FRANK MERRIWELL'S SCHEME
OR THE DARING DECEPTION
OF DR. CLOUD

BY BURT L. STANDISH

FRANK RECOILED IN AMAZEEMT. IT WAS NOT INZA.
CHAPTER I.

FRANK RECEIVES A TELEGRAM.

"For Yale, old Yale! come join the cheer
That reigns from age to age,
The rose-crowned altar of our love,
Our goodly heritage.
The scepter's might shall wax and wane,
The kingly cheek shall pale,
But deep within the hearts of men
Shall live the name of Yale.

REFRAIN.

"Yale, old Yale!
Though voices fail
That shout to-day thy name,
A hundred hearts
Where one departs
Shall keep alive the flame!

Unheeding clime,
Unawed by time,
The anthem of thy praise
For Yale! for Yale!
For good old Yale!
Shall ring the endless days!"

Back at Yale again, Frank sat in his beautiful rooms in Vanderbilt, listening with happy heart to the group of friends about him who sang this song. His bosom swelled and his eyes dimmed with moisture.

Browning, Hodge, Dashleigh—they were there with the others. Dashleigh had brought his mandolin, but it was useless to strike the strings when all joined in that grand chorus of loyalty and love for Old Eli.
They had given Merry a royal welcome. He had thought to return quietly and reach his room without attracting attention, but somehow notice reached the college that he was coming on a certain train, and a crowd of admirers turned out to meet him and give him a rousing reception.

It was too much! It was like the reception of some old-time warrior returning from battle and conquest, and he felt that it was altogether more than his due. What had he ever done to merit all this applause? He asked himself the question, and his inability to answer made him feel very small and insignificant.

But was not this something to incite him to do something, to perform noble deeds and accomplish great things? He knew he could never forget it, and he felt that sometime the memory of it might urge him on to heights that seemed unattainable.

And now he was in his room. They had permitted him to remain alone but a short time before they came hurrying to his apartments to grasp his hand and tell him how glad they were to be with him again. Some of them had lingered. Jack Ready was sitting in a corner, looking the picture of happy modesty. Joe Gamp grinned till the muscles of his face grew tired from the strain, and yet he could not seem to relax them. For once in his life, at least, Browning did not loiter, but sat bolt upright and showed his interest. Even Hodge wore an expression of pleasure, with not a shadow of a frown on his dark face. Dashleigh alone did not seem quite happy, although he tried to be so. He was nervous, and at last he found an opportunity to speak to Frank.

"Where in the world is Starbright?" he asked. "He ought to be here. I expected him yesterday. He was due then."

"And you have heard nothing from him?" Merry asked.

"Not a word. I don't know what to make of it."

"Oh, I think it is all right," smiled Frank, reassuringly, as he thought how close Dick had hung about Inza during the brief vacation. "I know he's been very busy and had a great deal to take up his mind."

"It may be all right," admitted Bert, "but I don't like it. Somehow, I feel that he is in trouble."

Just then the company struck into the second stanza of the song.

"Spirit of Yale that sacred guards
Our stripling manhood's home,
Robed in the hue that holds our hearts
The blue of heaven's dome,
 Thy song has swept the southern seas
And cheered the Northland gale
Till where the foot of man has turned
There lives the name of Yale."

Deep sank the sentiment into their hearts, thrilling every soul with love for the blue and for Yale. Frank rose to his feet as he joined in the refrain, and in a moment every youth was standing, his eyes glowing, his cheeks flushed, his entire being quivering with a thrill indescribable. In truth the "Spirit of Yale" possessed them all at that moment.

Hands met hands and eyes met eyes. It was a brotherhood bound by an undefinable yet powerful tie that could never be broken in after years, no matter what vicissitudes life might bring.

Frank led with the third stanza:

"When passing years with rev'rent hand
Have thinned our joyous throng,
Life's mellow sunset flush shall find
Our love still deep and strong.
Though brows be garlanded with white,
We'll join the young and Yale,
And hand-in-hand and heart-to-heart
We'll sing the name of Yale."

They remained standing a few moments and then sat down quietly. It was Jack Ready who broke the silence.

"I had to sing," he said, apologetically. "I hope no one is mortally offended. I've tried to reform and be temperate in singing, the
same as in other things, but I'm afraid I'm like a thermometer in this respect."

"How's that?" asked some one.

"I fear I'll not reform till late in life, and you know a thermometer never becomes temperate till near sixty."

"Show your license!" roared Browning. "We're going to stop that kind of business, and any man who springs a stale gag must have a proper license."

"I shall make due application for one tomorrow, my weary friend," chirped Jack. "In the meantime—refuse me. It comes natural for me, and I just can't help it, you know. I was born a wit, and I shall die a wag."

"And that will be a wag gone," said Frank. "Sometimes I think you're a little buggsy, and I know you have wheels in your head."

"I'm sorry I spoke," sighed Ready. "But, then, I have a tongue."

"You should be tired," laughed Dashleigh. "But everybody knows you're a perfect dasher."

"Puns are not permitted," grumbled Browning. "You've made Hodge look as sour-faced as an auctioneer."

"Is an auctioneer generally sus-sus-sour-faced?" asked Gamp.

"Of course," answered Bruce. "It's natural for him to be for-bidding."

"And that's the worst pun of the lot," declared Merriwell. "I didn't think it of you, Browning."

"Couldn't help it," pleaded the big fellow. "It just popped out before I could stop it."

"I'm glad to be back, fellows," said Frank. "It has become home to me, you know. Really, I have no other home."

There was a sharp knock on the door.

"Come in," called Frank.

A messenger boy stood there with a telegram for Merry. Frank took it and quickly tore it open. A startled look came to his face as he hastily read it.

"It's from Starbright," he said. "Something's the matter. I'll have to obtain permission to leave college for a while."

"Read it!" exclaimed several.

This was what Merry read:

"Inza in great trouble. Need immediate aid. Come at once! Send answer to me, Manhattan Hotel. Don't fail to come.

"STARBRRIGHT."

CHAPTER II.

WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO INZA.

Frank lost no time. He hastened to obtain permission to leave college, which he was able to do, having a good reason, and then he wired Starbright when he would arrive in New York.

Of course, Merry wondered greatly what could have happened to Inza Burrage, whom he had last seen in Florida in perfect health. Starbright's dispatch threw no light on this point, which continued to trouble Frank as the train hurried him on to New York.

In time of trouble Starbright had not hesitated to appeal to Frank.

Indeed, there was no reason why Dick should not consider Merry his friend just the same as ever. There had been a time when the big-hearted, fair-haired freshman had believed Frank in love with Inza, and, finding he cared more for her than he fancied was just to his friend, Dick had done his best to avoid the girl and exclude from his heart all thoughts of her.

Fate, however, decreed that this was not to be, and the old sea captain's son could not avoid Inza, try as he might. That made the battle with himself very difficult, but he kept it up bravely, determined that his secret should never become known.

It was something like fate that gave Dick the opportunity to save Inza from drowning
at the beginning of the mid-winter holidays, and it was not strange that the dark-haired girl became attracted to the fair-haired young giant.

Believing she had stood between Frank and Elsie, believing Frank really cared more for Elsie, it was not strange that Inza turned to Starbright. She was fully convinced that it was right for her to step aside and leave the field to Elsie. Added to this, she had grown to admire Dick Starbright intensely; perhaps she fancied that she loved him.

At any rate, Inza did not believe she was doing anything wrong, and it had not taken Merry long to discover just how matters stood.

Then came the plot against Frank’s father, which had led him as far South as Savannah, where Charles Merriwell was rescued from the villains who had ensnared him.

That sudden trip to the South had brought Frank and Elsie together, but, in the meantime, Hodge, fully convinced that Elsie no longer cared for Frank, had in the face of what seemed certain death for them both, un- bosomed to the golden-haired girl the secret of his heart, which betrayed how intensely he loved her and had loved her for years.

As Frank was the one who saved them both from perishing in the flames which consumed the steamer at the time this revelation took place, the situation became still more complicated. When the peril was over Hodge was filled with remorse over what had happened, and he was almost sorry that he had not perished in the fire.

Then came that talk on the beach of Cumberland Island, when Hodge confessed everything, and the two friends clasped hands with the full knowledge that the future might witness them as earnest rivals for the heart of the same girl.

Then Inza had again appeared on the scene, and, with true girlish inconsistency, she seemed to waver as if not fully decided on her willingness to entirely abandon Frank to another, for, knowing nothing of the move made by Hodge, she believed Merry must have a clear field to Elsie’s affections.

It may be that Inza’s actions were caused by a desire to alarm Starbright and make him all the more attentive; for when others of the party started North Inza decided to remain in Florida for a day or two longer with her father, and induced Dick to tarry.

Merriwell had fully expected to find Starbright ahead of him at New Haven, but this had not happened. Then came the telegram from the big freshman, telling Frank that Inza was in trouble and asking him to come at once.

Frank thought over the startling changes that had taken place within the last few weeks. He sat by the car window and looked out vacantly on the snow-covered world as the train whirled him onward toward New York.

Inza in trouble? What could have happened? He knew it must be something serious, else Starbright would not have sent such a message; but he wondered why Dick had not made it clearer by adding a few words of explanation.

He did not believe Inza was ill, else Dick would have stated as much plainly.

“Confound the fellow!” Merry muttered. “Why didn’t he add another line to let me have an inkling of what is up!”

His imagination pictured all sorts of things as possible, but he rejected them one and all as improbable, but it was vain for him to try to stop speculation concerning the matter.

A thousand times he had assured Inza that he would fly to the ends of the world to aid her if she should need him and appeal to him. Now he was ready to keep his promise if called on to do so.

He thought of her as he had first known
her in faraway Fardale. He remembered her in short dresses, dark-haired, dark-eyed, red-lipped, bewitching, vivacious, proud and spirited. No wonder she had appealed strongly to his boyish heart; no wonder he had believed himself madly in love with her. She was utterly different from other girls he knew at that time. Even since then, he confessed to himself, he had met none quite like her and few that resembled her.

And Frank had been a lad to win the admiration of such a girl. Straight, well-formed, handsome, apparently without fear, plainly honest and open as the day, his bare-handed fight with a mad dog to keep her from being bitten had appealed to her as a deed of daring unrivaled by the exploits of old-time knights who fought for their ladies.

In the days that followed they were often together, and of course their regard for each other grew. Still they were simply a boy and a girl, and no boy or girl may foretell what the future holds for them. Neither had dreamed of the many strange things time was to bring them.

These memories came thronging upon Frank as the train whirled him toward the great city. They were pleasant memories, but they did not cause him to forget that Starbright had dispatched that Inza was in great trouble.

Again and again Frank looked at his watch, impatient because the time and the train did not fly faster. His overcoat lay beside him on the seat, for the car was not crowded, and there were seats to spare.

Down through Mount Vernon sped the train. The Harlem River was reached, with the electric lights gleaming on every hand, for night had fallen as the city approached.

There was a hold-up at the river, the bridge being open, and this delay annoyed Frank, although he tried to restrain himself. It seemed to him that every moment was precious, and minutes were being wasted.

At last they crossed the bridge, stopped at the Harlem station, and then rolled on into the tunnel.

Then came another annoying delay, as there had been an accident on the track, a car being derailed.

By this time it almost seemed to Merry that he could hear Inza calling to him for aid. He peered out into the darkness of the tunnel and fancied he beheld her white, helpless face turned appealingly toward him.

"For Heaven's sake, what has happened?" he huskily whispered. "Why doesn't this train go on?"

Frank Merriwell had a vivid imagination, for which reason his sublime and unaltering courage in times of extreme danger was all the more praiseworthy.

Courage in a person devoid of imagination is not very remarkable. Such a person may not behold the actual extent of the danger, and his imagination pictures to him no unseen horrors.

The one with an intense and vivid imagination may fancy a danger far greater than it actually is, and it takes real courage to overcome the inclination to shrink from the actual peril.

To annoy Frank still more, the train started forward with a jerk, ran on a few feet, then stopped again.

Frank put on his coat and prepared to leave the car as soon as the station was reached. He ceased peering out into the darkness of the tunnel, for continually before him in that darkness rose the pale face of Inza, her eyes turned on him in beseeching despair.

He became impressed with the belief that some frightful thing had befallen her, and he could not shake off the feeling.

"If she is alive, she may depend on me to do everything in my power to help her," he whispered. "I have said that I would lay
down my life for her. If necessary, I shall stand ready to make that statement good."

The train started once more, but it moved forward with great slowness. Frank was on his feet and waiting on the platform of the car, grip in hand, when the station was reached. He was the first passenger to spring down and hasten along toward the street.

Starbright was there. As Merry saw the throng of persons waiting to greet friends who might arrive on the train, his keen eyes immediately singled out the tall figure of the handsome young giant of the freshman class.

Merry rushed forward and grasped Dick's arm.

"Tell me," he demanded, "what has happened to Inza? Where is she?"

"I have every reason to believe," answered Dick, "that she is in a private asylum for the insane!"

CHAPTER III.

STARBRIGHT'S STORY.

Frank was astounded and horrified.

"Impossible!" he cried. "You must be joking, Dick!"

"It would be a pretty poor joke, Merry."

"But how can such a thing be, man? How did it happen?"

"I don't know that I fully understand it myself, Frank."

"But tell me," insisted Frank, drawing the big fellow aside. "Why should you fancy such a thing? Inza is not insane!"

"No more than you or I."

"Then how can she be confined in a private madhouse? Boy, you are dreaming!"

"I wish I were!" groaned Starbright, who looked pale and agitated. "But look at this, Merry—look at this!"

The freshman thrust a morning paper beneath Frank's eyes, pointing with a none too steady finger to an article which gave an account of the supposed recapture of one Rose Fenton, who had escaped from the private asylum for the insane which was managed by one Dr. Cloud, in Brooklyn.

"But what has this to do with it?" demanded Frank, as his eyes ran over the printed piece of news. "Rose Fenton is not Inza."

"I have every reason to believe that she is," declared Dick.

"Why?"

"Read on."

The account went on to say that the Rose Fenton was detected and recaptured while on a Fulton street trolley car bound for New York. She had escaped from the asylum two days before, and the most thorough search had failed to trace her. It was known that she had friends in Brooklyn, and without doubt they had sheltered her and given her clothes, for she was tastily, though not expensively, dressed at the time of her recapture, which took place at the Brooklyn side of the bridge. From all appearances, she was trying to get over into New York, where she might not have found great difficulty in hiding for a time at least.

Two of the asylum officials had apprehended her, it was said. Then followed a brief description of the girl and the clothes she was wearing at the time of her recapture. In every particular the description seemed to fit Inza.

"But what of that?" demanded Frank.

"There must be other girls who look like Inza in a general way—who resemble her so much that a newspaper description of one would seem applicable to the other."

"But the clothes," said Starbright. "It is exactly as she was dressed."

"Even that might happen."

"But see here, the account says that she protested against being molested, claiming there was a mistake."

"An escaped lunatic might do that."

"It also says that one of the men called
her Miss Fenton, and that she asserted her name was Burrill, not Fenton."

"Well?"

"I believe that is a mistake of the reporter. I believe she said her name was Burrage."

"Which is simply conjecture."

"Still, I believe it. Burrage might easily be misunderstood as Burrill, and it is likely the reporter got his account second-handed from some one who happened to be on the car at the time."

Frank drew a deep breath and seemed to steady himself.

"We have been going too fast, Dick," he said. "Let's start over. Inza has disappeared?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"Last night."

"Give me the particulars, but cut them short. Time is precious."

"Inza went over to Brooklyn yesterday afternoon to visit a girl friend."

"She went alone?" asked Merry, in surprise. "How did it happen that no one accompanied her?"

"I was going with her. We were invited over there to dinner."

"Go on."

"Shortly after noon Mr. Burrage was taken ill."

"Seriously?"

"Well, it is impossible to tell just how serious it may prove. We were at the Manhattan Hotel. He sent out for a doctor, who came and ordered him into bed, although Mr. Burrage protested. Inza became alarmed, but the doctor assured her that there seemed to be not the least cause for worry. However, she was going to send a message to her friends in Brooklyn that she could not come over that evening. Mr. Burrage found this out, and, in his own fretful way, he protested against it. When she insisted, he became very excited and angry, declaring that she must go. She was afraid to disturb him further, and she finally agreed; but she made me promise to remain with him, look out for him and send her a message at once if he grew worse. Of course, I consented to this plan, which Mr. Burrage did not oppose. Thus it came about that Inza went alone."

All this was plain enough, and Frank urged the narrator to hasten with his story.

"She told me that she would be back by nine o'clock at the very latest," said Dick, "and she thought she might be able to return even earlier. But nine o'clock came and she did not appear. At ten she was not on hand. By that time I was alarmed and rapidly growing more so. Mr. Burrage had fallen into a gentle slumber, induced, I presume, by the medicine. Once he awoke and asked me if Inza had come, but I lied and told him it was not quite time for her. Then, as the minutes dragged by I grew more and more alarmed. I pictured all sorts of terrible things. I cursed myself for permitting her to go alone. Then I tried to console myself by recalling the fact that she is a courageous, self-reliant girl, but that gave me little satisfaction. By ten-thirty I was in a cold sweat. After waiting a little longer, I went down to the office and made arrangements for a hired nurse to watch over Mr. Burrage. It was eleven o'clock before I got started, and then I made a rush for Brooklyn."

"When I reached the home of the Leverings the house was dark and everybody there was in bed, but I soon rung them up. In answer to my questions, they told me Inza had left at seven-thirty, young Phil Levering accompanying her to a Fulton street car and putting her aboard. The news that she had not arrived at the hotel threw the household into commotion. It was not long before we
had the police notified and searching for Inza, but it seemed that she had disappeared as completely as if the ground had opened beneath her. Not a trace of her was found.

"Imagine the sort of night I spent!" exclaimed Dick. "By heavens, Merriwell! I don’t believe I ever suffered half so much before in all my life!"

It was plain to see how deeply the big fellow had felt the strain, for his appearance betrayed it.

"We have done everything," he declared, "but we have not found Inza. At last, I sent to you for aid. You always seem to know what to do."

"Have you been to this private asylum, which I see is run by one Dr. Cloud?"

"Yes, I have been there."

"With what result?"

"At first they refused to admit me at all."

"What did you do then?"

"I went to the nearest police station and appealed to the police. I told them why I believed Inza might be confined in that place. They seemed to think me crazy myself."

"Couldn’t you get satisfaction out of them? Wouldn’t they help you in any way?"

"No. They told me my idea was ridiculous."

"It does seem remarkable," confessed Merry; "but I’d rather think Inza was in that place than that some other things had befallen her. Still I fail to understand why she should be captured and confined there. There seems no reason for it."

"Unless she is the double of Rose Fenton, the escaped lunatic."

"It is beyond the range of probability that she is so much like Rose Fenton that the doctors in the asylum cannot detect the difference. No, Dick, if she is there, there is another reason for her incarceration, you may be sure. But I am afraid we’ll find she is not there at all."

Starbright choked.

"Then Heaven help her!" he huskily groaned.

"How about Mr. Burrage?" asked Frank.

"What have you told him?"

"As little as possible. He is much worse to-day, but he does not seem to realize the trouble, although he sometimes asks for Inza. He has the best of attendance, but I fear the hotel proprietor will demand his removal to a hospital."

Frank’s face wore a stern, set look, and he seemed to be thinking deeply. The big freshman watched him anxiously.

"What can we do?" he asked.

Frank did not seem to hear the question. After a time, Dick repeated it.

"Do?" exclaimed Merry, in a suppressed tone of grim determination. "We’ll see the inside of that private asylum in short order, that’s what we’ll do! Come on!"

CHAPTER IV.

FRANK PLAYS HIS CARDS.

In less than an hour Frank was knocking for admission at the gate of Dr. Cloud’s "Private Sanitarium" in Brooklyn.

The place was a large, old-fashioned house, gloomy in appearance, set back from the street and inclosed by a high iron fence. There were heavy shutters to some of the windows, but the windows at the front of the house were draped with lace curtains. There were a few drooping, moss-covered trees about the house, adding to its general appearance of desolation. One of the trees, with heavy branches, grew at a far corner of the building.

This much Frank had seen by the aid of a distant street-lamp. A light burned dimly in one of the upper windows of the house.

After a time, Frank’s persistent knocking brought a thick-set man slouching down the walk.
“What do you want?” this person demanded, his voice far from pleasant.
“I wish to see Dr. Cloud at once,” stated Merry, in a tone that was almost a command.
“What for?”
“That is my business—and his. It is important, and the sooner I see him the better it will be.”
“He ain’t in now.”
“Then I must see his first assistant, Dr.—er—dr.—”
“Dr. Stork?”
“Yes.”
“You’ll have to send your message by me.”
“Are you going to keep me waiting out here? Why don’t you open this gate? You are making trouble for this place by this delay.”

The fellow peered out and saw Starbright standing a few feet behind Frank.
“Who’s that with you?” he demanded.
“A friend.”

The man beyond the gate seemed to hesitate. All at once it seemed that he decided to take the chances, for he unbolted and opened the gate, whereupon Merry walked in boldly, followed by Starbright.
The gate closed heavily behind them.
“You’ll have to send in your names before the doctor will agree to see you,” explained the guard.
“You simply tell him we are friends who wish to see him about Rose Fenton.”

They followed the man up the walk to the door, which opened when he had pressed a button in a certain manner.

Frank and Dick were close at the guard’s heels as he passed through the door, which had been opened by a burly, muscular-looking man. They found themselves in a small, dimly-lighted hall that was shut off from the rest of the house by heavy walls and solid-appearing doors.

The guard spoke to the doorkeeper in a low tone, and the latter, after looking the visitors over sharply, turned and vanished by the nearest door.

The guard remained standing, with his eyes fastened on Frank and Dick. Plainly it was not his intention to let them get out of his sight till he was certain it was all right for him to do so.

Frank sat down coolly on a hall seat. He was well satisfied with his success in getting thus far.

Just then a sound came to their ears from beyond the heavy walls, but the atmosphere of the place was oppressive, like that of a dungeon.

After some minutes of delay the doorkeeper returned and announced that “the doctor” would see one of the visitors in his private office.

“Wait for me, Dick,” said Frank, immediately.

Starbright started to say something, but Merry checked him with a gesture. As he followed the doorkeeper, Frank touched his lips, and the youth left behind knew that was a signal for him to be cautious and keep silent.

A moment later, Merriwell found himself in a small square room, where a man with a coal-black moustache and a prize-fighter’s jaw lounged in an office chair, smoking a cigar. A shaded lamp sat on a desk at the elbow of this man.

The doorkeeper retired. The moment they were alone, the man in the office chair pressed a button and a glare of light was thrown on Frank by several electric lamps, backed by polished reflectors. By the aid of this light the man at the desk was able to survey the visitor while he remained partly in the shadow.

“What is it, young man?” demanded the
one with the cigar. "You insisted on seeing me. Now state your business."

"Are you Dr. Stork?"

"No; I am Dr. Cloud. What can I do for you?"

The guard at the gate had told Frank Dr. Cloud was not in.

"I have come to see you on a matter of great importance—to you," Merriwell declared, grimly and earnestly. "What would you say if I were to tell you that I know where the real Rose Fenton may be found?"

The doctor gave a growl of annoyance.

"Are you a newspaper reporter?" he fiercely demanded. "I have been annoyed enough by those fellows."

"I am not a reporter."

"Then what are you?"

"No matter. You have not answered my question."

"Because it is a silly one. The real Rose Fenton has been found, and is now safely secured in her room within this house."

"Doctor, I hope you will not compel me to contradict you point blank, but I know you are mistaken. The real Rose Fenton is not in this house, and you know it."

The man sat bolt upright, glaring at the cool youth.

"Why, that is calling me a liar! Are you crazy yourself?"

"Not the least, as you will soon discover. You know that Rose Fenton is dead!"

Dr. Cloud drew a short, hissing breath through his teeth.

"Fool!" he laughed. "You must be crazy or drunk!"

But Frank Merriwell, who could read men as a schoolboy reads a book, saw that his venturesome shot had struck home.

"The girl you have conf inning here is not Rose Fenton," Merry calmly declared; "but she is as sane as you or I. If you were told that she is a poor girl without friends, you have been deceived. If you thought she would not be traced to this place, you made a mistake. If you thought her friends would not bring powerful influence to bear to rescue her from your clutches, you have made a blunder that may send you to the penitentiary!"

Dr. Cloud sprang to his feet.

"Why, you daffy young dog!" he grated. "How dare you come here and talk to me in such a manner?"

"I dare because I know what I am talking about. What if I were to tell you that Rose Fenton's body has not been destroyed beneath the knives and that it is still preserved undamaged as evidence against you?"

Dr. Cloud sat down as suddenly as he had leaped to his feet. His legs seemed to melt beneath him, permitting him to drop limply on the chair, and he actually gasped for breath.

Frank was elated, but he did not show it. He had taken a venture and made a daring play, and now he was satisfied that his ready wit had put him on the right track. Being confident of this, he resolved to come out still more boldly.

"When Rose Fenton died suddenly and unexpectedly on your hands, after certain treatment that you considered necessary, including a straight-jacket and similar comfort-giving devices, you were alarmed and afraid of an investigation, as suspicion has been aroused concerning this place by other sudden deaths. Bruises and marks on the body of the unfortunate girl would have served a public outcry against you were the truth to become known, and so the body was taken from this place at the dead of night. You know where it was carried. Other bodies have gone there before. But even medical students have consciences, and the marks on that body seemed to indicate that a crime had been committed. That body may appear as evidence against you."
Dr. Cloud was making an effort to regain his composure, but he found it hard to do so.
"Are you a medical student?" he asked.
"No matter what or who I am. It is sufficient that I know the facts in this remarkable case. You cannot deny that I have stated the truth."
"Why should I? I won't take the trouble! What's your game?"
"Game?"
"Yes. I suppose you are making a play for something. What do you want?"
"For what—my silence?"
"Yes."
"Are we alone? Is there no possibility that others may hear?"
"Not the least. I have taken care of that. No conversation carried on in this office is ever heard beyond these walls."
"You are willing to purchase my silence?"
"Well, perhaps—if your price is reasonable. But that body—you'll have to give me proof that it has been dissected."

Frank shuddered, for he saw he was dealing with a villain who seemed utterly without conscience. And this man who called himself Dr. Cloud had mistaken Frank for a blackmailer, whose lips could be sealed with money!

It required nerve and a cool head for Merry to play the cards through to the finish, but he did not falter.
"There is but one price you can pay," he declared.
"What is that?"
"The immediate and unconditional release of the girl you are now detaining here as Rose Fenton."

CHAPTER V.
A SURPRISE FOR MERRY.

Not by mere accident had Frank Merriwell hit upon the facts in the astonishing affair. Within a few months New York had been stirred up over the abuses in the insane ward of Bellevue Hospital and the result had been a general overturning of affairs in that department. Then the reporters had pushed the matter further by turning the light of newspaper publicity on several so-called "private sanitariums" and their methods. Frank had read the stories in the papers, and he recalled that one paper had asserted that in a certain sanitarium in Brooklyn patients were treated even worse than in Bellevue. Bodies from this place were, it was claimed, disposed of to a medical school for dissecting purposes.

On his way to Brooklyn, Merry had been busy meditating over these stories. As a result, he formed a theory that Rose Fenton had not escaped from Dr. Cloud's place at the time reported, but had died under suspicious circumstances that made the doctor doubt the advisability of permitting the body to be seen by those who had known her, and who, perhaps, had once been her friends. Hence the story that she had escaped. Without doubt the body had been sent, after the usual manner, to the dissecting room of some medical school.

To be sure, this did not explain the remarkable capture and confinement of Inza under the name of the dead girl, which seemed to Merry a piece of folly closely allied to madness, but it gave him a theory to begin work upon, and with that much he had boldly faced the rascally doctor. It must be confessed that his success thus far had given him considerable surprise, as well as unlimited satisfaction.

The belief that Inza was in the hands of such a scoundrel filled him with intense anger, but it was necessary for him to hide this in order to continue to play his cards well.

Plainly Dr. Cloud had expected his visitor to set a price in dollars, for he showed bewilderment at Frank's words. After some moments, he asked:
“Do you mean that? Aren’t you looking for boodle?”

“Not a dollar.”

“Who are you?” the man again demanded, his astonishment increasing.

“It makes no difference who I am, Dr. Cloud; I have you dead to rights. If you want to save yourself serious trouble, permit me at once to see the girl who is held here under the name of Rose Fenton. She must leave with me.”

“You know her?”

“Of course I know her.”

“You are sure?”

“Yes.”

“Because,” said the doctor, “she is a dangerous lunatic, and——”

“That will not go, sir!” exclaimed Frank.

“You know that the young lady is perfectly sane, and it will be well for you that she has not been harmed since falling into your hands.”

“Never fear about that,” quickly said Dr. Cloud. “I have taken excellent care of her. Indeed, she could not have been treated better in her own home. She will tell you that herself.”

Frank drew a breath of relief. He fancied the rascal was about to surrender tamely, and this assurance that Inza had not been harmed was gratifying.

At the same time, Merry was inwardly boiling with indignation over the outrage, and he was resolved that Dr. Cloud should not escape just punishment. He believed there must be some power back of the doctor, and he hoped to find out just what that power might be.

In truth, the whole affair was most surprising and mysterious, for it was absolutely certain that Inza had not been picked up and taken into custody haphazard unless the man who conducted the institution was himself mentally deranged.

Why had Inza been selected as a victim?

The question flashed across Frank’s mind, but at that moment there was no time to speculate upon it and endeavor to arrive at a satisfactory answer.

First, she must be released from that prison. It was possible that she might throw some light on the most astounding affair.

“All the better for you if you speak the truth, sir,” said Frank, grimly. “Of course, the detention of her here might be overlooked as a mistake, but ill-treatment of her cannot be.”

“Don’t worry about that,” urged the doctor. “You will find that she has been treated with the utmost kindness, and she will tell you so herself.”

Frank’s spirits were rising steadily. He now no longer had a doubt but he should find Inza in that house, and the confident manner of the doctor seemed assurance that she had truly been treated with consideration for her physical feelings, at least.

Of course, the captive girl had suffered intense mental anguish, and thoughts of what she had passed through in this respect caused the blood of the young Yale man to boil within his veins. He registered a mental vow that Dr. Cloud and his rascally assistants should be brought to book—he silently swore that the “sanitarium” should be closed forever.

But Frank did not forget to be cautious and diplomatic. He was not an adept in the art of deception such as he then required; but, bringing all his will under command, he played the part well.

“Very well,” he bowed. “As we have arrived at an understanding, doctor, be kind enough to let me see the young lady without delay.”

“But we have not arrived at an understanding,” asserted the man, who seemed to be getting back his nerve, for he coolly selected another cigar, bit off the end with his broad teeth, struck a match and lighted the weed.

“I thought we had,” said Frank, sharply.

“Not at all.”

“How is that?”

“I must have your promise.”

“What promise?”

“That you treat me right.”

Frank could not restrain a flush of indignation; but, in a quiet, unaltered voice, he asked:

“What do you mean by that? Treat you right in what way?”

“You know you might make a row over the affair.”
"Possibly."
"And that would make it unpleasant."
"Undoubtedly."
"The newspapers might make a fuss about it."
Frank nodded.
"Now, those are the things I wish to avoid," went on the doctor, puffing swiftly at his cigar, the end of which glowed till it threatened to burst into a blaze. "I am running a respectable place, strictly within the limits of the law. You understand that?"
"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Frank, with sarcasm he could not check. "It is very evident, doctor."
The man stirred nervously in his chair, despite the fact that he seemed like a person utterly devoid of nerves.
"A place like this," he went on, "is absolutely necessary. In such a quiet, well-managed retreat a man may place his wife when he becomes a little dull. He would hesitate to have her committed to a public institution for the insane; but, without noise or publicity, he could have her brought here and taken care of with gentle consideration. A man might have a brother or a friend whom he would wish to provide with such a home, knowing it was not safe to have the demented one wandering about at liberty. In fact, my home for the slightly demented is an absolute boon to humanity."
"Without doubt!" murmured Merry, still with an inflection of sarcasm.
"Such being the case," the doctor went on, "I do not wish to get into trouble and be falsely represented by the newspapers. You understand. Evidently there has been a mistake in this Rose Fenton case; but what is the use to make a big row over it? If you hear her tell you with her own lips that she has been kindly treated here, I presume you will be willing to let the matter drop."
Frank could restrain his indignation no longer. He had played his part till he regarded it as played out.
"I make no promises to you!" he exclaimed, his voice ringing out clear. "If you know what is best for you, you will release Miss Burrage at once without attempting to extract any promises from me. If you do not, sir, I promise you that she shall be taken from here by the law before another day has passed! More than that, I promise you that you shall find yourself behind bars! The only thing you can do now is to make haste to rectify this frightful blunder. Confront at whose bidding you seized upon a perfectly sane and inoffensive girl and shut her up in this place of horrors. Let the law take its course with the ones who are behind the plot!"
Dr. Cloud sat up very straight in his chair and listened, staring hard at Frank, his under jaw protruding. It seemed that the man longed to attack his boyish, daring visitor on the spot, but something held him in restraint. After a time he laughed shortly, saying:
"Young man, you’re excited. You think to frighten me, but you have made a mistake. We are alone, and I don’t mind telling you that I have a pull in this city that makes my position safe. All the influence you can bring to bear against me will not be sufficient to do me any permanent injury. At the same time, it is but natural that I do not want a lot of stuff in the papers about me and my affairs. That is why I tried to exact a promise from you."
"You may think your position impregnable," said Frank, "but it is not. Wickedness and crime can never occupy a position of security. For a time such things may seem triumphant and impregnable, but the downfall is sure to come. Justice does not always sleep."
"Very finely said; but you are simply giving me a game of conversation. Your talk doesn’t mean anything to me."
"All right. Refuse to set that girl free at once, and I swear to leave no stone unturned to bring you to the bar of justice!"
"Oh, I have no intention of refusing," said the doctor. "I do not relish all this hubbub and bother over the girl, and I shall be glad to get rid of her. Besides that, I regard her as dangerous. For that reason, I’d rather not have her here, my patients being nearly all harmless. She excited them, and she might arouse some of them to violence."
Somehow Frank felt that the man was not quite sincere, yet it seemed that he had bowed to the inevitable.
“Then take me to her without delay,” commanded Merry.

The doctor arose.

“Very well,” he said. “You shall see her, and I want you to take her out of this house in double-quick order. Now that I have decided to let her go, I am anxious to get rid of her in a hurry.”

He pressed a button, and a woman nurse, wearing a white apron and cap, soon appeared.

“Snell,” said the doctor, “here is a young man who has come for Rose Fenton. He will take her away with him. Tell her to get ready.”

The nurse bowed and left the room.

Frank’s heart leaped with triumph. When he entered the place he had not counted on such an easy victory, but now something seemed to indicate that Dr. Cloud was really glad to get rid of the girl who had caused him so much trouble.

“Snell will let us know when the girl is ready,” said the man, as he tossed his half-smoked cigar aside. “I hope you will be decent about this little blunder. It is nothing but a simple mistake, and mistakes will happen, you know.”

Frank was silent, watching the doctor closely. He wondered if the man meditated treachery of some sort, and meant to be on his guard for it.

The doctor continued his apparent effort to persuade Frank not to “make a fuss;” but his anxiety did not seem deep, at which Merry could not repress his wonderment.

Perhaps five minutes had passed when the nurse returned and announced that “Miss Fenton” was ready.

“Come,” said the doctor.

Frank followed the man, holding himself ready for an attack, for he could not feel quite safe in that place.

They ascended a flight of stairs and passed along a bare corridor that echoed hollowly to the sound of their feet. A muffled light burned in the corridor, which seemed cold and deserted, with grim shadows everywhere.

The doctor paused at a door. Frank was close behind him.

Across the door was a heavy bar and a chain. The bar was removed, the chain rattling in a manner that caused a chill to run over Frank. Then Dr. Cloud thrust open the heavy door, saying:

“Miss Fenton, here is a gentleman who has come for you.”

As Frank sprang quickly into the room there was a cry of joy, and a young lady, dressed for the street, rushed toward him.

“Oh, I’m so glad!” she sobbed. “We will go at once! Let’s not lose a single instant!”

Frank recoiled in amazement.

It was not Inza!

CHAPTER VI.

FRANK IS BAFFLED.

“What’s the matter?” exclaimed the doctor, in apparent surprise.

“Take me away!” cried the woman.

“Quick! Let’s go!”

“There is a mistake!” declared Merry. “This is not the young lady I came to see.”

“What do you say?” demanded Dr. Cloud.

“Not the young lady? Why, this is the one you called for.”

For the moment Frank Merriwell was bewildered.

The woman tried to fling her arms about his neck.

“Oh, Count!” she sobbed, “you have left me here so long! I thought you had forgotten me! Now we will return to our castle in France. They told me your creditors had caused your arrest; but I did not believe them, for you are the Count Boni de Castelane, and they would not dare to arrest you. But they have kept me here, and I am your wife! How dared they detain me—me, Anna Gould—the countess? They shall suffer for it! You will have them punished, won’t you, Count?”

She had clutched Merry by the arm, despite his efforts to avoid her. Her face was pallid, save where two hectic spots burned on her thin cheeks, and there was a wild light in her glittering eyes. Her thin hands were astonishingly strong in their clutch.

“She is somewhat excited by your appearance,” remarked the doctor; “but she will become calmer as soon as she reaches the
open air. Will you take her away in a car-
riage, sir?"

"Of course he will!" cried the woman,
haughtily. "The carriage is at the door, and
it bears the coat-of-arms of the royal house
of De Castellane. Stand aside and permit
us to pass!"

She tried to urge Frank from the room.
"Wait a minute," said Merry, with forced
calmness. "You have made a mistake; I am
not the Count de Castellane."

"You are not?" she almost screamed. "It
is not true! You are my husband! Don't
try to deceive me! You cannot deceive me!
They have lied to me here! They have told
me I had no husband! They said you would
not come for me! But I knew they lied, and
I knew you would come! Now you are
here!"

Again she tried to clasp him in her arms,
sobbing:

"It is good to see you again! It seems
years and years since I looked on your face!
Sometimes I thought you were dead and
would never come! But now you will take
me away to our beautiful home in France,
and we'll be happy together forever and ever.
You may have all my money to pay your
debts—every dollar! They locked me up in
this place so I could not give you the money,
but I scoffed at them and I told them you
should have it for all their plots and schemes.
For I love you, my husband—I love you!"

The situation was one of the most remark-
able in which Frank Merriwell had ever
found himself. It was only by main force
he could keep her from embracing him and
showering kisses upon him.

"What trickery is this?" he demanded in-
dignantly, of the doctor, who stood look-
ing on.

"No trickery at all, young man," growled
Cloud, in reply. "You insisted on seeing this
young lady and taking her with you. I shall
be glad enough to have her go, although you
can plainly see her condition."

"Wretch!" cried the woman, turning fierce-
ly on the doctor. "How dare you speak thus?
I know you! You are Nero! You burned
Rome and slaughtered the Christians! You
cast them to the lions and you made living
torches of them! The blood of hundreds and
thousands is upon your head! But the day
of retribution shall come!"

The woman seemed almost violent, but the
doctor appeared not to mind it in the least.
"That's all right," he said, in a tone meant
to be soothing. "Of course, I shall be pun-
ished severely; I expect that. But have I
not always treated you well? I have been
kind to you, have I not, my dear Countess?"

"Always, except when I have demanded
my rights and my freedom. You have de-
tained me here in your palace. I have
listened to the sound of revelry and music
and laughter, and my very soul has sickened
at your carousals. Yet you would not per-
mit me to depart, though I besought you on
bended knees. That is my charge against
you!"

"But I have never handled you roughly?"

"You did not dare, for you knew my royal
husband would come for me some day, and
you feared his wrath even though your name
is Nero."

"You hear, sir?" said the doctor to Frank.
"But this is not the one I asked to see,"
Merry persisted.

"It is!" declared the man. "You insisted
on seeing her and taking her away. Go—go
at once! It will be a relief to have her re-
moved from beneath this roof."

He seemed intent on urging Frank to take
the woman away.

"Stand back!" commanded the woman,
haughtily. "Call my servants. Let them
strew roses before us! My husband has
come! Let them strew roses for our feet to
 crush—sweet roses, red and white and fra-
grant! Bid the musicians strike up! Let
merriness abound! I am happy again! Long,
long my heart has been empty and cold, but
once more it springs to life!"

"She's mad as a March hare!" thought
Merry.

"Unfortunately," said the doctor, with an
apparent show of respectful regret, "the mu-
sicians are absent and we have no flowers
on hand. I am very sorry."

"Wait a moment," said Frank. "Perhaps
we can make arrangements. I will speak
with the doctor."

"The doctor?" said the woman, as if she
did not understand.
Merry indicated Dr. Cloud.
"Oh, he is no doctor!" she declared, scornfully. "Have I not told you that he is Nero, the wretch who burned Rome?"
"Even Nero may be able to provide roses," said Frank. "I will speak with him a moment."

He managed to unclasp her fingers and draw the doctor aside.
"See here," said Merriwell; "this is not the young lady I came to see. I know absolutely nothing about her."

The doctor pretended to be surprised.
"That being the case," he said, "you have made a great blunder and caused me untold annoyance. What are you going to do about it now? This girl is the one taken from the Fulton street car and brought here as Rose Fenton. Are you going to take her away?"
"Certainly not!"

"Then the sooner you get out of this room and this house, the better. I have spent quite time enough with you. You have seen fit to utter some very silly threats and have made yourself ridiculous."

He turned on the woman.
"Countess," he said, "we must leave you a few moments to see that the carriage has arrived."
"You shall not go!" she screamed. "You are taking my husband from me!"

The doctor had left the door slightly ajar, and now he whistled sharply. Almost instantly two stout attendants sprang into the room.

"Look out for her," commanded Cloud.

The men placed themselves before the woman.
"Don't touch me!" she shrieked. "Don't let them touch me, Count! You will not leave me here? Oh, do not leave me! I shall go mad in this dreadful place! Sometimes I fear I am going mad! Take me with you—take me back to our beautiful castle in France!"

She tried to rush at Frank again, but the attendants seized her. With all her strength she struggled, uttering scream after scream, begging and imploring Merriwell not to leave her.
"There is the door," said the doctor.

Frank was glad enough to escape from that room. As the door closed the wild screams of the mad woman became muffled and indistinct, but they seemed to ring in the ears of the young Yale man for a long time after that.

Dr. Cloud urged Merry down the stairs.
Frank was thinking swiftly now, and he said:
"Dr. Cloud, if you have deceived me in this business, I swear to bring you to punishment! If you have Inza Burrage confined beneath this roof, you are standing over a volcano! If harm comes to Inza Burrage through you, as there is a Heaven above I'll never rest until you are in prison!"
"Go!" snarled the doctor. "I want to hear no more of your threats! I believe you are crazy yourself!"

Frank had fancied they were returning to the doctor's private office; but when he passed through a door that opened before him, he found himself again in the hall, where Starbright was waiting for him, with the guard standing near.

CHAPTER VII.
"ALL FOR INZA."

Of course, Starbright was eager to hear what Frank had done, and Merry told him everything as soon as they were on the street, the heavy iron gate having closed behind them.

Dick listened with breathless interest, and great was his surprise and dismay when Merry described the meeting with the young woman said to be confined in the house under the name of Rose Fenton.
"Then I have been all wrong in my conviction that Inza was there!" groaned Dick, completely bewildered. "Heaven knows what has happened to her!"
"I am not sure you were wrong at all," said Frank, quietly.
"What do you mean?"
"Just what I say."
"But—but—"
"I am not satisfied that I was not tricked by Dr. Cloud."
"How?"
"It was the easiest thing in the world for
him to take me to some really insane inmate and claim she was the one confined there under the name of Rose Fenton.

"By Heaven! that's so!" cried Dick, stopping short on the street and clutching Merry's arm with a powerful grip. "Why didn't you think of that before?"

"I did."

"In there?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, why didn't you do something?"

"What could I do? I made my bluff, and I saw the crafty rascal held the best hand on that deal, to use a little expressive slang. Under the circumstances, there was nothing I could do but submit to the inevitable, seem to be fooled and apparently give up. By so doing, it was possible I might deceive him and catch him unprepared on my next play."

"But—but if you really believed Inza was in there, I don't see why you did not insist on seeing her. I don't see why you did not try to force him to let you see her."

"You think I should have kicked up a row?"

"I would."

"And thus you would have played right into his hands, Starbright, my boy. It is certain that I feel as strongly about this matter as you do; but it is necessary to use our brains if we get at the bottom of the affair and succeed in setting Inza free. Had I raised a row in that place, Dr. Cloud would have called up the police, had me arrested, and tomorrow morning he could have convinced almost any judge that I was either intoxicated, crazy or a blackmailer. It would have gone hard with me, and I should have done nothing at all for Inza. I realized just where I stood, and it was my better judgment that held me in restraint."

"Merriwell, you're a wonder!" declared Dick, admiringly. "You seem to think of everything, no matter what the situation may be. Under such circumstances, I should have thought of nothing but that Inza was probably somewhere in that house of horrors, and my anger would have been my undoing."

Frank nodded. They had halted something more than a block distant from the gloomy sanitarium, and now Merry said:

"Dick, I have an idea that Mr. Cloud was somewhat alarmed by my visit and my charges. I was astounded when he agreed without further argument to let me take the girl away, but now I see it was all a trick. He knew I would not remove her after I had seen her. Of course, most of those poor creatures confined there must be examined and committed in the regular manner. There must be a proper certificate of insanity, but I am convinced that such a document is easily obtained by bribery, and undoubtedly many perfectly sane persons have been unlawfully confined there. It is even possible that occasionally a captive is held without the formality of a commitment or certificate of insanity: Dr. Cloud is a thoroughbred scoundrel; but he does not take great risks for nothing. He is not a fool, and so lie would not seize a strange girl on a street car and confine her in his house in the place of one who had died there. There is a deep mystery in this business... If Inza is there, some one besides Cloud is mainly responsible for her misfortune. There lies the mystery. Of course, it is possible we have been working on a false scent; and it is possible, too, that Inza is not in that house at all, but—"

"I beg your pardon!"

A young man who had been hurrying along the street bumped into Merry. He was smoking a cigarette, his hat was slouched over his eyes, and his coat collar was turned up.

"Don't mention it," said Merry, politely.

The young man hurried onward, and Frank noted a peculiar swagger in his gait.

Starbright was saying something, but Merriwell continued to follow the dark figure with his eyes. All at once, Frank gave a little exclamation.

"What is it?" asked Dick.

"Nothing: only that fellow who struck against me turned in at Dr. Cloud's sanitarium."

"Yes, and was admitted through the gate at once. He must have been there before."

"What if Inza is not there?" questioned Dick, returning to the sole topic that occupied his thoughts.

"Then," said Frank, "we are utterly without a clue to her fate. But something seems to tell me that she is there, Dick. She may
be removed from that house before morning; but I feel certain she is there now."

"What do you mean to do?"

"I am going to see the Leverings. They may be able to tell me something. In the meantime, I wish you to remain in this vicinity and watch that house."

"All right," breathed the big freshman, who seemed relieved by the knowledge that Frank did not mean to take him away from the vicinity of the place where Inza might be held a prisoner.

"But you must be cautious. You must attract as little attention as possible. In fact, you should attract no attention at all. If you discover that anything is doing, make preparations to keep up with the procession. I do not mean to be gone long; but Cloud may attempt to remove Inza while I am away. If he does, you should find a way to follow and learn where she is carried. You might find an opportunity to rescue her; but, above all things, do not forget my warning be cautious. If you make an effort to rescue her, be pretty certain you are going to succeed, or that you have a show to do so. Do you understand?"

"Yes, yes!" breathed Dick. "You may depend on me, Merriwell; I will do just as you say. But I think you are wasting your time in going to see the Leverings. I have told you all they know about the affair. They told me everything."

"But I wish to hear with my own ears what they have to say about it. I hope to solve the mystery of this astounding affair, and I may hit upon a scent that will be worth following up."

They clasped hands.

"Be cautious," Frank warned once more.

"It is not necessary for me to tell you to be brave. It is all for Inza."

"All for Inza!" breathed Dick, intensely.

"Even my life!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LEVERINGS.

Frank found the Leverings at home. He had never met Bessie Levering, but she hurried to greet him, her pale face and inflamed eyelids telling of the distress she had suffered.

"Oh, Mr. Merriwell!" she exclaimed, "have you heard anything of Inza? Mr. Starbright sent us a message saying you were coming on, and we have waited anxiously ever since. Isn't it just perfectly awful? What in the world could have happened to her?"

She was clinging to Frank's gloved hand in excited anxiety, utterly regardless of formalities and conventionalities. Her mother appeared in the background, adding her entreaties to those of Miss Levering.

"Not a soul in this house has slept since we learned of Inza's mysterious disappearance," declared Mrs. Levering. "Bessie has scarcely eaten; and my son, Phil, has done nothing but run from the house to the police station and back to see if there was any news. My boy is in a terrible state. You know he thinks a great deal of Inza. And Inza's father gave him encouragement at one time, although there has never been a regular engagement."

This was a surprise to Frank, and he mentally thanked the woman for her surprising openness, though he could not admire her taste in thus speaking of such a matter at such a time.

Bessie Levering seemed embarrassed by her mother's words, and she tried to hide the break as much as possible. She was a rather pretty girl, though her hair was too light and her eyes not quite attractive.

Urged to do so, Frank took a seat in the parlor. They attempted to pry him with questions, but he deftly turned it about so that they were compelled to answer his questions.

It was not long before Merry heard from Bessie Levering's lips the story of Inza's visit, what happened while she was there, just when she had left the house, how Phil Levering had accompanied her to a cab and put her aboard, and all that.

"Phil wanted to send her home in a cab," said Bessie; "but she would not permit it. Then he insisted on accompanying her, but she objected to that, and you know she always was a girl to have her own way."

Frank nodded.
“How long was your brother gone from the house?” he asked.

“When do you mean? He had to go out just before dinner, and did not get back till we had nearly reached dessert.”

“I do not mean that time. How long was he gone when he accompanied Inza to the car?”

“Not over twenty minutes.”

“As long as that?”

“I do not think so, but not more, I am positive. Why do you ask?”

Frank did not answer the question, but expressed a desire to see and talk with Phil Levering.

“He is out now,” said Bessie; “but he may be back any time. He went out to see if there was any news.”

“The dear boy is almost broken-hearted,” sighed Mrs. Levering. “I know he thinks the world of Inza. I’m afraid he’ll lose his mind if anything serious has happened to her.”

“He has done everything possible to aid the police in their search for her,” declared Bessie.

By this time Frank had decided that the Leverings were people who had seen better days, and were now trying to live beyond their means.

“It is so sad that Mr. Burrage should be taken ill at such a time,” said Mrs. Levering. “I have written a letter urging him to come here. We will take care of him.”

“Indeed we will, and he shall have the very best of care,” agreed the girl. “It is awful for him to be ill there in that hotel, and I do hope you will not allow them to remove him to a hospital. Let them bring him right here.”

“It’s a shame,” Mrs. Levering went on, “that a man of his wealth and age should be forever traveling about the world without a home. I have offered him a home here more than once,” she confessed, with a slight show of embarrassment. “He could have all the comforts of home, while Inza and Bessie could be such close friends and companions. But he would not hear to it; and now this great trouble has fallen upon us all.”

“Mr. Burrage has long been an invalid,” said Frank; “and it has been his hobby to seek health in travel.”

He did not feel called on to state that it was quite possible that Bernard Burrage was not nearly as wealthy as generally supposed. Frank knew that Mr. Burrage had a moderate income, enough to enable him to live comfortably and travel about; but that income was not sufficient for him to indulge in extravagances and luxuries.

At the same time, Merry knew many persons were convinced that Inza’s father was a man of great wealth, which would all become Inza’s on his death, she being his only child. In some respects a vain man, it had pleased Bernard Burrage to be regarded as very wealthy, and he had never offered to dispel the misapprehension in regard to his financial standing.

As a thought of this flashed through Frank’s mind, he was struck by the possibility of a plot to obtain possession of this reputed wealth belonging to Bernard Burrage. Was not Inza’s mysterious disappearance simply a part of the working of the plot?

There was a ring at the bell. A few moments later, Bessie Levering brought in a young man, whom she introduced to Frank as Dr. St. Clair.

“The doctor knows all about our trouble,” she said; “and he’s just dropped in to learn if we have received any news.”

Frank shook hands with Dr. St. Clair, who was an honest-looking chap, being very nearly Merry’s height and build.

“Mr. Merriwell,” said the young doctor, “I believe you are a Yale man? Yes. I’ve read something of you in the papers. Glad to know you.”

Frank decided that the doctor was trustworthy. They sat down to resume their conversation on the one topic that seemed to interest them all.

It was not very long before Merry decided that Dr. St. Clair was decidedly interested in Bessie Levering, which explained the interest he took in the mysterious disappearance of Inza.

Mrs. Levering chattered like a parrot. She was an exceedingly shallow woman, but her great inclination to talk served to explain
many things about which Frank did not like to ask questions.

Merry was lingering to see Phil Levering.

"Is it not time for your son to be back, Mrs. Levering?" Frank asked.

"Land! yes. He's been gone more than an hour now. I can't understand what is keeping him."

A key rattled in the outer door.

"I believe it is Phil!" exclaimed Bessie, starting up. "Oh, my heart is all a-flutter! I do hope he has some good news!"

She rushed out into the hall to meet her brother. In a moment she was back, dragging him with her. His hat was on his head, but he quickly removed it when he saw the visitors, saying:

"I beg your pardon!"

Merry started. Where had he heard that voice?

The smell of cigarettes came with Phil Levering.

"I'll hang up my hat," said Bessie's brother, and he walked out of the room with a swagger, immediately returning to be introduced.

"I have it!" thought Frank, his heart giving a leap. "This is the fellow who bumped into me as I stood talking with Starbright just a block from Dr. Cloud's sanitarium. And he entered the sanitarium!"

CHAPTER IX.

PHIL LEVERING.

Merry was actually startled by the conclusion at which he had arrived. In case he was right, it opened up a possibility that was bewildering.

Did Phil Levering know what had happened to Inza Burrage? Was he aware she was confined in Cloud's private madhouse? Was he in any way concerned with her capture and imprisonment there?

The possibility of an affirmative answer to these three questions did not set Frank's head to whirling. Instead, it seemed to clear his active brain and make him unusually cool and alert.

"This is my brother Phil, Mr. Merriwell," said Bessie Levering.

"Oh, by Jawve!" exclaimed Phil. "Is this Mr. Merriwell? Why, I'm delighted, I asshaw you, old chap!"

He gave Frank a flabby hand, the fingers of which were stained a sickly yellow.

The touch of that hand was repulsive to Merry, who instantly understood that Inza had regarded Phil Levering's advances with aversion that she might have found difficult to successfully hide.

Frank had come to read a man's character to a certain extent by the manner in which that man shook hands, and he decided that Phil Levering was a modern youth whose vitality had been sapped by cigarettes and bad habits, whose moral conscience was of the weakest order, who shunned work of any kind as he would a pestilence, yet who was ambitious to possess wealth and make a show in the world. The diseased brain of such a young man might lead him to concoct all sorts of wild schemes for obtaining money, and he might attempt a daring venture that would stagger and appall a reckless criminal of experience.

"Have you brought any news, Phil?" anxiously asked his sister.

"Not a blooming bit," was the answer, in an apparent mood of despair. "I don't believe the police have tried to trace Inza. They are looking for a reward to be offered, don't you know. What is needed is an overturn in the police department in this howling old city."

He threw himself wearily upon a chair.

"It's awful!" gasped Bessie. "Not a trace of her yet! My poor friend! I'm afraid she is dead!"

Somehow it seemed to Merry that there was a note of false sorrow and despair in the girl's cry; but just then he was busy studying Phil.

"Where is Mr. Starbright?" young Levering asked.

"Hard at work on the case," answered Merry. "I came here to get the particulars myself. He couldn't spare the time to come with me."

"What is he doing?"

"I don't know what he is doing just at present."

"Well, what have you done since arriving?" persisted Phil. "Starbright was positive von
would be able to do something, don’t y’ understand.”

“I have not done much yet,” was Merry’s
evasive retort. He wondered if Phil knew
of the visit to the sanitarium, and something
assured him that the fellow had heard full
particulars. “You see, there was not much
to do till I became possessed of the facts at
first hand. That’s why I’m here. Your
mother and sister have told me many things;
I hope you may be able to tell me more.”

Phil frowned a little.

“Mother and Bessie know all that I know,”
he declared.

“But you may be able to give me the ac-
count more minutely.”

“Are you a detective, Mr. Merriwell?”

“Not exactly; and yet in my life I have
solved a few mysteries. I take delight in
solving mysteries.”

“You think you’ll be able to solve this
one?”

“I hope to.”

“Um!” There was a note of doubt in this
half-smothered exclamation.

Frank was not to be diverted or turned
from his purpose by the questions and man-
ner of young Levering, and he persisted in
asking Phil questions which brought out the
whole story. This agreed almost perfectly
with what Merry had already heard. Lever-
ing told very nearly the exact time when he
left the house with Inza, where he had placed
her upon a car and how he had returned.
He even told much of their conversation, or
what he claimed was their conversation as
they walked out to get the car and waited
on the corner for it to appear. The story
was simple, and Frank could not detect any
bad breaks in it. Still he did not believe the
fellow had told everything.

All at once Merry asked:

“Where did you go a short time before
dinner, Mr. Levering?”

Even though he may have been prepared
for the question, Phil was seen to stiffen
a bit.

“Eh?” he drawled, lifting his eyebrows.

“I went out on a little matrahah of business,
don’t y’ know. I hawdy think that has any-
thing to do with the case.”

“Perhaps not; but I am not so certain.

Whom did you see while attending to that
little matter of business?”

“Well, by jawce!” exclaimed the youthful
cigarette fiend. “I rawther think you are
awsking things that do not concern you, Mr.
Merriwell.”

Frank had not expected Phil to answer,
and the manner of the fellow simply served
to strengthen a belief that was growing rap-
idly in the mind of the questioner.

“Oh, very well,” smiled Frank; “if you
regard it that way, why, you are at liberty
to refuse to answer.”

Then, not without some difficulty, yet with
great skill, he succeeded in soon putting Phil
again at his ease.

Dr. St. Clair had lingered, talking to Bess-
ie now and then. He now took his depart-
ure, both the girl and her mother accompany-
ing him into the hall.

Frank and Phil were left alone.

Immediately Frank drew closer to young
Levering, looked him straight in the eyes,
and said, in a low tone:

“The game is not worth the candle.”

“Oh?” gasped Phil, turning pale.

“Take my advice—drop it,” said Merry,
grimly.

“Why? What do you mean?”

“You know what I mean. It is sure to
land you in prison if you do not drop it at
once.”

Phil sprang up, white with anger.

“Confound your blooming insolence!” he
exclaimed, savagely. “I’ll not stay here to
be insulted by you! You’d better leave this
house! I’ll tell mother and sister that you
have insulted me!”

“You’ll tell them nothing,” declared Frank,
“because, if you do, I may tell them a great
deal more.”

Levering’s jaw dropped and a light of fear
came into his washed-out eyes. He seemed
to waver some moments between indignant
anger and growing cowardice. The latter
got the best of him, and he panted:

“You go to the devil!”

Then he almost ran from the room.

When Bessie and Mrs. Levering returned,
they were surprised to find Frank there
alone.

“Where is Phil?” they asked.
"I think he has gone to his room," answered Merry.

Then, when Mrs. Levering went off to look after her son, Frank quickly said:

"Miss Levering, I have taken a remarkable fancy to Dr. St. Clair, and I would like to know him better. I may wish to call on him some time. Would you mind giving me his number?"

She was perfectly willing to do so, and Frank jotted it down. When Mrs. Levering returned she was somewhat surprised to find Frank almost ready to go.

"Phil has been attacked by a sudden headache," she explained. "He has them quite often. You must let us hear from you the moment you learn anything, Mr. Merriwell. Don't forget our anxiety."

Frank gave his promise, and was soon on the street.

When he came to a drug store, Merry ran in and purchased a tiny bottle of dark liquid and another containing an almost colorless substance, together with a small camel's-hair brush.

With these things in his pocket, he made his way directly to the home of Dr. St. Clair. The young doctor had his office in the parlor of the house where he lived. He was in his office, not having retired for the night.

The doctor was surprised to see Merry.

"I have come to you, doctor," he said, "because I believe you a thoroughly honest man. Believing this, I am going to trust you and appeal to you for assistance in solving the mystery of the disappearance of Miss Burrage."

"If I can help you," said the doctor, "command me."

"Do you know anything of Dr. Cloud's private sanitarium for the mentally deranged?"

"I know there is such a place, and I once met Dr. Cloud."

"He is a scoundrel."

"That was my impression of him."

"His so-called sanitarium is run contrary to law and justice. It would be a grand thing to expose his villainy and cause the closing of his den of horrors. I wish you to aid me in an attempt to do this. If we succeed, it will be a feather in your cap, will give you prominence and attract attention to you which may result in a large practice."

The doctor was more astonished than ever.

"But, my dear fellow," he cried, "why should you wish to spend your time in such a thing? I thought you had come on here to try to find Miss Burrage?"

"And so I have. I have every reason to believe that Inza Burrage is a prisoner in Dr. Cloud's sanitarium. Now you can understand why I hope to strike him a blow that will result in the exposure of his rascality and the closing by the proper authorities of his place."

CHAPTER X.
FRANK'S DARING SCHEME.

It is needless to say that Dr. St. Clair was amazed. At first, he fancied Frank Merriwell himself was not quite in his right mind. But Merry soon convinced the doctor that he was perfectly sane, and the story that he told was enough to astound St. Clair and arouse his intense indignation.

"If you are right," exclaimed the doctor, "Cloud should have twenty years in Sing Sing!"

"We'll see what can be done to give him twenty years retirement there," said Merry.

"Are you ready to help me?"

"If you have a plan that seems practical to me—yes," was the ready assurance.

"It may not seem practical at first, but I hope to convince you that it is. I have been an actor. I will not praise myself by saying I was clever, but, at any rate, I was not hissed off the stage. Now, with your assistance, I hope to do a bit of acting that will deceive Cloud and gain me admittance to his place as a mild sort of lunatic. You are to take me there as one of your patients and offer to pay him as least a hundred dollars a week to take care of me. You will also offer to get a regular certificate of my deranged condition if necessary, but the all-important thing is to get me under that roof at once, certificate or no certificate. You may urge him to take me in for the time, assuring him that there will be no trouble, as my folks have turned me over into his care to be taken care of. If one hundred dollars a week will not hit him,
make it two hundred, and I will provide you with the money to pay for the first week. If you shake the cash under that man’s nose, you will get him."

The doctor was carried away by the daring of Frank’s scheme, but it seemed too wild and hair-brained to be successful. This he frankly asserted.

"Why," he said, "you have been in his place this very night. He has seen you, and he would recognize you. If there was a ghost of a chance, I’d take hold of it, but it can’t be done."

"That shows that you do not know what I can do, doctor. I assure you that I can change my appearance so that he will not know me. I am willing to demonstrate this to you. All I want is some of your clothes, a trifle shabby and a complete change, with the privilege of using your back parlor as a dressing-room."

Dr. St. Clair was young; otherwise he must have rejected the proposition. He had imagination, and there was something convincing about Frank Merriwell.

"I’ll do it!" he laughed. "But I do not agree to try to carry out your plan unless I am satisfied that you can deceive Dr. Cloud. I’ll bring you a change of clothes directly."

He ran up-stairs, soon returning with his arms full of clothing, which he deposited in the back parlor.

"There," he said, "go ahead and see what you can do." Then he retired to the front office and closed the double doors.

In less than half an hour the doors rolled back. The doctor had been waiting patiently, but he sprang to his feet with an exclamation of surprise as a slouching form came dodging into the room.

Frank Merriwell had disappeared, and the metamorphosis seemed almost as remarkable as that in the case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

In place of the tall, clean, handsome youth was a hunched, loose-jointed, slouching, ill-formed creature, unsteady on his feet and uncertain in his movements. His clothes did not fit, but it seem that clothing of any make could not fit that unsightly form, one shoulder of which seemed higher than the other, while one arm was twisted and the body seemed set with a twist upon the hips.

But it was the face that was most changed. The plump cheeks had disappeared and grown strangely hollow, while the under jaw seemed set askew. The head was carried far forward on a projecting neck, and it bobbed queerly, turning from side to side. The mouth opened and closed, showing teeth dark and discolored. The tint of the flesh was pale, with dark circles beneath the eyes and a dark spot on either cheek. And down over the wrinkled forehead fell a tousled mass of hair, reaching to the eyebrows, beneath which peered and shone a pair of eyes that were dancing and shifty, with no light of reason gleaming in their depths.

Could this be the clear-eyed, pink-cheeked, vigorous youth who had retired into that room a short time before? To Dr. St. Clair it did not seem within the range of possibility; and, with a cry of horror, he peered into the back parlor, half expecting to see Frank Merriwell lying prone and dead upon the floor, slain by this creature. He saw nothing but Frank’s clothes, which had been flung upon a chair.

Then the "thing" spoke:

"See the butterflies!" croaked a rasping, hollow voice, as a crooked finger pointed flutteringly at nothing in particular. "Oh, the beautiful butterflies! Their wings are gold and silver, set with precious stones, and their eyes are diamonds. See them all round us, flitting, flitting, flitting. Listen! Can’t you hear the music of their wings? They are carrying roses in their mouths and they are armed with gatling guns! Look out! Look out! They are going to shoot! Down! down! They are coming! Hide me somewhere! They’ll carry me away! Give me my magic wand! If I have that they cannot harm me!"

He caught the doctor’s walking-stick from a stand near the door, flourishing it wildly in the air, shrieking:

"Begone, base monsters! Avaunt! Disappear! Ha! ha! ha!" rang out his wild laugh. "They have fled! Before the magic wand they were powerless! I am safe, safe, safe!"
Then he fell upon a chair and began sobbing brokenly.

"Great Heaven!" gasped St. Clair. "Is it possible this can be you, Merriwell? Why, your own father would not know you! If I had not seen it with my own eyes, I'd have sworn such a thing utterly impossible. I can hardly realize it even now. Speak, for the love of goodness, and tell me I am not dreaming!"

Frank straightened up, seeming to cast from him in a moment all the greater peculiarities of his disguise, although the pallid hue of his face did not change and the dark places lingered beneath his eyes and in his cheeks.

"I thought I could convince you, doctor," he said, in his natural voice. "Are you satisfied now?"

"Satisfied!" gasped the young physician. "I am dazed! You are the most remarkable actor I have ever seen!"

"Then you believe now that I can deceive Dr. Cloud?"

"It is certain he will not recognize you, but can you keep it up? It must be a terrible strain."

"Leave that to me. If I can get into his place as a patient, I will take care of the rest."

"Even if you get in, you will be locked up and closely guarded. What do you expect to do under such circumstances?"

"Leave that to me, doctor. If Inza Burrage is there, I will find her."

"It's a go, Merriwell! By Jove! I believe you will succeed!"

"Here, doctor, is the money you may need. Don't hesitate to pay that scoundrel two hundred dollars, if necessary, to get me into his place. Now, get a cab at once and take me there. I am perfectly under your control, and in your hands I am harmless as a child."

"I understand."

"One thing make sure: I am to be treated well because my relatives are rich and will pay liberally. As far as possible, I am to be given the freedom of the place. Impress the assurance that I am harmless and apparently willing to stay anywhere if well fed and treated. I may be made of service in doing work about the house. I am particularly handy in waiting on the table and serving food."

"I'll not miss a thing. Trust to me. Remain here, and I will bring a cab for you soon. Of course, I may not be able to bribe Cloud to take you in, but I'll work the thing as well as I can."

Then the doctor hurried out and left Merry waiting.

CHAPTER XI.

WITHIN THE MADHOUSE.

Dr. St. Clair was successful beyond his greatest hopes. He used money at the very start to bribe the gatekeeper, and soon found himself with the keeper of the sanitarium in the little private office where Merry had met the man.

St. Clair told his story well and skillfully. He convinced Cloud that it would be a very profitable thing for him to take charge of the "patient." Money in hand settled Cloud's hesitation, and soon Frank Merriwell was taken to a room in the sanitarium, where he was searched by two attendants, then locked up and left to himself.

For the time Starbright had been forgotten, but Frank thought of him now, and wondered what Dick would do when he found Merry, as well as Inza, had disappeared.

It was too late now to send word to Dick. Merry had moved in a hurry, led by his intense anxiety to reach Inza and render aid to her, and he found no time to keep Dick posted on all his plans. Anyhow, if Dick remained faithful and watched the place, it would do no harm.

Frank had hoped that he might be used to work about the place, in which case he hoped soon to satisfy himself if Inza was within those walls.

The hasty search of the attendants, who were rough and brutal, failed to disclose a long wire Merry had smuggled into the place beneath the lining of his coat.

Dr. Cloud had protested to St. Clair that the place was full to overflowing and there were no more regularly fitted rooms. To this Merriwell's assistant had given the assurance that it was easy to imprison him in any sort of room where the shutters could be closed
and the door locked. He had assured the doctor that "the unfortunate young man" was more of an imbecile than a lunatic.

The doctor looked Merry over and decided that St. Clair spoke the truth. Dr. Cloud was thoroughly deceived, for he did not for one moment suspect that this muttering, slouchy, misshapen thing was the daring youth who had bearded him in his own den earlier that very night.

So Merry was locked in a room that had not been intended to restrain lunatics. He noted there was no heavy bar and chain upon the door, which fastened with an ordinary spring lock.

Left alone, Frank lost not a moment in making an examination of the place. The shutters were heavy, and the windows were fastened down by patent fasteners. After a few moments Merry discovered the way to open the windows, but it was not so easy with the iron shutters. However, he persisted, with the result that he opened them at last.

Then Frank found he was in a corner room, just outside of which stood one of the gloomy trees he had observed about the house, a heavy branch almost brushing the window.

A warning of danger caused him to close the shutter quickly and noiselessly, shut the window and spring back to a chair, on which he flung himself, singing a tuneless song.

The door opened noiselessly to admit Dr. Cloud and an attendant. The doctor was still smoking a black cigar.

"What in blazes are you making that howling for?" he snarled, glaring at Frank. "Shut up your mouth, you idiot!"

"Rattle, rattle, rattle!" croaked Merry. "Beans in the shell! I can hear them rattle. Isn't it beautiful?"

"Have you searched him?" Cloud asked the attendant.

"Yes, sir."

"What did you find?"

"Nothing but nails, strings, two old ink-bottles, stubs of leadpencils and such trash. Just the sort of stuff a child might pick up."

"Um!" said the doctor, surveying Merry. "Nothing but an idiot. He never had a mind of his own."

"I see angels!" Frank exclaimed, with one crooked hand uplifted, his rolling eyes staring upward from beneath the shaggy mass of hair. "They are calling me—calling, calling!"

"Ho! ho!" laughed the attendant. "Ye're likely to hear angels calling yer if ye stay here long. Doc, I reckon what he needs is the rawhide."

"No," said Cloud, shaking his head; "not yet. He hasn't been regularly examined and committed, so he hasn't a mark on him. Later on you may have to shake the fool up some."

"Sh!" hissed Merry. "Can't you hear the tread of their feet? They are coming for me. Don't let them touch me! Hide me! hide me!"

He covered his face with his hands and seemed to tremble all over with sudden fear. His aspect was most wretched and pitiful.

"I guess he'll be all right here to-night," said Cloud. "In the morning there will be a regular room for him. We'll be rid of that infernal girl before daylight. If I'd dreamed there would be such a fuss kicked up over her you can bet I'd never troubled her; but I was told that she had no relatives save her old father, who is an invalid, and her friends did not count."

Frank knew the man was speaking of Inza. So he meant to "get rid of her" before morning! This was information to startle Frank. How did the doctor intend to rid himself of Inza? In desperation, being determined to cover up his villainy, might he not resort to some fearful crime?

Merry believed Inza was in great danger, and he thanked fortune that he had lost no time in getting into that place.

Dr. Cloud turned to Merry.

"Undress, idiot," he commanded. Merry was humming harshly to himself.

"Do you hear?" cried Cloud, impatiently. "The brook is rippling over the stones," said Frank. "You can see it ripple and flash in the sunshine. It has great, white eyes that come up and wink and wink and wink. I don't like those eyes. They frighten me! They are the eyes of men who have been drowned! The bottom of the sea is covered with dead men. Down there they laugh and
play and have such fun. Some time I’m going down to see them.”

"Mebbe ye are," grinned the attendant.

Cloud walked over and gave Merry a slap with his open hand.

"Undress, you fool!" he ordered. "Get into bed."

Frank rose and began to obey in a mechanical manner. The doctor and the assistant watched him, talking as he flung off his clothes.

When Frank was partly undressed, he suddenly plunged into bed.

"What in blazes are you doing?" shouted the attendant. "Get out of that and strip off the rest of your clothes!"

He started to drag Frank out of bed, but the doctor stopped him, saying:

"Let him go to-night. Bill. That’s all right. We’ll look after him to-morrow. There are other things that need our attention."

Then they retired from the room, taking with them the light.

"I’m afraid I’d had trouble in keeping up the bluff if they’d forced me to strip to the skin," muttered Merry, as he immediately got out of bed. "Don’t think they’ll come back to-night. Now, I must see what I can do."

In short order he had donned his clothes again. It was very dark there in that room, but Merry’s hands seemed quite as good as eyes.

Having dressed, he again unfastened the window and the heavy shutter, so that both could be flung wide open in a hurry. Then he brought forth the wire he had smuggled into the place.

"We’ll see what I can do with this," he murmured. "I may not be able to work the trick, but I’m going to try."

He slipped over to the door and listened for some time, hearing no sound outside. Then he set to work.

More than once Frank had picked a lock with a wire, but he knew it was a rather difficult trick to perform, especially in the dark. He began working slowly, listening occasionally to make sure the scratching at the lock might not be heard by any one outside.

To one with less patience than Frank, the work would have proved rather disheartening, for he could not tell if he was making progress, and the task of bending the wire was slow and difficult, even though he had smuggled in a pair of pliers for the work.

He repressed his impatience and fears, knowing that success could come only by care and persistence. The hours of the night were passing, and he knew not but the thing he feared had taken place or was taking place even as he worked.

Frank longed for a light, but he had not brought matches. At last he ventured to open the shutter on a crack, finding that a gleam from the distant street light reached to the window. By holding up the key between his eyes and the light he could see its shape and could tell just how much he had changed it.

Back and forth from the window to the door Merry made many trips. At last he began to believe that he was on the verge of success. He could almost shoot the bolt in the lock, but the key stuck at a certain point, indicating that a slight alteration was needed.

As Merry went again to the window a cab rolled heavily up a side street, turned to the front of the sanitarium and stopped at the gate.

"It has come for Inza," he thought, his heart giving a great leap.

Back to the door he went, his feet making no more noise than those of a cat. There was a slight grating as he inserted the skeleton key and turned it. The bolt moved, stopped, stuck.

Then Merry heard sounds outside in the corridor.

They were taking Inza away!

CHAPTER XII.

STARBRIGHT ON HAND.

Had he taken such desperate chances and run such a great risk only to balk himself? Was he to remain helpless in that room while the villains carried Inza from the place to some unknown spot and some unspeakable fate?

His heart swelled with despair. Firmly, but with considerable strength, he persisted
in the attempt to turn the key. It moved, slipped, turned—the bolt clicked back!

Beneath Frank’s hand the door yielded!

A moment later Merry was peering forth into the dimly-lighted corridor.

Far down the corridor the door of a room stood open.

Merry watched and waited, ready now for whatever might happen.

The sound of low voices came to his ears.

In a few moments Dr. Cloud came out of the room. He was followed by two men, who were carrying a muffled figure.

Was it Inza?"

Frank’s first impulse was to rush forward at once and take a hand in the affair. He knew he could surprise the men, and he fancied he might get the best of them for a time by a sudden and unexpected assault. Even then, however, he would be within the asylum, and it seemed that he would have an unconscious girl upon his hands, which would encumber him in a most unhandy manner.

So his better judgment told him to wait, and his ready wit suggested a plan.

He watched the men carry the girl down the stairs, and then he gently closed the door, still remaining within the room.

“I’ll see you outside!” he whispered.

Across the window he darted. Open went the window. It made some noise, even though he was cautious in his movements.

By the open window Frank crouched, timing himself, for he realized that were he to make his next move too soon he might be seen by the guard outside, who would give a warning that would ruin his plan and balk the rescue.

When he fancied he had waited long enough, the shutter was flung back, he lifted himself upon the window sill, and then, with a leap, shot out and clutched at a thick limb.

Merry’s training on the horizontal bars now served him well. The branch swayed and shook beneath the shock, but he held fast, and, hand-over-hand, he moved quickly along the trunk of the tree. Down to the ground Frank slipped. He was at the corner of the house as the front door opened and the men came out with their burden.

He delayed no longer. Silently, but with terrible force, he rushed upon the men.

Smash! He struck one and sent him flying to the ground. Slash! He tore the muffled figure from the grasp of the other. Crack! His hard fist landed under the second man’s ear.

Every movement was well-timed and perfect. Both scoundrels were down in a twinkling.

“Inza!” panted Frank.

The answer was a snarl of rage from the lips of Dr. Cloud, who had been following the men. The doctor precipitated himself upon Merry, whom he clutched and held, calling loudly for assistance.

The guard came running up the walk, while the men Merry had overthrown were struggling to their feet.

Frank saw that he was in a most desperate situation. In vain he tried to break the hold of Dr. Cloud.

“Jump this fellow, Mike!” snarled the keeper of the place. “Down him, quick!”

Merry was forced to drop the limp form of the girl. And then he managed to get hold of the doctor, whom he twisted round in time to hurl him fairly into the grasp of the onrushing guard.

But the other ruffians were on their feet, and they came at Merry together. One of them struck him with a heavy fist, while the other grasped his collar.

Frank broke the hold of the man at his collar, stooped, rose, lifted and hurled the fellow fairly over his head!

“While we are about it,” he grated, “we’ll settle the business right here! If you’ll come one at a time, I think I’ll be able to accommodate you!”

But they did not come one at a time. As he ducked a blow from the other ruffian and kicked the fellow fairly over the heart with fearful violence, Dr. Cloud and the guard leaped upon him together.

Merry was crushed to his knees. It seemed that they would conquer him then in a moment.

But the young Yale athlete never gave up as long as he could fight. He pulled one of the men beneath him and rose with the other.
It was the guard, and he persisted in his efforts to crush Merry to the ground.

Merry reached up, got a good grip on the fellow, and then twisted him under.

But one of the fallen scoundrels had fastened about Frank’s angles, so that Merry was pulled to the earth.

They piled upon him, and at last they had him in their power.

“Slug him!” grated the voice of the doctor. “Put him out!”

Frank received a blow that made him see stars. He seemed robbed of his strength for the instant, and he realized that his enemies were getting the best of the struggle.

At that instant Dick Starbright took a hand. Faithful to his trust, Dick had watched and waited through the long hours for Frank to return. He was not far away when the struggle at the front door of the place began, and he heard Frank’s voice.

Like a tornado the young giant of Yale swept into the fight. He picked up men in his strong arms and hurled them aside as if they were children. He flung one against the side of the building with such force that the wretch dropped unconscious and motionless to the ground. His blows seemed to be like those of a sledge hammer, and the fight was over in less than ten seconds after his advent.

“Are you all right, Merriwell?” asked Dick, dragging Frank to his feet.

“Think so. Want to settle one thing.”

Merry lifted the form of the girl. The muffling cloth was torn from her head. The light from the distant street lamp showed them it was Inza!

“Let me have her!” panted Dick.

Frank surrendered her into the arms of the big fellow, whom he hustled down the walk and out through the gate.

The cab was waiting, although the driver had been greatly alarmed by the fight.

“What’s up, there?” he asked.

“Nothing much,” answered Frank, as he thrust Dick and Inza into the cab and closed the door. Then he leaped to a seat beside the driver, saying: “Get us to the Hotel St. George in double-quick time. There’s ten in the job.”

Away went the cab, with Inza Burrage safe inside, clasped in the arm of Dick Starbright.

Inza’s story was a simple one. The newspapers had given it very nearly correct. When she awoke from the sleep into which she had fallen from the influence of a drug before she was removed from the hospital, she was astounded to find herself quite safe, with Bessee’ Levering at her side. Bessee explained to her what had happened, but it seemed almost impossible to Inza.

Unfortunately, she could throw no light on the point that Merry most wished to clear up, for she knew not why she had been selected as a victim by the men who took her from the street-car and carried her to the asylum.

Frank, however, was positive that Phil Levering was behind the game. He believed Phil had induced by false stories the villainous doctor, who desired a substitute for Rose Fenton, to seize Inza, leading Cloud to believe that she had few friends to cause trouble over her disappearance. It was probable that Phil had intended to offer to rescue her from the sanitarium in case she would marry him. Cigarettes were responsible for many wild and foolish schemes formed in his drug-distorted brain. Of course he had promised Dr. Cloud money for his part of the job; perhaps he was able to pay the doctor for the first move in the game:

Frank hoped to learn the entire truth from the lips of Levering or the doctor himself; but Cloud had been thoroughly alarmed, and
he could not be found the following day by
the officers, who, armed with a warrant for
his arrest, scoured the city for him. He had
vanished from Brooklyn, and his overthrow
resulted in the closing of his infamous "pri-
ivate sanitarium."

Phil Levering also took to his heels, and
he could not be traced.

But Frank, by his daring scheme and
clever deception of Dr. Cloud, had wrought
the rescue of Inza, who was restored un-
harmed to her father.

However, he gave full credit to Starbright,
declaring he could not have succeeded had
not Dick taken a hand at just the right mo-
moment.

Dr. St. Clair refused to accept money to
remunerate him for what he had done, say-
ing the exposure and overthrow of Dr. Cloud
was satisfaction enough for him.

THE END.

The next number (256) will contain
"Frank Merriwell's Mysterious Move; or,
Thirteen Pieces of Silver."

Correspondence.

P. A. B., New York.—No premium.
John Lowell, Brooklyn, N. Y.—No premiums on any
of the coins mentioned.
Jacques Hurst, Crown Point, Ind.—Your measure-
ments are fine, and you should develop into a good
athlete.
M. P. E., Huron, Ohio.—Address any "Training
School for Nurses" and you will receive full particu-
lar as to age, requirements, etc.
E. A. C., Lowell, Mass.—Dumbbells are excellent
exercise and should be used regularly. Swinging In-
dian clubs is also excellent for one.
M. J., Chapin St., Chicago, Ill.—If the coin you
mention has no rays back of the eagle then it has a
premium of ten dollars. Otherwise there is no pre-
mium whatever.

TIP TOP WEEKLY.
I have read nearly all of the Tip Tops, and many other yearly books, but the Tip Top is the best. In regard to the Eisle-Inza question, I think that Eisle is the girl for Frank, first, last and all the time. She is true and more faithful than Inza in every way, and always has been. Inza has said that she does care very much for Frank, especially in the issue No. 28, where she turned down for Dick Hawthorn, which she never met until a few months ago. Dick is a splendid fellow, but he isn't as good as Merry. If I was Frank, I wouldn't bother the Inza any more, even if I had the chance. I would turn her down every day, every week, because she didn't turn the Tip Top from Frank too often and went with some one else. Let Starbright keep Inza, and she can stay away from Merry. She will not have anything to say about Eisle and Frank now, if Merry takes Eisle as his choice. I like Browning next to Frank, and then Diamond and Badger. Having that this is not too long to publish, and hoping that Merry finds Eisle and then marries her some time in the near future. Wishing Mr. Standish success with the Tip Top for 1921.

WM. CROW

You are strongly in favor of Eisle, but rather severe on Inza, we think, for "all is fair in love and war." you know, as the old saying goes.

I. Hurrah for dark-eyed Inza,
So noble, bravey and true,
The girl who makes Merrills once make
"The Mascot of the Crew."

II. And also blue-eyed Eisle,
Shows off a strong, true eye,
Who says Frank is a hero,
"The Mascot of the Nine."

III. We can't leave our Dick Starbright,
So, my friend, fill up your glass,
And drink the health of the hero,
"The Star of the Pennsylvania Class."

IV. Stubbs, and Diamond, and Browning—
The latter too lazy to walk,
And Ready, and Camp, and Griefsoid,
Help make up "Frank Merrills's Flock."

V. And last, but not least, comes our here: Inza Noble, brave, and true,
A mean or cowardly action
He never would stoop to.

Once again, boys, fill up your glasses!
With joy let your voices ring,
As with a will you give three cheers,
For Merry, "The Polo Knight of the World."

MAUD FAVOR
Newburyport, Mass.

Thank you. Your verses are very apt and have a good, stirring ring to them.

I write to say that I think—yes, I know—Tip Top the best weekly published! I have written twice already, but I make it a business to write once a year; therefore this letter. The first letter, I told you I was stranded; in the second, that, owing to my letter to you, a friend found out about my plight and secured me a place in his company. Since then I have met with every success. Had it not been for the popularity of your books the chances are my friend would not have known my plight; he might be in that place yet. As to the girls, my choice is and has always been the same. Frank, Inza and Eisle have all saved each other's lives, so that does not count. But Inza has qualities which are unsurpassable, and when the girls are praised in the will-power, pride and confidence. Eisle has the second, but not the first and third, and she has the maker with the most. I can admire. Some of the letters of Applause make tips, one of "Syracuse Boy" who says "Burt is a lobster" and "Inza is a milk-and-water girl." Is not Eisle as much so as Inza? Burt is no "lobster." He is the finest character, with the possible exception of Frank and Inza. Eisle is a good girl—one who is admired by all for her intelligence. Inza has some faults, but he has corrected them wonderfully lately.
and Inza wedded, and I like the latter picture best. Inza is my choice, first, last and all the time. By this I mean Inza the wife, as I know Frank is one of the gentleman who stands upon the topmost pinnacle of success, anything, for it would be like a superwoman to do as much as to do, or call boy telling a star how to act. Mr. Standish is by all means the leading light of hearing about, or whose works I have been able to read. Every character in his stories, from Frank to Vespie, that I sometimes wonder if the author has not lived a hundred years or more,  

Thinking of this, I see that I have been able to spend many hours pleasantly, and that I have been able to read these three books, as you have doubtless seen that I am one of the "professional" readers, for I know, there is none too much spare time. Now, one word to Mr. Cummings: Had you not better think a few times before you talk about a fellow who may be his place. He is mistaken. I will close, after telling "A Girl Reader of Ali," and Miss Leroy that every member of the family who reads the book will find it a pleasure, and congratulate their friends for their stand for "Inza, the queen," as well as Mr. Standish, Street and Smith. Mr. Frank has all a long and happy life, and ever continued success.

HARRY C. RAYMOND,
Chicago, Ill.

Are you girded up a position through the medium of the Appliance Column? It certainly shows how easily readers reach the printer. We wish you suc-

cess in the profession, and hope to hear from you soon. I am one of those who have read from No. 1 to No. 42, and yet I champion Eloise. "A Con- 
stant Reader" asks, "Why isn't "Inza" safe?" Frank's careless words, if she had the chance, If Eloise is tender and womanly, she should make more to its credit. What better for a fellow to love a sweet, tender girl, all to make up for his ideal woman. And Eloise is the one to make that ideal woman. Eloise is always making sacrifices for Frank and Inza. Best wishes to Mr. Standish and Street & Smith. A. B. C., 
Chelsea, Mass.

One more Eloise to the front! The Tip Top readers who favor Inza will undoubtedly have a great deal to say in reply.

It seems very funny to me how stubborn men can be when they want to be. I'll explain. I work among men, all of whom are older than myself, that have got the idea that anything that has been bad can never be good. They read "bloody and thun- 

der" till they cannot or will not appreciate a good clean bit of refreshing reading. It's a very good, old royal debate I have with them. The five-cent novel of to-day is not the novel of a decade ago, that is why I can argue with them and not be put- 
ing myself forward and out of my position for my age. Ever am I glad to put in a word for Tip Top and has great success. We have been delayed by the present, but now standish and Street & Smith a long and happy life.

A NIGHT STRANGER,
Indianapolis, Ind.

We like to hear from our girl admirers just as much as from the boys. Let us hear from you often.

I have read all the Tip Tops from No. 1 to the present one (249), I think they are lovely, and  

and I can't wait till I get my new copy. Tip Top reader, do you care to do, or call boy telling a star how to act. Mr. Standish is by all means the leading light of hearing about, or whose works I have been able to read. Every character in his stories, from Frank to Vespie, that I sometimes wonder if the author has not lived a hundred years or more,  

Thinking of this, I see that I have been able to spend many hours pleasantly, and that I have been able to read these three books, as you have doubtless seen that I am one of the "professional" readers, for I know, there is none too much spare time. Now, one word to Mr. Cummings: Had you not better think a few times before you talk about a fellow who may be his place. He is mistaken. I will close, after telling "A Girl Reader of Ali," and Miss Leroy that every member of the family who reads the book will find it a pleasure, and congratulate their friends for their stand for "Inza, the queen," as well as Mr. Standish, Street and Smith. Mr. Frank has all a long and happy life, and ever continued success.

HARRY C. RAYMOND,
Chicago, Ill.

Thank you for your words of praise. We like to have the boys look forward to Friday as a red letter day, for it is the day Tip Top arrives.

In reading over your Appliance Column, I see many letters from all parts of the country praising the Tip Top. As we did not see anything from Duluth, I thought you would write and tell me what they think of the Tip Top is getting from here. It is a fine book, and the only one I would ask to be added to the Eloise and Inza controversy, we all are for dear Eloise, the gentle girl, and we think the girl for Frank. If you asked me the question, Eloise will get our votes and a great many more besides. I am glad to see that the Wisking Tip Top, Burt L., and Street & Smith, Frank, Eloise and Inza are all joyful in their happy life, Thos. K. S., Frank K. and a great many more.

Duluth, Minn.

Thank you all for your good wishes. We are sure you are staunch admirers of Eloise and would help her to get Frank if it were in your power alone.

Having read your paper from No. 1 to the latest, I think it the best that I ever read. Being a strong admirer of Inza, after reading No. 358 that first Frank was going to pick Inza out after he got the note from Eloise, but he did not. I don't think Inza is the girl for Dick. I think and many others think, Inza is the one for Frank, being the strongest character outside of Frank in the weekly. I like all the boys, and wish Mr. Standish and Street & Smith a long and happy life. Hoping to see a red letter in print soon, I close.

O. McC.

Another Inza Admiree! Well, both girls should be flattered by their hosts and hosts of friends, for Frank, he will choose wisely and well, you may rest assured.

We, the undersigned, are members of the Frank and Eloise Club of Indianapolis, Ind. The Weekly deserves the name of Tip Top. We are all for Frank and Eloise, Frank Millard, Ed Whit- 

ney, Fred Leroy, Paul Boos, James Smith, Eimer Merrick, Fred Rockwell, Stanley Anderson, Walter Graham, Harry Morton, Grace Smith, Marion Robinson, Winifred Hale, Lenora Eyre, Clare St. John, Marjorie Russell, Edith Brewer, Viola Dun- 
ston, Gertrude Brown, Leila Baker.
Springfield, Mass.

Three cheers for the Frank and Eloise Club! May Frank's affairs turn out to your satisfaction, and may all of you be as happy and successful as Frank Merritt is sure to be.

Having seen no applause from Frisco for quite a while I thought I would write and let you know the Westerners appreciate your publication as much as ever. Tip Top has reached a height of success, which can never be excelled. I agree with F. M., In No. 26, about comrades. I think every Tip Top reader should read comrades, and I think they will get no stronger praise than by saying they are next to the Tip Top. In regard to the Inza's question, I beg to note that I am a strong admirer of the former, who, I think, can give Frank a lot of company, and I am glad to see that a majority of the readers, especially in the later numbers, are taking the side of Inza. In regard to the tip top question, that the Inza admirers can put up by saying that Eloise can't compare with Inza, and that Inza is too proud. Why, what would a girl be if she did not have some ambition. Of course, Frank so far has made a success, and when he has been in danger and would have perished for his noble friends; therefore, would it not be bet-
TIP TOP WEEKLY

TER for him to marry a woman who can help and advise him in his hour of need and make his life easier. Have Inza been published? Why, she would be just the person, cool, brave, noble Inza. Look how in No. 26, where Frank is hanging at the end of the rope, and his body turns over the basket, and with a calm voice says: "You can make it Frank." And when he goes out of the dark eyes, did he not gain new courage and with assistance manage to get out? What did Inza have done? Why, she would have sat in the bottom of the basket, too frightened even to stand up. Again, in No. 29, where some one should give Frank a pitch for outlaws because white as snow, while Inza fights her way to the side, looks at the gray sky in sign of any assistance. And in several other numbers does not her noble courage give him renewed strength? Let the Elsieites answer this if they can. We, I will end by saying that I am for Inza once, now and forever, and trust that I shall never have occasion to regret it.

Then here’s to the girl of such noble courage. Our loving idol, Inza Burrage. Then cheer her, boys, cheer her well. The only girl for Merrick and Frank.

RALPH WINTERS,
San Francisco, Cal.

You know how to defend your favorite. For set forth such good arguments that the Elsieites are sure to be baffled.

I am sitting in my home on D street, and have just finished a Tip Top, and so I am going to contribute by saying a few words of Frank Merrickwell and his friends. I think Frank is the best type of young American manhood that I ever heard of. He is brave, bold, determined, and always ready to stand up for the weak. All of Frank’s friends can be said to have two girls, and am very fond of them both, but I will have to choose between them before I can submit to Frank, his friends, Burt L. Standish and Street & Smith. I am an ardent reader.

AL. 32, Like 32.
Mankeeto, Minn.

As you seem to be in the same predicament as Frank, we presume you are doubly interested in Frank’s affairs, and wonder how he will decide.

Seeing letters from our town in your applause columns I thought I would write and let you know that I am a great admirer of the Tip Top Weekly. I see there are a great many Elsie admirers, but I think Inza is the girl for Frank. Elsie is very charming and sweet, but I don’t think she would make as good a wife for Frank as Inza. I don’t think she would be put off on Dick Starbright. I know he is a splendid boy, but I don’t think they would make a good match. Frank is No. 1 to me, and I don’t see any reason why she should not marry Frank. Seven of them are pretty enough for Frank, but I think Inza is the one. I have tried to get into Elsie and I cannot. I think Elsie and Burt Hodge would make a good match, because Burt always admired Elsie the most, I read where one of the Inza admirers called Burt Eade and but- ter Elsie, but I don’t think that is right for them to exalt Elsie names they can uphold Inza and not abuse Elsie either. Long life to Burt L. Standish and Street & Smith, publisher.

FANNIE KEESENE,
Harrisisburg, Pa.

You express your admiration for Inza with great arder and yet temper your remarks with that moderation and fairness which appeals to all just-minded people.

Being an admirer of Frank Merrickwell, I write these few lines to congratulate the author, Mr. Standish. I have read the Tip Top Weekly from No. 80 to the present date. You cannot imagine how long for Friday to come, when I get the Tip Top. Next to Frank I like Bart Hodge.

WILLIAM H. MURPHY,
Halifax, N. S.

Thank you.

Having just finished one of your interesting weeklies, we wish to express our opinion in regards to Elsie. We have read the applause and find that most of your readers are in favor of Elsie. We wish to make it known that we are also. We think she would make the best life companion for Frank. We think Frank a very good model for American youths to follow, and we would like to hear of that quick-tempered lad, Jack Diamond once again. With kindest regards to Mr. Standish and Messrs. Street & Smith.

T. J. S.
Pawtucket, R. I.

Thank you both for your pleasant letter.

We have read every number of Tip Top that has been published yet. We are amazed and delighted at Frank Merrickwell’s baseball playing and would like to have him pitch for Mark Finn. We are not sure of victories then. We boys have not had such experience before. We read another Tip Top any until two years ago. We played fourteen games last year, but although we played some close games, we only won one game—that was against Star Lake. We did some heavy slugging in that game. Somebody said their pitcher’s arm was lame that day, but we think that was just an excuse. If we could get Frank we would always have a good chance. We think you keep right on playing you will soon become champions yourselves. You knew success is in the practice.

I have read the Tip Top from No. 1 to date, and think that they are the best boys’ paper ever published. I have not expressed my opinion on the Elsie-Inza question. Frank is a good fellow and I think he is an Inza admirer and am not ashamed to let the readers of the Tip Top know it. I have heard Frank talk about Inza, but out a few places that I think will convince you that Inza is the girl for Frank. Did the Elsie admiring read the first four numbers of the Tip Top? Did not Inza save Frank when he was about to disgrace himself? When he had such a good chance to drink, he didn’t, but Inza stood by him and kept him from doing wrong. If I were not for Inza Frank would not be in Yale now. Frank and Inza were sweethearts before Frank ever saw Elsie. What did Elsie ever do to make you think that she is the girl for Frank? I am so much in favor of Inza that I cannot explain; but I will leave some room for my friends to tell how they think of Elsie. There is one thing I will leave up a letter to send you soon. Wishing the Tip Top and its author a grand success.

AN INZA ADMIRER,
Cerro Gordo, III.

Inza has always been a good true friend to Frank. We are willing to admit, but then Frank is the one to make the decision, and we must wait until the proper time and moment arrive.

Having been a reader of your now famous publication, the Tip Top Weekly, for over four years in fact, since it was first published, and not having written to you before, I think it is about time I got it on Friday. I don’t stop reading it until I have finished, it is so interesting. I am a great admirer of your applause column, as I think the letters are so interesting as to the Elsie and Inza question. I don’t think I have any choice, as I think one of the girls is just as good as the other and I don’t care which. I will marry either of them. Still, as Thomas Q. Sea- brooke says, "But I am willing that Mr. Standish shall name the girl for our hero—one I know that will please me." I like all of the characters in the Tip Top very well, and I think that Buck Hodge and Bill Higgins are the finest. Wishing you the best.

JAMES D. HOWARD,
Nov. 1, 19—.

Pawtucket.

We are glad to have such enthusiastic readers, and we thank you for your words of praise, which are indeed very gratifying. It is in favor of Elsie, and we always like to keep in close touch with all our great host of readers.
CONCERNING IMITATORS

EARLY five years ago Street & Smith originated and introduced the Tip Top Weekly, combining the new features of beautiful and attractive colored covers, and a continuous series of stories, each dealing with the same characters; each book complete in itself yet part of a progressive series.

It was an instant success. An enormous circulation was at once secured, and this has yearly increased with rapid strides. The Tip Top Weekly, containing the only and original Frank Merriwell stories, by Burt L. Standish, has today three times the circulation of any similar publication not issued by Street & Smith. In response to continued demands we have, from time to time, established new libraries as companions to Tip Top.

Success always stimulates imitation. Other publishers have copied the general style and form of the Tip Top Weekly, Do and Dare, etc., and, while the contents and general merit of these would-be rival publications are far below the standard acceptable to Street & Smith’s patrons, it is probable that some have been induced to purchase the inferior product of other publishers under the mistaken idea that they were getting “Street & Smith’s.” In one instance a rival publisher has gone so far as to ascribe the authorship of his stories to a name very similar to that of Burt L. Standish, a method calculated to confuse the reader.

We wish to call our reader’s particular attention to the fact that all of Street & Smith’s five-cent libraries are of uniform size, of convenient dimensions to handle readily, and to fit nicely in the pocket, and that any five-cent weekly which is not of the same size as the one you hold in your hand is not Street & Smith’s. As a further safeguard against disappointment always look for the name of Street & Smith as publishers on the cover.

We use every effort to secure the very best stories by the very best authors, and give our readers this caution that they may not be disappointed by mistaking the lines of other publishers for ours.

As a further safeguard we give herewith the complete list of the five-cent weeklies published by Street & Smith:

THE TIP TOP WEEKLY, containing the Frank Merriwell series.
THE SHIELD WEEKLY, new and novel detective stories.
DO AND DARE, containing exciting stories of adventure.
COMRADES, containing the best series of railroad stories ever written.
MY QUEEN, our latest, containing the Marion Marlowe series.
THE NICK CARTER WEEKLY. Nick Carter Stories.
DIAMOND DICK, JR., the best stories of the West.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 238 William St., N. Y.