

Florida the Land of Youth

By J. B. Hackney.

It was the 5th of January. A cold northwest wind was blowing across the mountains and down the valleys. Dark, heavy clouds with rifts here and there, floated from northwest to southeast. At intervals the cutting wind would bring sheets of fine snow and rain to sting the face like flying needles. The day before had been warm for the time of year in that locality and during the night a heavy rain had fallen. Then came one of those sudden changes so common in middle eastern states. All day it had been getting colder. The ground, soaked with water, was freezing.

It was an unusually disagreeable day in a bad winter climate.

About 6 o'clock on the day mentioned in the locality just described, a man, broken in health and low in spirits, boarded a train for Florida. In the warm Pullman little could be known of the kind of weather outside. Next morning he walked out of the train and found himself in the glorious, sunny "Land of Flowers." What a change! It was almost like going to sleep and awakening in paradise. The sun was shining, and what sunshine! The sky was clear and blue—so very clear and blue! And the weather could not have been more to one's liking, it seemed. But the change from cold to warmth did not produce a drowsy mental state, or weakened physical forces. Every faculty seemed to become responsive to the will, as if all hampering barriers were removed. Vitality seemed to quicken in every fibre of the body, as growth begins in a plant just set in suited soil and clime. It was like beginning life again where all things were young and strong.

A few days later he stood amid the palmettoes and the pines. Gentle winds were blowing. Soothing fragrance filled the air. Slightly playful waters of a lake near by lapped the sandy shore. Through a glade an orange grove was visible. He had just left one of the most beautiful springs imaginable. Suddenly there came to his mind the story of Ponce De Leon and the Fountain of Youth—the story that is woven into the history of Florida and lives in the narrative of the nation. Where is the boy or girl who has not read of the old Spanish soldier tramping through Florida in search of the fountain which would, he had been told, by plunging into its waters, make him young again!

This man wondered, then, how such a story started, why it should be linked with Florida, and why a spring should be supposed to hold this magic power. Then he thought if water anywhere could possess the power to restore to an old man the vigor and beauty of his youthful years, certainly it would be thought to exist in this land, where springs are so mysterious and beautiful, bubbling up clear as crystal out of the white sand. How strong they look, and what a life-giving element they seem to hold, as one gazes into their clear, pure depths. Surely if there were a spring anywhere that would turn age back to youth, it would be found in Florida.

Then he thought of another reason why this story of youth renewed might be associated with Florida. It seemed to him that the idea of youth was everywhere in this wondrous section. On every side were suggestions of newness, freshness, strength. With springtime weather—suggesting youth time of the year—ever-growing crops, trees that are ever green, flowers that never appear to fade and die, anyone might easily feel that something in Florida might make the life

of man go on forever without bringing the infirmities of age or marks of advancing years, and make the old man young again.

The lay of the land, its formation, and the general view from car window, boat or auto gives an idea of a land younger in ages than other sections of the country. The land of Florida has no mountains—no wrinkles upon its brow. It is a land that seems young, that it always shall be, that it is always smiling, laughing, playing.

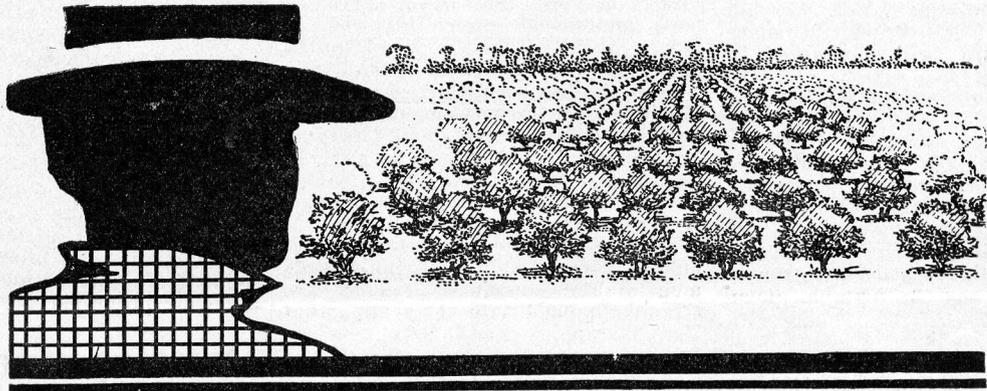
The air in this young country, it seemed to him, on that ideal day, was like one might imagine it on the first May morning of the life of the world, before it knew smoke from factory and furnace, and before it was poisoned by things dying, dead and decaying. And the sun was as bright, he thought, as it could have been when it was first placed in the heavens and lighted by the hand of the Creator to shine through the ages for the children of men. The sky could not have been clearer, he

thought, on that childhood day of the earth when God looked upon His handiwork and saw that it was very good.

An hour later he was in an automobile, passing through orange groves and truck farms. Again he thought of Florida as the Land of Youth. With its fruits and flowers and gardens it was remindful of the Garden of Eden, the garden that existed in the early days of the life of the race, where lived the first people in the morning of creation. It seemed that everything suggested youth, youth! The section through which he passed was a dreamy land. Dreams and youth are close associates. Passing swiftly beneath stately pines, with long, swaying moss, and by placid lakes, with a balm atmosphere prevailing everywhere, fleeting fancy, he thought, might here weave flowery figures on imagination's fleecy fabrics as nowhere else in all the world. The dreams of youth are bright and fresh and strong, and the dreamy mood in which he found himself in this delightful clime, amid captivating scenes, appeared to be born of a clear mind, in a vigorous body, made young

again by a regenerating force contained in land, air and water. The idea of youth, youth, seemed everywhere, all the time.

In the "Land of Flowers," the thought came to him, it must be that a dream of eternal youth is born in the human soul, though in some it might be only a ripple upon the tide of emotion, melting away without being realized or understood. Then he wondered if the story of the Fountain of Youth was not an expression of feeling common to all upon visiting this land of endless springtime. Had it not been conveyed through the idea of a spring, he thought likely it would have been in some other form. Could it not just as well have been said that the eating of a certain golden fruit when found would turn backward time in its flight and make one young again, or to find a certain delicate flower and inhale its rich perfume would make an old man young, to live on in the glory of his youthful days? And was not the feeling naturally arising in the mind in this flowery field and dreamy, sunny clime to be expressed in some such way?



The Florida Citrus Exchange Is A Growers' Organization

The Florida Citrus Exchange is purely a growers' organization, formed and operated on the most democratic basis.

On the first Tuesday in May of each year the growers who form the local associations meet and elect one of their number to represent them in the county sub-exchange.

Two weeks later these representatives meet and choose a manager for the county sub-exchange and a member of the Board of Directors of the State organization.

On the first Wednesday in June the directors of the State body meet at some central point, choose the executive officers of the organization for the coming year, and agree upon a general policy of administration.

Once each month through the entire year and twice a month in the shipping season directors of the Florida Citrus Exchange meet at the State headquarters, and go over all that has been done since the last meeting.

At each meeting of the board of directors there is presented a complete record of all the financial transactions since the last meeting. The financial statements are published from time to time, after the books have been audited.

An organization operating in this open, above-board way can never go far wrong so long as it is made up of intelligent people like the citrus growers of Florida. It is worthy the confidence of the people of the State, entitled to the support of all growers who want to secure the largest possible returns for their fruit and it asks that this be given it in this year of great crop production.

Daily in the shipping season the Exchange sends to all sub-exchanges, local associations and directors, bulletins which give complete information as to market conditions, sales made, offers refused, fruit moving, etc., etc.

Each grower who ships through the Exchange receives a detailed account sales for every shipment, showing when and where his fruit was sold, its condition, the price received and the cost of selling, with check for the net proceeds.

FLORIDA CITRUS EXCHANGE