

# OUR NEXT PRESIDENT

REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES — SELECTED BY FORUM READERS

*Drawings by Johan Bull*

*A*MONG the hundreds of predictions submitted in THE FORUM's Presidential Contest, three leaders — Secretary Hoover, Vice-President Dawes, and President Coolidge — stood far ahead of all others, in the order named. Then followed former Governor Lowden of Illinois and Senator Borah. Half of the contestants foretold the election of Mr. Hoover.

*In this issue are printed the five best papers predicting Republican victories. Next month the best papers selecting the Democratic candidates will be published, and the Editor will award the prize of one hundred dollars to the winner of the entire contest.*

## I — HERBERT CLARK HOOVER

LEE WARD

**B**ARKER, my neighbor across the street, came over and sat on the front steps while I sprayed my lawn. His face was a yard and a half long by actual measurement. He was chewing gum and letting out sighs most lugubrious.

"What's the matter?" I asked after an extra heavy gust. "Your radio busted or car on the blink?"

He pulled a newspaper out of his pocket and pointed to a big scare head.

"That says Calvin Coolidge meant it when he said he wouldn't run for President again." He offered me the paper.

"I read that this morning," said I, quite unconcerned. "Instead of crying about it, you ought to be glad he's man enough to say what he means and stick to it."

Barker looked glummer than ever and stirred up the atmosphere with another sigh.

"I don't know what will become of the United States," he said gloomily. "There ain't another man capable of carrying on the government like he does."

"Rats!" I remarked cheerfully. "They said that about G. Washington, but the United States still survives after one hundred and thirty-two years."

"Times were different then," he grumbled.

I gave the hose a flirt that sent a little shower over him. He seemed to need freshening up. While he shook the water off his hat and wiped his face on his shirt sleeve, I fixed the nozzle so it would run slowly in the pansy bed and sat down beside Barker. He's a good neighbor and a carpenter, and I wanted him to put a new spring on my screen door.

"After the shower, let's look for the rainbow," I said comfortably. "I hate to see President Coolidge go out of office, but he's doing the square thing and there are other men just as capable of running the country." Barker sniffed.

"Show me the man who can fill Coolidge's place," he challenged.

"Haven't you any state pride?" I demanded. "What kind of Californian are you, anyway?" He stared.

"You don't mean —"

"I sure do. He's going to be elected next fall," I said decidedly.

"But you said you wouldn't vote for him," Barker insisted.

"I never said anything of the kind," I declared.

"You did," he retorted. "You said if he was the only man in California —"

I laughed and shifted the hose a couple of feet.

"You're barking up the wrong tree,"

I told him. "The man you mean won't be our next President, not by a long shot. The man I mean isn't a skyrocket politician. He is a man whose motto is service. He took over the problem of food distribution during the World War and handled it in a way that proved his ability and common sense. Since then he has been in the Cabinet, getting trained for what's coming to him. He understands the political whirlpool in Washington thoroughly and will not be drawn into it. He has the wide outlook that living at both ends of the continent gives. He knows the United States is bounded on the west by the Pacific Ocean, not by the Rocky Mountains, and he is big enough to spread over the whole country. There will be no geographical divisions in his administration. Maine or California, Michigan or Florida will all be one and the same to him when it comes to the good of the nation. He won't be like President Coolidge, because no two men can make the same kind of President, and we don't want 'em to. Variety is the spice of life. But in honesty, fair-dealing, and patriotism, all good Americans are alike.

"When Calvin Coolidge lets go of the steering wheel on March 4, 1929, the machinery of this great government will move on without a tremor, for the hand that takes hold will be strong and steady and we can all go to sleep that night feel-



ing sure that Herbert Hoover, the thirty-first President of the United States, is the right man for his job."

I heard the gate slam and looked around. I had "moved my audience." He was making a bee line for home. When I went in to supper, my wife asked if I spoke to Barker about the screen door.

"I plumb forgot it, I was so busy telling him who is going to be our next President. But there's lots of time between now and November," I added, apologetically.

"November!" exclaimed my wife in a tone most husbands would recognize. "I should hope so!"

## II — CHARLES GATES DAWES

J. DONALD KINGSLEY

**W**ELL," said the Senator, biting the end off a five-cent cigar, "the next man to smoke his pipe in the Blue Room'll be Charley Dawes."

He leaned back in his chair on the porch of Robert's General Store and held a match to the cigar with an air of finality.

The Senator is highly respected in our town. His six years at Albany gave him a keen insight into things political. But in spite of this prestige there was a snicker as he made the remark. Now snickers don't usually bother him; he grew used to them as a legislator. But this seemed to get under his skin. He pulled himself up in his

chair and with characteristic good marksmanship spat squarely on a dried leaf before the porch. It is a habit with the Senator, whenever he has anything important to say.

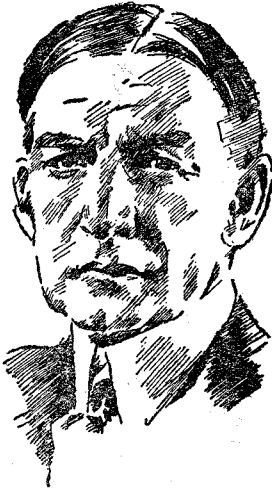
"I repeat," he said with dignity, "that General Dawes'll be the next man to wear a ten-gallon hat and git presents from the Girl Scouts."

"But what about Hoover and Smith?" I asked.

"Hoover kin never git himself nominated and no Democrat is gonna be able to win this skirmish."

Lem Travers tore off a chew of tobacco

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and we waited for the Senator to continue, for now that we had him started, he was good for most of the day.

"Dawes," he said softly, "Dawes is the man the Republicans are goin' to put their money on. He's a dern good party man, and though he's talked more'n a politician ought to, he ain't talked as much in the past as Herb has. And Herbert's too liberal to suit the big men, while Charley's right in with the bankers."

"But," Lem put in, "this feller Hoover's already got a sight o' delegates."

The Senator spat disdainfully.

"Sure," he said, "and he and Leonard Wood had 'em in 1920 and so did Teddy when he split with Taft. Naw, the G. O. P.'s makin' a grandstand play with Herb. While people're watchin' him in the show window, they'll nominate one of the clerks from behind a counter. Dawes is playin' smart politics in not makin' any noise, even the kind that don't say anything. The American people don't like a man that talks above a whisper, just before elections. They like political conventions to be kind 'o surprise parties."

"Well no man usin' the kind o' language Dawes uses is gonna git my vote," Lem remarked.

The Senator, aside from a contemptuous glance, ignored him, and continued.

"And another thing," he said, "The Republicans still look upon Cal as the great symbol of prosperity and he and Charley are thicker'n a bushel o' rats. The Coolidge men and the Dawes men'll git

hitched up before this pep fest is through."

"Hmm," said Lem, "but even so, where do the Democrats come in?"

"They don't," said the Senator, "unless things change a heap. The Republicans've got the country so believin' that it's on the crest of prosperity that it'll take a mighty strong man to wake 'em up. There ain't but one man in the Democratic line-up that could do it, and that's Governor Al. And he can't."

The Senator paused to light a fresh cigar.

"What about Teapot Dome?" I asked. "Won't the Republicans find it hard to explain that?"

He snorted.

"Did you ever know the American people to remember anything like that 'round election time? And if they did, they never blamed it on the party. Political parties in this country are like constitutions; they're above the weaknesses o' men. The oil scandal didn't bother the last election none, did it?"

He paused expectantly and I admitted that I didn't know as it did. Then he really began to warm up to his subject.

"Now I'll tell ya why Smith could never be elected. You've heard of the solid South? Well, the South is solid because they're afraid of lettin' the Republican Negroes into power. But it's dry fer about the same reason. They're afraid to have the 'cullud' folks goin' on sprees. That's the reason that all the Southern states but Louisiana, Maryland, and Delaware were arid ahead of the Eighteenth Amendment. All the rest of 'em had voted fer parched throats. And the interestin' thing is that all but those three states're strictly Protestant, too. So, it'd look like there might be a two-way split there."

"I thought Al Smith come out in favor of enforcin' the Eighteenth Amendment," Lem interrupted.

"You're right," said the Senator, "he did. But he was a little late in doin' it and actions speak louder'n words. Also, that statement didn't change his feelin's toward the law none. He's agin the whole idea of tryin' to make people temperate."

"It doesn't seem as though his loss of votes in the South would be enough to carry the election against him," I remarked.

"No," the Senator answered, "the

South'll always be more or less solid. It's the West that'll break the Governor's winnin' streak, and the South'll jest finish the job. The West, exceptin' the Eastern state of California, is narrerly Protestant and bone dry. They still think democracy is a great success. And no wet but Will Rogers could scrape votes out there, and he'd have to lasso 'em."

The Senator paused once more and looked us over critically.

"And in ordinary times," he continued, "there are four important states: New

York, New Jersey, Ohio, and Illinois. If Al could carry those he might have a fightin' chance. But he can't. New York he'll git without difficulty, and probably New Jersey. But Dawes'll carry his home state of Illinois and have little trouble makin' Ohio fall his way. Yeah, Charley Dawes'll be the next man to claim he's the choice of the American people."

The Senator spat vigorously again and put on his battered felt hat, which was his way of saying that the matter was closed, as far as he was concerned.

### III — CALVIN COOLIDGE

BERNARD KELLY

**W**ELL, sir, if you ask me, I'll say that this thing of electing a President is getting to where people don't take it seriously. What the country needs to-day is a man with ideals, like Bryan, now. There was a man that'd win hands down to-day if he was alive to run. Of course, I don't approve of prohibition, but then I don't think we ought to let the saloons come back either.

Why, just last night I was talking to my wife. I'm married, got three children, all boys, and I said "Honey, I'm glad we got prohibition, because look at the boys, now. I'd hate to see 'em hanging around a saloon." And that's why Al Smith won't get it even if the Democrats nominate him. Now there's a lot of people who won't vote for Smith on account of his being a Catholic, but I don't think that feeling amounts to much among people like us. Why I'd just as soon vote for a Catholic as anybody else, but as I say, Smith's wet. Lots of my best friends are Catholics, and I think they're as good as anybody else. Of course, lots of people aren't broad-minded enough to see that, but it's the fault of the Ku Klux Klan. I'm not knocking the Klan, you understand; it's a good organization and does a lot of good work — like keeping the Negroes in their place.

Well, I guess it's going to be between Hoover and Smith unless Reed gets in; he's too radical, I think, and while our boys were fighting overseas he tried to

keep us out of the War. Not that there wasn't a certain amount of graft during the War, like ship-building and the railroads, which ought to teach the government to stay out of business and let business men run things right, because if you let the government go running things you get socialism and it's just a step to free love; but I think it's a patriotic citizen's duty to close his eyes to his country's faults, especially at a time like that. I was on the exemption board and couldn't go across because I had flat feet; but there were a lot of strapping young fellows came up before me and tried to worm out of it, and I sure told them which side their bread was buttered on. "Your country needs you," I told them. "Are you going to do your duty?" I changed many a young fellow's mind and some of them — a few of them — came up afterward and thanked me.

Anyhow, Reed doesn't appeal to me as being the sort of man we want in that job. And I think we're all agreed that a Republican ought to get it. The way I look at it is that business conditions are best under a Republican administration. Four years ago I sent a notice around to the help in my store — I'm in the sporting goods game — telling them that if Cox was elected business would drop so that I'd have to cut the force. Now, I don't believe in trying to force anybody's vote, but I think that a working man owes something to his employer — don't you gentlemen?

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— and you'd be gratified to know that we had a hundred per cent vote for Coolidge.

Now, Hoover is a problem. Lots of people think he's a little too friendly with England; but we're all brothers, after all, and he's a good silent business man, the kind we need to cut out all this monkey business about the government taking over Muscle Shoals. But then, he's going to want to spend millions of dollars to pro-

tect the Mississippi against floods, and we can't afford it if we're going to keep our army and navy up to par like a great power. Another thing, Hoover would want strict enforcement of prohibition and that wouldn't be right. I can take a drink and hold it, and I don't think it's wrong, but as I told our pastor — I'm a Congregationalist — I'd like to see the law hang a bootlegger that sells to kids. I told my oldest boy that I'd kick him out of the house the next time, one day when he offered me a drink; and believe me I haven't caught him with any since, either.

Anyhow, it's a problem for the business man to solve. As I told Helen — that's my wife — when Coolidge said, "I do not choose to run" — and by the way, that sure caused a lot of talk, didn't it? The other day Harvey Gilmour — he's in the boot and shoe game — the other day he called me up and wanted me to play a couple rounds of golf before dark. I told him "I do not choose to play golf to-day." Laugh! I wish you could have heard him. I went around in ninety-six that day. Anyhow, I don't think the country could do any better than draft Coolidge and make him run for reelection

## IV — FRANK ORREN LOWDEN

JOHN H. DENISTON

**O**UR next president will be Frank O. Lowden, of Illinois. That is not an idle guess. It is a logical conclusion, reached after consideration of conditions as they are. Soup and bread lines and three million idle men in industrial centres are not good omens. And back in the smaller cities are as many more idle or partly idle workers, while there are to-day more vacant houses and apartments, more empty offices and store rooms, than ever before in the history of this "prosperous country."

Unemployment and discontent in urban centres mean millions of votes for the "outs" in a national election, and the Democrats are heirs to that gain this year. It is a loss which cannot be avoided by the Republicans, since it is the product of factors now working which cannot sud-

denly be reversed. And it is already discounted by party leaders in their forecasts.

That loss narrows the margin of safety in the East sufficiently to make certain that the G. O. P. will avoid a greater loss in the West at any hazard, which would result from the disaffection of the farmer vote; for the West goes as the farmers vote. Nominally Republican, yes. But twice within the memory of many men still voting the Western farmers kicked out of the harness that hooked them to the G. O. P. band wagon and started rival shows of their own, with less provocation than they now have for quitting the G. O. P. circus. "How did it happen?"

Well, for years such professional optimists as Arthur Brisbane and the *Nation's Business* have flaunted stories of this "unprecedented era of prosperity" in the



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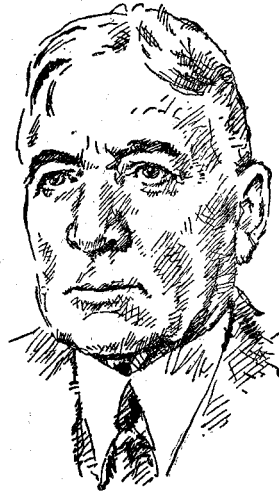
faces of millions of farmers who have been working their farms at a loss. They feel that they have been "gypped" by their friends, who should have shared the melon with them. Such "prosperity" should have been passed around, but its delicious core was "hogged" by favored classes in financial circles and industrial centres.

There are now hundreds of thousands of abandoned farms in the West, not all of them poor farms in thin-land sections by any means. And in country towns and cities, too, to some extent, are hundreds of thousands of middle-aged and elderly people who were driven from those farms and are now existing on meager wages or charity of relatives — on a plane of living far below that to which they were accustomed when there were living upon the farms.

Who are they — these quitters? They are the army of loyal Americans, men and women, who won the War; who gave first their sons to the armies that marched away, and then took up the doubled burdens at home, toiling as they had never toiled before, to produce the food which, they were told, would win the War. Now, robbed of their homes through no faults of their own, disheartened and hopeless of retrieving their losses, they hang on as the pitiful "remnant" of the defeated army of the prideful Americanism that is passing in the West from resident farm-ownership. But they still vote as farmers.

Again, to-day in much of the West, you can rent a good farm cheaper than you can own it, with the tax burden upon the owner. And, another anomaly, upon thousands of farms, the "hired hand" who lives with the farmer's family as one of them, is making more money than the farmer-owner who employs him.

Thus it comes about that the Western farmers are not satisfied with their share in "national prosperity" nor content with what Congress has done about it. And they have decided to elect a President who will at least try to do something more than talk about it. They have decided to quit playing the rôle of scapegoat in the desert, while all the other sons and daughters are sitting in at the joyful prosperity feast. And before the Republican National Convention picks a standard bearer, it will discover that the farmers think they know what they want and that it will be the best



kind of politics to hand it to them. That means the nomination of Frank O. Lowden, and if nominated he is practically certain of election in November.

Why Lowden in preference to Hoover or some other? Lowden is a farmer, knows farmers' problems, and, moreover, is tried and proved. As Governor of Illinois he increased efficiency and lowered costs by consolidation of boards, commissions, and bureaus. He has also, alone among public men with friends to reward with offices, dared to point out what is speedily coming: a taxation which means the confiscation of property that pays the taxes — killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. Thousands of abandoned farms, millions of acres of land on delinquent tax rolls, millions of farmers working for nothing except to pay taxes to support parasites to govern them, and thousands of farms, all over the West, that will not rent for the taxes levied against them attest the fact that that condition is already here. The farmers and Frank O. Lowden, apparently, are the only people concerned about it. For the country as a whole, as represented by the politicians, is still on a wild spree of extravagant spending of public money, and taxes are still going up instead of being knocked down as they should be.

Hoover may be "o.k." but the Western farmers feel that he takes in a bit too much territory. We have won World Wars, saved bankrupt nations, and fed starving foreigners until millions of American citizens are bankrupt and thousands are suffering for food and clothes, if not actu-

ally starving. It is time to take a dose of our own philanthropy at home to save our farmers from the sheriffs and the poor houses in the heart of the richest nation on the planet, and to bring to the farms a sufficient amount of that "unprecedented prosperity" to make life there livable.

Anyway, Lowden is a one-term man, and Hoover will get his chance in 1932. In this hour of crisis, the safest, sanest, surest man to pilot the Ship of State and keep her on an even keel is that statesman from Illinois, tried and true, Frank O. Lowden.

## V — WILLIAM EDGAR BORAH

GLENN D. WHISLER

**A**S to who will be our next President, the gods will decide. To single out any individual candidate with reasons for his choice can be barely more than political biography. A writer in a current magazine names Smith and Hoover as the candidates. Many men on the street think that neither will be nominated.

But no Democrat will be elected in the year 1928. Governor Smith would be defeated on the wet score alone. This country is dry and it is going to stay dry with increasing majorities. The weakest of the present Republican candidates who might be named at Kansas City would beat Smith. Nor will Smith be nominated at Houston except in the event of a gesture of fatalism on the part of the Democrats. Reed has no chance for the nomination. The vitriolic and aggressive man never does have a chance at the Presidency. Walsh would make the best Democratic candidate, but he could not win. Why would the weakest of the Republicans defeat any of the three Democrats? Because he would have the full force of the Republican machine back of him and a great portion of the Harding and Coolidge votes. When it comes to candidates like Harding, men are nothing and parties are everything.

Hoover will not be nominated. He is not a Republican in the typical sense. Two things will defeat Hoover before he is well started. One, the politicians have taken Hoover in hand and the result will not be fortunate for him. Two, the Scripps-Howard papers (independent Democratic) have backed him. He is a novice in politics who thinks that the Scripps-Howard papers would not prefer Al Smith in the Presidency. And he is a novice in politics, indeed,

who thinks that the Scripps-Howard editors have any idea that the Republican Convention will do their bidding. Smith and Hoover present a peculiar situation. Hoover would make an ideal Democratic candidate. Al Smith, in his personality alone, would make an ideal Republican candidate.

Dawes will not be nominated. The Vice-presidency has submerged him regardless of whether he may think so. He has a Vice-presidential and not a Presidential personality. Harding had the Presidential personality in plus terms.

Coolidge does not want the Presidency again for personal and political reasons. He would refuse if nominated at Kansas City. If he attempts to aid Hoover it will be unfortunate for Hoover. Coolidge is no political Roosevelt. Coolidge may be wise enough to say nothing.

Lowden in terms of Republicanism, affiliations, ability, respectability, and present expediency in politics, would make a good and a winning candidate and he has an even chance for the nomination.

Hughes is too cold and too inept at politics to receive consideration.

Borah, if the Republicans were smart enough to nominate him, would be safely elected, even in the face of his apparent quixotism about returning the Sinclair money to Sinclair.

The Republicans do not dare repeat the error, as it turned out, of nominating another man like Harding. Their only man without a single smudge upon him is Borah. And he happens to be the biggest, the most acceptable to the rank and file, and the most typically American of the possibilities. The Republicans have a Grover Cleveland knocking at their gate,

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if they but knew it — a man above reproach and of the highest ability.

Teapot Dome, though it had no effect on the Coolidge election, may force the hands of the Republicans this time. It may in the end, and not beyond the bounds of reason, force them to nominate Borah. If they do, Borah will be the next President.

Smith would come closest to thrashing any man in the field in either party if he were not wet and were not a Catholic. He could probably overcome the stigma of his Tammany alliance, if that were the only objection to him. Teapot Dome made Tammany look amateurish.

The Republican candidate will be Borah and he will be the next President. The pendulum will swing from Harding to Borah, and that is how it should swing. Harding meant a party. Borah means an individual, but an individual Republican. The old-line Republican voters will not accept Hoover as a Republican by tens of thousands of votes. They will accept Borah, but they must accept him as another Cleveland, and they will do it gladly after the outcome of 1920. Borah is a Republican in the best Democratic sense. Hoover is a Democrat (League of Nations, etc.) in the worst Republican sense.

Borah is a statesman who matched his statesmanship against Wilson and won.

Borah is a statesman who more clearly



than any other knows the American mind and heart, as in its attitude toward the League of Nations and in its attitude toward the Eighteenth Amendment.

Borah is a statesman who would mold events, rather than a creature of politics to be crushed by them.

Borah stands alone, but, standing alone, stands for the best in these United States in morals, in business, and in things of the highest political vision.

Borah is a Republican.

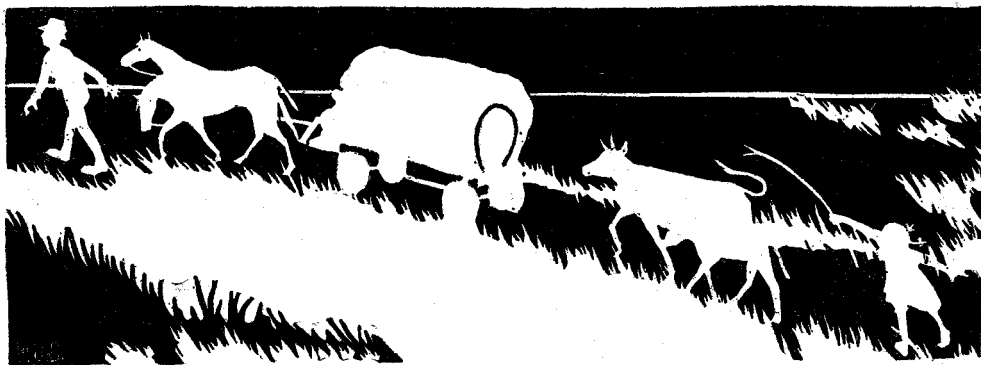
Borah is an American.

Borah is incorruptible.

Our next President: Borah of Boise!

*Sinclair Lewis, in his latest book, "The Man Who Knew Coolidge," presents a superb piece of irony on the mental processes of homo sapiens Americanus. Some of the papers printed above are dyed the same hue as this Lewis book, in that they predict the outcome of this year's campaign, not so much upon considerations of the candidates' abilities or qualifications, nor even upon political strategy, but upon a downright knowledge of how the average citizen's mind functions. Such essays are typical exhibits in our newly discovered museum of Americana.*





Scissor-cuts by Martha Bensley Bruère

## HILL COUNTRY

### *Forum Prize Biographical Novel — IV*

RAMSEY BENSON

**A**S a politician, Pick Overturf was dyed in the wool, so to speak. His father had been an Abolitionist before abolition — when to be known as an adherent of that faith brought a man into the shadow of the prison, if not of the noosed rope. His older brother had actually been jailed for attempting to smuggle arms to John Brown's crusaders; and when the Civil War broke out Pick, though still only a boy, enlisted and saw service. By these influences and experiences he was marked a Republican for life, through thick and thin, in good and evil report. He voted the straight ticket, and the platform of the national convention was his political gospel. Of course, Pick wasn't pleased with the position the *Voice* had taken, and he didn't hesitate to haul Sven Opsahl over the coals.

"Where would you and your paper be if it wasn't for what Hill has done to open up the country?" he demanded. Sven's usual answer was to ask if Hill hadn't been well paid for his services. Pick contended that such men have a right to fix their own pay. You couldn't hold them to any ordinary scale of wages and it wasn't for any ordinary man to say they were being overpaid.

"If Hill don't like the wages we can afford to pay, let him quit. There'll be somebody else glad to take the job off his hands," Sven countered.

"After he's gone and done what nobody else had the courage to do — do you call it fair, now that he's got his great work well started, to expect him to step out and let somebody else reap the reward?"

Yes, Sven called it fair — he thought the greatest good of the greatest number should govern. That was a form of words often in his mouth, and Pick was more and more annoyed by it — so annoyed at last that he was willing to be very rough shod indeed.

"The trouble with you, Sven," he snorted, "is you've got the swelled head!" He lost his temper, in other words, and Sven as good as pleaded guilty to the charge by losing his.

"Who," he shot right back, "has got the swelled head any worse than you?"

When, that very day, he found in his mail an invitation to a party at the Overturf home his first impulse was to pay no attention to it. He was too bashful to enjoy parties in any way pretentious, too conscious of his lack of social graces. But when he turned the printed card over