

# "NED," The FARMER BOY A Possible Result of a Lad's Industry and Foresight.

By GEO. E. FOSTER.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

Ned Claims a Reward of Merit.

"Well, Ned," said Mr. Sharp, on day, as he met him on the street "what is the sum total of your farming receipts this far?"

"If I count in recent interest, the sum total is over \$1,500," said Ned. "But I have been making a study, and I find that even by crop statistics, I am nearly \$500 below a possible result and that I am not much ahead of a possible one."

"Well," said Mr. Sharp, "you are twenty years of age now, you have made \$1,500 by industry, foresight and study. You have not trusted to chance, nor have you waited for success. You have made success come to you. It is said that the gods help those who help themselves. They looked down upon your industry, and did help you; they brought you the additional \$1,500. If you had no made farming a study that which you call luck would not have come to you. Look over the matter and see for yourself."

"That is so," said Ned. "The \$1,000 and the \$500 gifts were really traceable to my little quarter-acre farm."

"Ned," said Mr. Sharp, "I have been wishing to speak to you on a subject on which you must have thought me strangely indifferent. I have never expressed in words or in anything substantial my gratitude to you for saving Nellie from the awful fate that awaited her in strawberry time. I had rather have lost all I possess of worldly goods than to have lost her. You were a brave boy, Ned, and few would have dared as you did to run even on horseback between that ferocious bull and his intended victim. In that way can I pay you, Ned, for anything that I could do to help you, anything in the way of money or land? Do not be afraid to ask."

"Yes, you have something that I very much want some day," said Ned. "What is it?" queried Mr. Sharp.

"Something too valuable to easily get, I fear," replied Ned.

"Ask freely, Ned. Your modest actions in regard to receiving the \$1,000 indicate that you will not be unreasonable. If in my power, Ned, your wish shall be granted, if it takes half my farm."

"The boon I ask, then, is permission to woo your daughter, and if possible win her hand and heart," he said, while a blush spread over his countenance.

"It did not occur to me that she was even old enough to wed," replied Mr. Sharp, "but it is true that she is now nineteen, while you are twenty. Well, Ned, you had your promise before you asked, and I know of no one on whom I had rather bestow her hand. Have you told her of this?"

"No, Mr. Sharp, but do not tell her. I desire that she shall learn to love me for myself and not give her hand through gratitude."

"I am not sure, Ned, but the heart is already won, and the hand now only remains to win," he said.

"But you must not be in too much haste, Ned, the father and mother are in no haste to lose their darling daughter. You saved her for us, and yet you are to take her away again?"

"Not far," said Ned. "I have plans already made for a fine residence, which I shall erect next season on the knoll above the road, on the land I purchased of you. It will be a beautiful site, and the grounds will be fine for landscape gardening."

"Can I aid you in building?" queried Mr. Sharp.

"No, I shall put at least \$2,500 into the house, and that will be good enough, for it will be equal to most any here."

"But that will leave only \$500 of all your capital on which to furnish the house and for a future nest egg. Is that not rather a reckless way of starting life?" said Mr. Sharp. He said this more to find out Ned's plans than from any fear. Like every one in town he now had unbounded confidence in Ned's judgment.

"Perhaps in one year from now I may be even a richer man than you, Mr. Sharp," replied Ned.

"That is saying a good deal," said Mr. Sharp, with a little surprise in his voice.

"If I get your daughter," said Ned, "I think I shall have the finest gem the earth affords; but in addition to that, a year hence we will count together our wealth and see who wins."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

Ned Attends the Starch Maker's Convention.

Ned's original quarter acre, and the acres in the upper lot, were planted with the two leading kinds of potatoes, which Ned had selected from the many varieties that had sprung from the seed of the potato ball. Up to the time the crop was harvested, the general public knew nothing of Ned's new potatoes, for in all these years he had kept his own counsel in regard to his plans. When the crop was harvested he gave away a few to some leading agriculturists with the request that they try them for table use, and they declared them to be the best they had ever eaten. If they had any left over after the first cooking, they of course used them, not thinking but what they would be able to get all they wanted in this manner.

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"Is that the one that the papers have said so much about?" queried the president.

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had been propagating, was soon a running item in all the newspapers of the country. The frequency of the item attracted the attention of a scientific writer, and he wrote a treatise for one of the magazines on the subject of "Germinating from the original source." This article of course attracted considerable attention, and he whole or a part of it was copied into half the papers of the country. Ned began receiving letters asking about the new potato, from all parts of the country. All these letters he answered and placed on file. He wrote regretting his inability to supply the demand, but would rather choose to supply all orders for the next year before the next spring. Ned found that he had received four hundred and seventy-two letters of inquiry.

"I think I will go to Boston to-morrow," said Ned to his father, as he sat reading the New England Homestead one evening during the winter.

"What new scheme have you in mind?" said Mr. Jackson. "Do not all into the hands of another sharper as you did going to Portland," he continued.

"I shall keep my own counsel this time," replied Ned. "I think I shall attend the 'Starch Makers' Convention."

"What for, Ned? are you going into the manufacture of starch?"

"No, father, but the convention will be a lively one, the manufacturers and potato growers are going to get together, there is some trouble in regard to price."

Ned went to Boston next day, and he took with him specimens of his starch seedling. They were immature potatoes and only required a few hills for a heaping bushel. He also took with him an affidavit from the Hon. Jared Sharp that the yield of Ned's quarter acre of land had been exactly 150 bushels.

The meeting of the starch manufacturers was a stormy one. The potato producers threatened to withdraw from the business unless the price could be raised, while the manufacturers had agreed to prove that they could import potatoes to prove that they could import them. They wanted at the present prices, one of the largest potato producers brought to the association presented statistics to show the annual yield of potatoes to the acre, and the cost of culture, and his figures actually proved that at the present yield, the potatoes did not pay as well as other crops.

"Supposing the yield could be doubled, would potato raising pay starch manufacturers?" said Ned, rising and addressing the man with statistics.

"It would be a fair business then," replied the man, "but that is not possible, by adding fertilizers we increase the crop and the expense. In fact, the potatoes appear to be running out, and our yearly returns grow less and less."

"Supposing," said Ned, "that you plant a larger kind, one that is naturally large, then your yield would be more."

"True," said the speaker.

"The chemical analysis of the potato," continued Ned, "shows that though different varieties indicate a slightly different proportion of constituents, a fair standard reveals the fact that seventy-five parts in one hundred are water, that fifteen or a little more are starch, three are sugar, three fibre, and that the remainder contains several elements not necessary to name in this connection. The great value of the potato consists in its starch, rather than its importance as employed in manufactures. Those varieties which contain the greatest amount of starch are the best for the table, and those that have less are usually poorer. Those varieties usually do not yield so abundantly as the poorer kind."

"What would be the effect of the producers if a kind could be obtained that yield an equal or greater amount in proportion of starch to that found in another potato and yet produces from three to four times the usual crop."

"It would be a bonanza for the producer, even at present prices," said two or three in the audience.

"It has been almost impossible to find a large potato that yields as much starch as the smaller ones," said the leading starch manufacturer. "When certain kinds have been brought in they were so lacking in starch that we felt obliged to reduce even the price. Our association have had always a willingness to help the producer. We once offered a prize of \$500 cash to one who would introduce into the market a potato like what the young gentleman suggests as a possibility, but which we claim is not a probability."

"Does that prize still hold in force?" queried Ned.

"It does," replied the manufacturer. "The secretary desires the name of the young gentleman who has spoken, that he may record it in the minutes of the meeting," said the president.

"Ned Jackson," he responded.

Ned noticed that there was quite a little sensation in the assembly as he spoke his name, and several arose in their seats and looked over to where he sat. More than this, several of the leading men present began to whisper with each other, and at last one man went up and whispered a moment with the president.

"Will Mr. Jackson please inform us if he is in any way connected with the man of the same name of whom the papers have so often spoken of as having produced a remarkable potato from the seed of the ball? We understand that he is a man who has made the potato a study and has been remarkably successful. Perhaps he is your father or a near relative."

"I myself am the person to whom you refer."

A look of incredulity spread over the faces of half the crowd.

"You are quite a young man to have done all that the papers say you have," said the president, "but the convention was very glad to see Mr. Jackson present."

"Will Mr. Jackson inform the convention if he sees any way to solve the problem before us to-day," said a gentleman on the floor.

"I see no reason why the question cannot be solved by using what I call the 'starch seedling,'" said a gentleman on the floor.

"Is that the one that the papers have said so much about?" queried the president.

"It is not," said Ned, "it is one that I

have been propagating for this purpose for four years. Its yield this season on old ground was at the rate of six hundred bushels to the acre. I have had it examined by our High School chemist, and he finds nearly twenty per cent starch. I presume I am entitled to the \$500 prize."

"And it is gladly awarded," said the starch manufacturer enthusiastically, as he looked at Ned with wonder, "if you prove your statement."

"I can produce a certified statement of the yield, and the chemist's statement, but better I can produce a sample of the potatoes this afternoon."

At this reply there was a general applause about the hall.

"The New Hampshire delegate has the floor," said the President, noticing a gentleman from upper Coos rising to speak.

"Too much importance cannot be attached to the statements of Mr. Jackson, if they are true," said the New Hampshire man. "Last year the yield of potatoes in the State was over 5,000,000 bushels, and the average price was over 40 cents per bushel. Taking 40 cents as an average, the potato crop was worth \$2,000,000 at least. It is placed at \$3,000,000 in the report. If Mr. Jackson has something that will produce three times as much, in a year the production will increase in value from six to nine million dollars. I consider this a new seedling of the greatest importance to New Hampshire. As you know the two potato growing counties are Grafton and Coos, Grafton produces one million, one hundred thousand bushels per year, and Coos about eight hundred and two hundred thousand, both together furnishing two-fifths of the potato product of the State. These two counties manufacture almost the entire invoice of New Hampshire starch, and show an annual product of more than six million pounds, one-sixth of all the starch made in the country. It is an important question, whether Mr. Jackson can produce a product that will produce three times as much as the potatoes now in our country."

The delegates from other states spoke in a similar line.

"Mr. President," said a gentleman on the floor, "I move that a committee of five be appointed to examine Mr. Jackson's claims and report at the evening session."

The motion was carried.

Later in the day Ned was called into a conference with the committee. He had his samples present. The testimonials from Mr. Sharp had great weight as he was extensively known in the agricultural world. A chemist was called in, and though it was not a time he was unable to get at the per cent of starch that the so-called 'starch seedling' contained he was sure that it contained a much larger amount than any ordinary potato.

"What is your intention in regard to the future disposal of the potato, Mr. Jackson," queried the chairman of the committee.

"I propose to raise a large lot this year, and supply those who are willing to pay a proper price in a year from now. I have spent considerable time and have a good thing. I shall not sell these potatoes at any ordinary price," said Ned.

"So we supposed," said the committee, "and it is evident that should you sell this potato to every one who would buy, that there would be an over production, and the price would fall again. In order to keep this potato of value to us as producers we must be able to control it."

"This potato for even two years in the limits of our association it would be a great thing for us, in fact a great speculation," said the New Hampshire delegate.

"How many bushels of this kind have you now on hand, Mr. Jackson?" queried another member of the committee.

"One hundred and fifty bushels," said Ned.

"Will you sell your right and title to them, or to the so-called 'starch seedling' for \$1,000?" said the chairman.

"No, sir, I will not," responded Ned. "Do you suppose I will sell for \$1,000 what in two years will increase the value of the potato crop within the limits of this association the sum of over ten million dollars annually according to the figures of your delegates? I have spoken to-day."

"But some one else, hearing of your success, may also attempt propagating new kinds and eclipse yours," said the committee.

"Let them do so, but it will take four years to get as far along as I have, and then they may fall. Meanwhile I will sell all I can at pound rates, and retire from the field to any opponent that may appear," said Ned.

The committee conferred again among themselves. The man with his head full of statistics figured for a time, and at last they reported that if Mr. Jackson would sell every one of his potatoes and agree to let no one else have a single one, in order to have a monopoly of them for awhile, the Association would give Ned the sum of \$3,000. They would also call Ned's mind that while his other potatoes would be desired by the multitude, the one he offered for sale would be only purchased by those who were producing for starch makers.

Ned saw the reasonableness of this, and convinced that a bird in the hand was worth two in the bush, he sold his right for \$3,000. The members of the Association, three hundred in number paid in \$10 apiece, and received an order for half a bushel each, which were to be planted by the members of the Association for future seed and speculation.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

Among the Roses.

"What are you so busy about now?" said Mrs. Jackson to her son one evening shortly after his return from Boston. She went up to the table where he was bending over some papers. She saw that he had been sketching a house, which was apparently situated in a beautiful garden, in which were well trained vines, ever-green trees trimmed in shapely form, beds of flowers, fountains and winding walks. The house itself, while not large, presented a unique appearance, nestled as it was among the shrubbery.

"That is a pretty place," continued Ned's mother, as she examined his

work more minutely. "Where is the original? I do not remember ever seeing it, but the surrounding landscape reminds me of the scenery at your knoll."

"There is no such place now," said Ned. "It is an ideal that I hope to make a reality."

"I do not understand you, Ned," replied Mrs. Jackson.

"I am sketching the exterior of what I hope will some day be my home," he replied.

"But you are not going to build at once, are you, Ned?" queried his mother. "In the spring I shall," Ned replied. "Out on the knoll?" continued Mrs. Jackson.

"Yes," replied Ned. "While my potatoes and my fortune are growing in the field below, I intend to erect my future home, and to grade the grounds and start the foundation for a charming garden."

"So you are already tired of living with father and mother," said Mrs. Jackson.

"Far from that. You and father have been so kind to me. I am aware that he has given me practically my time since I was fifteen years of age; but while I have worked for him when he asked, he has kindly but quietly extended my hours of play that I might take them for labor on my little farm. If there is one thing more than another that I feel thankful for it is that father took that way to make me self-reliant and to teach me to think and act for myself. It has been the making of me. The boys say it is luck, but it is not. My crops have not been much above the average, but I have made use of what came in my way. I have thought and planned, and taken advantage of circumstances. Any farmer or any boy in town might have propagated new varieties of potatoes and could have sold to us as good an advantage as I did my starch seedling."

The want of a better starch producing potato has been known for years. It was no chance that I produced better potatoes than were in the market. It was a natural result, and one that all the farmers in the state knew to be possible, but did not wish the bother, for it took too much time, and one day looked too far off. But I appreciate all of father's kindness in allowing me the use of his quarter acre of land. Wilkie laughed at me for spending my time that way. He has spent half his father's fortune, they say, since he fell into bad ways and I have nearly made one of my own."

But, Ned, your mother is interested in your success and in your plans for the future. Are you going to live in that big house alone?"

"I hope not," said Ned. "There is one whom I would like to live with me, and home would not really be home unless she is there."

"Who is that, Ned?"

"Nellie." "Have you spoken to her about it, Ned. The ideal home you have drawn on paper must be very tempting to any young lady."

"No, mother, I have not spoken to her. I would not tempt her by offering her a palace. I want one who will love me for myself alone. I sometimes fear that she would accept me, if she accepted at all, through gratitude, because I saved her life, but I have asked her yet. But a while ago I asked, and if possible win her hand and heart, and she said she would not really be home unless she is there."

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"How lovely these roses are," said Ned, as he watched Nellie pick a bud from a moss-rose bush.

Had any one seen Ned at the moment he spoke they would have had serious doubts if he saw anything before him, but the handsome face of Nellie.

"There is a tradition," said Nellie, "in one of the heathen nations, that the crown of thorns our Saviour wore at the crucifixion, was made of roses, and that the drops of blood that started under it fell to the ground and blossomed into roses."

"The rose from earliest times has been regarded as the symbol of all that is sweet and lovely," said Ned. As he spoke he looked meaningly at Nellie and she crimsoned to the neck.

"And its thorn," replied Nellie, "has been a symbol to remind man that even earth's fairest objects has a dark side, and that there is nothing so bright and beautiful as not to be without alloy."

"But the rose, Nellie, has ever been the symbol of beauty, the prize of virtue, the image of pleasure, innocence and youth," continued Ned.

"They stood beside each other now, and above them were the branches of a monster rose bush which had been twined to a trellis.

Just then the full moon, that for a few moments had been hid behind a cloud, began to show above it, and tinged the edge with silver light.

"How beautiful," said Nellie, and Ned, who turned his eyes from the moonlit cloud to Nellie's face, said: "Yes, it is beautiful."

Nellie caught his glance, and noticing its intentness, blushed redder than the roses that hung over her head.

Both now were silent, each at that moment would have given worlds to have known the other's thoughts.

Nellie toyed nervously at the overhanging rose bush and suddenly a branch escaped from its fastenings and dropped down; it was a forked one, and as it fell Nellie and Ned were caught between the two and they found themselves bound together. It was no easy task to unhook all the little thorns that held them together, and in their laughing efforts to extricate themselves from the net their hands frequently touched, and when the last thorn was unhooked and the vine flew back partially, but yet bending over them, as if to pronounce a benediction, and to strew their path with roses, Ned caught both of Nellie's hands in his own. They had never rested that way before, at first there was a little movement as if to withdraw them, and then they yielded to the stronger clasp.

"Nellie," said Ned, "the falling of this rose about us to night was but another link in what seems to be our chain of fate. To me the rose has always been the most charming flower; and all the virtues that the ancients saw in it have been intensified of late. The rose has become the flower of my dreams and in my dreams the rose always comes to me, and when I awake I find myself in the beauty and loveliness of myself. One in my sickness Nellie I had a curious dream, in which the roses and you took an active part, and as I dreamed two branches of the rose suddenly flew around my neck, and I was fast, and then I awoke, and it seemed to me as if you and not the rose, had filled my heart a moment with greater happiness than I had ever known before. Since then, Nellie, I have been the rose of my dreams, and while I have desired all this time to give you to be my rose in reality, I have not dared to ask it, but the fate seems to-night an omen of success by dropping these roses branches around us. Say, Nellie, shall the dream rose be a real one and all my own? I have already asked your father and he gave me permission to woo you and if I could win your heart and hand, what say you, Nellie?"

"You have long had my heart and you have both my hands," said Nellie demurely, and then the moon, considerably hid under a cloud but for all this Ned knew that the rose he clasped in his arms was a blush rose.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Success.

Ned's field of New Jackson seedlings, which were planted where only two years before had been nothing but a tangled mass of laurel and birches, was ready for the harvest at last, and he began to liberally advertise them through the press. He sent men to the county fairs wherever he was raising a specialty. As already stated he had received four hundred and seventy-two letters, the first year that the potatoes were announced, and to the writers of these he sent a card saying that he was ready to fill orders at fifty cents per pound. On these he realized an average over of five pounds each or 2,360 pounds which of course gave him the net sum of \$1,180. As a result of extensive advertising which raised from one to ten pounds, and the average was four pounds to each order, which increased his mail receipts fully \$4,000. Ned decided to allow his agents 50 per cent of all they received in the sale of potatoes, and owing to the liberal commission, he found it was anxious to undertake the agency. The great culture fairs prospered, and many a farmer went home at night with a pound or two of the wonderful new seedling; which the papers had said so much about. These they carefully laid away after counting the number of eyes they had, and speculated how many hills they could plant from the pound or pounds of the seedlings which they had purchased. Ned never told any one the amount that he did receive as a result of his sales that year, but it is known that the yield of the New Jackson averaged 300 bushels to the acre, and that he had six acres. He did not sell from his mail orders enough to clear \$500 exclusive of postage paid. The bank cashier, in a confidential conversation, told a friend that after the fairs were over, he had cashed checks that Ned had received from his agents, which were in nearly every state in the union, that amounted to nearly \$20,000, and he did not know but more. At any rate he believed that Ned was now numbered among the richest men in town. "And it is queer how it has all come about," continued the banker. "Some say it is luck, but there is nothing in the whole of Ned's career, that any one of our boys might not have done, if they had put themselves in the same shoes that Ned did, and pushed forward as he has toward success."

Gladly would we follow Ned in his after life, which was a successful one in public as well as private affairs, but we must leave him in his new home for a time, which cost him double the sum that he promised Mr. Sharp when he sought Nellie's hand. The house he furnished with great care, and when the roses bloomed in the summer again the house was occupied by Ned. Although he filled the ground with rare shrubs and flowers and roses of every kind bloomed in after years within the gardens, Ned always insisted that there was no rose in the world like the rose of his dreams, because that rose was his own Nellie, which he always said was indeed the most charming flower of his beautiful home.

THE END.

Delagoo bay is the finest natural harbor in South Africa. It has a length of nearly 70 miles from north to south, and a width varying from 16 to 25 miles.

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