his mother drove to Dawnville to see the Judge who still maintained an office in the bank building on the square, although he had little use for it.

Judge Waldo Cason was a pompous individual. He was almost as broad as he was tall, and wore a frock coat and carried a cane. Had he dared, no doubt he would have worn a silk hat, but as this would have been a little out of place in Dawnville he had to con-

tent himself with a wing collar and one of the ascot ties which were in style almost a quarter of a century ago. Waldo Cason had earned title by being judge of the city court during the early days of his professional career. The title pleased him, so long after he had given up this trivial position his family and friends had continued to address him as judge. Now, everyone did so, although few could remember that he had ever held a judgeship. In fact, Cason had never been much of a lawyer. He had saved his money. He was penurious. After accumulating a little surplus he had watched for persons in financial distress and had bought the property that was sold at public outcry. It was in this way that he had made his start in the financial world. He was well satisfied with himself and even now in this period of depression was laying the foundation for a greater fortune.

"How do you do, Mrs. Dale," greeted the Judge in the most pleasant manner one could assume. "I hope that you are getting along well?"

"Not very well, I am afraid, Judge," replied Mrs. Dale. "This is my son, Fred."

"Well, well, he's almost a man, isn't he?" said the judge looking at Fred. "And a mighty fine looking boy Mrs. Dale."

"We have come to see you about getting some money Judge" said Mrs. Dale coming direct to the

mission which brought them to the office of the man she feared and detested.

"How much do you want?" inquired the judge.

"About five hundred dollars to make a crop next year."

"Will you need that much Mrs. Dale?"

"Yes. Fred has a special project in which he is interested. He's studying vocational agriculture now at the Cedar Falls Consolidated School."

"Gone in for book farmin', eh?" laughed the Judge.

"I never had much confidence in that sort o' farmin', but I guess I can let you have the money this time. How long do you want it for?"

"Nine months or a year."

"Well, we'll make the note due about the middle of next November that'll give you plenty of time."

"That'll be all right" said Mrs. Dale.

"And of course you'll give me a mortgage on your land?"

"Yes. We are prepared to do that," replied Mrs. Dale.

"All right. I'll get the papers fixed up at once."

"Do you have the deed?"

"Yes, sir, we have everything here with us."

"Good, then there will be no delay."

The papers were soon prepared and Fred and his mother received the judge's check for five hundred dollars.

Fred was very happy. Now he could proceed with his plans for growing the tomato plants for the Caldwell Soup Company.

CHAPTER IX

FORMER CONTESTANTS MEET AGAIN

ONE morning in the early spring a roadster pulled up to the school grounds and a good looking young man stepped out. He glanced around for a moment as if to get his bearings. Observing a friendly expression on the face of one of the boys, he inquired where he might find Professor Langford.

“He’s in the office,” said Charlie Hardin, the boy to whom the visitor had spoken. Then the lad added politely, “I’ll show you where it is.”

“Thanks. I’d be glad if you would,” returned the stranger. “This is a splendid school building you have,” he added, by way of comment.

“It’s a lot better than we’ve ever had before,” said the boy proudly. “We got the new building because all the school districts in this section of the county were consolidated last year.”

“Yes, so they told me. You see, I have talked with Mr. Dominick and the members of the county board of education.”

“You’re not by any chance Dennis Martin from the State Department of Education, are you?” asked Charlie.

"Yes I am. You're a good guesser."

"Oh, we were expecting you. My name is Charlie Hardin. I don't suppose you remember me since you meet so many boys but I'm reporter for the chapter here and you have written me several letters."

"Charlie, I'm glad to meet you," said Dennis Martin, extending his hand. "And I couldn't forget you after reading that very fine account of your Florida trip which appeared in the *Dawnville News*."

"Thanks," muttered Charlie.

"That was a splendid article, Charlie," continued Martin with enthusiasm. "Did you know that you had the knack of telling a story in a very fascinating way?"

"No, sir," said the boy modestly. .

"Well, you have, and it's a rare gift. You ought to cultivate it. Maybe some day you might get to be the editor of a farm paper."

"I'd like that, I know," said Charlie, glowing with the inspiration that had come from a few words of encouragement.

"While I'm here I'd like to talk with you about your writing," said Martin. "Will we find the time?"

"Yes, sir. And all the other boys would like to talk with you. They have a lot of questions to ask about the chapter."

"Good. I'm going to be here all day."

Dennis Martin was a favorite with all the Future Farmers. He held the position of assistant state supervisor of agricultural education, but at the first annual convention of the F.F.A. the boys had elected him as state adviser. So well had he served that they had never thought of electing anyone else to the office. Martin was young enough to enter into the spirit of the boys' activities and old enough to have good judgment in all matters pertaining to policy.

When he and Charlie reached the office they found Professor Langford talking with Willard Henderson.

"Hello, Dennis," greeted Walter Langford. "Delighted to see you. Meet Willard Henderson, president of our F.F.A. chapter."

"Glad to know you, Willard," said Martin. "I understand you are to have a speaking contest here today?"

"Yes, sir, we were just talking about it," answered Willard. "It's going to be held tonight at the Kiwanis Club in Dawnville. I guess you will be here for it, won't you?"

"You bet," returned Martin. "That's the main reason I am here today. I understand you have two fine speakers."

"We can't tell how good they are yet, but we'd be glad to get your opinion after tonight. I guess you have heard several of the local contests?"

"Yes. Most of the winners have been fairly good, but I hear that you have an exceptionally fine contestant. Isn't his name Waters?"

"Watterson," corrected Langford. "We call him 'Red' here in the chapter. That's the fellow you're talking about, but who said he was good?"

"I heard some folks talking at the hotel this morning," explained Martin.

"Well, we might have even a better one than 'Red,'" suggested Charlie Hardin.

Since the Future Farmers of America were first organized, public speaking has been encouraged. It was the conception of the founder, and all the national officers who have had charge of the destinies of the association, that one of the main objectives of the F. F. A. was to train boys for leadership in the vocation of farming. The ability to speak in public is one of the very valuable assets of most great leaders. It is essential to explain to others in an effective way the principles for which one stands if any great sphere of influence is ever attained. This is especially true of the farming business. Few farmers speak well. For this reason most of the opinions concerning farming which reach the public are those voiced by politicians. Unfortunately, politicians are not always well informed about matters pertaining to farming and sometimes, it must be said, the motives which prompt them to urge certain reforms are selfish

ones. It is the hope of those in charge of the F.F.A. that within a comparatively short time a great army of young farmers will be developed in this country who can talk intelligently about the business in which they are engaged, and possibly some of them, like Washington and Jefferson, will sometime be heard in the legislative halls of the nation's capitol.

So impressed was United States Senator Arthur Capper of Kansas with the possibilities of training farm boys to express themselves that he sponsored a national speaking contest which is held each year in connection with the annual congress of the Future Farmers of America, in Kansas City. In this contest there are four speakers, one from each section of the United States. The boys in this final contest are presumably the best speakers in the entire organization; they must first have defeated the candidates for speaking honors in their own chapter, then the speakers in the congressional district, after that the state, and finally the region.

Four prizes, ranging from \$500 to \$100, are awarded to the speakers in the national contest. Also their expenses incident to the Kansas City trip are paid by Senator Capper.

The boys in the Cedar Falls Chapter of the, F.F.A., under the direction of their young and aggressive instructor, Walter Langford, decided to take part in all

recommended Future Farmer activities. This program, of course, included participation in the speaking contest.

Every F.F.A. member becomes something of a speaker. Before a boy can be raised from the "Green Hand" to the "Future Farmer" degree it is necessary for him to be able to lead a chapter discussion for at least ten minutes. In this way the boys learn to talk and also to discover the members who, have natural ability as speakers.

When the time came to begin making preparations for selecting a chapter representative, the boys at Cedar Falls agreed that "Red" Watterson and Fred Dale were the most likely prospects. Both boys willingly consented to engage in a contest for the oratorical honors.

Of the eight subjects upon which the boys might speak, "Red" selected "Cooperative Marketing -- The Solution of the Farm Problem," while Fred chose "What the F.F.A. Will Mean to American Agriculture."

As soon as Watterson had selected his subject he began a tour of the state to secure information. First, he went to the State College of Agriculture and talked with the marketing specialists in the Division of Agricultural Economics; then to the state library; and finally to the "co-op" managers from whom he obtained

first-hand information as to the way in which they handled different commodities.

Fred could not indulge in the luxury and expense of travel, so wrote to the state advisers of the F.F.A., and secured from them reports of the achievements of their most outstanding chapters. Then from the farm papers he obtained the views of economists relative to current farm problems.

The two boys worked faithfully in the preparation of their papers. Finally, they completed the tasks. Then came the far more difficult job of preparing for the delivery of their addresses.

By this time Judge Waldo Cason, uncle of "Red" Watterson, became greatly interested in the contest. As a lawyer who had been none too successful in public speaking, he was very eager to see his nephew distinguish himself as an orator. If the truth were known, it is also possible that he did not care to have any member of the Cason family defeated by a Dale. But, at any rate, the Judge decided that his nephew should have some training in delivery, and arranged for the boy to come to Dawnville each day for a period of instruction under the local teacher of expression.

Fred had no one to coach him. In fact, he hesitated to say his speech aloud in the presence of any person except his mother. Instead, he did most of his practicing in the middle of a five-acre corn field where he

was sure he could be alone. From the school library, however, he obtained a book on "Public Speaking" which impressed him very much. This book stated the fundamental principles of an effective talk: First, that the audience be able to hear and understand every word delivered by the speaker. Second, that sincerity of manner and expression are more effective than a polished, yet formal, delivery.

Both boys were now nervously awaiting the contest.

Dennis Martin spent a busy day at the Cedar Falls Consolidated School. In addition to inspecting the work of Walter Langford, he talked with Willard Henderson and helped him plan a piece of community service work for the chapter through which the boys would aid in the development of a live-at-home program through the cannery of the surplus fruits and vegetables which were brought to the school cannery.

With Charlie Hardin he outlined a publicity program and taught the inexperienced reporter how to construct a typical news story. He told the secretary how to make out the chapter reports, and helped the treasurer rule off the forms for keeping his records.

At the chapter meeting which was held after the close of school, Martin aided in the organization of a thrift bank and made a talk on the importance of saving money. He told the boys that when they graduated

from the Cedar Falls Consolidated School there were three and only three things they could do: First, they could continue their education in college or in some institution in which they could secure specialized training. Second, they could enter the business of farming either as operators, laborers, or on some basis of partnership at home. Third, they could go to town and get a job. Martin suggested that most of the boys who elected to study vocational agriculture in high school would probably choose one of the first two pathways -- that is, obtain more schooling or go into the farming business. In fact, more than sixty percent of the vocational agriculture boys in the United States remain on the farm after completing their high school course and approximately ten percent go on to college.

Dennis Martin in his talk said, "Regardless of which of these two things you prefer to do, one thing is certain -- you will need some money."

Then he said that any boy who could save enough to pay his expenses in college for one year -- say \$500 -- would find some way to finish even though his parents and relatives were not able to assist him. He pointed out that many vocational boys now well established in farming had made their start through the saving of a small sum which they had invested in live stock and farm equipment. He urged the boys to save systematically and pointed out that it was the habit of

saving that was important and not the amount that one was able to lay aside.

The boys were greatly impressed with the wisdom of Martin's talk and made plans to secure the literature on Economics and Banking which the American Bankers Association of New York gladly sends to any school which promises to make use of it.

After the meeting adjourned, Martin and Langford sat down in the office. "At what time does the Kiwanis Club meet tonight?" Martin asked.

"At seven," replied Langford.

"Well then, we have lots of time. Tell me something about the plant project that I heard the boys talking about today."

Langford explained how they had met Caldwell and obtained the blanket contract to grow tomato plants for him.

In his effort to safeguard the work of the teachers under his supervision Martin inquired, "Do you know how to handle tomato plants on a commercial scale?"

"Yes, I think I do. You see, an Extension specialist came out here from the College. Then we secured all the literature available on the subject. We have gone over that carefully and discussed it in class. We have selected the land best adapted to plant growing and I have ordered the shipping crates."

"Are all the boys growing plants?"

"Yes. Most of them are growing only one acre, but Fred Dale has between five and ten acres."

"Fred Dale? Isn't he the boy who is to speak tonight?"

"Yes."

"How is he getting along with his school work?"

"Fine."

"Ever had any serious trouble with him since he re-entered school?"

"No. He has been a model student, except for the fact that he had a fight with 'Red' Watterson while we were in Florida."

"I know about that."

"You know about it?"

"Yes."

"How did you find out?"

"Your county superintendent was talking to Jeppson about it at the convention of the State Education Association."

Langford was disturbed. He had no idea that anyone in Cedar Falls or Dawnville knew anything about the trouble the boys had had. "You mean he was talking to the state supervisor?" he inquired.

"Yes."

"What did he say?"

"That a fellow by the name of Judge Cason, who seems to be related to the Watterson boy, wanted Fred expelled from school."

"What did Dominick tell him?" asked Langford anxiously.

"Dominick said he wouldn't recommend any such action to the board that Fred was getting along fine and was making a good, record under your direction."

"Did he say that about me?" inquired Langford who, never felt sure that he had the confidence of the county superintendent.

"Sure. He praised you to the skies. Said that when you first came to Cedar Falls he thought you were too easy on the boys, but that, he was delighted with the way you had handled the situation."

"I was afraid," said Langford, "that Dominick didn't think much of me. I know that we didn't have the same ideas about the way to handle boys."

"Why man, he's sold on you and your war one hundred percent."

"That's encouraging," said Langford, who was extremely eager to make good on his first job. Then looking at his watch he suggested that they ought to start for Dawnville to be sure that everything was ready for the meeting.

When they reached the hotel where the Kiwanis meeting was to be held the boys were waiting. "Slim"

Carson was there with a quartet to sing a few F.F.A. songs; Charlie Hardin, in true reporter style, was on hand with a pencil and notebook; Willard Henderson was talking to Henry Knoll, president of the Kiwanis Club; and the two young men who were to speak were attempting to find a quiet place where they might give one last thought to what they were to say.

President Knoll, suggesting that it was time for the meeting to start, led the way into the dining-room. "Red" and Fred were assigned the seats of honor on both sides of the president. The boys who were to sing sat near the piano, and the other boys from Cedar Falls, as well as Martin and Langford, were placed at the speakers' table.

There were about fifty members of the Kiwanis Club, but tonight each had invited a guest, and the dining-room was crowded. Fred had never talked before such a large audience of men and was very nervous.

The tension was relieved, however, by the humorous way in which the club members introduced some of their guests. Apparently, thought Fred, these Kiwanians were not so serious minded as they appeared. Then, too, he enjoyed his conversation with President Knoll, who told him how much the Club was interested in agriculture and in vocational education.

At the beginning of the program, "Slim" and his quartet sang "F.F.A. Will Shine Tonight."

Dennis Martin was presented and explained that the winner of the speaking contest would represent his chapter later in a congressional district contest, and that the winner from that group would have the privilege of speaking in the finals of the state contest to be held in connection with the annual convention.

“Red” Watterson was the first speaker. He rose with dignity and began to talk with all the self-assurance of a professional speaker. He told of the depressed condition of American agriculture. He pictured the poor business methods that farmers practice by selling in a market where the other man sets the price and buying in a market where the other man tells him how much he will have to pay.

In contrast with a situation like this he explained how farmers sold their products through commodity cooperative marketing associations. He told the story of how a few farmers from Denmark years ago had come to this country and discovered that the farmers of New York sold their dairy products through an association which gave them some control over the market fluctuations, and showed how these Danish farmers had developed the idea until it had brought prosperity to their entire nation.

“Red” spoke with confidence. He had learned his speech well. His voice was well modulated, his pro-

nunciation perfect. His gestures were graceful, but Fred thought, a little mechanical.

When he closed by telling the story of how an orange is marketed by the growers of California, he received a generous burst of applause. It was apparent that his talk had been well received.

Between the speeches, President Knoll asked “Slim” and the boys to sing again. Fred was glad to have a few more moments to think.

Then it was Fred’s time to talk. He rose to his feet and addressed the president. His deep bass voice commanded immediate attention. He was wearing a blue serge suit, a white shirt, and a black tie. At first he seemed ill at ease, realizing perhaps that he was addressing the leading citizens of the county among whom there were men representing professions in which public speaking plays an important part. But as he launched into his subject of what the F.F.A. will mean to American agriculture his embarrassment vanished.

“There can be no worthy achievement without effort,” he said. “When you learn that a man has run a faster foot race than has ever been run before, built a better business, or made a greater speech, you know that a part of his very soul has entered into the accomplishment and made it possible. It is so with farming. Too many of those engaged in that vocation have done

so through force of circumstances and not from choice. They have had no training for the work and have no vision of its possibilities. To them the work is drudgery because they have no desire to make improvement in it -- no goal toward which they are striving, no incentive like the golf player who goes out to the links each day with the hope that he can lower his record by one stroke. The F.F.A. will bring the dawning of a new day when farmers will feel no social inferiority and enjoy the life which most nearly makes possible the freedom for which this country was established."

Then he told the story of a boy who had no ambition, no philosophy of life, no sense of obligation to his fellowmen, but who through the F.F.A. had been fired with a burning desire to become a worthy member of society and a farmer of distinction. "There are thousands of such boys in this nation," he concluded, as he pointed out how the F.F.A. had set the feet of this boy in the pathway that leads to the goals he had visualized.

Perhaps there were some of the audience who did not know that Fred was telling the story of his own experience, but Langford did and a lump came into his throat and he swallowed hard to keep back the tears.

When Fred had concluded, President Knoll announced that the judges would retire and reach a decision as to which of the two boys would represent

the Cedar Falls Chapter in the congressional district speaking contest.

While the judges were deliberating, Willard Henderson explained the community improvement program which the chapter had developed.

Before Willard had finished the judges returned. The Reverend J. A. Willanson, pastor of the Baptist Church, was asked to announce the decision.

"It goes without saying," he began, "that both speeches were fine. We wish that both boys might represent their chapter. Since this is not possible, however, we have given the decision to Fred Dale."

CHAPTER X

AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY

AS SPRING gave way to early summer, the boys at Cedar Falls watched their tomato plants with anxiety. Because of the unusually cold weather for a month or two following the time of planting the seed, growth had been retarded. Now it would be but a short time until Mr. Caldwell would expect them, under terms of the contract, to begin shipping plants. If these were too small, it was possible that they would not be accepted; and most assuredly the Caldwell Soup Company would not renew the contract unless the plants were large and thrifty.

Langford knew, of course, that the growth could be hastened by a side application of nitrate of soda, or some other carrier of readily available nitrogen. But he was not certain as to the amount that should be applied nor did he know how soon the desired response might be expected. In his perplexity, he thought of his professors at the State College of Agriculture and decided to make a weekend trip in order to get from them the information which seemed essential to the success of the plant project.

Accordingly, Langford packed his bag after school had closed one Friday afternoon and drove to Dawnville to catch the 5:30 train. It would not be possible for him to reach the college that night but he could get to Atlanta and then go on early Saturday morning. This plan rather appealed to him and as he drove to the station he was trying to decide whether he would go to a night baseball game or see a good show. Before reaching a conclusion he arrived at the depot and had just time enough to store his car in a garage when the train whistled. Buying his ticket, he rushed out on the platform and was surprised to see Jim Adair.

Jim had been a student at the State University while Langford had been in college. As college boys they had not been particularly good friends but everyone had known Jim for the reason that he was a four-letter man. Jim and Walter had met each other in Y.M.C.A. work, however, so Walter greeted him most cordially, "Hi there, Jim! Where are you going?"

"To Atlanta," responded Jim as they climbed into the smoker.

"What are you doing down in this neck of the woods?" inquired Langford. "I thought you lived in the city?"

"I have been down to look over some land around Cedar Falls."

"Cedar Falls? Why, that's where I live. I'm in charge of the school there -- teaching vocational agriculture. Why didn't you look me up?"

"I didn't know you were there, Walter. And besides I was on a hurried trip, just came in this noon."

In the University, Jim Adair had studied electrical engineering and on his graduation had secured a position with the Southern Power Company. He had been out of school several years and had made rapid advancement in his work. Now he was a supervisor for his company and visited the smaller power plants which they owned throughout the state.

"The Southern Power Company doesn't own any property near Cedar Falls, does it?" inquired Langford, who knew of Jim's position.

"Not at present, but it is possible that we will in the near future."

"How interesting. It's not a secret, is it?"

"Well not exactly, but we never want too many people to know what we are thinking about until the plans are made. But I don't mind telling you. We are thinking about locating a dam on the Tugalo River between Dawnville and Cedar Falls and building a plant to serve industry in that section of the state. We are also interested in the electrification of the farms, but that is something in the future. Just now we are interested in selling industrial power. You know that

the cotton mills are moving out of New England and coming into the South. Already we have fifty percent of the spindles of the country and operate seventy percent of the spindle-hours. We have the power, cheap labor, an ideal climate, and the raw product. It's just a matter of time, so our engineers tell us, until all the principal textile units will be located in the South, and to handle the business we expect to have a power system developed so that we can switch 'juice' from Virginia to Louisiana."

"When will you know definitely about the plant at Cedar Falls?"

"It will be sometime next fall -- in November when the directors hold their annual meeting."

"I guess that plant would mean a lot to the country around Cedar Falls if it's put in, wouldn't it?"

"It surely would. That's the reason why we don't care to advertise it much. It would increase the price of all the property we tried to buy for one thing. But the news will leak out -- has already I think, for there is an old fellow by the name of Cason there who is wise to the proposition. He owns stock in the company and reads all the reports. But he won't say anything about it for they tell me he's shrewd."

"How big a proposition would it be?" inquired Langford.

"Can't tell yet, but there would be enough employees of our company located there to make a little town and it is quite likely that several industrial concerns would locate near the plant."

"Gee, that would start a boom in our little village, wouldn't it?"

"Yes, and this fellow Cason knows it. I came down here to look over the lay of the land and he found it out so drove me over the country I wanted to see. While we were together he told me that he was getting hold of the land in the section near the river as fast as he could."

While they were talking it flashed across the mind of Walter Langford that Fred and his mother had borrowed money from Judge Cason to make a crop this year. He knew that their note ran until the middle of November, or about the time that the decision of the directors of the power company would be made. Langford knew, now, why Cason had been so willing to loan them the money. He realized that the Judge would be glad to have an excuse to take over the farm in the event that the boy and his mother could not pay off the note when it was due. He said nothing of this to his friend Adair, but in his mind he resolved to help Fred all he could so that there would be no doubt that his tomato project would be a success.

Langford and Adair talked on about the industrial development of the South. Adair brought out what a boon it would be to the agricultural population of the South to have a larger proportion of the people engaged in industry. Not only would it cut down agricultural production, but it would furnish a market for many new farm products and help relieve the South of the curse of a one-crop system of farming. He told of how excellent markets for milk, butter, poultry, and vegetables had developed around the power plants and cotton mills and how the farmers in these sections were profiting from the outlet for these additional cash crops.

At the terminal station the young men parted and Langford felt that the talk had been a most profitable and inspiring one to him. He realized also that it had been given somewhat in confidence and for that reason reached the conclusion that it would not be proper for him to speak to Fred or his mother about it.

The next day at the College he secured the information that he needed concerning the application of a side-dressing to the tomato plants and was glad to learn that there was ample time to push the plants to the proper size before time for shipping.



The next few weeks were busy ones for Fred. He was spending every hour that he could spare from school with his tomato plants. While he had the help of the "hands" on the place he never allowed them to go into the field of tomato plants unless he was with them to supervise the work. He had to keep up his studies at school and found the work in mathematics very difficult. He did not have a mind that responded to theorems or equations. On the other hand his English and history classes afforded him much pleasure and he began to understand why his father had so enjoyed reading good books. Agriculture was easy. He looked forward to the ninety minutes each day that he, with the other agriculture students, spent under Professor Langford.

In addition to all his other tasks, the ordeal of speaking in the congressional district contest hung over him like a pall. It was not that he minded speaking, for nothing had ever brought him the thrill that came from speaking to the Kiwanis Club at Dawnville. He felt that he had held the attention of his audience. He could feel the power that he had exerted over them in the word pictures he had painted. His story of what the F.F.A. had meant to one boy held them in rapt attention. He recalled that once, when he had paused for a moment, the quiet which invaded the room startled him, but later he realized that this was merely an evi-

dence of the concentration with which his audience was listening. Yet he was apprehensive about the district contest, not because he feared to speak, but because he wanted so much to win.

The day for the contest arrived and the boys in the chapter at Cedar Falls seemed more excited about it than Fred. They decided that to encourage him all the members would attend. The school busses were again pressed into service and the boys drove over to New London where the contest was to be held.

By this time the boys in the Cedar Falls Chapter had bought the official uniform of the Future Farmers of America -- blue shirt and trousers with a gold insignia on the left breast and an "Overseas" cap of blue, trimmed with gold braid. They looked very fine and impressive in their new suits. "Slim" Carson was jubilant. He led the boys in one song after another.

When they arrived at New London they found there were to be six speakers in the contest. Looking them over, Charlie Hardin said that Fred was the only fellow in the crowd who looked like an orator. And Charlie was about right, for as soon as the last speaker had finished it was apparent to any discriminating judge that Fred's talk was far superior to any of the others. It only remained to discover whether the judges were of that mind. They were. Congressman Bland, who served as one of the judges, announced the decision.

He was extravagant in his praise of Fred. Never on the floor of the House of Representatives, he said, had he listened to a more finished speech. He praised Fred's voice -- said that it was the finest he had heard since the days of William Jennings Bryan.

The boys at Cedar Falls were very happy. They predicted that Fred would win the state contest; they even began to talk about his going to the national contest at Kansas City. Fred said nothing, but he hoped that the boys were right. He wanted to win the state contest more than he had ever wanted anything in his life -- unless it was to make a success of his plant business.

After the contest at New London, the next week was a very busy one for the boys at Cedar Falls. Their plants were ready for shipping. Professor Langford had ordered the knock-down crates and several shop periods had been spent in tacking them together.

The one difficult thing about handling the plants was that they were all to be shipped at the same time. Every available laborer in the community was pressed into service, including the younger children in the families of the F.F.A. members.

Langford arranged with the agent at Dawnville to get cars set on the track for loading and secured trucks to haul the plants to town.

Fred had the biggest job of all. To pull and pack the plants from one acre of land is no small undertaking,

but to multiply the task six or seven times means real work. He had to go to Dawnville to secure enough labor to get the job done quickly. While shipping plants he had no time to go to school. But his teachers were so pleased with the record he had made in the speaking contest that they gladly excused him.

From daylight until dark, Fred's "hands" worked. Since he was paying them for the number of plants they pulled they worked long hours, for there was very little work to be done in the community at that time of year and money was scarce. The plants were pulled from the drills by hand and tied into bunches, then packed in the crates which resemble those in which peaches are shipped. As the crates piled up they were hauled to Dawnville and placed in cars.

The project attracted much attention. Men gathered around the tracks in Dawnville where the plants were being loaded. Many came to Cedar Falls to see how the pulling was done. They all asked many questions: "How much were the boys getting for the plants?" "Where were they being shipped?" "What was the man going to do with so many?" "How had they secured the order for them?"

The conclusion of those who obtained this information was that the plant business is a fine game—and that it was strange that no one in the country had discovered it before. In the minds of both the farmers

and the business men, the value of vocational agricultural instruction was increased a hundred fold and many who had condemned "book farmin'" as rank nonsense conceded that they might possibly have been mistaken.

At last the plants were all shipped and the boys had a period of rest which they greatly enjoyed. To celebrate they decided to give a chapter barbecue to which they invited the board of education and the county school superintendent. Mr. Dominick was delighted with the success of the project and made a talk in which he said that education must deal with the problems of the people if it was to have any value. It was the first time, he said, that any school in the county had attempted to deal with the problem of farm diversification, upon which the standard of living and the culture of the people depended. He complimented the boys on the work of their chapter; praised Professor Langford; and lauded Fred for his record both as a farmer and an orator.

It was but a few days after the plants were shipped that Mr. Caldwell sent the boys checks for their plants.

One morning when the mail man came he left a long impressive-looking envelope addressed to Fred Dale. When Fred opened it he discovered a check for \$1,250. Never in all his life had he had one-tenth as

much money in his own name. It seemed too good to be true. He rushed out to his mother.

"See here, Mother!" he shouted, waving the check. "What do you think of that?" he added proudly.

His mother took the check in her hand and looked at it intently. "I think it is wonderful, Fred."

Mrs. Dale was not only delighted to know that the project had been so profitable, but she was even more pleased to think that her son had begun a successful career. No greater happiness can come to a mother than for her children to succeed through honest effort.

"What shall I do with it?" asked Fred.

"You had better go up town and put it in the bank and then go directly to Judge Cason and give him a check for the \$500 we owe him."

"All right. I'll go right now," said Fred excitedly.

After he had gone his mother wept tears of joy. She was so glad to know that they had been able to payoff the obligation to Judge Cason in ample time, for ever since the mortgage on the place had been given she had feared that something would happen so that they would not be able to pay it off on time. She knew of no reason why the Judge would be interested in having their farm, but wondered what they would do in the event that they should lose their home.

When Fred arrived at the bank, instead of going to the window of one of the paying tellers and deposit-

ing the check as one would ordinarily do, he asked to see Mr. Warren Smith, cashier. Fred could not help but remember his previous conversation with Mr. Smith. He wanted to show the banker that he had been right -- that the plant project had been safe and that the loan which he had requested would have been paid long before it was due.

"How are you, Fred?" greeted Mr. Smith. "Come in." He opened the wicker gate behind which his desk was located.

"You remember, Mr. Smith," began Fred, "that some time ago I came and talked with you about a loan of \$500?"

"Yes, I remember," said the banker.

"You know I told you I was going to grow some tomato plants?"

"Yes. And I hear that you did well," said the cashier pleasantly as though he were greatly pleased.

"Yes, sir. I just received this check for them" Fred handed the check to the banker.

Mr. Smith looked at the check and then at the boy. "Fred," he said, "this is fine. I congratulate you. You, and your teacher, and the other boys have done something that none of the men in this county have done. You have brought us a new money crop. I'm proud of you. I wish that we might have loaned you the money but it was impossible. We were at about the end of

our row along the farm financing business, but this is encouraging. What are you going to do with the money?"

"I'm going to deposit it and then go down and give Judge Cason a check for the \$500 which we borrowed from him."

"When is your note due with Judge Cason?" asked the cashier.

"The fifteenth of November,"

"Why that's almost six months from now. Will he accept payment at this time?"

"I don't know," said Fred, to whom this was a new idea.

"Have you paid him the interest?"

"Yes," said Fred, "he took out the interest when we borrowed the money."

"Do you think he will refund the interest if you pay the note now -- I mean for the five or six months which remain before the note is due?"

"I don't know," said the boy.

"Well, I'll tell you what I'd advise. A business man always saves all the interest he can. Instead of paying Judge Cason now, why don't you deposit this in our Savings Department where it will draw interest? In that way you will not be losing the interest that you have already paid Judge Cason, but you will at the same time be making some money with your money."

This sounded like good business advice to Fred. It occurred to him that Judge Cason made his living from interest which his money earned. He hated to give the Judge one cent that he didn't have to, so was favorably impressed with the idea of delaying payment until the note was due.

Suddenly he remembered his conversation with his mother. "But my mother expects me to pay Judge Cason today," objected Fred.

"I'm sure your mother will see the wisdom of the plan I have suggested," countered the banker. So Fred decided to put the money in the Savings Department of the Merchants and Farmers Bank.

When he returned home and told his mother what he had done she was not very much pleased.

"But the money is perfectly safe in the bank, isn't it?" asked Fred.

"I guess so," replied his mother.

"Then I don't see why we can't keep it instead of paying Old Judge Cason so he can loan it to somebody else and get interest twice."

"All right, we'll leave it in the bank," said his mother, wishing to encourage her son by giving him some business responsibility.



With several other candidates, Fred received the degree of Future Farmer

CHAPTER XI

FUTURE FARMERS MEET

THE annual convention of the Future Farmers in Fred's state was held at Lake Henry in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Here in a beautiful forest of white pine and hardwoods, the representatives of more than one hundred chapters scattered from the mountains to the sea gathered in mid-summer to carry on the business of their organization and indulge in a week of recreation.

A banker in Atlanta whose only son had died while on a camp in these same mountains had given the site to the F.F.A. organization of the state. The assembly hall, which was also used as a dining-room, had been erected from funds raised on the note of the state association shortly after the land had been donated. The Highway Department of the state had constructed a gravel road to the camp in order that the big school busses in which the boys traveled might be driven to the clubhouse entrance. Grouped around the central clubhouse there were a number of log cabins which had been built by the boys. Every member of the organization who came to the camp was expected to do-

nate at least three hours' work each day. This was the boys' plan for improving the property. In this way the cabins had been built without any cost so far as labor was concerned.

It is hardly considered proper in most states for the General Assembly to appropriate money for a thing which most people would regard as nonessential. For that reason, perhaps, the members of the legislature had made no direct appropriation for the Future Farmer camp, but had made \$5,000 available for the promotion of activities in which vocational boys were interested. Since this money was to be spent at the discretion of the state supervisor of agricultural education, it was possible to use a part of it each year in buying additional equipment for the dining-hall, kitchen, and bedrooms.

The camp was open from the beginning of summer until school began in the fall. Any chapter, or group of boys, might, so long as there was room, spend a week at the camp. The boys paid a small fee to cover the cost of food and servant hire. Through strict economy there had always been a small surplus in this fund and, since it was money that had been paid in by the boys, it was spent for boats, baseballs, bats, tennis courts, and other things for which it would not be wise to spend public funds.

The camp itself had no name, but it soon came to be known as Camp Henry. When the boys acquired the property the lake had an unpronounceable Indian name which was known to only a few of the natives. The boys decided that they would change the name, so in honor of Henry Groseclose of Virginia -- the man who in a Baltimore hospital worked out the fundamentals for the F.F.A. -- they decided upon Lake Henry. It was their fond hope that the time might come when Mr. Groseclose could visit their camp and see how crystal clear was the mountain lake that had been named in his honor.

Lake Henry was a delightful place to swim on hot days, but the water was too cold to be very pleasant on chilly mornings. Trout were plentiful and at certain seasons of the year would strike a fly. In the woods there were squirrels. Late in the fall, boys would come over weekends to gather nuts, and they were distressed to see that all the chestnut trees were dying from blight.

The climate was delightful. No matter how hot the days were in the lower part of the state, it was always cool in the mountains and at night it was necessary to sleep under blankets.

By having the camp open all summer, it gave every member of the organization a chance to get an outing without interfering with his farm work. The boys from

the southern part of the state came first and then later those in the northern sections.

While there was generous provision made for recreation on the program of the annual convention, it was primarily a business meeting. The officers-elect were expected to attend in order that they might be instructed in the duties of their positions. Then, if the camp had not been filled to capacity, others might make application for reservations.

Since Cedar Falls was a comparatively new chapter, Langford was permitted to bring ten boys. He selected the officers for the new year and those who had served so faithfully during the first year of the chapter's existence. Fred, of course, did not count among the number, for as a speaker in the final contest he was the guest of the state association.

Willard Henderson and the other boys who had served as officers with him were thrilled by meeting two hundred and fifty boys representing more than one hundred chapters. It made them realize that the F.F.A. was a going concern and that they had many "brothers" throughout the state who were fostering the same objectives as they had attempted to promote in their work at Cedar Falls. Prior to the convention their only contacts with other F.F.A. members had been the boys from the school at Rentz who had installed the Cedar Falls Chapter and the few boys from the Dade

County Agricultural School at Miami who had visited their camp during the Christmas holidays. Of course, they had read *The Planter*, which was published by their state association, and the F.F.A. Section of *Agricultural Education*, but this was not so impressive as a personal contact.

Many of the boys at the convention were wearing the F.F.A. uniform, but most of them had some mark of distinction to indicate the school they were attending. The boys from Cedar Falls were wearing white-and-green arm bands. Fred Dale's fame as a speaker seemed to have reached every chapter in the state for it was not uncommon to talk to a boy and have him say, "You're from Cedar Falls? That's where Fred Dale lives, isn't it?" Charlie Hardin, as a joke, said that it was the irony of fate for a reporter to make someone else famous and never be known by anybody except the editor who printed his stuff. But Charlie and the other boys from Cedar Falls were proud of the reputation which Fred was acquiring and did everything they could to disseminate additional information about Fred's ability.

The first night program at the convention was devoted to the raising of "Green Hands" to the degree of "Future Farmer." The initiation team from Statham, which had acquired somewhat of a reputation, was to put on the work. It was difficult to find "Green

Hands” to initiate, however, for most of the boys at the convention were juniors and seniors and had already received the second degree. Willard Henderson discovered that it was possible for Fred Dale to get the second degree, so the boys from Cedar Falls insisted that he go through the ceremony. Fred was glad to have the opportunity.

Along with several other candidates, he was ushered to the door of the assembly room blindfolded.

“Who comes to the portals of our assembly seeking knowledge of the deeper mysteries of agrarian life and brotherly love?” demanded the Farm Watch Dog.

“Friends who are seeking membership in this most worthy band,” said the conductor, “and who wish knowledge of the rights and privileges which come from a closer friendship.”

The Farm Watch Dog then asked, “Have they shown by interest in our organization, in agricultural problems, and in community improvement, and by plans for improving the practices on their home farms that they will uphold the honor and dignity of our organization?”

“They have fulfilled the requirements of Green Hands and wish to become Future Farmers,” replied the conductor.

“Bid them enter,” said the Farm Watch Dog, “and follow the steps that all Green Hands have taken before them. And let them mark well the way that leads to their goal.”

As the candidates entered the assembly room they were stopped four times. The first who stopped them by roughly striking both shoulders said, “I am *Ignorance*.” The second, a moment later uttered, “I am *Waste*.” The third, who blocked the path of the candidates was *Indolence*, and the fourth *Isolation*.

After passing these obstructions, the candidates reached the president, who told them that these were the stumbling blocks which stood in the way of a happy and prosperous community and asked if the candidates were willing and ready to aid in casting these menaces from the communities in which they lived. Of course all agreed, so the president said they would then be instructed in the four ideals for which the F.F.A. stood ideals which would overcome the obstacles which had blocked their pathway.

In the course of this instruction where the candidates had met *Ignorance* they now encountered *Wisdom* who said, “Those who succeed best in life, in whatever occupation, are themselves students and know the means whereby great problems may be solved. Ignorance leads to indolence, neglect, waste, want, and poverty. Industry leads to productivity, plenty, and happiness.

My symbol is the owl, traditionally the wisest of all birds. May this symbol inspire you to study all of your farming problems.”

The candidates were then brought to *Thrift*, who had replaced *Waste*. And *Thrift*, through the mouth of the treasurer, made this impressive speech:

“Candidates, you have been conducted to this place to learn more of the value of Thrift. The story is told that Joseph, son of Jacob, was sent by his father to meet his brethren who were feeding their father’s flocks at Shechem. His brethren hated him and when he drew near unto them they stripped him of his coat of many colors, which his father had given him, and sold him into captivity in Egypt. Later, because he found favor with the Lord, he was put in charge of the storehouses of Egypt to direct the production and storing of food against the seven years of famine. In due time his brethren heard that there was food in Egypt and made a journey to that country that they and their families might not starve. Joseph knew them at once and not only gave them food but returned in each man’s sack the money which he had brought to buy food, and in further token of his forgiveness, asked that they bring their father, together with their flocks and families, to Egypt that they might enjoy food and protection through the famine.

“My symbol is the cross section of an ear of golden corn. May this be a constant reminder of the story of this boy who rendered this service to his needy brothers. May the example of this thrifty man, Joseph, be your guide. Save and prepare for the lean years in order that you may be better able to support yourself, your family, and the worthy enterprises of your community.”

As the “Green Hands” followed the pathway that led to the “Future Farmer” degree they found that *Labor* stood in the place where they had formerly found *Indolence*. Here, they were reminded, their forefathers had made, through their labor, a great country and that there could be no accomplishment without labor.

Next, they found that *Isolation* had been replaced by *Cooperation*. Each of the candidates was allowed to remove his blindfold and was given a fiber of rope which he was told to break. This each did easily. Then the fiber was replaced with a rope and the same command given. None of them was able to break the rope. This was the dramatic way in which the strength of cooperation was brought to their attention.

The candidates had been informed, through this ceremony, that the four great ideals of the F.F.A. are *Wisdom, Thrift, Labor, and Cooperation*.

Following this first part of the initiation into the second degree, the candidates, after a few words from the president, were conducted on another farm tour.

This time, instead of finding an old gate that would not open, they were ushered through one that worked perfectly. Where on the "Green Hand" tour there had been a mud walk, now there was a concrete drive. The old barn had been replaced by a new and modern structure in which all the up-to-date conveniences were demonstrated. The ceiling in the new smoke house was high enough so that there was no danger of bumping one's head; and in the new and spacious tool shed all the machinery was well-oiled and in its proper place. It was impressed upon the candidates that this was the type of farming for which the F.F.A. stood.

The initiation was completed when the candidates were again brought to the president who said, "Every worth-while reward carries with it an obligation. You have been marked for distinction in our organization. For that reason, we shall expect more of you. Your instructor, your parents, and the community will expect you to do much more as a Future Farmer than as a Green Hand. As a token of our esteem we have advanced you to the degree of Future Farmer. In return we will expect more loyalty and work for the F.F.A. and more service to your fellowmen."

After the initiation was over the members gathered around the boys and congratulated them on the honor of being raised to the second degree at a state meeting.

Fred appreciated the distinction very much, but the next day witnessed an initiation which had no ritual and no foolishness about it. This was the awarding of the "Planter" keys to the boys who were given the third degree. Only two percent of the members of any state organization may hold this degree which is conferred only at annual meetings.

Twenty boys received the "Planter" degree and as each came forward to receive the gold key which is the symbol of the honor, his accomplishments were briefly outlined.

Albert Swan was one of the first boys to get the degree. He was only a junior in high school, but already had earned enough money through his farming efforts to buy and pay for an 80-acre farm of his own. In addition, he had distinguished himself in athletics and in his studies was rated among the upper third of his class.

That is the degree, thought Fred, which I would like to get one year from this time.

The week's convention was a busy one.

Each morning the boys got up at six-thirty and in their underwear or pajamas formed on the drill field

to take setting-up exercises under one of the teachers who had been a captain in the World War. Then they ran to the showers for a cold bath.

Meals were served cafeteria style and each day a squad was selected to aid with the serving, clear the tables, and wash the dishes. It wasn't such a disagreeable task because there were so many at work that the job lasted but a short time.

Each morning the officers were instructed in their duties. Fred went with Charlie Hardin to the section that was devoted to training reporters.

The afternoons were devoted to play and to trips through the mountains. One day they went into North Carolina and visited the Biltmore estates, where the native mountain people are taught to make pottery and weave very fine homespun cloth. One night they climbed to the top of Big Mountain, the highest peak in the state, and slept on the mountain top in order that they might see the sun rise. When there was no trip to be made the boys played baseball or tennis or pitched horseshoes. Interest in all these games was stimulated by tournaments in which prizes were awarded to the winners.

Each night there was a picture show given in the assembly room. The first part of the program was always of a technical nature dealing with farming problems of

interest to the people of the state. But the second half of the show was made up of comedies secured through a film, distributing house located in Atlanta.

The boys took a very great interest in the election of officers, but the representatives from Cedar Falls, not having been at any previous conventions, were not acquainted with the candidates. They did the natural thing, however, and voted for those living in their own section of the state.

Dennis Martin, serving as state F.F.A. adviser, was in charge of the camp. While he was familiar with every detail of the program and the activities of the boys, his hand did not appear often on the surface. He greeted Fred Dale with a cordial handclasp and told him that he was sure when he heard his talk at Dawnville that he would be one of the speakers in the final contest.

Discipline was not a problem at the camp. The only time that there was any disturbance was the first night. This occurred among the boys who were sleeping on the second floor of the assembly room. Dennis Martin and several of the teachers had cots in this dormitory. After the lights had been put out at ten o'clock the boys, being in new surroundings, did not go to sleep at once. Several began to roll rocks or other heavy objects across the floor. One of the boys tied a rope across the passage way between the rows of cots and

another boy who was sneaking around snapping others with the end of a wet bath towel fell over it much to the amusement of those who were watching him. Dennis Martin, in a quiet way, decided to put a stop to the noise. He watched for prowling figures and seeing one crept out cautiously to catch him. Waiting behind one of the beds where he was out of sight he reached out and grabbed a prowler by the collar. It proved to be very funny when he found that he had caught a teacher who had been out later than the regulations permitted.

The speaking contest was the feature of the week's program. It was held on Friday night, the last night to be spent at the camp. There were to be eight speakers in the contest. This was not one from each congressional district, but undoubtedly represented the best speakers in the organization.

Fred was very much disturbed when he learned that Dr. Anderson, from the State College of Agriculture, was to be one of the judges. He recalled all too vividly the first time that he had seen Dr. Anderson as he looked through the windows in the Cedar Falls schoolhouse the night that the boys were having their father and son banquet. He also remembered that Dr. Anderson was on the deer hunt and spoke to him none too kindly when he said that Walter Langford wished to see him at the hospital.

Fred sought out his instructor. "Do you know that Dr. Anderson is one of the judges in the contest?" he inquired.

"Yes, I know it," said Langford.

"Do you think he'll hold anything against me?" asked Fred.

"No. I'm sure he won't, Fred. He's not that kind of a fellow. I believe, if anything, it will help you for he will be glad to see what you have done since he visited Cedar Falls and then it will help him remember you better. You know, the trouble about being a judge in a contest where there are eight speakers is that most of the speakers will be forgotten by the judges when it comes to making a decision."

The boys all assembled in the hall where they had been attending the picture shows at night and waited for the speaking contest.

The program was so arranged that there would be four speeches and then an intermission for music. This would be followed by the other talks and then there would be music and singing while the judges were making their decision.

The speakers drew for places. Fred was fortunate in drawing number seven. It would be an advantage to speak so near the close. The judges were seated near the front of the hall. They had read all of the speeches and rated them. They had also met the boys who were

to talk and had questioned them for five minutes on the technical aspects of the problems which they were discussing.

As the boys mounted the platform and took seats in the order in which they were to speak, Fred sought out the judges. He decided he would watch their faces to see whether he could determine what sort of an impression the speakers were making.

The music at this interval seemed to relieve the situation. At any rate it enabled Fred to think of something besides the fine speech which the young man with the Southern drawl had given.

"The first boy talked about the great changes in farming that had come about through the use of improved farm machinery. His speech was a very good one, Fred decided, but his delivery was not impressive. Fred was not greatly worried by the prospects of being beaten by Number One.

The second boy's speech was almost altogether about the work of the Federal Farm Board. Fred decided that this subject had been so much discussed among the farm people that a discourse on it would prejudice the audience and the judges.

When the third boy had been talking one minute, Fred noted that the judges were no longer listening, so concluded that he had already been eliminated as a possibility.

Number Four, however, gave Fred something to worry about. He was a fine-looking boy over six feet tall and spoke with the pronounced Southern accent which is supposed to be typical of all persons who live below the Mason and Dixon line. Fred thought that this might appeal to the judges; and the boy's talk, which was on the subject of "Tax Reform as a Farm Relief Measure," was impressive. Fred found himself listening in spite of his determination not to do so. The judges were giving the speaker close attention. The young man pointed out how farm values had shrunk in the past few years while wealth in the form of stocks and bonds had increased enormously. He told how a noted manufacturer had been proud to say when he was a very old man that during his lifetime he had made fourteen millionaires through the expansion of his one corporation, and contrasted that with the boast of the head of a great motor corporation that eighty-eight millionaires had been made from the ranks of its junior executives within the short period of fourteen months. The speaker pointed out that taxes had, in the early days of this country, been levied on land because that was the most valuable property of the people, whereas now while the tax on land was still collected much as it had been in the past, that land and real estate no longer indicated the ability of people to support the government as once had been the case.

It was a splendid talk and when the speaker closed he received a great burst of spontaneous applause. Fred broke out in a cold sweat.

The music at this interval seemed to relieve the situation. At any rate it enabled Fred to think of something besides the fine speech which the young man with the Southern drawl had given.

In all too short a time the music was over and the speech-making resumed. Fred listened to the other talks but fortunately, he thought, none were as good as that given by Number Four.

When his number was called he had regained his composure. To have spoken immediately after Number Four would have been tragic. But there had been two rather mediocre speeches to follow.

He had never felt better in his life. The two contests in which he had taken part had given him poise. He had confidence in his speech and knew that he could deliver it well. He was happy because of the success he had had with this plant venture and realized that the F.F.A. could work marvels for the farming of America if it could do for many what it had done for him. If he could but convey this thought to the audience!

As Dr. Anderson listened to the speech, he was saying to himself that surely this could not be the boy who had interrupted the banquet where he had spoken at Cedar Falls, and not the boy who had been tried

for the shooting of Walter Langford. But he knew, of course, that it was, for Langford had talked with him about Fred when he came to the college to get information about the side dressing of the tomato plants. He never in his life-long experience with boys had seen such a transformation in so short a time. He was delighted with the part that his former student, Walter Langford, had had in the development of the youth. And the story of the boy's life made the speech that Fred was delivering more impressive.

Fred concluded and took his seat. He received a good round of applause, but could not remember how it compared with that given Number Four.

He did not listen to the last talk. It didn't seem to be very good. And then he was anxious to get the decision of the judges.

They were out for a long time. The boys sang most of the songs in the book; several announcements were made; Dennis Martin introduced the new officers. And still the judges did not come back.

Finally a slip of paper was handed to the presiding officer. From it he read: "We have selected Number Seven as the speaker to represent the state and Number Four as the alternate."

Fred Dale had won again.

CHAPTER XII

A FINANCIAL CRISIS

Winning the oratorical contest at the state convention of the F.F.A. gave Fred the privilege of entering the regional contest which was held at Hot Springs, Arkansas, in October. Here he would compete with the winners in state contests from Virginia to Texas.

Since this was a rather long and expensive trip, it became necessary for Fred to go alone. He left with the best wishes of the boys in his chapter and the admonition from Langford that just as soon as the contest was over he would wire giving the results.

It was a wild and happy group of boys to whom Langford read the following telegram one morning:

WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO WIN REGIONAL
CONTEST LAST NIGHT STOP WILL GET TO
GO TO KANSAS CITY FOR NATIONAL
FINALS IN NOVEMBER STOP WILL ARRIVE
DAWNVILLE THURSDAY NIGHT MIDNIGHT
STOP CAN YOU MEET ME

FRED

Had Fred arrived in Dawnville in the daytime, doubtless the entire chapter would have met him, but as it was, Langford decided that he should go alone.

Instead of waiting until just before train time to go to Dawnville on Thursday night, Langford decided to go to the hotel for supper and then see a movie while waiting for the train. On reaching the hotel he was greatly surprised to find his friend, Jim Adair, sitting in the lobby.

"Hello, Langford!" greeted Adair. "Congratulations."

"What's the big idea?" returned Langford a little puzzled, for he was thinking of the power plant that he and Adair had talked about the last time they met.

"Why, on the oratorical contest. Didn't you have a boy who won first place in the South?"

"Sure. Thanks so much," said Langford, shaking hands with Adair. "It was Fred Dale. I'm here to meet him. He's coming in at midnight."

"What kind of a prize did the boy get out of winning?" inquired Adair.

"None, but he gets his expenses paid to Kansas City to compete in the finals of the national contest, and since there will be only four speakers in that contest the worst he can do is to win the fourth prize of \$100."

"Did you say his name was Dale?"

"Yes. Fred Dale," said Langford.

Adair said no more for the moment, and presently the two men went into the dining-room for supper. They sat at the table which was presided over by George, the faithful waiter who had advised Langford to bathe in the blood of the first deer he shot. Langford had told George several times that he was sorry it wasn't possible for him to carry out the advice but that he surely meant to do it the first time that he had a chance.

After a good meal Adair lighted his pipe and settled back in his chair.

"How's the power project coming?" inquired Langford.

"I believe that thing is going through, Langford," observed Adair, with something of an air of confidence. "They keep asking for more information, and if they didn't think that the plant would be put in they wouldn't get all the data they are collecting."

Langford hesitated to ask questions about a plan which was regarded as something of a company secret. But it wasn't necessary.

"This boy Dale who won the speaking contest! Does he live about three miles north of the school-house?" asked Adair presently.

"Yes," returned Langford, knowing that more questions would follow.

"Do they own their place?"

"Yes. His father is dead. He and his mother and three younger children live on the farm."

"Small place, isn't it?"

"Yes, only eighty acres."

Adair puffed at his pipe, but said no more. "Why did you ask about the Dale family?" inquired Langford.

"It looks like that place will be about the center of the whole development and perhaps the site for the plant of the United States Thread Company, which is one of the biggest concerns of its kind in the country," said Adair, and then added with some caution, "that is, if the proposition goes through."

Langford and Adair continued to talk about the projected plans of the power company until about nine o'clock when Judge Cason came in and called for Mr. Adair. The two went out together and Langford walked over to the picture show.

All the time that Langford sat in the show in his subconscious mind he was turning over the very significant remarks that Adair had made concerning the Dale property.

When Fred's train pulled in, Langford greeted him with real enthusiasm. "Fred, how in the world did you do it?" he asked.

"It wasn't so difficult," said Fred. "I really thought we had speakers at home just about as good as those

in the state contest. But I really think that I did better than I ever have done before. You know, I felt fine. It was such an inspiration to meet the men from other states."

They talked on about the contest and all the folks Fred had met in Arkansas. But in Langford's mind he was wondering whether it would be ethical for him to tell Fred about his conversation with Adair. He really did not reach a decision but finally said, "Fred, you borrowed money from Judge Cason, didn't you?"

"Yes," said Fred.

"I don't want you to think that I am butting into your private business, but have you paid it back?"

"No. We thought we'd wait until it was due November fifteenth. You see the interest has been paid until that time."

"Well, I wish you would pay it back right now."

"Why so?" asked Fred.

"Well, maybe I ought not to tell you, but it has come to me that Judge Cason is trying to get control of all the land near your place. And I just thought you ought not take any chances."

"Why does Judge Cason want the land? It isn't much good."

"No, it's not good land, Fred. There is plenty of land in the county that would be more valuable for farming purposes, but the Southern Power Company

may want to buy it for a good price. They are thinking of putting in a power plant on the Tugalo River and there are some mills that are moving here if the proposition goes through."

"I see," said Fred. "Thank you so much. I wondered why Judge Cason was so anxious to let us have that money when no one else would loan money to finance my project."

The next morning, Fred and his mother talked things over. She was very much excited about the news of the proposed power plant.

"Mother, I think we ought to go right up town now and pay Judge Cason," said Fred to his mother.

"I do, too, Fred," said his mother. "I will get ready and we'll get to town by the time the bank opens."

This pleased Fred very much for he had already begun to think about making preparations for his trip to Kansas City. Since he would not get back until after November fifteenth, he was anxious to have his debt to Judge Cason settled before leaving.

On the way to town, Fred and his mother had a fine visit. In spite of the fact that they lived in the same house it was not often that they had the opportunity to sit down and talk alone. In the morning there was breakfast to get and the children to get ready for school. At night there were chores to be done and lessons to be studied.

"Fred, I am very proud of the record you have made," said his mother, "and I hope you will win the national contest at Kansas City."

"That is too much to expect, Mother, but I'll do the best I can," replied the boy.

"I know you will and it will be a wonderful trip to Kansas City. Your father and I went to St. Louis to the World's Fair when we were married -- on our honeymoon. That was in 1903 and it seems like it was ages ago. Maybe you'll go through St. Louis and can go out to see the Fair Grounds. Of course, they are not the same as they were when we were there, but some of the buildings are now being used by Washington University."

"I hope I can stop in St. Louis, Mother. I would like to see the Lindbergh souvenirs. You know, it was in St. Louis that the money was raised for Colonel Lindbergh's flight to Paris."

"Fred, I hope you can and that you get a chance to go all over this wonderful country of ours and see all the beautiful and historic places that I have read about in the atlas. It takes money, of course, to do it; but if you get along as well with all your farming work as you did with the plant business you will have the money to do lots of things -- things your father and I never got to do."

"But, Mother, I want to do something for you. I want you to go to Kansas City with me, won't you?"

"Of course not," said his mother as though the boy were out of his head to make such a suggestion.

"But, Mother, we have enough money to pay off the debt on the place and have \$750 left. And besides, I get my expenses paid to Kansas City and if I win fourth place, which is last, I will win \$100 and that will be more than enough to pay your expenses."

"We couldn't think of it, Fred. All of us need winter clothes, Estelle must have some work done on her teeth, we need a new heater, the roof leaks, and then we ought to build a good chicken house."

To Fred's mother the idea of spending money so that she might enjoy herself on a trip seemed almost like a sacrilege. But she enjoyed thinking about it just the same; for all of us enjoy the trips that we contemplate but never take. And she was pleased that Fred should so earnestly invite her to go with him. Nothing could have pleased Henrietta Dale more than to have had the privilege of hearing her son speak to the vast audience that would be present in the finals of the national F. F. A. speaking contest.

"I wish you would go, Mother," pleaded Fred.

"I'm glad you want me to go, Fred, but we ought to be thankful that we have the money to buy things we have needed for so long."

By this time they had reached Dawnville and Fred noticed that there was a big crowd gathered in front of the Farmers and Merchants Bank.

"I didn't know there was anything going on in town today, Mother, did you?" asked Fred.

"No," said his mother.

"Why, it looks like Saturday and circus day to see that crowd in front of the bank," added Fred.

They parked the car on the square and walked over to the bank. Fred knew none of the people in the crowd. He and his mother elbowed their way to the door. It was locked. Fred looked inside but could see no one at work. Then a sign on the door attracted his attention. It read:

To Whom It May Concern:

The Farmers and Merchants Bank of Dawnville is temporarily closed while the books are being examined by the State Banking Department.

D. M. WHATLEY,
Bank Examiner.

Fred read the notice several times, but did not understand what it meant. Turning to one of the men in the crowd he asked, "Why is the bank closed?"

"You read what it said on the door, didn't you?"

"Yes," replied Fred, "but I didn't understand exactly what it meant."

"It means the bank has failed," explained the man.

"When will it open so I can get my money?" asked the boy, not comprehending what a bank failure involves.

Several persons in the crowd who heard the question laughed. The man to whom Fred had been talking was not so unkind. "None of us know," he said. Then added, "The officers have issued a statement saying that the bank is in excellent condition, but that at this time when a loan from one of the larger banks was called, they were a little short of cash and were closed by the Banking Department because they were unable to meet the obligation."

"And there's nothin' to the statement -- it's all the bunk," volunteered one of the crowd. "Let me ask you -- did you ever hear of a failure in the world where the officers of the bank didn't say it was in fine shape? You never did. It's always the same old gag -- temporarily embarrassed. It makes me laugh. I don't see why they can't think up a new one sometime. Why don't

some honest man tell the truth just once and say that the bank will be closed for all time and will do well to pay ten cents on the dollar?"

Several folks in the crowd, probably those who had no money in the bank, thought this was funny. But Fred didn't smile. Neither did his mother. As yet they had not been able to realize fully what had happened.

For a time they stood in front of the bank and listened to what was being said.

Mr. Watson, the president, they learned, was not in town. He had left for the city the day before to confer with the officers of the Federal Reserve Bank. He had hoped that they would lend him enough money that the Farmers and Merchants Bank might avert disaster. But his efforts had been to no avail. It was reported that he had pleaded with the city bankers all night but had not been able to make a loan of any kind.

News of the impending disaster had leaked out shortly before the bank had closed the previous day, either through one of the directors or from the phone calls which President Watson had put in to the bank. As a result there had been a run for thirty minutes. This news had spread through the town and community during the night and when time for the bank to open in the morning arrived most of the depositors were standing in line hoping to get the money they had

on deposit. Then just before opening time the notice which Fred read was pasted in the window.

In a bewildered sort of way Fred and his mother talked things over. 'Till tell you what let's do, Mother. Let's go to Warren Smith and see if we can find out from him how to get our money."

Mrs. Dale willingly acceded to Fred's wish, not knowing of anything better to do. When they arrived at the residence of Warren Smith they found him at home and perfectly willing to talk to them. Unfortunately, however, he had little more information than those persons standing in front of the bank.

"Is there no chance for us to get the money, Mr. Smith?" inquired Mrs. Dale.

"I really know nothing about it, Mrs. Dale," replied Warren Smith, the former cashier, "but I'm afraid there isn't. Of course, I never thought the bank would close. I have known for a long time that we had many loans which would never be paid. I guess that it was worse than I had suspected. The bank may open later, it is true; but I suspect that it will be liquidated and a percentage paid to the depositors."

"Why did you advise me to put my money in the bank, Mr. Smith, when you knew that the bank was no good?"

"Fred, I thought the bank was good. If not, I never would have urged you to put your money on time deposit."

"But look what I've lost—a whole season's work."

"That's too bad, Fred, and I'm sorry. But you're not the only one who has lost. I've lost a job that I've had for thirty-one years. And besides, I own some stock in the bank and will be assessed, no doubt, one dollar for every dollar's worth of stock I own. It will probably take every cent I have in the world, and the home in which we live."

Mrs. Dale and Fred listened to what the aged cashier told them how the bank failure might affect him. They knew Warren Smith to be an honest conscientious man. In thinking of his problems for the moment they forgot their own. But as soon as they stepped into their car to return home Mrs. Dale thought of Judge Cason and the mortgage against their place. There was no other income from which they could pay the indebtedness. Judge Cason would foreclose. They would lose the farm. In her extremity she breathed a silent prayer: "O God, our great Heavenly Father: We know Thou watcheth over Thy children and that not a sparrow falls without Thy knowledge. We know that in Thy wisdom Thou carest for even the lilies of the field. Give Thy servant faith and courage and point the

way. And O Lord, deliver us from those who would persecute and oppress us. Amen.”

CHAPTER XIII

NATIONAL F.F.A. CONVENTION

SO DEPRESSED was Fred by the loss of the money which he had deposited with the Farmers and Merchants Bank at Dawnville that he decided not to go to Kansas City to the annual congress of the Future Farmers of America. Without taking anyone into his confidence he sat down and wrote Dennis Martin this letter:

My dear Mr. Martin:

I can't go to Kansas City to take part in the national speaking contest. I have just lost all the money I made from my plant project in a bank failure. I would not be able to make my speech, so wish you would tell the boy who was selected as alternate at the regional contest that he can go in my place.

Thanking you very much for all that you have done for me, I am

Respectfully yours,

FRED DALE.

"As soon as Dennis Martin, state adviser of the F.F.A. association, received this letter he called Walter Langford over the long distance phone.

"Hellow, Langford!" said Martin, "we can't allow Fred Dale to drop out of the contest."

Walter Langford, who knew nothing of the letter Fred had written, was at a loss to know what Martin was talking about. "What do you mean?" inquired Langford.

Martin told him of Fred's letter. Langford was shocked. He had not realized how much Fred had been affected by the bank failure. "Of course, we can't," he agreed. "I'll go and see him and call you back."

"Please do," said Martin, "for we are leaving Atlanta tomorrow afternoon at four o'clock and I will expect you to be there and have Fred ready to start on the trip."

As soon as he had finished talking to Martin, Langford drove over to the Dale place and found Fred and his mother in the dining-room looking over their accounts.

He launched right into the subject which prompted his call, "Mrs. Dale, don't you want Fred to go to Kansas City?"

"Certainly, Mr. Langford. Why did you ask?" inquired Fred's mother in astonishment.

Langford explained about the phone call from Dennis Martin and how disappointed the state adviser had been to get Fred's letter. Mrs. Dale was greatly surprised, for Fred had told her nothing of his decision.

"Why, Fred, you mustn't do that," said his mother earnestly. "You must go on as if nothing had happened." Then turning to Professor Langford she said that she had wondered why Fred had not been making preparations for the trip.

"Look here, Fred," commanded Langford.

"You must go. Begin getting ready at once."

"But I couldn't speak well," pleaded Fred. "I might better be home than to go up there and make a fool of myself."

Langford knew that Fred was allowing the very emotional temperament which had helped him win his previous contests to plunge him into the deepest despair.

"But think of the honor it will be to you to speak in the finals of the national contest," suggested Langford.

"I am not interested in it," was Fred's only comment.

Walter Langford knew that he had made an unfortunate approach. How empty honors are when they are not shared with those we love. And how futile is the approach of self-interest to the man of ability. It is not

for himself that a man labors and shoulders responsibility, but for those he holds most dear -- those who look to him for support and loyalty.

"Fred, this is all foolishness. You haven't stopped to realize that this contest is something that cannot be affected by your personal troubles. Don't you realize that all the members of the F.F.A. in the South are looking to you to represent them -- to make a good showing -- to win for them? Had you thought of that? You're not going to let down your friends, are you? You are not a quitter."

Fred looked up from the paper on which he was figuring, but said nothing.

Langford sat silently for a moment and then announced that he must be going. "Walk out to the car with me, will you Fred?" he asked, as he picked up his hat. They walked out to the gate and before Langford stepped into the car he put his hand on Fred's shoulder and looked him squarely in his eyes. "Fred," he said, "you must go for your mother's sake. Did you see the tears in her eyes when she thought that you were going to quit after all the joy that you have brought into her life by the record that you have made?"

Fred swallowed hard. "I guess you're right. I was thinking only of myself. I'll go," he said.

"Fine. Get all ready and I'll call for you in the morning," said Langford as he drove away.

When Fred and his instructor reached Atlanta they found Dennis Martin with a live-stock judging team, a meat judging team, two boys who were to get the "American Farmer" degree, and Dr. Anderson, from the State College of Agriculture. They all welcomed Fred most heartily. He was the hero of the group, for he had already shown superior ability in the activity in which he was taking part.

They boarded the Kansas City-Florida Special, which went into Kansas City over the Frisco Lines. It was a well-equipped train.

Dennis Martin wanted the boys to have a good time, so told them, when they entered the diner for "dinner," that they might order anything which appealed to them. When the menu was handed to them, the boys studied it in bewilderment.

Without any thought of embarrassing the boys, Martin asked the waiter what he would suggest that was good.

Sensing the fact that he was talking to a group of farm boys, who had probably never been on a diner before, the waiter, thinking that he would have a little fun, said in the most serious and dignified way, "The *hors d'oeuvres* are very tasty."

The boys looked at one another not knowing whether to laugh and make a joke of it or to look serious as

though they were giving intelligent consideration to the suggestion that the *anchovies* would prove very delectable.

After several other equally absurd proposals, the waiter suggested that a *filet a la Bohemienne* would probably be more to the boys' liking.

If any of them had suspected that this was just a name for beef steak served with mushrooms and fried potatoes, they would have immediately agreed with the waiter. But since this secret was not divulged they decided on ham and eggs.

After a liberal piece of apple pie, a la mode, the boys felt that the meal had been a complete success and retired to the observation car to look at the pictures in the magazines. To them every mile of the trip was a great adventure. Sleeping in a Pullman had a special appeal and, unlike most travelers, all of the boys preferred uppers -- but they didn't require a ladder to get in and out of the berth, as was suggested in a sign that was prominently displayed in each section.

Fred sat alone in his seat and strangely, instead of thinking of his speech, his thoughts turned to Sally May Caldwell. The young lady he had met in Florida appealed to him more than any girl he had ever known. She seemed so sensible and yet with it all was so beautiful and attractive. Fred could see her now as she sat in the deck chair on the yacht -- her dark hair blowing

in the wind, her clear, velvety, olive skin, and the trim ankles in sheer silk hose. She was truly marvelous. Fred wondered what she thought of him; and if "Red" had explained the unfair implications concerning his character. But most of all Fred wondered if he dared call her when he arrived in Kansas City; if she would consent to see him; if he might call on her. But he decided that it would be unwise. She probably lived in a big home and had as her friends and associates only the social elite of the city. He was just a country boy with whom she had talked for a few moments when there was nothing else to do. He would try to forget her, he concluded.

When the boys reached Kansas City they went to the Baltimore Hotel on Twelfth Street, in the very heart of the city. This hostelry was at one time the most elegant in the Mid-west. It was comfortable and home-like, and the headquarters for the Future Farmers of America.

There were boys in Kansas City from every section of the United States. As they pressed through the crowd in the lobby to get to the desk to register they saw representatives from New York talking with those from California, and their neighbors from Florida had already formed fast friendships with the delegates from Michigan.

"Is Fred Dale in your party?" the hotel clerk inquired of Dennis Martin.

"Yes," replied Martin.

"We have some mail for him," said the clerk. Dennis went with Fred to the window to which they were directed and the lady in charge handed Fred a stack of letters and telegrams.

Every chapter in the state had sent Fred a wire. While no two of them were exactly alike, all urged him to do his best and to remember that the folks back home were pulling for him to win.

Letters and messages from every state in the region brought words of encouragement and best wishes.

As Fred looked over the communications, and passed them on to the other boys with whom he was sharing a room, he realized that Professor Langford had been correct -- the contest was more than a personal matter with him. He had won the privilege of representing thousands of boys who would expect him to reflect credit upon their part of the nation, their state, their chapter. He was greatly encouraged by such interest and loyal support. Already he felt like speaking and was glad that he had not been so foolish as to drop out without effort.

Finally, in the pile of letters he reached one envelope of heavy, bond paper, addressed in a feminine hand. Fred looked at the letter carefully. It was such

a contrast to the thin business stationery on which the others had been written. Somehow before opening the letter Fred felt that the contents would be as distinctive as the outside appearance. He noted that it had a city postmark. With a trembling hand, he tore the letter open.

"Dear Fred: (It began) I read in the paper that you were to be one of the four speakers in the finals of the F.F.A. contest. I was thrilled to know that one of my friends had done so well, and it made me recall most pleasantly our visit last winter in Florida. I want to extend my most sincere congratulations. I hope you win. I will be in the audience holding my thumbs for you. "You probably have forgotten what that Watterson man said about you on the yacht, but if not, I want to tell you that I know all about it -- Professor Langford explained before we went back to the Yacht Club that day. I think "Red" was right mean, but you did nobly to control your temper so perfectly.

"With best wishes, Sally May."

For a long time Fred sat looking at the letter. He lost interest in the others that were unopened. To think that Sally May had sent her best wishes and would be

in the audience to hear him speak brought more inspiration than all of the other letters he had received. And now that she knew something of his personal experience she would appreciate the references in his talk that would escape those who knew nothing of the facts that led to his becoming a member of the F.F.A.

When the others left to attend an evening meeting of the convention, Fred asked to remain in his room alone. He wanted to study his speech.

Every hour of the day and night while the boys were in Kansas City was filled with interesting things to do. One day they were taken on a tour of the city. They visited the new thirty-story building of the Bell Telephone Company; saw the Ford assembling establishment; went through the mammoth stock yards and packing plants. They were entertained by the Chamber of Commerce and by a number of agricultural organizations. Many nationally prominent men spoke at their banquet. Among the guests of honor were John F. Case, the man who wrote *Tom of Peace Valley* and several other books about farm boys; Estes P. Taylor, editor of the *Agricultural Leaders Digest*, which always contains interesting stories of the activities of vocational boys; Dr. C. H. Lane, chief of the agricultural education service of the Federal Board for Vocational Education, and national adviser to the F.F.A. And best of all, there was Henry Groseclose, the man

who started the F.F.V. in Virginia. The boys were surprised to see what a modest and retiring sort of fellow he was and not at all spoiled by being the patron of an association of 50,000 members.

The most interesting thing of all was the American Royal Live-Stock and Horse Show. This was better than a three-ring circus to the boys who came from the southeastern states where there are few beef cattle and no fine horses of the types that performed so wonderfully on the tanbark arena.

At the horse show one night before an audience of more than twenty thousand people, Arthur M. Hyde, Secretary of Agriculture in the President's cabinet, presented a check for \$1,000 to the outstanding vocational boy in the United States. In making this presentation, Mr. Hyde paid well deserved tribute to the effectiveness of vocational training in agriculture and to the potential possibilities of the F.F.A. as a national organization of farm boys.

"No method of propagating truth is so effective as that which goes out from the classroom and laboratory to the youth of the land," said Secretary Hyde. "The instruction in vocational agriculture is systematic and practical as well as technical. It is adapted to those who are farming and those who are preparing to farm. It is the type of training that prepares for a livelihood and inspires general respect for advanced learning.

"The possibilities of the Future Farmers of America are immeasurable. There is no more hopeful sign of progress among our farm population.

"In this organization of farm boys, achievement of the individual is made the basis for advancement from rank to rank. Class work of a high order, a successful handling of project work, evidence of thrift, and a practical demonstration of leadership are the pass-words to the higher degrees in the organization.

"Through the leadership of these boys we may expect a new agriculture -- an agriculture lighted by science and organized to demand an equal share with industry in the country's general prosperity."

Fred was delighted to hear these words from the nation's Secretary of Agriculture. They were so much like the thoughts expressed in his speech that he felt sure they would add weight to what he would say on the same subject.

On the final night of the convention, after all officers were elected, the "American Farmer" degrees conferred, the state reports given and the program of work developed, there was but one major event remaining -- the speaking contest.

On the afternoon of the contest, Fred finally mustered up enough courage to call Sally May on the phone. "I wanted you to know that I have your letter," he said with such nervousness that his voice sounded

very little like that of an orator who was able to say impressive things to great groups of people, "and I want you to know that I appreciate it very much."

"How long have you been here?" she asked.

"About three days," answered Fred.

"Why didn't you call me? I would have come down and taken you for a drive," said Sally May.

"We've been very busy," replied Fred, who hesitated to say that it had taken three days to get up enough courage to call her.

"Suppose I come down now?"

"I wish so much that I could go with you this afternoon, but you see the speaking contest is tonight and I couldn't go out now. I must stay here and look over my talk and be ready when they call the speakers for their examination. Are you coming tonight?"

"Sure, I'm coming," said Sally May.

"I want to see you so much. Will you look me up? I'm afraid I couldn't find you."

When Sally May promised to see Fred after the contest he left the phone in a state of bewilderment. What would they talk about? What should he say to her? Should he take her some place to have supper? These were but a few of the questions that flashed across Fred's mind unanswered.

In the midst of his perplexities over these problems of etiquette, there was a rap on the door. Fred found

that it was a boy with a message for him. He tore it open and read:

DIRECTORS OF POWER COMPANY AT
MEETING TODAY APPROVED PROJECT
FOR BUILDING DAM ON TUGALO RIVER
STOP JUDGE CASON NEGOTIATING FOR
THE SALE OF YOUR PLACE ON
ASSUMPTION THAT YOU ARE NOT GOING
TO BE ABLE TO PAY MORTGAGE STOP
PLACE WILL SELL FOR BIG PRICE IF YOU
CAN HOLD IT FOR A FEW DAYS STOP DO
YOUR BEST TO WIN FIRST PLACE AND
THE FIVE HUNDRED DOLLAR PRIZE STOP
IF YOU WIN MONEY WIRE SAME TO
ME TONIGHT AND I'LL SETTLE WITH
JUDGE CASON STOP TOMORROW WILL BE
TOO LATE.

WALTER LANGFORD.

This telegram from Fred's faithful instructor who had not been able to make the trip to Kansas City drove from the boy's mind all thoughts of Sally May. They now turned to his mother and the story she had told him of how Judge Cason in an emergency, such as he was now facing had, under the regulations of the law,

stolen his father's business. Now he was preparing to do the same thing with their farm. It was not a matter of getting his money back with all the interest that it was legal to charge, but now that the place promised to become much more valuable he wanted it too, and saw a chance through the failure of a bank to force a widow and her children out of their humble home.

It made Fred angry. He was glad that he was alone so that he could think. By the time Dennis Martin and the boys came in, however, Fred was calm and determined.

"How are you feeling, Fred?" asked Martin.

"I never felt luckier in my life, Mr. Martin. When does the contest start?" said Fred with determination.

"It starts at eight o'clock central standard time. That's in about thirty minutes. And it will start on time, too, because it's going on the air on a national hookup over the Columbia network."

"I'm ready," said Fred. "Let's go."

When they reached the auditorium the crowd was gathering. There were more than two thousand members of the F.F.A. in the audience and an equally large number of farmers and stock men who were attending the stock show. Before the speaker's stand, there was a battery of microphones that would carry the words of the four boys who were to speak to the farthest corners of the United States. Reporters were seated at the press

tables below the platform and cameras on tripods were already set up so that not a moment would be lost in getting the photograph of the winner of first place.

As the boys who were to speak stepped out on the platform, camera men from the concerns which make the newsreels stopped them for a few shots. Flash bulbs were snapped by newspaper photographers who wanted to make the mail editions. It was an exciting moment when it seemed as if the attention of the country was centered on the outcome. But Fred liked it. The blood was racing through his body; his mind was as keen and alert as when he was playing a hundred-pound tarpon on a light line. He felt strong and was eagerly awaiting the opportunity to pit his wits and ability against those of his opponents.

John F. Case, dean among the editors of the farm papers which Senator Capper owns, officiated at the microphone. He explained the contest, named the speakers and gave the order in which they would talk.

Fred drew third place. This to his mind was ideal. It was a good omen.

He did not listen to any of the speeches. Instead, his mind was concentrated on the folks at Cedar Falls -- on his mother, who he knew was listening in on the radio over at neighbor Nix's; on Willard Henderson, Charlie Hardin, and the other members of his local chapter. Then he thought of Walter Langford and all

that his instructor had done for him since the night that the boys held their father and son banquet the previous November. It was to these people that Fred spoke rather than to the audience in the auditorium; to them he appealed with all the passion and fervor of one who wishes to acknowledge a debt of gratitude. Never had he spoken so well; never had he received such thunderous applause as burst forth when he had completed his talk.

While fearing to anticipate the result, it came as no great surprise to Fred, or to the audience, to hear Mr. Case step to the microphone at the conclusion of the contest and say, "On behalf of Senator Arthur Capper, I take pleasure in presenting this check for \$500 to Fred Dale of Cedar Falls as first prize in the national speaking contest conducted by the Future Farmers of America. I am sure that all who heard the talks will agree that Fred is a great orator and I hope that he can use this check to help him on his way toward a great and useful career."

The applause from the audience showed that they were endorsing the decision of the judges and the sentiment expressed by the chairman. After the other winners were announced, there was a rush to the platform in which Fred was almost overwhelmed by the congratulations he received.

Among those who sought to speak to the winner was a beautiful girl with an olive complexion dressed in a great fur coat and wearing a brown toque to match. "I am so happy that you won," she said, "I almost feel that I should kiss you."

"You wouldn't do that, would you?" Fred asked, looking into the big brown eyes of Sally May.

"Maybe, if we were outside," she replied. "Well then, let's go," urged Fred.

When they were comfortably seated in Sally May's car she suggested a nice place where they could go for a bite to eat and a little visit. On the way, Fred stopped in a telegraph office and sent Walter Langford a message which read:

WAS LUCKY AGAIN TONIGHT STOP AM
WIRING THE FIVE HUNDRED STOP PLEASE
PAY OFF THE OLD BUZZARD AND ACCEPT
MY SINCERE THANKS FOR EVERYTHING
YOU HAVE DONE FOR ME STOP TELL
MOTHER I'M LEAVING FOR HOME
TONIGHT.

The project of the Southern Power Company proved to be all that Jim Adair had prophesied it would be so far as improving the market for farm produce. With the money that Fred and his mother received for their

little place they were able to buy one of the best farms in the county. As Fred shows visitors over the new place, which is a model for efficient management, he always has a few words to say about what the F.F.A. will eventually mean to American agriculture.

THE END