

"Got rid of 'em. Had too many," answered Tom briefly.

"Wish you'd given me some." "Fix up a place for 'em and I will," was the answer, "and I'll tell you a secret, too, if you won't let the other boys know."

And the two lads retired to Tom's room to have a confidential chat.

That was a hard winter, and even Tom knew that his father was having a pull to make ends meet, although he never talked much about his business. Tom had evidently inherited this taciturnity.

One evening as he came whistling into the house, he overheard a few words which made him grow suddenly silent.

"It's no use, Nancy." It was his father's voice that spoke. "I cannot meet that note by twenty dollars. And I don't know any one round here that's rich enough to lend it to me. The worst part is, it looks like I wasn't honest."

Tom entered the dining room quietly and slipped into his chair at the supper table. He was an only son, but that fact and the consequent indulgence he had received had not spoiled him; for he loved both parents dearly.

"Tom," said his father, suddenly turning toward the boy, "I'll have to drain that marsh, son. I'll need every foot of land next year for corn."

"All right, sir," and Tom got out his lesson books; but somehow, he could not study, for there was a conflict going on inside his breast. Presently he rose, lit a candle and went to his room, a little closet that opened into his parents' sleeping apartment. Stooping, he drew from under the bed a box in which he kept his clothes; and diving down to the bottom, brought out an old pocketbook, whose contents he spread upon the quilt and counted. Twenty-two crisp dollar bills! Oh, how he had coveted the possession of a bicycle, and soon he would be able to buy one! But then, there was dear old father. Tom had seen him gulp his supper down

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and push away the dishes, and mother had eaten nothing, but had gone about clearing the table with a sad look on her face.

The victory was won. Tom gathered up his earnings, descended the stairs, extinguished the candle, and then he paused. His father had buried his face in his arms upon the table.

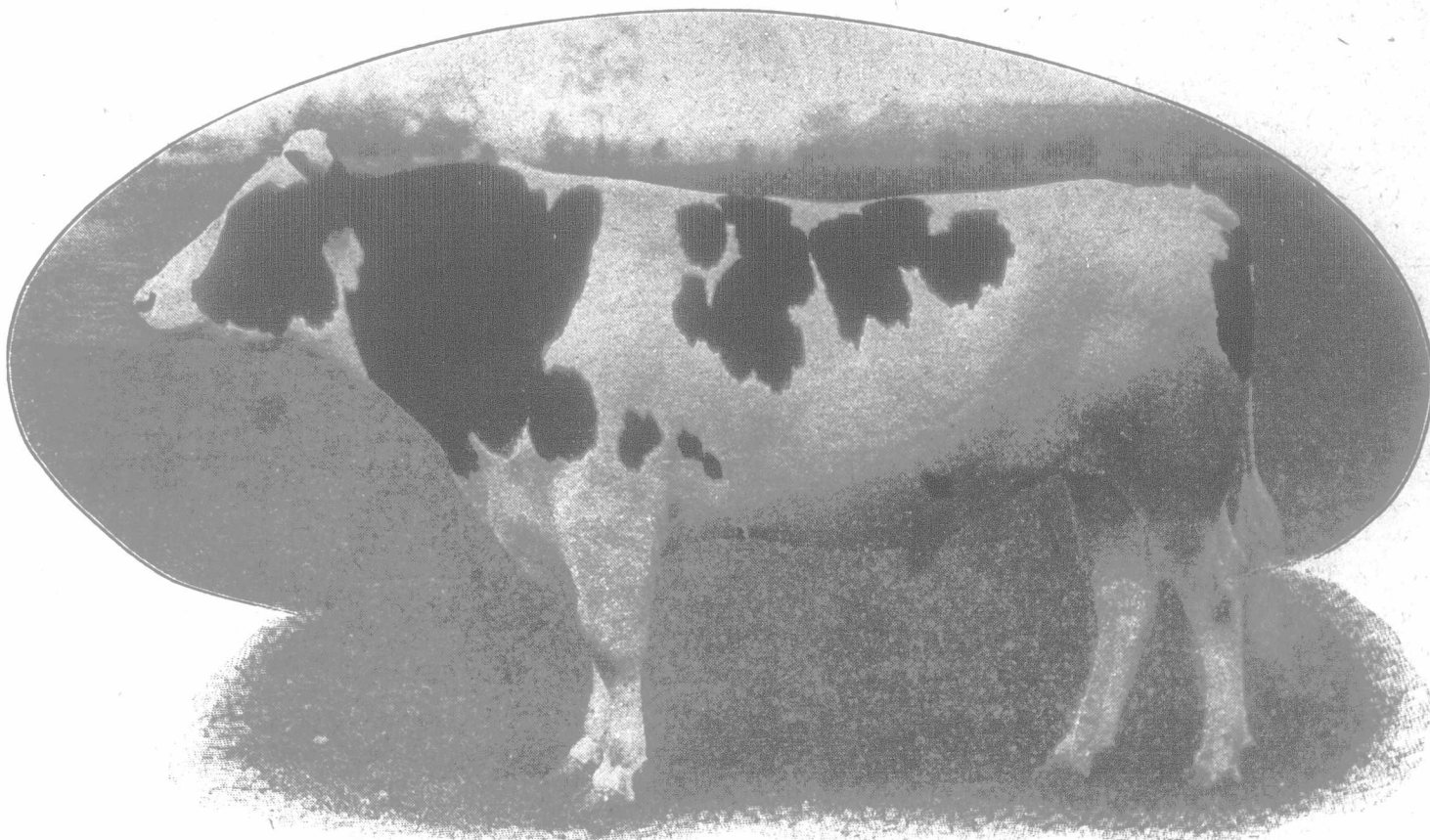
"Pa, I say, pa, you can meet that note," Tom laid the money upon his father's knee. "This is mine. I earned it. I've been saving up to buy a bicycle, but I don't want one now. You take it."

Mr. Parker stared at his son incredulously. "You earned all that money?"

"That's what, I got from my frog pond," Tom explained. "Do you remember when cousin John stopped here, last March, on his way back from Washington City? You know he had been to see about some salmon to stock his fish pond. Well, he left an old report of the Fish Commission when he went away, and I read it. It said there was a lot of money to be made selling frogs' legs. I didn't believe it all, so I went in town to one of the big wholesale dealers and asked him if it was true. He said yes, that folks up at the big hotels paid a good price for 'em, said he'd take all I could bring in. And the very finest frogs in the United States are found in Missouri, too. So I took that Government report and studied up all about how to make a pond and raise 'em. I've learned to dress 'em good, too, and if you'll let keep the marsh, I'll try to sell to a hotel direct, next year."

"My dear boy," said his father, grasping his hand, "you shall have that bicycle next year if such a thing is possible. You've saved me more to-night, son, than you can understand. As to the marsh, we'll enlarge the enclosure and go into the frog business. Tell you what, it came in handy this year."

Tom looked up at his mother. Her face was beaming with joy. It was the



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