DICK MERRIWELL'S FRESHMAN FRIEND

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Amid a storm of cheers and much laughter, the two freshmen carried out the orders of the hazing committee.
Dick Merriwell's Freshman Friend;

OR,

A QUESTION OF MANHOOD.

By BURT L. STANDISH.

CHAPTER I.

THE BOY.

Sitting by the open car window, Dick looked out as the train stopped at the station of a small country village. Having spent a few days at his brother's home, in Bloomfield, Merriwell was on his way to New Haven.

Upon the station platform was to be seen the usual gathering of curious idlers, who had collected there to "watch the train come in," which, for many persons in a sleepy country town, is always something of an event.

Directly opposite Dick's window a slender, middle-aged woman in black was bidding her blue-eyed, rosy-cheeked boy good-by. They embraced almost tearfully.

"Be a good boy, and take care of yourself, Lance," urged the boy's mother, "I know you're sure to meet with lots of temptations and trials, and you must be brave and always on your guard. I shall be very lonely. Oh, it doesn't seem that I can let you go!"

The boy, an almost girlish-looking chap of eighteen, clean, healthy, blue-eyed, with curly hair, seemed greatly embarrassed.

"Don't worry about me, mother," he said. "Don't cry, now. Please don't! If you do, you'll upset me, and that will look silly. I'm all right. I reckon I can take care of myself as well as other fellows."

The woman wiped her eyes swiftly with her handkerchief, and smiled bravely.

"You've always lived in the country, Lance," she said, "and you'll be——"

"Oh, I'm not so frightfully green, if I have lived in the country. I know a thing or two. Any one would think that I was going away to war. I'll come back alive, mother."

At this they both laughed.

"It isn't that," she said. "I'm not afraid that you'll be killed, Lance. There are things even worse than such a calamity. I've talked to you; I've tried to make you understand."

"Any one would think me a girl," muttered Lance, with good-natured resentment. "I'll prove to you that I'm a man, and that I can look out for number one."

"You must write me often, my son—every day."

"You may be sure I'll write as often as I can, mother; but you know I'll be pretty busy at first, and you can't expect that every letter I write is going to
cover a dozen pages. Whenever I can get time I will write a good, long letter, be sure of that."

"And you mustn't forget your Uncle George; you must write to him, too. You know he has promised to help you, if you need help."

The boy promised.

The conductor cried "All aboard!" and once more Lance hurriedly embraced and kissed his mother, after which he caught up a battered suit case and boarded the train, which began to move immediately.

Looking from the window, Dick saw the woman smiling bravely and waving her handkerchief. Then, when it was likely that the boy could see her no longer, the handkerchief suddenly went to her eyes.

The train was crowded. Every seat in Dick's car was occupied, and he saw the boy come through, carrying his suit case, and vainly looking right and left for some place to sit. For a moment their eyes met, and Merriwell gave the lad a smile. He would have spoken, but the boy hurried on to the next car in search of a seat.

"Lucky fellow to have a mother," thought Dick, with a touch of sadness. "I wonder where he is going?"

Lancelot Fair walked through the train until he came to the smoker, which was filled with a blue haze of tobacco smoke. On the other coaches he had been unable to find a seat, but in the smoker two well-dressed young fellows were sitting, and one of them had his feet deposited on the cushion of the opposite seat, the back of which was turned. Neither paid any attention as Fair paused beside that seat.

"I tell you, Carlin," the fellow who had his feet on the cushion was saying, "Brighton is a piker. He tries to pose as a sport, but he lacks sand. He's got a yellow streak, and he pinches his money with a grip of grim death. I'd like to trim him in good shape once."

"I beg your pardon," said Lance Fair, "is this seat taken?"

They looked up at him languidly, indifferently, almost disdainfully. He was blushing like a girl.

The one who had been speaking was tall, with rather a haughty face, and a cold, thin-lipped mouth. About him there was a wearied, blasé air, even though he could not have been more than twenty-one years of age. The words issued from his lips drawlingly, which was an affectation of speech corresponding with his affected manners.

His companion, sitting near the window, was thick-set and dark, with straight, black hair, and full, reddish lips, which gave his mouth a sullen pout.

Both were smoking. The tall chap pulled slowly at an amber-stemmed briarwood, while the other chewed the end of a black cigar.

For a moment or two the taller one made no move, and Fair became conscious that his cheeks were burning.

The chap by the window removed his cigar from his mouth.

"I say, Clay," he said, in a decidedly disagreeable voice, "the lady wishes to sit down."

The one called Clay withdrew his left foot from the cushion and followed it slowly with his right.

"Thank you," said Lance, slipping into the seat; and then could have choked himself for the words.

"Will you give me a little room for my suit case?" he added, seeking to draw it in from the aisle.

Begrudgingly they made room for him to dispose of the suit case.

"Why don't you check your trunk when you travel?" asked the dark one.

"That's my business," flashed Fair resentfully. "I'll see that it isn't in your way, if you don't occupy more room than properly belongs to you."

The taller chap laughed softly.

"And there you have your answer, Mr. Carlin," he murmured, in that slow drawl. "You must be careful to confine yourself strictly to the space required by a single passenger, without getting out of bounds."

Carlin frowned and glared at Lance, who tried to assume an air of disdain and indifference, but made a decided failure of the effort.

"Children should not be permitted in this car," he said. "It's no place for them among real men."

"It seems to me," said Lance, "that some of the passengers on this car do not come up to the standard of real men."

"What do you take us for?" demanded Carlin threateningly. "You'd better be careful with your lip, young fellow."

"There, there, Hugo," murmured the one called Clay. "Don't get into a chew with him."

"Some kids are frightfully fresh," growled Carlin, chewing at his cigar, and discovering it had gone out. He threw the stub on the floor and produced a case, from which he selected a fresh cigar.

"I think you're right about Brighton," he said, turning to his companion. "He's a piker, always was, and always will be. The only real sport in that bunch is Nubby and he's dead broke two-thirds of the time."
“Nine-tenths of the time,” corrected Clay. “He’s always hoinking his valuables in order to get along until he receives the next allowance from home. There are times when he owes every man he can touch.”

“But I’ve taken care not to let him get into me very deep,” said Carlin. “Of course, he’s a good chap, and all that, but I can’t afford to let him trim me. I say, Dunbar, are you going to have those rooms in Vanderbilt?”

“No,” was the answer; “I didn’t get them. A fellow by the name of Oxford beat me to it. I don’t know how he did it, but he asserted some prior claim, and the rooms were assigned to him. I shall stick to my old quarters in Welch Hall.”

“Well, they’re pretty fair. You ought to be satisfied. It will be good getting back, old man.”

“Oh, I’m not particularly enthusiastic over it.”

“You’re never enthusiastic over anything, Dunbar. You’re always cool as ice. Why, not even the football game with Harvard seems to warm your blood.”

“I’m willing other people should go dotty over things. It’s my way to take it easy. Have you given up your idea of trying again for the team? It’s your last show, Carlin.”

“Oh, what’s the use?” growled Carlin. “I’ve come out with the bunch two years, now, and that’s all the good it has done me. In order to get a square show, a man has to stand well with certain influences. If he’s a particular friend of Dick Merriwell, he’ll be pushed forward, and given all the chance in the world. That fellow seems to have the call at Yale.”

Lance Fair had repressed his excitement with no small difficulty, and, now, ere he realized it, he exclaimed:

“Are you Yale men?”

They turned their eyes on him with that superior disdain, which again made him sorry he had spoken. Nevertheless, Clay answered:

“Yes, we’re Yale men. We’re on our way to New Haven, now.”

“So am I,” said the boy. “I’m going to enter Yale.”

CHAPTER II.

YALE MEN.

Hugo Carlin whistled, and then he laughed.

“Indeed!” drawled Dunbar Clay. “You surprise me.”

In spite of his words, he did not seem at all surprised.

“You don’t mean to say you’re making the journey alone?” inquired Carlin. “Seems to me it would have been the proper thing for your mother to accompany you.”

“Oh, she wanted to,” said Lance, “but she couldn’t afford it, you know. We’re not rich, and father died a year ago. It has always been my ambition to go to Yale, and I was afraid the jig was up when I lost my father. However, my Uncle George obtained a scholarship for me, and he’s going to help me through college. I’ve saved one hundred and seventy-eight dollars of my own, which I’m taking with me. That will last me quite a while, if I’m careful.”

Carlin sat up with a show of interest.

“One hundred and seventy-eight will carry you a short distance,” he said; “but you’ll find it won’t go so very far, after all.”

He was smiling on the boy, now, and his atmosphere was that of one who had taken sudden friendly interest in a person for whom he had previously held no regard whatever.

Fair softened.

“It’s because I’m to become a Yale man,” he thought. “Yale is very democratic. These fellows thought me just an ordinary passenger on this train.”

Despite the fact that he had been born and reared in the country, Lanceot Fair imagined himself somewhat worldly wise. But, truth to tell, he was most unsuspicious and unsophisticated.

Dunbar Clay exerted himself enough to hold out a languid hand.

“Shake, old chap,” he drawled. “If we’d known your destination at first——”

“We’d welcomed you with open arms,” assured Carlin.

Lance shook Clay’s hand, giving it a warm grip, which, however, awakened no response. But Carlin returned his handshake with interest.

“You were lucky to get a scholarship, old fellow,” he said. “Your uncle must have had a pull. Was he a Yale man?”

“No; but his best friend is Professor Hopkinson, of Oberlin, and Professor Hopkinson is very well acquainted with the head professor at Yale. That’s how it came about, you understand. Perhaps I may add, without egotism, that I graduated from Cranford Academy at the head of my class.”

“All of which helped,” said Clay, gracefully tapping the heel of his boot with the bowl of his pipe, and
knocking the loose ashes out upon the floor. “Have you friends or acquaintances in Yale?”

“No, I don’t know any one in New Haven, even.”

“Well, that’s too bad. But, then, you’ll make plenty of friends.”

“Sure,” nodded Carlin. “Yale men always stick together. We’ll be glad to help you in any way we can.”

“Which is very kind of you, indeed,” said Fair, again blushing rosy red, which made him look more than ever like a girl. “I certainly shall appreciate it, gentlemen. Of course, I expect to be hazed like other fellows, and I’m going to try to take my medicine.”

“Oh, hazing is practically abolished at Yale,” said Clay. “It doesn’t really amount to anything any more. You needn’t worry about that. What you want to do is get in with the right bunch, and make plenty of good friends. We’ll fix that for you.”

Fair’s gratitude increased with each moment. What a mistake he had made in his original estimate of these fellows! Apparently his first impression of them had been wholly wrong.

“What dormitory do you think of rooming in?” inquired Carlin.

“Oh, I’m not going into a dormitory. It is arranged that I shall have a room in a private house on York Street. Is that near the college?”

“Quite near. It’s very convenient; but, of course, it’s better to live in a dormitory, where you get a taste of real college life. Do you go in for athletics?”

This question was put in an apparently sincere manner, but the left eye of the speaker twitched a bit as he glanced at his companion.

“Oh, I’ve never taken up athletics a great deal,” answered Fair. “I’ve played baseball a little, but my mother wouldn’t let me go out for football. She was afraid I’d get hurt.”

“Football,” drawled Clay, “is an extremely rough game. Here’s Carlin, sore, because he hasn’t made the Yale eleven, but, perhaps, it has saved him broken limbs, or even a broken neck.”

“I heard you speaking of Dick Merriwell,” said Lance. “He’s a very famous athlete, isn’t he? Everybody seems to have heard of him—that is, everybody who takes an interest in college athletics.”

“Oh, yes,” nodded Hugo Carlin, with a laugh, that was half a sneer, “he’s managed to advertise himself pretty well. As a self-advertiser, he certainly takes the palm.”

“But isn’t he really a fine athlete?”

“He’s fairly good; but there are others, although you might not suspect it, if you were listening to his ardent admirers. There’s a lot of tommyrot circulated about that fellow.”

“I supposed all Yale men were proud of him,” said Lance, in a disappointed tone.

“We’re proud enough of any Yale man who can deliver the goods,” said Clay; “but we’re not at all inclined to boost any particular chap above other men who are fully his equal.”

“I didn’t suppose Dick Merriwell’s equal could be found in Yale.”

“Isn’t it remarkable,” cried Carlin, “that such a fellow’s reputation should be known even in remote rural regions? He ought to be in the circus business. Why, he could give any of them points in advertising. He could out-Barnum Barnum.”

“It’s that thing about him which has always made me disinclined to take up with the fellow,” observed Clay. “It’s remarkable how many chaps can be hoodwinked.”

“I’m awfully disappointed to know that he isn’t all he’s cracked up to be,” said Fair. “I’ve looked forward with a great deal of eagerness to the time when I should see him. I’ve even thought it might be possible for me to become acquainted with him.”

“And that’s the height of the ambition of many fellows,” laughed Carlin. “They come to Yale with a false estimation of Merriwell, and are willing and eager to bow down at his shrine.”

“But I should think in time they would become undeceived. I should think their disappointment would be so great that he would lose much of his popularity. Isn’t he a popular man?”

“He is,” admitted Clay, “and that’s where his cleverness comes in. He knows how to keep the bunch in line. He knows how to do certain spectacular stunts to deceive them. Let’s not talk about him, for it makes me sore. Confound this dirty old car, anyhow!”

“Yes, confound it,” drawled Clay. “Still, what’s the use to growl? We couldn’t get any seats in a parlor car, and we had to be satisfied with what we could get.”

“I didn’t try to get a seat in a parlor car,” said Lance, “but there were no seats in the other cars I came through, and that’s how I happened to be here.”

Carlin produced his cigar case, opened it, and extended it toward the boy.

“Smoke,” he invited.

Fair flushed and shook his head.
"I don't smoke, thank you. It makes me sick. I've tried it."

"You'll have to brace up and learn, old fellow. It always makes a man sick when he first tries it. I say, let's have a little game of smudge, to pass the time. That's the idea."

Restoring the cigar case to his pocket, he produced another case, from which he drew forth a pack of cards.

CHAPTER III.

THE SHARKS AND THE SUCKER.

It may seem remarkable that a youth like Dick Merrimell should choose for railroad reading the "Meditations" of Marcus Aurelius, but this was the book in which he buried himself after glancing through a newspaper and reading a magazine article on irrigation.

Dick had discovered that the plain maxims of the great Roman sage and emperor were most excellent teachings for any one who would heed their wisdom. They taught benevolence and that self-abnegation which destroys self-indulgence, and urges one to work for the good of all, rather than for the individual. In that book he found the teachings of a man who had learned to despise superstition, who had developed an undeviating steadiness of purpose, who was tolerant of human infirmities, who held sophistry and display in contempt, who was forever loyal to duty, and who, under all circumstances, maintained his dignity.

In that book Dick found such splendid maxims as these:

"Men exist for each other; teach them to bear with one another."

"When thou risest unwillingly in the morning, say, 'I am rising to the work of a human being; why, then, should I be dissatisfied if I am going to do the work for which I was brought into the world?'"

"Since it is possible that thou mayest depart from this life this very moment, regulate every act and thought accordingly—for death hangs over thee while thou livest—while it is in thy power to be good."

It must not be fancied that Dick Merrimell was a prig who could find no pleasure in light literature, or who was affected and artificial because he could take interest in philosophy of this sort. At times, Dick loved to read a rousing tale of adventure, and indulged in such pastime; but always he had taken care not to let reading of a frivolous sort get such a hold on him that it would destroy interest in literature of a solid and substantial nature. He wisely took his light reading much as one takes dessert at dinner. Never had he been silly enough to attempt to subsist upon it. Never had he thought it worth while to spoil his taste for good reading by indulging promiscuously in the "best sellers" of the day; and, when questioned, he felt no shame in confessing that he had not read this, that, or the other recently published popular novel.

Many plain, old-fashioned people used to believe sincerely that all reading of fiction must be harmful, and in former days there was perhaps too little novel reading by certain straightlaced people; but now it may safely be said that all this is changed, and there is often too much reading of light fiction, and too little reading of literature of a higher character. Nevertheless, the novel has been, in thousands of cases, the stimulus which has aroused in those who perused it a taste for better reading, for poetry, history, and philosophy. Doubtless, therefore, light fiction has done more good than harm.

Dick did not merely skim through the "Meditations"; he read them slowly, carefully, comprehendingly. He sought to fix him in his memory, so that they would make a deep impression upon his mind, and such an impression could not but have its effect in the development of his character. Already reading, study, and observation had led him to form opinions and acquire a sort of philosophy far in advance of his years. The effect upon his character was most marked. The majority of youths and young men seem more or less crude. When one is met who possesses a fixed, well-formed character, that fact is immediately discernible, for character is something which may be felt, even before one has associated with that person sufficiently to witness the proof of its existence.

Mental breadth and strength was plainly written on Dick Merrimell's face; and yet it was a pleasant, genial face, that of a life-loving, jovial, loyal chap, who could be trusted in small things as well as great. He was, to a surprising extent, the possessor of that wonderful charm called personal magnetism. That he was kind and just and tolerant and resolute, a staunch friend, and an honest, fair-fighting enemy, no one could honestly doubt.

With all the other qualities which he had gradually developed, he still retained the ability to enjoy an honest lark, to find real pleasure in any fair sport, and he could take a joke upon himself without displaying anger or resentment, which is often a failing with
those who most love to put a joke upon others. In no
degree had he lost that keen zest in life which every
healthy youth should feel. Indeed, it may be said that
the zest increased and deepened with his advancing
years.

It is a sad and unfortunate thing when the edge of
this zest begins to grow dull in any one, for that marks
a turning point and the beginning of a decline which
should never come as long as mental and bodily health
continue.

So deeply was Dick absorbed in his book that he
failed for a few moments to notice a woman who had
looked in vain for a seat, and stopped in the aisle,
where she was swaying with the motions of the train,
with no man showing an inclination to rise and give
up his place to her. Happening to glance up, the Yale
youth closed his book suddenly, and was on his feet
at once.

"Madam, will you please take this seat?" he invited,
with a smile that illumined his fine face.

"Oh, thank you," she said. "It is too bad to de-
prive you of——"

"You're not depriving me in the least," he assured.
"I've been sitting some time, and it will do me good to
move. Doubtless I'll be able to find a seat somewhere
on the train."

"You're very kind, and I thank you," said the
woman, as she slipped wearily into the seat he had
vacated.

Taking his magazine and book with him, Dick went
in search of another seat, which he finally found in the
smoking car.

It chanced that this vacant seat was directly behind
Clay and Carlin, who, with Lance Fair, were now en-
gaged in a game of cards.

They were playing "smudge." Craftily they had
led Fair into the game, playing at first for small stakes,
and overconquering the boy's scruples by laughter and
jest, which caused him to blush a great deal, and feel
that he would be showing weakness if he did not take
a hand. At first he had won in a rather surprising
manner. His companions complimented him on both
his luck and skill.

"You fooled us, old chap—you fooled us nicely,"
drawled Clay. "Why, you gave us the impression that
you were not much of a card player."

"Oh, I'm not," Fair had retorted.

"Come off. You're the cleverest chap with the
pasteboards I've met in a long time. It's really a
pleasure to watch your game, and I'm getting lots of
points. I'm willing to pay the price, too."

And eventually they had induced him to consent to
raising the stakes, saying that all good sports did this,
which gave the losers a chance to get square. As
Lance was ahead, his objections were feeble, and so
they lured him into the trap.

Dick knew both those men by sight, but he did not
speak to them. At first he seemed to take little inter-
est in the game. Soon, however, their conversation
attracted him, for he was quick to detect that they
were playing the pink-cheeked, blue-eyed boy for a
sucker.

Even then he had no suspicion that they were play-
ing a really stiff game.

"It may do the boy good to lose a little money like
this," thought Dick. "It may open his eyes to the
folly of taking up with strangers and gambling upon
trains. The honest fellow who does such a thing gets
bitten nine times out of ten."

He shifted his position and leaned forward a bit, so
that he could watch the play. Luck had turned against
Fair, and already he was a loser. With the craft of
their kind, his game mates led him on, by saying that
it was only a little streak, and that it would certainly
turn again in his favor in a few moments.

When he dealt, Carlin handled the cards awkwardly;
but Clay could shuffle and deal with a certain air and
grace which indicated much practice. He was languid
and deliberate in his movements, it is true, and, as he
invariably offered the pack for Fair to cut, there
seemed on the surface no chance of crookedness.

But Dick knew instinctively that the game was
crooked, and the boy was being defrauded. Watch-
ing, he saw Clay and Carlin play into each other's
hands more than once, something which would have
aroused the suspicions of one wiser than Lance Fair.

At intervals they permitted Lance to win, but always
he got the games in which there were no "set-backs,"
and steadily he went farther and farther behind. Once
on his own deal he smudged, in spite of the fact that
Carlin brazenly reneged and tried to throw the game
into Clay's hand.

At last, losing with six set-backs against him in one
game, the boy pushed the cards away, his face now
quite pale, saying:

"I'll not play any more. I can't stand it, fellows.
You know I can't afford to lose so much."

"Why, my dear chap," drawled Dunbar Clay,
"you're just having a little bad luck, that's all. It's
dead sure to turn the other way, and you'll get square,
all right. You can't help it, you know."

"Not with your luck and skill," put in Hugo Carlin.
“Clay has just had a little streak, that’s all. He’s usually the easiest man to beat I ever saw. Come, stick to it, Lance. That’s the only way to get even in this world. When you’re behind at anything, you’ve got to hang on until you even up.”

The boy shook his head.

“I—I was a fool to play at all,” he stammered. “I wonder how much I owe!”

The sharks exchanged glances. They realized that the victim would stand for no further plucking, and so Clay, who had kept the record on a sheet of paper, prepared to figure it. Dick, listening and watching, started with surprise when the man announced:

“You’re just twenty-three dollars behind, old chap.”

“Twenty—twenty-three dollars!” gasped Fair. “I didn’t think it was so much.”

“Let him look at the record, Clay,” said Carlin. “Let him see it’s perfectly correct.”

“Sure,” murmured the other, pushing the paper toward Fair. “You can figure it up yourself. We were playing for fifty cents a corner and fifty a setback the last of it.”

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“You’re an outsider,” he said. “What business have you to butt in?”

“The business every man has to see fair play,” returned Dick.

“I hope you’re not accusing us of anything crooked?”

“To blazes with him!” rasped Carlin. “He’s always butting into something.”

“I’ve been sitting behind you fellows for some time,” said Dick, “and it’s my conviction that you were not giving that chap an honest deal.”

Carlin started to rise.

“Punch him, Clay!” he cried.

Dick’s hand closed on Carlin’s collar, and the fellow sat down with a jolt that made his teeth rattle.

“If I can’t prove my claim,” said Merriwell, “I’ll apologize most humbly. If I can prove it—”

“Begohs!” cried the Irishman. “If yez can prove it, me bhay, we’ll kick thinm two thaves av the world off the train, so we will.”

“If they are crooks,” said the traveling man, “they ought to be kicked off.”

“If they are crooks,” wheezed the fat man, “they should be tarred and feathered.”

“Waugh!” exploded the man from Wyoming. “If they’ve been cheating at cards the critters should be lynched.”

The passengers in the car now came crowding around the card players and Merriwell.

Clay looked disturbed, but prepared to “put up a front.”

“He lies!” he declared. “We’re Yale men, and we’re playing an honest game.”

Once more Carlin had attempted to gather up the cards. Dick’s hand, outthrust, pointed at the pastebords.

“Better let those things alone,” he said. “If you want to prove me wrong don’t touch them. If you grab them up now it will be proof sufficient that you’ve not willing they should be examined.”

Carlin hesitated, and Clay forced a laugh.

“Why, he thinks the cards are markers,” he scoffed.

“Let them be examined by any one, Hugo. They’re an honest pack.”

Dick’s eyes fell on the commercial drummer.

“Will you please pick those cards up?” he invited.

“I don’t wish to touch them myself.”

“Why, certainly,” said the traveling man briskly, as he stepped forward and gathered up the cards.

“You’ve got them all, have you?” asked Dick.

CHAPTER IV.
RASCALS EXPOSED.

At times, various other passengers sitting near-had watched the game. One was a traveling salesman, whose seat mate was a fat man. Another was an Irishman, who had been talking in a rich brogue with a rough-looking individual who claimed to be a cow puncher from Wyoming.

The sharp, clear manner in which Merriwell spoke attracted the attention of all these and several others.

Lancelot Fair, having heard the name which escaped Carlin’s lips, looked at Dick in surprise.

Clay, having lost some of his languor, turned angrily and spoke to Merriwell.
"I think so. I don't see any more. Are there any more?"
"You've got them all," said Carlin. "Now look them over to your satisfaction."
"You needn't bother to inspect the backs of those cards, sir," said Dick. "I don't think they're marked."
"I said so, didn't I?" drawled Clay, seeking to re-assume his languid, self-possessed manner. "You're making an ass of yourself, Merriwell, and you'll certainly have to settle for the insult."
"I wish, sir," said Dick, still addressing the man who had the cards, "that you would count that pack."
Clay had produced his pipe and pouch of tobacco. He brought the tobacco forth from the side pocket of his coat and began filling the pipe. It seemed that he started slightly when Dick requested the commercial man to count the cards, but if he was at all disturbed he hid it cleverly.
The man with the cards began running them over carefully, counting them aloud. The passengers watched with breathless interest, which, however, was faint compared with the interest and suspense of Lance Fair.
"Forty-six," counted the traveling man. "There are only forty-six cards here. Six are missing from the pack."
"Just enough to make up a hand," said Dick. "In the last round Dunbar Clay smudged with an invisible hand, which he had prepared while the game was in progress by pilfering cards at intervals from the pack."
"It's a dirty lie!" said Clay, striking a match and lighting his pipe.
The pipe stem quivered a bit in his teeth, and the flame of the match singed his fingers.
"Of course it's a lie!" rasped Hugo Carlin. "If there are cards missing from the pack we didn't know anything about it. I've been playing off and on with that pack for several days past, and either those cards were lost at some previous time or were removed by some one engaged in a game with them."
"Begorra, yez make a foine bloof at it," muttered the Irishman; "but it's meself as thinks it looks a bit suspicious."
"It certainly does look suspicious," wheezed the fat man. "I favor tar and feathers."
"No!" roared the man from Wyoming. "We'll stop the train and swing 'em both to a telegraph post."
One of the other passengers, a mild, placid, gentle-looking individual, ventured to remonstrate.
"Don't be too hasty, gentlemen," he pleaded. "I must say that the proof of fraud seems insufficient to me. It certainly might be the case that the cards were lost from the pack on some previous occasion."
"And you're a man of sense, sir," drawled Clay. "I'm glad to discover at least one such person on this car."
"In order to settle the point," said Merriwell quietly, "I would suggest that all three of the card players be searched."
"Now what do you think of that!" cried Carlin. "Of all insults I ever heard that's the limit! Oh, you'll pay for this, Mr. Merriwell!"
"I'm quite willing to be searched," said Lance Fair. "Any honest man would be under such circumstances," was the opinion of the commercial traveler.
"Sure you're right, sir," cried the Irishman. "Thot's the way to prove av it's an insult at all, at all."
"If the galoons won't stand peaceable to be searched," said the man from Wyoming, "I'll hold them steady with my pocket hardware."
"Don't produce a pistol here," fluttered the mild passenger. "It would be very unwise and very dangerous. There's no telling what sort of a riot this unpleasant affair may incite."
"Oh, I don't reckon that'll be any riot, mister. If we finds the critters are crooks we'll yank the bell cord, stop the enjine, and lynch 'em all reg'lar and serene."
"Perhaps that's the way they do in Wyoming," said the fat man; "but it wouldn't quite go in this part of the country."
"Say you so?" inquired the Westerner. "Why, what is the proper method hereabouts of fitting a couple of card sharps for pine boxes?"
"We'll hardly go to such an extreme. Tar and feathers would be about the limit for them."
"Great rattlesnakes! Out in the Carbon country they would present 'em with a couple of hemp neckties."
Suddenly Dick Merriwell leaned over the back of the car seat and, with his right hand, seized the right wrist of Dunbar Clay. Clay had put his hand into the side pocket of his coat, and Merriwell caught and held it there, at the same time gripping the fellow with his left hand and holding him motionless.
"Look here, gentlemen—look here!" cried Dick. "He's got his hand in his coat pocket. Take note of it. I've caught it there. I am confident that, a short time ago, he slipped the cards from his sleeve into that pocket, and now he's trying to get them out and drop them on the floor."
Clay was held helpless by a grip of iron, but Hugo Carlin rose and lifted his fist to strike Dick.

"Hold on that!" roared the man from Wyoming. "If you don't hold hard I'll certainly fill you full of lead pills!"

His "pocket hardware" was in his hand now, and Carlin suddenly grew limp, for he found himself gazing into the muzzle of an ugly-looking pistol.

"That's proper, young feller," said the Westerner. "You want to be as gentle as Mary's little lamb."

The commercial traveler flung the pack of cards down, stooping over Clay to seize the arm held by Dick Merriwell. The fellow's hand was withdrawn from his pocket in spite of some resistance, and then the traveling man reached into that pocket. A moment later he produced some cards and held them up. One by one he counted them and dropped them with the others, six in all.

"Now may the Old Nick have mercy on thim!" muttered the Irishman.

Clay was deathly pale, and Carlin shivering and limp. The evidence of their guilt was sufficient.

Swallowing down a lump in his throat, Clay sought to force a laugh.

"There's no damage done, gentlemen," he said. "We were simply amusing ourselves, that's all. This young fello is on his way to enter Yale College, at which we are students. He's young and raw, and we thought we'd have a little sport with him. We had no intention of keeping his money."

"Certainly not," mumbled Carlin, reminding them of a drowning man grasping at a straw. "It was simply a little joke for his own good."

"We intended," said Clay, "to make believe that we meant to take his money and then refuse it. You see that would give him a lesson—that would show him the folly of gambling."

"Regorra, it's the koid, ginerous creathures they are!" muttered the Irishman. "Now isn't it decent av thim!"

"Rot!" roared the man from Wyoming. "They're caught with the goods."

"Yes," agreed the commercial traveler, "they're certainly caught with the goods. It's useless for them to squirm."

"That's right," nodded the fat man. "They can't lie out of it now."

"It certainly looks very suspicious," admitted the mild-appearing passenger.

"Whativir will we do with the spalpanes?" asked the Irishman.

"We have no tar and feathers," said the fat man. "And you won't lynch the varmints," complained the Westerner. "That being the case, I suggests a little programme. I suggests that we line up between the seats on either side of the aisle and permits them to run the gauntlet after the fashion of Injuns in old times. As they pass along we'll hand them out something to remember us by."

"Good! good!" cried the passengers. "That's the idea! Line up, everybody! line up!"

In short order they were lined up on either side of the aisle and ready.

But Clay and Carlin were not disposed to run the gauntlet. Nevertheless, the man from Wyoming started them promptly by swearing that he would shoot their ears off unless they moved.

Clay started first. Crouching and holding his arms up to protect his head, he leaped forward and ran down the aisle.

Carlin followed a moment later.

Every passenger succeeded in thumping or kicking them as they passed, and the Irishman ejected a huge mouthful of tobacco juice full and fair into Dunbar Clay's left eye. There were shouts of laughter as the two rascals tore open the door and rushed out upon the platform of the car.

CHAPTER V.

A LOST OPPORTUNITY.

Battered, bruised, humiliated, and enraged, Clay and Carlin rushed into the next car, which was one of the regular passenger coaches, and nearly ran down the conductor who was coming through.

They presented a somewhat disheveled and surprising spectacle, for their clothes were rumpled and torn. Clay's necktie and collar had been ripped loose and were dangling askew, and both had lost their hats. Blood was coursing down Clay's left cheek, where the mild and gentle man who did not wish any trouble had clawed him with some very sharp finger nails. With his handkerchief he was wiping tobacco juice out of one red and smarting eye. Some one had given Carlin a smash on the nose, and that organ was bleeding profusely. In short, the general appearance of the two panting and frightened fellows was that of men who had lately been engaged in a savage rough-and-tumble fight.

Some of the lady passengers in the car into which they plunged uttered little cries of terror.
The conductor put out his hands and seized them, demanding:

"Here, you, what's the matter, anyhow? What's happened?"

"Out of the way!" rasped Carlin, pushing against Clay. "Knock him down, Dunbar!"

But, despite his battered condition and his smarting, blinded eye, noted the conductor's uniform and kept a part of his wits.

"We've been outrageously assaulted, conductor," he said furiously. "It's an outrage for which some one must suffer."

"That's right! that's right!" snarled Hugo Carlin. "Those thugs ought to pay dearly for it."

"Who did it?" questioned the trainman. "What was it all about, anyhow?"

"We were set upon by a perfect gang of ruffians in the smoker," declared Carlin. "We're Yale students and gentlemen. Why, one desperado even drew a pistol on us and threatened our lives."

"Isn't it dreadful!" exclaimed a lady passenger, sitting near. "They look like gentlemen, and I'm sure they are. It's perfectly awful to think that there should be such a band of desperate men on this very train! It's terrible to contemplate what may happen! Joseph," she continued, addressing her husband beside her, a timid-looking little man with a very big nose and a very short chin—so short indeed that it scarcely seemed a chin at all—"Joseph, you must protect me if those wretches invade this car. It's your privilege and duty, Joseph. I think you should step into the smoker at once and warn them to remain where they are. I think you should threaten to chastise them if they attempt to intrude here. It is best that they should be checked by some one who has the courage to give them to understand what will happen if they aren't careful. Go at once, Joseph. Assume your most commanding air and speak sternly to them.

Joseph blinked and rubbed the place where he should have had a chin.

"I—I'm sure, my dear—I'm sure there is no necessity for it—none whatever," he faltered. "They won't come in here."

"How do you know that?" asked his wife. "You can't be sure of it. The only way to make sure is to frighten them so they won't dare come here. You've always been waiting for an opportunity to show your devotion for me and your readiness to protect me in time of peril. You've lamented the fact that circumstances or fate has never given you a chance to show your mettle and prove that you are a hero. Here's the opportunity. This is the occasion. Rise to it, Joseph—rise to it."

But, although she sought to push him from her into the aisle, he grabbed the arm of the seat with his hands and braced his feet, remonstrating earnestly.

"Be calm, Dorothy," he said. "Don't get so wrought up. Be calm, I beseech you. This is no time for me to desert you and leave you alone and unprotected. My place is at your side, my dear. Why, it's possible those scoundrels have boarded this train for the purpose of holding it up. It's possible they're divided into two parties, and some of them have come aboard at the other end of the train. If I should leave you now and enter the smoker, ruffians might invade this car from the opposite direction, and then who knows what would happen? Then who would defend you from them, my dear? You wait and watch your Joseph. If they came here, if they dare to show themselves, I shall rise in my wrath and lay violent hands upon them. I'll throw them out of the windows, Dorothy. I say let them come if they dare!"

In his excitement he had risen to his feet and was glaring at the door by which Clay and Carlin had entered. He even lifted his clinched fists and shook them at that door, posing for a moment in the attitude of Thor—hurling the thunderbolts.

The door was flung open with a bang, and a man leaped in. Instantly Joseph dropped between the seats, uttering a squawk of dismay, and thrust his head, ostrich-like, beneath his wife's skirts.

"Josephtown, Josephtown," cried the brakeman who had entered.

"That's right," laughed an amused traveler; "Joseph's down under the seats somewhere."

Joseph's better half pulled her skirts aside and grasped her lord and master by the ear, exclaiming:

"Get up here, you cockroach! Don't you hear them saying Joseph's down? Shame on you! Is this the way you would defend your poor, helpless wife from those ruffians?"

"I—I lost my balance," gasped the little man. "The movement of the train upset me. Ow-wow! Dorothy, dear, don't pull so hard! You'll take my ear off. Leggo—leggo, my darling!"

His face, screwed into an expression of utmost anguish, was most amusing to behold as, clinging to his ear, she dragged him up into view. He clutched her wrist with both hands and continued to entreat her to release her hold before that ear gave way and came off in her clutches. Forgetting the battered young men
who had lately entered, almost everyone on the car
burst into hearty laughter.

The conductor, however, was attending strictly to
business and seeking from Clay and Carlin a statement
of what had happened in the smoker.

Clay told the story, coloring it to favor himself and
his companion. According to his statements they had
been assaulted and abused while playing an innocent
game of cards. The charge of cheating, he averred,
was simply a pretext by which a man named Merriwell
had aroused the smoker's passengers against them.
Toward Merriwell and the man from Wyoming who
had drawn a pistol, Carlin was especially bitter.

"We're gentlemen," he persisted, "and sons of in-
fluential citizens who will be certain to take up
this matter and investigate it thoroughly. If this road
permits its passengers to be treated in such an out-
rageous manner, doubtless my father will carry the
matter into the courts."

"I'll investigate, myself," promised the conductor.
"Come back with me and point out your assailants."

"Go back into that car?" cried Clay. "Face that
gang of desperadoes again? Not for mine."

"Not much," said Carlin.

"But I'll accompany you," said the conductor. "If
you wish me to do anything you must point out your
assailants."

"It's my opinion," declared Clay, "that every man
in that car joined in the assault upon us. They stood
in line between the seats on each side of the aisle and
mauled and kicked us as we passed."

"How dreadful!" breathed Mrs. Joseph. "Can
such things be? Joseph, those two unfortunate young
men are afraid to return to the smoker unprotected.
You should accompany them. It's your duty to see
that peaceable gentlemen are supported and sustained
against such wrethches. At last you have the oppor-
tunity to do something. Do it."

"I will," declared Joseph resentfully, as he tenderly
rubbed his ear. "I'll stand my ground. I'll remain
right where I am, madam. Stop pushing! Take your
knuckles out of my ribs before you give me a crick in
the side. As Shakespeare says, 'Discretion is the bet-
ter part of valor.' If I prove that I'm discreet I shall
likewise prove that I am valiant."

"Oh, you're discreet enough," scoffed his spouse, in
great scorn. "There's no doubt about that. The last
time I thought I heard burglars in the house you
crawled under the bed looking for them, and I had to
pull you out by your heels. Joseph Immaculius Bibbs,
you're a coward. You haven't as much genuine cour-
age as a cosset lamb."

"Now, Dorothy—now don't get to going on. Don't
have one of your tantrums, for goodness' sake! Re-
member where you are. Remember you're beneath
the eyes of gaping passengers. If you work yourself
up you'll certainly have a heart spell, and that will
mean more doctor's bills. I can't stand it. You're
ruining me with doctor's bills."

"That's like you!" squawked the woman. "You're always
thinking of yourself. You're always thinking
about money. The first thing that pops into your head
when I'm taken ill is how much it will cost to call a
doctor. Joseph, you're not only as cowardly as a
sheep, but you're as cold and cruel and hard-hearted
as—as a Bengal tiger. Such a man for a woman to be
hitched to! Such a man for an unfortunate woman
to be bound to for life! Oh, dear me! I've got a
pain. Get my campfire bottle out of my reticule—
get it quick. Fan me this instant! Bring me a glass
of water at once! Support my head. Oh, this is ex-
cruciating!"

"Holy pickereel!" spluttered Joseph. "How in thut-
eration am I going to do all those things at once?
It would take ten men to wait on you when you have
one of these spasms."

"Then let me die—let me die, you heartless brute!"
moaned Mrs. Joseph, as she sank over into the corner.
"You'll get rid of me at last, and that's what you want.
You're anxious to bury me so you can marry again.
All the young girls are running after you, the shame-
less things! They would snap you up in a minute if
they could get you. I know of several who are wait-
ing for you. They're expecting me to drop off sud-
ddenly. I suppose you've told them I've got heart dis-
 ease and I'm liable to die any minute. There's no
doubt about it. I know you have. But I won't die!"
she suddenly cried, sitting up. "I'll fool them. I
won't let them have you. I'll continue to live and
make you toe the mark like a husband should. Where
are you going?"

"After a glass of water for you, my dear."

"No, you don't!" she cried, grabbing him and jerking
him back into the seat. "You stay right here! I've seen
you looking round at that shameless hussy on the
opposite side of the car. I know what you want. You
want to flirt with her, you want to smile at her.
I've seen her smiling at you. You can't deny it."

It was not surprising that any lady passenger should
have smiled at Joseph, for his appearance was sufficient
to evoke a smile from a graven image. At this mo-
ment, although most of them were endeavoring to suppress and conceal their merriment, the majority of the ladies in that car were highly amused.

"Very well, my darling," said Joseph, "I'll remain right here. Do you want the campfire? Shall I fan you?"

"No, I don't want the campfire, and you needn't fan me. Don't you dare turn your head to look round at that woman again, you gay Lothario. You can't fool me, you masher! There's nothing more contemptible than a married man who tries to flirt right under his wife's nose!"

Evidently Mrs. Joseph had quite forgotten the ruffians in the smoker.

But Dunbar Clay and Hugo Carlin were not to forget for some time to come.

CHAPTER VI.
A FRIEND WORTH HAVING.

Having made an investigation and questioned the passengers in the smoker, the conductor decided that the two young rascals had received no more than their just deserts. Seeking them out, he informed them to this effect and silenced their threats by stating that he had secured the names and addresses of several witnesses of the affair, who would, if necessary, appear and testify that they had been caught cheating.

Meanwhile, Dick Merriwell and Lance Fair had become very well acquainted. Naturally, the boy was grateful to Dick for exposing the rascals.

"I didn't like them at first," he said; "but when I learned that they were Yale men and they seemed so friendly, I fancied they must be decent fellows."

"You may find men in every college in the country," said Dick, "with whom you can't afford to be friendly. Yale is no exception. Such fellows are bound to get in."

"I was foolish to play cards with them," muttered Lance.

"Yes," agreed Dick, "you were foolish to play cards with strangers, and especially foolish to play for money."

"I—I didn't want to play for money, but—but they laughed and said it was only to make the game interesting. The way they laughed at me made me feel ashamed not to play."

"It's a way such fellows have of shaming an intended victim into doing things against his better judgment—things which the moral principles condemn as not just right. A man shows his real courage when he refuses to weaken before the scoffing and laughter of such fellows. Lots of young chaps go wrong in various ways because they haven't the nerve to stand a little chaffing. I know of fellows who have been chaffed into drinking against their will, and who have acquired the tipping habit because of such foolish weaknesses. It's the same about card playing. Fellows who do those things—who drink and gamble and go the paces—pretend to despise men who do not; but really, down in their hearts, they respect the individual with backbone enough to refuse to be jeered into such practices. Card playing of itself is not such a heinous thing. If games with cards were always played for amusement alone it would be no more hurtful to play cards than to indulge in other similar mild pastimes. It is simply because there is so much gambling with cards that card playing has got a bad name. Fellows inclined to do such things may gamble over almost anything. There's no cleaner sport than honest baseball, and yet one may gamble on any game of baseball."

"But they said it wasn't gambling, you know."

"Of course they did. Many a decent fellow excuses his card playing for small stakes by claiming it is not real gambling. He asserts that he wagers simply to make it interesting. A game that is not interesting enough to watch or to take part in without betting on the result should be shunned as a thing that is harmful."

"You must know something about cards, or else you could not have detected them cheating."

"I do know about cards," answered Dick. "I've been interested enough to learn all about the games commonly played with them. I have likewise investigated the tricks of card sharks, and, as a result, I have been able to save more than one of my friends from being cheated by fellows they fancied were square and honorable. Let me tell you something, Fair. The chap who has scruples against card playing for money and yet yields to the temptation is weak enough to yield still further. The greed of gambling will get a hold on him in time, and in some game in which he takes part he will be tempted to cheat also. He will see an opportunity to win a good pot by stealing a card from the pack or the discard, or doing some other underhand trick. Perhaps he will resist this temptation once or twice, but eventually he will fall and win dishonestly. When he has done this he loses a certain amount of self-respect. For the time being his conscience may trouble him, but he overcomes it, and
conscience thus defied soon becomes dulled and dormant. Unless he is detected and exposed, the chap who has yielded to such a temptation is almost certain to develop into a cheat, a rascal, a creature who steals by trickery at cards—for it is stealing, nothing else. It’s just as bad as putting your hand in a man’s pocket and pilfering his purse."

"Oh, I’d never do anything like that," protested Fair, his face flushed. "I made up my mind after I’d begun to play to-day that it would be the last time I’d ever play for money."

"I hope it will be, old chap; but I imagine it would not have been if you had not discovered the rascalcy of your game mates. You would have paid your losing and felt bad over it, and some time they would have lured you into another game, and you would have played, in hopes of winning back what you had lost. That’s the way thousands of fellows do. They think they will get even, and so they keep on playing. But, even if they do get square, they don’t stop. If they have the misfortune to win and get ahead of the game it creates within them a fever for gambling—a fever they can’t resist. They keep at it. Have you ever heard of my Brother Frank?"

"Oh, yes, indeed."

"The temptation, the desire to gamble, was one of the things he had to fight hardest against. He told me about it himself. He conquered the inclination. At college you’ll encounter many other temptations. The only thing to do is what your conscience tells you is right. Refuse to be inveigled into anything which you even fancy may be wrong. Oh, you’ll make mistakes, Fair; we all do. If we didn't, we’d be almost too perfect for this world. We make our mistakes and regret them afterward. If we’re wise, we let them teach us a lesson."

"But you—do you ever make mistakes?"

"Dick Merriwell laughed."

"Lots of times," he confessed. "I’ve done scores of things of which I was afterward ashamed, but always I’ve tried to remember my experiences as a warning against repeating such blunders. I saw you as you were bidding your mother good-by, but I didn’t dream you were bound for Yale. Have you friends or acquaintances in New Haven?"

"No."

"Let me be your friend, Fair. When you need a friend don’t forget me."

"Oh, that’s awfully fine of you, Dick Merriwell!" exclaimed Lance proudly. "I’ve often thought I’d like to know you, but I never dreamed we’d—we’d become—friends so quickly."

Dick smiled.

"I like you, Fair," he said honestly. "Of course the fact that I shall be a senior and you a freshman will prevent us from seeing very much of each other. I shall be awfully busy, too. I know what it means. We’ve simply got to beat Harvard at football this year, and the coach will have us out and at it as soon as possible. If I seem to forget you, don’t forget me. Come round and hunt me up some time at Durfee."

"I will," said Lance. "It’s splendid of you to invite me."

"And if you get into trouble don’t delay about coming round."

"I suppose I’ll be hazed. I’m expecting that."

"You may be, but the sort of hazing you will have to take won’t hurt you. Don’t squeal. Take your medicine like a man, and you won’t find it very bitter. You’ll win respect in that way also."

"I suppose Clay and Carlin will have a grudge against me?"

"Don’t bother about those fellows. It’s hardly likely they will trouble you, and I doubt if you see much of either of them after you reach New Haven. In all probability they will treat you as if you were a total stranger."

During the remainder of the journey to New Haven Dick and his newly made friend kept together. They saw nothing more of Clay or Carlin. Fair’s exalted opinion of Merriwell was not harmed by association with him. Indeed, if possible, it grew, for Dick was one to whom the old saw "familiarity breeds contempt" could not be applied.

It was dark when the train rolled into the station at New Haven. The electrics were gleaming, and by their light Lance Fair saw a great gathering of young men who seemed eagerly looking for some one. At sight of Dick upon the platform the crowd gave a shout.

"There he is!" they roared.

Dick descended and was grasped by his enthusiastic college friends. They crowded upon him, seeking to shake his hand. He was surrounded by the old familiar faces. Buckhart, of course, was there; so were Blessed Jones, Bouncer Bigelow, Tommy Tucker, Hal Darrell, Rob Claxton, Bertie Lee, Joe Cohen, Eben Lamb, Piper Devon, and many others.

Fair saw those fellows meet Dick and watched them as they greeted him with all the enthusiasm of devoted and admiring youth. He was gathered into the heart
of the throng of Yale men, who packed close about him.

Lance dropped off the train, suit case in hand, found a truckman to whom he gave his trunk check, and then started out to seek the house on York Street in which he was to room.

"I'm a fortunate dog," he muttered, as he strode away with springy step. "It was great luck to meet and become friendly with a man like Dick Merriwell."

CHAPTER VII.

THE FELLOW WHO PLAYED THE FLUTE.

Suffering from his first bitter attack of homesickness, Lance Fair sat in the little hall room of the house on York Street and tried to study.

In the room adjoining a fellow was torturing a flute, and, to add to Fair's misery, the chap persisted in trying to play "Home, Sweet Home."

"Oh, jingo!" groaned Lance, plugging his ears with his fingers. "I wish he would stop! He will drive me crazy! Home, sweet home! That's what I left to come to this!"

He had passed in his exams all right, which should have made him very happy; but, to confess the pitiful truth, he was extremely sorry. For at the last moment after getting settled in that cramped, poorly furnished little room and realizing that four years of life away from home, broken only by vacation visits, lay before him, the boy had lost heart. If he should fail to pass he would return home, and so he was almost willing to fail.

True, he had been envied by other village lads, and one of his best friends had almost wept because he could not also go to Yale; but somehow the lure and glamour of a college career had waned and faded and turned to something cold and sombre after the arrival at New Haven.

Almost every boy who leaves home for the first time and faces a protracted absence from the old familiar scenes suffers more or less from nostalgia; and for some the torture, the longing for home and friends, is almost beyond endurance. Particularly is this true with those of fine and sensitive organism. Fair was such a boy.

He had tried to fight it off. He had struggled hard to cease thinking of home and to put his mind upon those tasks and studies with which he must occupy himself. He had even gone forth from the cramped little hall room and walked upon the city streets, seek-

ing distraction and diversion by means of the strange, unfamiliar, lively scenes about him.

It is true that the loneliness which attacks one in a crowded city is even more severe and crushing than the loneliness that may be felt in the country. To be alone, to have no friends, no acquaintances amid great crowds who pass you by as if you were a thing of no account whatever, a stick, a stone, or a cast-off boot, is to sometime experience a realization of the full depth of loneliness.

To be sure, Fair had met Dick Merriwell and made his acquaintance, but after reaching New Haven it did not take Lance long to discover that there was a tremendous yawning gulf between the unsophisticated freshman and the grave, dignified, worldly-wise senior. Dick had invited the boy to call on him in Durfee, and once Lance got as far as the steps of the dormitory. Some well-dressed fellows surveyed him superciliously, and faltering he ventured to ask them if Mr. Merriwell was in. The tallest man in the group winked at the others as he replied:

"Mr. Merriwell—Mr. Richard Merriwell? Yes, I think he's in. I believe he is entertaining callers. If I'm not mistaken, just at present Andrew Carnegie and J. Pierpont Morgan are seeking his advice upon the matter of founding libraries and paying seventy-three thousand dollars each for almost Old Masters."

"That's right," nodded a solemn, dignified chap; "and Carnegie and Morgan should be ashamed to take up so much of Mr. Merriwell's valuable time, especially as several very notable personages, like Lord Mortimer Duxbury, Admiral Togo, and Chuck Comers are all waiting patiently in the anteroom for a brief interview. It's really outrageous that such insignificant people should persist in bothering Mr. Merriwell as they do."

Lance turned and "beat it" for York Street. Not that he fancied for a moment that the persons mentioned were really calling on Merriwell, but he had suddenly seemed to realize his own presumption in venturing to take up any of the time of the most popular man in Yale. Merriwell had been kind and friendly upon the train, but Fair had seen the great crowd of fellows who waited to welcome him at the station, and with all those friends around him it was but natural, it seemed, that he should forget the unknown country boy with whom by chance he had been thrown in contact.

"I suppose he'd see me," thought Lance; "but that would be simply out of decency on his part. He wouldn't care, a rap about me, and, being busy, he'd
rather I kept away. I'm a freshman and he's a senior. That settles it."

And so Lance was alone in his room, seeking to forget his wretchedness and trying hard to study, while the fellow in the room adjoining executed "Home, Sweet Home" on the flute in a manner that would have justified his own execution.

After a time, the flute player paused.

"Thank goodness!" breathed Lance. "What a relief! If he keeps this up I'll have to move, for I can't stand it."

He was again seeking to apply himself to his book when the man with the flute broke out in a new spot. This time it was "The Last Rose of Summer," and, if possible, it was even more doleful and heartrending than the previous performance.

Ere he was aware what he was doing, Lance hurled the book at the door between the two rooms, at the same time yelling:

"Shut up, confound you!"

The piping of the flute ceased with a sharp, remonstrative squawk of surprise.

"Hey?" cried the fellow in the next room. "What's the matter with you?"

"There must be something serious the matter with you," retorted Lance. "Why don't you see a doctor?"

"Waal, I like that!" came the retort.

"Well," said Fair, "I don't like your music."

"Don't you?" drawled the voice of the unseen man.

"You must be a critic to shun. You know old Shakespeare says that"

"'The man that hath no music in himself, Nor is moved with concord of sweet sounds, Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils; The motions of his spirit are dull as night And his affections dark as Erebus; Let no such man be trusted.'"

"Music!" scoffed Fair. "Do you call that music?"

"Sartainly," was the answer. "And I will add that while 'music has charms to soothe a savage breast, to soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak,' it doesn't seem to have a very favorable impression on you."

"Not the kind you dig out of that wailing old instrument, anyhow," acknowledged Lance. "Haven't you any sympathy for suffering humanity?"

"Lots of it," was the answer; "but a sassy cub like you riles me a heap. If you interrupt me again while I'm practicing I shall come round and spank you."

"Are you going to practice some more now?" cried Lance in anguish.

"You bet I am, by hocus!"

"Then just wait a minute and I'll get out. I'll go hunt for lodgings somewhere else."

Fair was in earnest about getting out, and he made haste to seize his cap. As he stepped outside his own door his neighbor appeared at the door of the adjoining room. They looked at each other.

The flute player was rather tall and angular, with long straw-colored hair and a face that was not at all unpleasant. He was in his shirt sleeves.

"Air you really going out on account of my flute playing?" he asked.

"I am," assured Lance.

"It must be purty bad."

"It is."

"Don't you think there's any chance for me to improve?"

"A great chance."

The stranger looked somewhat downcast, and then he grinned. In spite of himself, Lance smiled.

"What's your name?" asked the tall fellow.

"Lancelot Fair."

"Mine's Sampson Elwell. I'm from Jordan, Indiana."

"I'm from Wampsville, New York."

"Never heard of that place."

"I never heard of Jordan, Indiana."

"Jordan is purty nigh Terre Haute. Canterpoint is the nearest railroad town. I'm a Hoosier, you see. I've been in Terre Haute a good many times and in Indianapolis once or twice. There's a city for you, by hocus—Indianapolis! This old settlement is a back country village 'side it. So you don't like music, hey?"

"Yes, I do."

"Why, I thought you didn't the way you got excited and hanged around and yelled at me. Mebbe 'twas my selections you objected to?"

"Without wishing to offend you, Elwell, I must confess that I did not regard your playing as music."

"Oh, that's it, hey? Waal, you see I'm jest learnin'. I don't know nobody in particlker round here, and so when I get good and lonesome I play the flute to cheer me up."

"And you made me lonesomer than ever trying to cheer yourself up."

"Do you get lonesome?"

"Frightfully."

"Same here. I'm half dead for the want of some-
body to chin with. Say, if you'll be sociable and talk to me, I won't play the flute any more—today."
"Agreed," cried Lance.
This was the manner in which they became acquainted.

CHAPTER VIII.
THE HAZING COMMITTEE.

Sampson Elwell proved to be a pleasant, genial chap, with a certain dry, humorous manner of speech which cannot be reproduced in cold type. It lay more in the expression of his face and the inflection of his voice than in anything else, and many of his sayings spoken by another would have seemed commonplace, and lacking the faintest trace of humor. They amused Fair, however, who formed a pronounced liking for the lanky Hoosier, and it was not long before the two were real chums.

They secured from Mrs. Sparrow, the lady of the house, the key to the door between their rooms, and thereafter this door stood wide open the greater part of the time.

"By hocus!" said Elwell; "I was wishing myself back in Jordan and trying to drown my sorrers by tickling the flute when you set up the rumpus that made us acquainted with each other."

"I was so homesick that I was almost dead," confessed Lance. "Your offering of 'Home, Sweet Home' filled my cup to overflowing."

"But don't you really think I can learn to play the flute first rate if I keep at it?" asked Samp anxiously.

"Perhaps you may," admitted Fair, "if some one doesn't murder you."

"Gosh! I guess it's purty bad. Still, I'm a sticker when I git at a thing. Considering you, I'll try to do most of my practicing when you're out. If you happen to be in you'd better plug up your ears with cotton batting. How'd you happen to come to Yale, anyhow?"

"There were various reasons why I chose Yale. It has always seemed to me like the greatest college in this country. Then, you know, there was the chance of meeting Dick Merriwell."

"Hey? So you've heard about him, have ye? Say, that was one thing why I chose Yale. My folks would have preferred Harvard. We argued over it a right good bit. They made lots of points in favor of Harvard, but I says, says I, 'The greatest college in this country is the one made famous by Frank Merriwell, the one at which Dick Merriwell is now a student.' You'd orter heard them laugh at that. They seemed to think 'twas a joke that Yale should be made famous by the Merriwells. My big Brother Ben warned me not to make any such talk as that to anybody after I got here. He said they'd think me a jackass."

"I don't know about that. It seems to me that Dick Merriwell is a very popular man."

"Pop-lar—you bet he is! I've seen him. I took pains to get a look at him just as soon as I could after landing here. He's a pretty swagger chap, and I s'pose he's rather swell-headed."

"No, he isn't."

"How'd you know?"

"I've met and talked with him."

"You have?"

"Sure."

"How'd that happen?"

Fair told the story.

"Thunder!" exploded the Hoosier youth. "Wasn't that an adventure! And he actually showed us up card sharps, did he? That's just what I'd expect of him. He's right up to snuff, that feller. And you say he was friendly and invited you to call on him?"

"Yes."

"And you ain't never called?"

"Not yet. I went round to do so one day, but I lost heart and backed out. You see, I realize that he's busy all the time, and he couldn't bother much with a freshman. He has an awful lot of friends, you know."

"I've heard he's got some enemies, too."

"I don't see why he should have."

"I do."

"Why?"

"Do you s'pose fellers like that Clay and Carlin are going to feel particlally friendly toward the chap that showed 'em up? His enemies must be principally of that class. It's right likely, too, that there's a lot of chaps who are jealous of him because he's so pop-lar."

"Men like that can't cut much ice here."

"You never can tell, Lance. Sometimes they have a heap of influence. Sometimes they kick up a big disturbance. Have you ever seen anything of Clay and Carlin since reaching this town?"

"I've seen them both at a distance. I thought it best to keep away from them."

"I'd never turn off the pike for critters of that calibre. You and me ain't much alike, though. You're quiet and retiring, while I've got a pugnacious dispo-
sition when I’m riled. I’ve been looking for trouble lately.”

“What sort of trouble?”

“Hazing. Honest and true, I’m disappointed. I kind of reckoned that freshmen would get it good and hot, but nothing has happened. There used to be a heap of hazing, but it seems sort of dying out. Tell you honest I don’t think college life is what it was once.”

Fair laughed.

“Are you really disappointed because you haven’t been hazed?” he asked.

“Ruther,” nodded Samp. “Still, I’m hopeful. Mebbe tain’t as bad as it seems. Mebbe we’ll catch it yet. Let’s not despair.”

They were due to “catch it” all right. That very day while crossing the campus they encountered a knot of sophomores.

“Take off your caps, freshies!” cried one.

Elwell hesitated, but Fair promptly complied.

“Excuse me,” drawled the Hoosier, “if I’m somewhat reluctant to expose this faded topknot of mine. However, seeing it’s you, I s’pose I will.”

He lifted his cap a moment, but returned it promptly to his head.

“Take off that cap and keep it off!” cried the leader of the sophomores sternly.

In the background Lance Fair discovered two fellows who were looking on. He started a bit as he recognized Clay and Carlin.

“I’ve just had a shampoo,” drawled the youth from Indiana, “and I’m subject to colds in the head. If I catch cold I’ll come on to you fellows for the doctor’s bill.”

But he took his cap off once more and held it in his hand.

“That’s right,” said the spokesman of the sophomores. “Whenever you meet an upper classman remove your cap.”

“All right,” grinned Samp.

“Sir!” exploded the sophomore.

“Thank ye,” nodded Samp.

“Say sir.”

“Oh, waal, if you’re going to be so fussy about it I’ll say sir. You’re awful pertickler, ain’t yer?”

“Don’t talk so much with your mouth. What’s your name?”

Elwell gave his name.

“Where do you room?”

This question was likewise answered.

“And you?” said the sophomore, turning his eyes on Fair; “where do you room?”

“Same place,” said Lance.

“Say sir!” thundered the sophomore.

“Sir,” chirped Fair, smiling.

“Wipe that smile off your face. Your manners are rank. You have a great deal to learn.”

“Yes, sir,” murmured Lance.

“Elwell and Fair, you will be in your rooms at five p. m. to-day, at which hour an important committee will call upon you.”

“Tha-anks,” drawled Samp.

“Don’t forget the sir.”

“No, sir, I won’t forget the sir, sir.”

“You’re a very fresh young freshmen, and you need to be salted. Say, in your politest manner, ‘I’m very fresh, and I think salting will do me good.’”

“You are very fresh,” said Elwell, “and I think salting will do you good.”

“Here! here! That’s not the way to say it! Repeat that remark and substitute the pronoun of the first person.”

“By heck!” said Sampson. “I’m an awful blunderer. I hope you’ll ‘scuse me. I, sir, am very fresh, sir, and, sir, I need salting, sir. Does that satisfy your majesty, sir?”

In spite of himself, Fair giggled.

“Cut it out!” rasped the spokesman of the sophs.

“Don’t dare smile on your life!”

“I wasn’t,” murmured Lance; “I was smiling on my face—sir.”

“You may pass on, but don’t forget to be in your rooms at five p. m.”

“By jinks, old feller!” declared Samp, as they passed beyond earshot of the sophomores; “there’s going to be something doing, after all. I reckon we’re due to catch it good and proper.”

“We may catch it too good and proper,” said Fair.

“Did you notice those two chaps who stood off to one side?”

“Yes, I seen them.”

“Say I saw them, Samp. Seen is simply awful the way you sometimes use it.”

“I s’pose ‘tis. I’m rotten careless in my speech, Lance. What do you s’pose we’re up against?”

“If Clay and Carlin have anything to do with it, we’re up against something tough.”
"Waal, mebbe we’d better remonstrate. Mebbe we’d better raise objections."

"That wouldn’t do any good."

"Then we’ll fight."

"That would be worse still. Whatever we have to do we’d better submit."

"We can submit first and fight afterward, can’t we?"

"I don’t want to fight. I can’t fight, Samp; it isn’t in me. I suppose I’m lacking in manhood on that account, but I can’t help it."

"If it’s absolutely necessary, old feller, I’ll do the fighting for you. I take great pleasure in a good scrap. Out in Jordan I had to wallop most every feller in town before I could get along peaceable. You see, arter I’d got mixed up with one or two and trimmed ’em, all the rest wouldn’t be satisfied till they’d had a go with me, and that kept me pretty busy for a while. Don’t you get the notion that I’m going round with a chip on my shoulder looking for fight, for that ain’t me. Still, I do hate it most tremendous when somebody treads on the tail of my coat. As long as you think it best, however, we’ll be as gentle and docile as a couple of lambs unless them fellers go too far infringing on the rights of free-born American citizens."

Exactly at five that afternoon a delegation of six sophomores called on Fair and Elwell. One of them brought a bundle under his arm. Another carried two huge hatboxes, and a third had an old dilapidated umbrella which had been blown wrongside out. The leader of the hazing committee, whose name was Os-good, caused the bundle and the largest hatbox to be handed over to Lance.

"You will don the garments we have provided for you, freshie," he said. "You’ll find them most appropriate."

He turned to Elwell.

"You," he said, "will remove your coat, roll your trousers up to your knees, and put on this handsome silk hat which we have brought. When both of you are properly dressed you will parade across the campus arm in arm. Elwell, you must see that your fair companion is properly protected from the glare of the sun, which is nearly down, by means of this parasol. You are required to appear upon the campus in just twelve minutes, where an admiring throng will be gathered to behold you. If you fail to appear the consequences fall upon your own heads."

With which he turned and left the room, followed by his stern and silent companions.

CHAPTER IX.

THE INSULT.

Opening his bundle, Fair spread out the contents, a short skirt and a woman’s jacket of a style long abandoned. There were likewise a ridiculous pair of gloves. The hatbox contained a huge, weird creation of the milliner’s art.

Looking at these garments, Lance laughed and then grew serious.

"It’s rubbing it in on the sore spot," he said. "Everybody tells me how much I look like a girl, and that makes me sick. Now these fellows want me to dress up in these weird feminine garments and exhibit myself on the campus. I say, Samp, am I a sissy?"

"I ain’t jest took you to be that," answered Elwell, "though you do look rather sweet at times, and you certainly blush like a girl."

"I’d give a hundred dollars if I didn’t blush," cried Fair. "It makes me sick! I’d give a great deal more than that—if I had it—if I looked as tough and husky and masculine as a river driver. I’ve tried to get tanned up and shake this delicate complexion of mine; but every time I try it I burn my nose and it peels and the skin comes off my face, and I can’t get a tan to save me. Jingoes! I do hate to make a fool of myself in such a rig as this!"

"Waal," drawled the Hoosier, "if you don’t want to do it we’ll jest decline, that’s all. We won’t show up. We’ll let ’em wait out there till they get good and tired—and then some."

"If we do that," said Lance, "we’ll make no end of trouble for ourselves. They’ll be sure to make us suffer for it. No, Samp, I think the best thing we can do is to obey orders like little lambs."

"Waal, if we’re going to obey orders we’ve got to hurry right smart, for you know we was give only twelve minutes to make our ‘pearance."

"Don’t say ‘we was give,’ Samp; say we were given."

"By heck! this ain’t no time to quibble over grammar. It won’t take me a minute to get ready. ‘Bout all they’ve left me to wear is this old silk hat, which looks like it was picked long back in sixty-one. Hurry up, Lance, and we’ll sail across the campus and make jackasses of ourselves for the amusement of the gaping populace."

Nor did it take long for Fair to dress. Hooking the skirt over his hips, he squeezed himself into the antiquated jacket, clapped the huge plumed hat upon his head, tied the ribbons under his chin, and took a turn
across the floor, mincing his steps like a girl who was trying to be very nice indeed. His assumption of exaggerated feminine manners caused Elwell to roar.

"You certainly are a sight, Lance," shouted the Hoosier. "I swan, you could fix yourself up in shemale toggery and fool almost anybody. You could pass yourself off as a real girl. But don’t you try it, for I’m afeared I’d get gone on you myself. Are you ready, Daisy?"

"All ready, Algernon, dear," simpered Fair shyly.

"Then we’ll go forth and lemonade across the campus arm in arm, my darling. If any rude student feller tries to flirt with you, by hocus, I’ll poke him in the eye with my umbrill."

Arriving at the campus gate near the corner of Elm and High, they discovered a great gathering of students, mostly sophomores, awaiting their appearance. For a moment Fair hesitated and drew back, but, pulling his chum’s hand through his arm, Elwell spoke low words of encouragement, and amid a storm of cheers and much laughter they carried out the orders of the hazing committee. Down the full length of the walk, lined on either side by college men, they strolled, Samp beaming on his shy and blushing companion, while he carefully held the ruined umbrella above Fair’s head. Apparently they had neither eyes nor ears for any one save each other. Giggling and blushing, Lance occasionally glanced sidewise at his escort and then dropped his lashes coquettishly, causing the spectators to burst forth in renewed applause and merriment.

"The minute we get clear of this bunch," muttered Samp in Fair’s ear, "we’ll hoof it hot-foot for the shelter of our retreat on York Street. Can you run, Lance?"

"Can I! Just give me a chance."

"He does look like a girl, doesn’t he?" said one of the spectators.

"He should have been born one," said another; and the voice of the second speaker gave Fair an unpleasant start. "He’s a perfect sis. He hasn’t got an atom of manhood about him."

The words were spoken loudly and in a manner which plainly indicated that they were intended for Fair’s ears. The flush in the cheeks of the boy from Wampsville suddenly faded and was followed by an intense pallor as his blue eyes shot a glance at Hugo Carlin. At Carlin’s elbow stood Dunbar Clay, smoking his briarwood, a contemptuous sneer on his face. Although not a fighter, Lance would have given a great deal just then to punch both those fellows.

Elwell likewise heard Carlin’s insulting words, and his eyes sought the fellow out. Instantly he was quivering with wrath, and, had not Fair gripped his arm tighter and whispered a warning which checked the words on his lips, he would have made a stinging retort.

Reaching the corner of Chapel and College Streets, Elwell flung aside the old umbrella, and the two freshmen fled for their rooms, followed by shouts of laughter from the crowd left behind.

In Samp’s room Fair tore off the jacket and skirt and snatched the hat from his head, kicking it into a corner.

"There!" he cried fiercely; "that’s the end of that business, and I must say it’s hazing of a sort I don’t relish. I’d rather be tarred and feathered than repeat the performance. If this is what hazing at Yale has degenerated into, the good old days gone by certainly were better. I’m no fighter, Samp Elwell, but I will fight before I’ll make such another fool of myself."

"Who," inquired Elwell, "was your friend who handed out the remark about your being a sissy?"

"That was Hugo Carlin. The fellow smoking a pipe who stood near him was Dunbar Clay."

"A couple of cheap cheats. Lance, you’ve got more man in your little finger than either of them has in his whole body."

"Thanks, Samp; but your thinking so doesn’t make Carlin’s insult any pleasanter to swallow. I’d like to get back at them. I’d like to show both those fellows up."

"Mebbe you’ll get a chance some time, old feller. Such things happen. You just wait."

CHAPTER X.

THE STREET ENCOUNTER.

One day Elwell bought seats for the theatre and invited Lance to take in the show with him that night.

Late in the afternoon it rained heavily, but shortly before it was time to start for the theatre.

On their way they came upon a number of young fellows who were lined up at both sides of the walk, forming a lane through which people going to the performance must pass. These chaps were ogling every attractive girl, whether she was accompanied by a masculine escort or a companion of her own sex. Whenever two girls without male escorts happened to pass, the lounging youths made remarks of a nature calculated to attract attention to themselves.
When Lance and Samp reached this gauntlet of mashers it chanced that there were two girls a short distance ahead of them. One of the line along the curbing stepped out in front of the girls, pretending not to see them, and stopped suddenly in such a manner that they came near colliding with him.

“Oh, pardon me,” he laughed, carrying his hand to his derby; “I didn’t notice you.”

“Don’t see how you could overlook a pair of peaches like that,” said another chap coarsely, as he started to join the first.

“Are you going to attend the performance, girls?” asked the one who had stopped them. “My friend and I are going to take it in, too. We might arrange it at the box office to get all our seats together and make a nice sociable little party. What do you say?”

But the girls were highly indignant and attempted to pass on.

Samp Elwell was also indignant.

“All of dirty, unmannerly tricks that’s the limit!” he exclaimed, striding forward. “Where are the cops? These mashers should be pinched.”

“That’s right,” agreed Lance, fully as angry as his chum. “Fellows who will annoy ladies on the street in that fashion certainly prove how little manhood they possess.”

The girls shot grateful glances at Elwell and Fair, and, dodging quickly past the mashers, made for the entrance of the theatre.

The two freshmen found themselves face to face with Clay and Carlin.

“Here’s that sissy and his running mate,” cried Hugo. “There’s something coming to them.”

“That’s right,” agreed Clay, “and here’s where they get it.”

He whistled a sharp signal, and in a twinkling the freshmen were surrounded by six or eight fellows of the same stamp as Clay and Carlin.

“Give it to ‘em!” was the cry.

The freshmen were hustled hither and thither by that bunch, being thumped and pounded mercilessly.

With a roar, Samp Elwell let loose his fists. His first blow knocked a chap down, and the second sent another staggering. Then some one tripped him, and while he was on his knees his coat was jerked over his head, following which he was kicked and rolled into the gutter.

Fair was treated even more roughly, although for a few moments he put up a resistance that astonished himself. Outnumbered as they were, the freshmen got the worst of it.

Suddenly, however, they realized that something had happened. Apparently the attack upon them had ceased. Gathering themselves up from the muddy, slimy gutter, they stared in wonderment at the scene before them.

Two young men had hurled themselves at the assailants of the freshmen, and they were making the entire crowd “go some.”

“Whoop!” roared a voice. “Soak ’em, pard! Biff ’em in the blinkers! Tap ’em on the snouts! This sure is a pleasant diversion for the Unbranded Maverick of the Pecos. Look out, Dick; galoot behind you!”

The speaker was swinging his fists with telling effect. It was Bradley Buckhart, of Texas, and his companion was Richard Merriwell.

Fair recognized Dick in a twinkling, and, despite his recent rough treatment, he sprang up and charged into the midst of the street fight.

Elwell was equally prompt to get back into the encounter, and for a few moments there was a merry old battle.

The mashers and their friends were getting the worst of it when some one cried:

“The cops! Look out—the cops!”

At this warning cry there was a great scampering. Like running rats Clay, Carlin, and the rest of their crowd scattered and vanished in all directions.

Two policemen came up, and one of them promptly collared Fair and Carlin. The other recognized Merriwell, and said:

“Is it a strate foight you’re in, me bhoys? It’s a bad break for yez.”

“Good evening, Malone,” said Dick. “Too bad you didn’t heave along in time to nab some of those cheap mashers.”

“Harris has a pair of them,” said the policeman, jerking his thumb toward his companion, who was holding fast to the freshmen.

“Oh, no, he hasn’t,” said Dick. “Those fellows are friends of mine. They were jumped on by the bunch of mashers who were annoying ladies here, and we sailed in to give them a helping hand.”

“Fri’nds av yourn, do ye say, me bhoys? Is thot roight? Harris, it’s a mistake. Be after letting the lads go.”

At this order Harris released Fair and Elwell.

Dick explained the matter to the complete satisfaction of the policemen.

“Some evening,” said Maloney, “I’ll git a few av them lady-killers and lodge thim in the station, so Oi
will. Oi hope, me bhoi, ye passed out a few foine black eyes to the spalanes."

"We sure did our best," grinned Buckhart, "and I'm inclined to believe that one or two of them will carry the marks."

Eagerly Fair thanked Dick Merriwell.

"That's all right, old chap," smiled Dick. "Brad and I were more than glad to get a crack at those cheap dogs. But why haven't you called round to see me? I've been looking for you."

"Ha-have you?" faltered Lance. "I did come round to Durfee one day, but I backed out at the last minute, thinking it would be a nuisance for me to bother you."

"You shouldn't have done that. Come again and bring your friend. I saw you two fellows doing your little stunt on the campus, and you carried it off handsomely. I don't think I've met your chum."

"Oh—oh, excuse me," stammered Lance. "Mr. Merriwell, this is Sampson Elwell."

Samp shook hands heartily with Dick.

"I'm right proud to know you, Mr. Merriwell," he said. "Heard of you before I met Lance, and I've heard of you a heap since."

Buckhart was introduced by Dick and met the freshmen in his blunt, open, cordial manner, which made them both like him instantly.

"Mr. Buckhart certainly is an elegant scrapper," laughed Samp. "I saw him bunging that bunch right and left. By heck, it was a sight for sore eyes!"

"It gave me a chance to blow off some surplus steam," grinned the Texan. "I was getting a-plenty rusty and spoiling a heap for a little excitement."

"Those fellows were insulting every good-looking girl who passed," said Fair.

"Clay," said Dick, "thinks himself a great masher, and that's a game he practices frequently. Some time he'll get up against it good and proper."

"He will so," nodded Brad. "He will get all that's coming to him. You hear me warble."

"We're sights," said Fair, looking at his mud-bedaubed clothes. "We were going to the theatre, but I'll have to change these clothes for another suit."

"Me, too," said Elwell. "That'll make us a little late for the opening of the performance, but we've got tickets, and we'll take in what we can of it, Lance."

Dick and Brad accompanied the freshmen to York Street, fancying it possible Carlin and Clay might gather their bunch and attempt another assault upon Lance and Samp; but the mashers had scattered and sought cover to keep away from the police, and none of them was seen again that night.

CHAPTER XI.

A BITER BITTEN.

Late one afternoon Dunbar Clay, dressed in his swellest and carrying a cane, stood on the corner of Church and Chapel Streets ogling the girls who passed him. As it was near the dinner hour, there were many shop girls in the ever-thickening throng. Once or twice Clay fancied he had made an impression, and once he fruitlessly pursued a trim little miss as far as the post office. But when he attempted to address her, she gave him such a look of scorn that he abandoned his purpose and sauntered back to his former stand on the corner.

Barely had he resumed his graceful pose, which he fancied most fetching and effective, when a veiled girl slowly approached as if idly passing that way. Clay sized her up quickly. She was a trifle plump, but tastily dressed and carried herself well. Through the gauzy veil he caught a glimpse of fresh pink cheeks and a pair of large blue eyes, which bestowed a single glance on him and then were suddenly veiled by drooping lashes.

"By Jove!" thought Clay; "here's something fresh from the country. She doesn't look particularly rural, either. Still, I'll wager she hasn't been in the city long. This is the right kind to flirt with, innocent and unsophisticated."

He coughed softly as the girl was passing, and as she glanced at him again he ventured to smile and touch his hat. He was sure she was smiling in return, and there was no doubt that she walked still more slowly.

"I've got her," decided the fellow, as he promptly swung out and stepped forward briskly to reach her side.

She looked up at him again as if a bit startled as he came close beside her.

"Excuse me," said Clay, "but isn't this Miss Brown—Miss Mabel Brown, of Providence?"

"Oh, no, sir," was the hesitating answer. "You've made a mistake."

"I beg your pardon again," he smiled. "I thought sure you were Miss Brown. I hope you're not offended?"

"Why—why, no, of course not," said the girl in a low tone. "But you can't know Miss Brown very well to make such a mistake."

"I only met her once," explained Clay, keeping at the girl's side. "She's a most charming young lady.
She's one of the prettiest girls I ever saw. I felt sure you were her.”

The girl suppressed a giggle.

“That's very flattering, sir,” she said. “I'm afraid you're jollying me.”

“Oh, I assure you I'm not,” protested the fellow, elated at his success. “Do you live in New Haven?”

“No, sir; I'm visiting friends here.”

“May I ask where you're from?”

“North Woodbury.”

“I was right,” thought Clay; “she's a country girl. Well, she's really a peach.” Then he spoke aloud:

“Are you out shopping this afternoon?”

“No,” she laughed, “I'm just out walking to see the people. You know we don't see such crowds as this in North Woodbury.”

“I presume not. Do you know many people in New Haven?”

“Scarcely any one, sir, save the friends with whom I'm staying.”

“It must be rather lonesome. Haven't you any nice chap to take you around?”

She laughed again in that queer, half-suppressed giggle, which was so unlike the laughter of a city-bred girl. Nevertheless, it added in a way to her attraction for Dunbar Clay, as it made her appear like one quite lacking in that worldly wisdom which puts most girls on guard against smashers.

“No, indeed,” she said: “I don’t know a single fellow in New Haven. At home I know two or three nice boys. That it, they're nice in their way, but they don't dress as well as city chaps, and they haven't such elegant manners. They all treat me nice, you know, but one gets tired of country chaps.”

“I can understand why you should get tired of such chaps,” he declared. “Why, I though sure you were a city girl.”

“Did you really?” she murmured, as if highly pleased. “Don't you know, I was awfully afraid I looked country. I've seen so many swell girls in this town that I just hate my clothes, and they were made for me by the best dressmaker in our village.”

“Why, honestly, you're the swellest girl I've seen in a month.”

“Oh, don't say that! I can't believe you're sincere.”

“I give you my word of honor as a gentleman that I am. I'm very glad I mistook you for some one I fancied I knew, and I hope we may become better acquainted, Miss—Miss—”

“Mortimer,” said the girl—“Lucile Mortimer.”

“A very pretty name. My name is Maxwell—Robert Maxwell.”

“Are you a student?”

Clay hesitated.

“Yes,” he finally answered, “I'm a student.”

“Oh, I'm very anxious to see the college buildings, but, of course, I wouldn't think of venturing on to the campus without an escort.”

“No day,” said Clay, “I'll show you round.”

“Oh, will you, really? Haven't you time to do so to-day?”

“Why, nun-no, I'm afraid not,” he answered, looking at his watch. “You see, it takes quite a long time to see all there is to be seen. I've got a little time to spare. Won't you step into a restaurant with me, and have a little lunch?”

“Oh, I couldn't think of that, Mr. Maxwell. The folks will be expecting me home to dinner. I'm awfully disappointed because I can't see the college buildings to-day. Really, I believe I shall see what I can of them alone, if—if you—won't act—as my escort.”

It was up to Clay. He feared a refusal would offend the girl, and, therefore, he decided to take her across the campus and make as hasty a job of it as possible.

“That's the trick to get right with the fair Lucile,” he decided.

“Well, Miss Mortimer,” he said, aloud, “although there won't be time to look around as you should, I'll escort you across the campus and point out the various buildings.”

“It's splendid of you, Mr. Maxwell,” she giggled.

“Let's hurry, before it gets dark.”

“And I'll make a date with her after I've shown her around,” he decided.

They continued to chat in this manner as they approached the college buildings. More and more, the girl drew close to her escort, and, at times, she actually seemed to nestle against him.

Clay hoped there would not be many college men upon the campus, but, when they passed through the gate, he was dismayed to discover an unusually large crowd gathered in the vicinity of the Fence.

“We won't be noticed,” he thought. “Perhaps nobody will recognize me.”

They were halfway across the campus when a body of freshmen appeared and came toward them. As if at a signal, the crowd by the Fence began moving over toward the centre walk, and, in dismay, Clay saw he would be compelled to pass through the midst of those students, unless he turned back at once.
"Hadn't we better turn round, Miss Mortimer?" he asked. "There are a lot of college men out here, and we'll have to walk through the middle of the crowd."

"Oh!" she said, drawing away from him a bit. "If you're ashamed to be seen with me——"

"It's not that," he hastily protested, "only I thought it might disturb you."

"Not a bit, Mr. Maxwell," she purred, returning to his side, and cuddling close.

To his dismay, she took his arm.

"I'm in for it," thought Clay. "I may as well face the music."

A moment later they were in the midst of those students. To Clay's increased dismay, it seemed that every fellow was staring at them. Furthermore, half the crowd was laughing.

"Hello, Mr. Clay," cried one. "Who's your lady friend?"

"Mr. Clay!" exclaimed the girl. "He can't mean you. Your name is Maxwell."

"Er—er—no, of course, he doesn't mean me," mumbled Clay. "Let's walk faster. Don't pay any attention to them.

"But, they're staring in the rudest manner! Is this the way college men do? I thought they were gentlemen. I'm afraid, Mr. Maxwell."

She gripped his arm, and crowded hard against him.

"Don't do that, please," he whispered. "You're making them laugh at us."

"Well, I think it's contemptible for them to laugh. Do you know any of them?"

Did he know them! Already he had discovered twenty fellows whom he knew very well. One of them was the freshman, Sampson Elwell, who was almost splitting his sides with laughter.

"Look, fellows!" said Elwell, calling to his classmates, and making a gesture toward the girl and the mortified senior. "Aren't they a stylish pair? Mr. Clay has made a mash, at last."

"I'll break his face for that!" thought Dunbar. Merriwell and Buckhart were there. He saw them laughing with the others.

Suddenly an excited fellow broke through the crowd and rushed forward.

It was Hugo Carlin.

"Here, Clay!" he cried; "you're making a jackass of yourself. You'll never hear the last of this. That girl is no girl, at all. It's that fool freshman, Fair."

Clay seemed thunderstruck, and, ere he could recover, the "girl" at his side skipped away, pausing at a short distance to jerk off a hat, veil, and wig of false hair.

It was, indeed, Lance Fair, and, as the crowd sent up a tremendous shout of merriment, Dunbar Clay longed to sink into the group. With a sudden burst of rage, he tried to hit the freshman with his cane; but, gathering up his skirts with both hands, Fair fled into the midst of his laughing classmates.

An instant later Clay, likewise, took to his heels. No one offered to check him, but as long as he lived he could never forget the derisive hoots and shouts of laughter which they flung after him. Into Welch Hall he dashed, panting up the stairs, and bursting into his room.

"I swear I'll be even with that freshman, yet!" he snarled.

CHAPTER XII.

INTO THE RIVER.

On the night of the wrestling matches between the freshmen and the sophomores, the standard of the freshness was valiantly upheld by one Gilligan, from Indiana, whose chief assistant proved to be another Hoosier, named Elwell. Eventually Gilligan was downed by Joe Crowfoot, and it was Crowfoot who, a few moments later, threw Elwell, and gave the sophomores the victory.

Lance Fair had watched the wrestling with breathless excitement. The cheering of the two classes thrilled him. He joined with his own class, and shouted until his voice grew husky. When he saw Samp downed by the Indian, Lance groaned in dismay.

The triumphant sophomores proceeded to celebrate by invading the campus and whooping it up hilariously. At a distance some of the discomfited freshmen looked on. Among them were Elwell and Fair.

"Oh, it was tough luck, Samp," said Lance. "If you could have thrown that Indian, we'd have beaten them."

"I did my part," said Elwell. "That Injun is a corking wrestler. He's a friend of Dick Merriwell, you know. The sophs were backed by the seniors, and that put Merriwell against us. I heard him telling them we didn't have a man who could down Crowfoot. If I'd had a thousand dollars, I'd given it to throw that Injun."

"It makes me tired," sighed Fair. "Let's go home."

A cab came rumbling up and stopped near them.
The door was opened, and a bearded man, in a heavy, long coat and slouch hat, stepped out.

"Do you fellows know a student from Indiana?" asked the man. "There's a chap from that State who is badly hurt, and he's calling for some one from Indiana."

"By heck!" exclaimed Elwell; "it must be Gilligan! He was stunned when the Injun threw him. They had to carry him off."

"I think that's his name," said the bearded man. "He's sort of out of his head. I'm afraid it's a serious matter. The only thing that will quiet him, the doctor says, is to bring the fellow from his own State that he's calling for."

"Mebbe he means me," said Samp. "I'm from Indiana."

"He must mean you, then. Get into this cab, quick."

"Come on, Lance," invited Elwell. "We'll find out if it's Gilligan, and if he wants me."

They entered the cab, and the bearded man did likewise, slamming the door behind him. Immediately the driver whipped up the horses, and away they went at a lively pace.

The curtains of the cab had been drawn so low that only a few flickering gleams of light drifted in beneath them.

"Where is Gilligan?" asked Elwell.

"In the house, where he rooms," answered the man.

"Is it far?"

"Quite a distance," was the reply.

Soon the gleaming flashes of the street lights grew fainter, and they seemed to be traversing dark and poorly lighted streets.

"Wonder where we are?" speculated Fair. "Isn't it odd Gilligan should roam so far from the college?"

"Rather," admitted Elwell, attempting to run up one of the curtains.

The curtain was stuck, and refused to roll up.

"Let me try it," muttered the man.

But he had no better success, continuing for some time to fuss with the curtain.

"Samp," whispered Lance, in his friend's ear, "I'm getting nervous. I believe there's something wrong about this business."

"Hold on!" suddenly cried the Hoosier. "Stop this cab! We are going to get out!"

"We're almost there, now," said the man, and as he spoke the cab rolled on to a bridge.

Elwell tried to open the door. He was still trying when the cab stopped, and some one outside jerked that door wide.

Samp pitched out, and was seized by waiting hands. The man in the cab gave Fair a jerk and a thrust which sent him after Elwell.

They found themselves in the hands of at least a dozen masked and disguised fellows. They were on a long bridge, and could see the line of the water front gleaming in the distance.

"Stung!" panted Elwell, trying to put up a fight. "We're tricked, Lance!"

Fair, likewise, made a struggle, but they were handled without much difficulty by their captors. The driver backed the cab around, whipped up his horses, and went rumbling away toward the far end of the bridge.

"No use kicking against fate, my fine birds," exulted one of the masked fellows. "You may as well take your medicine. It will do you good. We're going to teach you something. We're going to give you all that's coming to you."

The ends of two long ropes were knotted about the waists of Fair and Elwell. This done, the captives were lifted bodily and poised upon the rail of the bridge.

"I—I can't swim!" gasped Lance.

"You don't have to," was the mocking answer. "You'll be pulled out, after we've soaked you good and plenty."

"There's that cabby coming back, now!" cried one of the crowd, as the sound of a galloping horse came from the distant end of the bridge. "It's too soon."

"Never mind him," said another. "Over with these chaps! Let 'em go!"

An instant later the two freshmen were thrust from the rail. Down they shot, striking the water with a double splash.

On the box of the approaching cab the driver was lashing his horse mercilessly. The cab came rumbling up and stopped near the spot where those masked chaps were crowded at the rail of the bridge, several of them clinging to the ends of the ropes which had been knotted about the bodies of the two freshmen.

The moment the cab stopped—even before it came to a full stop—it began shooting forth human beings from all sides and in all directions. Down from the top, and the seat beside the driver they leaped. Forth from the doors they projected themselves. It even seemed as if one or two of them crawled out from beneath the cab, and forever it must remain a marvel that a one-horse vehicle of any sort, especially the conventional cab, could provide conveyance for so many men.

They were freshmen, too—at least, the most of them
were. With savage shouts they fell upon the astounded hazers, tooth and nail. Immediately a wild old free-for-all fight began.

The masked fellows, startled and astounded, dropped the ropes and turned to defend themselves.

The tide was running out, and on its bosom it bore Lancelot Fair, struggling desperately to keep afloat, and crying chokingly for help.

CHAPTER XIII.
THE RESCUE AND THE WARNING.

"Pard," chuckled Brad Buckhart, standing at Dick’s side and watching the fight, “it sure is a right lively old scrimmage. I admit the fellow who put you wise to the hazing of those two freshies was on the level, though I did reckon at the time that he was lying.”

“That’s right,” said Dick; “but where are Fair and Elwell? I would not have interfered in an ordinary hazing, but, knowing those rascals, Clay and Carlin, were back of this, I decided to take a hand.”

Two fellows broke away from the ruck of the fighting and rushed toward the cab. Plainly it was their intention to get away, and leave the rest to settle the encounter as they might. Neither of them saw Dick and Brad standing close beside the open door of the cab until the Texan stepped out with a single stride, crying:

“What’s your great hurry, gents? Why don’t you linger some and back up your friends?”

As he spoke, he reached for the shoulder of the nearer and shorter man.

With a growl, the fellow struck at Buckhart.

“Whoop!” exploded the Texan joyously. “This lets me into the game, and I’ve been itching a-plenty to take a hand.”

Then, having parried the blow, he handed the fellow a body jolt that produced a grunt.

Meanwhile, Merriwell had clutched at the other chap, who started back and tried to escape the outshot hand. Dick’s fingers closed in the man’s collar.

“It’s really disgraceful to desert your friends in a time of need, like this, you know,” laughed Merriwell.

“Don’t run away. Show your manhood. Stand by your pals.”

The fellow thrust out both hands and made a backward twisting wrench with the upper part of his body.

Something ripped. The man’s collar gave way, and an instant later Merriwell was holding in his gripped fingers a strip of white linen and a necktie, while the chap he had tried to stop was legging it toward the New Haven end of the bridge.

“Go!” cried Dick, thrusting the trophy into his pocket. “I have something to identify you by, if I wish.”

A sound like a stifled, choking cry for help came up from the river. Merriwell heard it, and it thrilled him through and through. Suddenly he fancied he understood why those masked hazers had been gathered at the rail of the bridge, looking over and downward. Unmindful of the fighters, he leaped to the rail.

A distant light shot a gleam athwart the surface of the water. Down there, in that gleaming track, Dick saw something round and dark, like a human head.

It was amazing with what swiftness Merriwell tore off his shoes, flung aside his coat, poised himself on the rail of the bridge, and shot headlong toward the water. He knew some one was down there in the river, struggling desperately for life.

Like an arrow the diver clef the water. With a swooping curve, he rose to the surface, immediately striking out with powerful strokes toward the point where he had seen that human head revealed by the gleam of a far-off light.

Despite all Dick Merriwell could have done, Lance Fair must have perished only for the assistance of Sampson Elwell, who reached him, at last, and kept him from sinking. Frightened and frantic to a point which prevented him from listening to his friend’s instructions, Lance continued to struggle, and might have made it impossible for Elwell to save him had not Dick Merriwell reached them and taken part in the rescue.

It was Dick’s calm, commanding voice which finally brought Fair to his senses and led him to quit struggling and clutching at the two men who were holding him up. Samp’s words had made no impression on his friend. Dick, however, possessed the ability to compel obedience by the frightened boy. There was something in his cool, distinctly spoken words which gave Lance both confidence and trust.

Brad Buckhart, having stretched his antagonist on the bridge with a good left-hand punch, saw Dick leap from the rail and shoot headlong toward the water. Intuitively the Texan knew his comrade had dived to the rescue of some one in the water. As fast as he could run, Brad hiked toward the end of the bridge, where he knew some small boats were to be found.

And, so, in company with a watchman, the Texan finally came rowing and calling across the water, being answered by Dick.
Merriwell and Elwell lifted Lance Fair, who was first pulled into the boat. The lank Hoosier followed, and then Dick, grasping the stern, climbed quickly aboard.

"Thank you, Brad," he said. "I half fancied you might be the one who would get around to pull us out. You know, I always depend on you in such emergencies. Get us ashore as soon as you can, for this air is deuced cold, and Fair is pretty well done up, although I hardly fancy his bath will do him any serious injury."

* * * * * * * * *

The sound of Buckhart’s retreating footsteps had scarcely died away when some one knocked.

"Come in," said Dick.

He was not surprised by the appearance of Dunbar Clay. Clay closed the door securely, then stepped toward the table, at which Dick was still sitting. His eyes refused to meet Merriwell’s. Clearing his throat, he spoke.

"Merriwell," he said, "you advertised finding a necklace containing a valuable scarf pin."

"Yes," said Dick, "I have expected you would call for it before this. It’s almost unnecessary for me to ask you to describe the pin."

"It’s a diamond, surrounded by small rubies and emeralds."

"It’s your pin, is it?"

"Yes," answered Clay, in a low tone, "it belongs to me."

"Then you acknowledge having taken part in that dirty performance on the Long Bridge. I knew that, also, Clay. I knew you and Carlin were the leaders in that affair. I was determined that you should come to me to recover your pin if you were to get it. You shall have your property, Clay, but before I hand it over to you, I’m going to make a few remarks. To begin with, it was pretty cheap work for you and Carlin, seniors, to be concerned with a lot of sophs in the hazing of freshmen. If you had any real sense of dignity or decency, I should try to impress this point. Not only do you lack dignity and decency, but you are dishonest and revengeful. In the most petty, contemptible manner, you have tried to hurt Lance Fair, a fellow who has more genuine manhood in his make-up than a dozen such as you. You attacked him brutally in front of a theatre not long ago. When he got back at you with that little practical joke, which showed you up as a street masher, and made you the butt of ridicule on the campus, you vowed you would soak him. Well, you did. You soaked him in the river, and it’s lucky for you and your accomplices that Samp Elwell, Fair’s chum, was a good swimmer, and, therefore, able to save Fair from drowning. Only for that, you would have been guilty of manslaughter. Think it over, Clay, and see if the satisfaction you might have obtained would have made you content in the knowledge that you had helped drown a man. It was really a narrow escape for you. Fortunately, Fair came through that little experience in good shape.

"I’m going to add just a few more remarks. In any clashes between freshmen and sophomores, I shall not mix unless I consider myself justified, as I certainly was in this instance. As far as you and Carlin are concerned, I don’t care to have any dealings whatever with you. Nevertheless, if you do not let Fair and Elwell alone in future something is going to drop on you, and drop hard. It will flatten you out beautifully. It will be your finish."

"That’s all. Here’s your necktie and scarf pin. Good day."

Clay accepted the tie and pin, concealed them in his pocket, and went out without making any reply.

THE END.

THE NEXT NUMBER (705) WILL CONTAIN

DICK MERRIWELL’S BEST FORM;
OR,

Master of Himself.

Football Practice—Fellows Worth Knowing—The Man Who Won—Self-control—The Struggle Upward—The Lure of the Cards—Selfish Ambition—The Plotter—At the Woodlands Club—In the Arena—A Challenge Accepted—Splendid Wrestling—The Exposure.
The bolas and the lariat.

The bolas and the lariat are two weapons almost exclusively peculiar to America. One or the other of them is in use in several parts of South America and in Mexico. The gauchos, who inhabit the pampas of La Plata, and the Patagonians have made their living with the aid of these weapons, and the former are said to prefer the lariat to firearms.

The bolas consists of two or three balls of stone or metal united by leather thongs. The simplest form, and this is said to be the older one, is a leather thong about eight feet long, having a ball securely fastened at each end. Among the Patagonians these balls are made of stone, and have a groove running round them like a ring, into which the ends of the thong are tightly wrapped and fastened.

Another form of Patagonian bolas has three balls with three thongs united in a common centre. We might compare the thongs, when spread out, to three spokes of a wheel with pegs at the outer ends of the spokes. When there are three balls in the bolas, one of them is smaller than the other two, and as a rule in this form of bolas, which is the more modern one, the balls are usually sewn up in leather, and attached to the thongs by secure knots.

With his bolas the Patagonian or the gaacho hunts horses, cattle, and other quadrupeds, and the rhea, or American ostrich. As he rides upon horseback, he grasps one of the balls in his hand, always the small one. When the thong is three, and, after whirling the weapon about his head, hurled it at the flying animal.

He may so direct his aim as to strike the animal with one of the balls, and so kill it or stun it; or he may contrive that one of the thongs shall strike the creature's neck or feet, and the whirling balls will wrap the thongs in coils about its neck or limbs, and so bring the hunted animal down, and hold it entangled, until the huntsman rides up to dispatch it with his knife, or secure it alive. In some cases the force of the bolas wrapping about an animal's neck is sufficient in itself to strangle the animal. Occasionally the huntsman rides up near enough to strike his prey with one of the balls of the bolas without relinquishing his hold of the weapon.

All these different uses of the bolas are only acquired after long practice, and the weapon is not by any means so easy to wield as one might at first imagine.

The lariat is too well known to need a description. Properly, it is a leather thong of plaited, well-greased hide, some thirty feet long, having an iron ring at the end, through which the thong is looped so as to form a running noose. The lariat is always used by a rider. He holds the noose and the folded length of the weapon in his hand, while the other end is securely fastened to his saddle. Hunting the horse or other animal which he wishes to capture, until he is within striking distance, he throws the noose over the head, or horns, or about the legs of the flying animal, and, checking the horse which he is riding, he pulls his prey down in an instant, and quickly kills it, or secures it.

The gauchos, who capture wild horses with the aid of the lariat, usually drive them first into a corral or circular inclosure. Having selected a horse, the mounted gaacho throws his lariat so as to catch its forelegs, as it runs wildly round the corral. Drawing the rope tight, he pulls the horse down; then, making a circle, he catches one of its hind legs in the coil, and hitches it up to the others. He then dismounts, puts on a bridle, and fastens the horse's fore legs together with a thong. Taking off the thong, he allows the horse to rise, and leads him out of the corral. Then, in spite of all the animal's efforts, he saddles and mounts him, and, in the short space of an hour, it is said, breaks him in.

The Patagonians have a weapon which is sometimes called a lariat, but is rather between a bolas and a lariat in construction and use. It consists of a single ball at the end of a long cord. The cord is twisted with a rope, and the ball is secured by means of its impetus, round and round the animal's neck or legs, while the other end of the cord is retained by the thrower.

It is said that the lariat is not a native American weapon, but was introduced by the Spaniards who conquered and overran Mexico and parts of South America nearly four hundred years ago. In proof of this it is shown that the word lasso is simply an old Spanish word lasso, meaning a noose or snare. But it seems just as likely that the Spaniards found the weapon in use when they arrived in America, and called it a lasso, or noose, as the best description which they could give it in their own language. If, then, the native name was forgotten, while the Spanish name was retained in use, it would be very easy to think that the Spaniards had assimilated it.

It is curious to find, however, that the lasso or lariat was known to the ancient Egyptians thousands of years ago, and is depicted in some of the wall paintings which they executed. The noose and the ball lasso, such as the Patagonians use, are not both represented. They were used for catching the wild ox, antelope, and other animals alive, and the huntsman, being on foot, had to pull the animal, and it started after it.

The Lapps of northern Europe capture their wild reindeer with the lasso, when milking time comes round. And a tribe inhabiting the island of Luzon, in the Philippines, is said to make use of the lasso when hunting the stag, and sometimes also when out upon head-hunting expeditions.

**IN A FLORIDA BOG.**

A hunter's life often means an almost equal degree of peril to the hunter as to the hunted. An experience of the Indian River counties of Florida is told recently by a hunter.

He was duck shooting alone, with not even a dog for company. He had been jumping sloughs, wading brooks, and retrieving his own kills. He says:

'Ve rode a wading suit of mackintosh which came above my waist, and was strapped to my shoulders. About noon I came to an open space, green with the freshness of spring. I came to it suddenly, emerging from a tangle of oaks and vines which grew to its edge, and from a puddle near its centre a mallard duck flushed. It was a fine shot, and the bird fell not ten feet beyond the puddle, and it started after it.

My gun was in my right hand, and over my left shoulder I had a game strap, from which hung a dozen birds weighing some thirty pounds—as much as I cared to carry. I took two steps forward, and sank nascently in the bog.

I tried to go back, and made an effort to extricate myself by bearing down with the gun and my left hand on the green surface around me, and both gun and hand went under to my elbows. I let go the gun, pulled out my hands with a little effort, and by that time had sunk nearly to the top of my waders.'

I was getting frightened. I made a desperate effort, and threw my body half round toward the firm bank I had quitted. It forced me to wade and swim, and I thought I felt, a steady suction on my legs. Unquestionably there was quicksand under the bog.

I knew that in another five minutes that green surface would close over my nostrils. A worse scared man never saw himself being buried alive.

I had thrown off, my game strap before I sank so far. And then, in my extremity, I glanced up, and saw a length of rattan vine, stretching from the limb of an oak which jutted over the bog, within reach of my right hand. I grabbed it.

The rest was comparatively easy. I pulled on the rattan, and slowly and steadily drew myself up, but my mackintosh suit was left behind. My gun also was lost, but I saved my game bag, which had not settled much.

For that rattan vine I should to-day be under the treacherous green bog.

**A HUNDRED FEET HIGH.**

The "India rubber" plant—Ficus elastica—is a great tree in the tropical countries in which it flourishes, often reaching as much as one hundred feet high. Imposing indeed it looks in such conditions, with a vast leafy crown extending forty or fifty feet outwards on each side of the massive trunk; and with immense buttressing roots twisting and winding along above the ground in such a way as to lead the natives of India and Ceylon tell the "snake tree." Sometimes these roots grow up into the trees and make the tree look like a banyan—to which, it may be mentioned, it is botanically related.
NEW YORK, October 9, 1909.

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TIP TOP ROLL OF HONOR.

Following the suggestion of Mr. Burt L. Standish, that appeared in his letter to Tip Top readers in No. 580, the following loyal Tip Toppers have won for themselves a place on our Honor Roll for their efforts to increase the circulation of the King of Weeklies. Get in line, boys and girls, and strive to have your name at the head of the list.

Misses M. and K. Samson, New York City.
Robert L. Waggoner, C. E., Ohio.
Arthur P. Miles, Colorado.
Howard W. Butler, Jr., Pennsylvania.
Hugo Sandgraf, Wisconsin.
Clarence Gusbach, New Jersey.
R. R. Miller, Ohio.
R. F. Vanatta, Denver, Colo.
E. P. Scolum, Iowa.

The names of other enthusiastic Tip Toppers will be added from time to time. Send in the result of your efforts to push the circulation of your favorite weekly and win a place on the Roll of Honor.

APPLAUSE.

Owing to the large number of letters received, the editor of Tip Top cannot undertake to secure their publication under six weeks. Those who contribute to this department must not expect to see them before that time.

FREE POST CARDS—Any boy who writes us, telling why he loves Tip Toe, and what the magazine has done for him, as well as what he is doing on his part to increase its circulation, will, upon request, receive a set of six fine post cards of the principal characters in Tip Toe free by mail. Be very sure and address your letters "Editor Tip Top Weekly Post Card Offer."

Although I have read many books, there is none to compare with "Tip Top." I am saying what thousands of others have said: I have had the pleasure of reading "Tip Top" for three years, and hope to for many years to come. I first came to read "Tip Top" when I was working in a bookstore. We sold more copies of "Tip Top" than any other weekly on the market, and being curious to know why it was popular, I read one, and have continued reading them ever since. During this time I have induced several friends to read it, and they all voiced the same opinion as quoted above. I am also reading Burt L. Standish's story in the Popular Magazine, and think that it is the greatest baseball story he ever wrote. Wishing long life and success to Street & Smith, Burt L. Standish, and "Tip Top," I remain a loyal Tip Topper.

Jno. ALEXANDER.
Jenkintown, Pa.

Sentiments that do you credit, John. We do not think any boy need ever feel ashamed to be caught reading a Merrill story, whether published in book form or in the "Tip Top Weekly." Print any one of them in dollar shape and there is not a man alive who would hesitate to buy it for his boy. It is only that absurd, unreasonable outcry in connection with "cheap literature" that makes many condemn what they have never examined. Five cents is the limit of most boys' pocket money, and "Tip Top" is placed at that small figure so that it may be within the reach of every lad in the land. It is "cheap" only as to price—in all other respects it is the "top notch" of juvenile literature, the finest and most instructive magazine for boys ever printed.

(A letter from Minnesota.)

Four years ago I began to read "Tip Top Weekly," and since that time I have not missed a copy. It is certainly a great little magazine, not only interesting, but uplifting, at least it has been so for me. A boy playing Dick or Frank Merrill as his hero, carefully striving to follow in their footsteps, may be sure that he will amount to something in this world. Can say that I am not the only one reading "Tip Top" in our family. It seems to be as interesting to father as it is to me. Will close with best wishes for the further development of "Tip Top," promising to do in the future as I have always done in the past, spread the best of all weeklies among my friends and acquaintances. Respectfully,
Clarence G. Merkle.

Another father who appreciates the value of "Tip Top" as an educational factor. They are really quite plentiful this week, and it delights us all to know of a united "Tip Top" family, each and every member of which finds a fascination in the stories, as well as some benefit in the sound doctrines advocated by the Merrills.

I have been a reader of "Tip Top" for a long time now, and like it better every week. I know several other boys who are very interested readers, too. I and my brother have established a "club room" in our field near home, and we gather a lot of hums there every day, now the holidays are on, and they are all glad to read your fine stories. Many of them are now buying "Tip Top," too. I take advantage of every chance to bring the paper to the notice of those I know. My father, who writes a lot for the papers, says "Tip Top Weekly" does publish some real good stories, just the kind that boys ought to read, and many of them provide very enjoyable reading, as well as cultivate those ideas that help to make boys intelligent and brave men when they grow up. Many of the stories in "Tip Top" give a clear description of life under all conditions, and show us how we may act and succeed when placed in similar circumstances. The characters and heroes in "Tip Top" are O. K. I will now close, and wish everybody success. I hope to see my letter in the Applause column so that your readers can see that the popular weekly is no stranger away here in Nova Scotia. Yours truly,

E. F. Scolum, Nova Scotia, Canada.

And here it is, Thomas. Your father knows a good thing when he sees it. Some men unfortunately forget what they used to yearn after as boys, and the temptations surrounding them at that time, but others, thank Heaven, never grow old in mind if they do in body.

I have been a reader of Burt L's famous publication, "Tip Top" since the first week of 1909. So you see I am a short reader of "Tip Top." But I can never say enough of praise for "Tip Top." I smoked, but left off before buying a copy of "Tip Top," and it has changed me. If any boy wants to lead a straight life let him follow "Tip Top" week by week and he won't go far wrong. I have not done much for it, but it has done much for me. After I bought the first weekly I saw on the back cover a list of books of the
Weekly.

TIP TOP

Medal Library, and I went to my dealer and got the first one—15c—and have been getting them right along. But he asks me fifteen cents for all numbers under 378. I would not care if they were in good book. No. 322 that they should be but ten cents, so I wish you would send a catalogue and let me know how much it would cost to send five Medal Libraries in one bundle. I close now with three cheers for all connected with "Tip Top."—Fred. FEYNBLAD.

We are sending you the catalogue. All the Merrilew books are 10c in the New Medal, which sells for fifteen cents. Your dealer will order them for you cheaper than you can, as he deals with the news company and has the benefit of express rates.

I think Frank and Dick are great. How fine it would be if more young men would become such splendid examples of strength and youth, which brings with it a clear mind and conscience. Last June one of my friends gave me a copy of "Tip Top," No. 635, "Dick Merrilew's Risk." From the start I liked it, and since then I have bought and read them each week up to the present date. I have also bought and read all of the New Medal Library pertaining to the Merrilews from that date. But then there are more and easier to read them than my sister and I. In our club we are known as the "Tip Top" girls, for we have induced about forty girls and boys to read this famous weekly. The characters we admire most are Frank, Dick, Bruce, and Brad of the boys, and Inza, Elvis, June, and Doris of the girls. We sympathize greatly with Bruce Browning for the loss of his sweetheart. We close with a poem to Burt L. Standish, who, in our estimation, is the best author of juvenile stories in the world, and with an equal amount of praise to the greatest publishing house, Street & Smith. From two loyal Tip-Toppers.

Yours is not an isolated case by any means. Many of our boy friends have sisters who vie with them in love for the wonderful characters portrayed by a master hand in "Tip Top's" columns.

NOTICE—So many inquiries reach us each week concerning the various manuals on athletic development, which we publish, that we have decided to keep a list of them at the head of this department. Any number can be had by mail by remitting 10 cents, and 3 cents postage, for each copy, to the publishers.

FRANK MERRILEW'S BOOK OF PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT.

The Art of Boxing and Self-Defense, by Prof. Donovan.

U. S. ARMY PHYSICAL EXERCISES, revised by Prof. Donovan.

PHYSICAL HEALTH CULTURE. — - - - by Prof. Fourmen.

PROF. FOURMEN: Please tell us how our measurements are. C. M.'s height is 5 feet 6 inches; weight, 168 pounds; chest, normal, 30 % inches; expanded, 32 inches; biceps, 8 inches; flexed, 9% inches; across shoulders, 14% inches; waist, 26% inches; thigh, 17 inches; calf, 13% inches; ankle, 8% inches; neck, 11% inches; age, 16 years 8 months; P. B.'s height is 5 feet 3 inches; weight, 137 pounds; chest, 31% inches; expanded, 34 inches; biceps, 8% inches; flexed, 10% inches; across shoulders, 10 inches; waist, 27% inches; thigh, 18 inches; calf, 12% inches; neck, 8% inches; age, 16 years 6 months. What are our weak and strong points? Hoping to see this in print, we remain two loyal Tip-Toppers.

C. M. P. B.

Xanten Island, N. Y.

PROF. FOURMEN: Being a reader of the "Tip Top," I would like to have you answer my questions. My measurements are as follows: Age, 13 years; weight, 97% pounds; across shoulders, 14 inches; height, 4 feet 10% inches; chest, normal, 30 inches; expanded, 32 inches; waist, 20 inches; wrist, 6% inches; calf, 12 inches; neck, 12% inches; thigh, 14 inches; knee, 13 inches. What exercises should I take?—BRILLIANT JAKE.

New Hampton, Iowa.

All good, Jake, but the waist. Your 20 inches should be less than 24 inches.

(Letter from Washington.)

PROF. FOURMEN: My age is 14 years 9 months 17 days; height, 5 feet 6 inches; weight, 103% pounds; neck, 11% inches; chest, normal, 31 inches; expanded, 33 inches; thigh, 18 inches; calves, 13 inches; forearms, 10 inches; biceps, normal, 10 inches; flexed, 12 inches; shoulders, 15 inches. I would like to be an all-around athlete; I play ball some. I don't smoke or drink. I would like to hear from you. I remain, yours truly, AUDREY BULLARD.

Weight 10 pounds in excess, chest 2-inch deficit. Change these conditions, my young friend, and it will be of advantage to you as an athlete.

PROF. FOURMEN: My chums and I have been readers of "Tip Top" for about a year, and we therefore take the liberty of asking a few questions. How is our build in general? Are we too young to train all year around? We are all between 16 and 18% years of age. Here are our measurements: Frank Gilbert—Height, 5 feet 5% inches; weight, 148 pounds; neck, 13% inches; chest, normal, 33% inches; expanded, 33% inches; right upper arm, 11½ inches; left upper arm, 14½ inches; right forearm, 10½ inches; left forearm, 10½ inches; right hand, 20 inches; left hand, 19 inches; right thigh, 20 inches; left calf, 13½ inches; right calf, 13 inches. Talborn Brooks—Height, 5 feet 7 inches; weight, 135 pounds; neck, 13% inches; chest, normal, 33% inches; expanded, 34 inches; right upper arm, 15% inches; left upper arm, 16% inches; right forearm, 10½ inches; left forearm, 10½ inches; waist, 26 inches; left thigh, 20 inches; right thigh, 20 inches; left calf, 13½ inches; right calf, 13 inches. William
Ashton—Height, 5 feet 11 inches; weight, 133 pounds; neck, 13½ inches; chest, normal 35 inches; expanded, 38 inches; right upper arm, 11½ inches; left upper arm, 11 inches; right forearm, 10½ inches; left forearm, 10½ inches; waist, 27 inches; left thigh, 19 inches; right thigh, 19 inches; left calf, 14 inches; right calf, 14 inches. Taken stripped. Yours truly, WILLIAM ASHTON.

Frank's weight is good and chest excellent. Talkfourn, weight exactly right and chest ditto. William is the shy one, as he has grown like a weed. He should weigh about 160 pounds and have a chest 30 inches normal. He should do all in his power to increase his lungs. The needed avoidupois will come later, no doubt, but at any rate it is not so essential.

PROF. FOURMEN: I have been a loyal Tip-Topper for about three years. My other two letters, I am sorry to say, had the misfortune not to be published. I hope this one will, as I know not what parts of my body need developing. I am 15 years 6 months old and 5 feet 4½ inches high. I weigh 128 pounds, every pound of which is hard as can be. My calves are 14 inches; biceps, expanded, 11½ inches; ankles, 9½ inches; neck, 10 inches; thigh, 20 inches; forearm, expanded, 11½ inches; wrist, 6½ inches; waist, 26½ inches; chest, normal, 33 inches; expanded, 26½ inches. 1. How are my measurements? 2. What are my weak points? 3. Do you approve of the two-meal diet? 4. I can run three miles, under 20 minutes without overexerting myself. Is this good? Hoping this will be published, and thanking you in advance.

ATHLETE.

New York City.

Measurements first class. You weigh a little more than the 113 pounds required, and your waist should be about 26½ inches.

PROF. FOURMEN: Ten years ago I read my first "Tip Top," and have been a constant reader ever since. I was a boy of twelve years at that time, with a weak body. I have tried to follow Frank Merriwell’s advice and example and make a strong, healthy man of myself with a clean body. I do not use tobacco in any form, and have never used liquor in any way. I will send my measurements and get your opinion. Age, 22 years; height, 5 feet 8½ inches; weight, 146 pounds; chest, normal, 37½ inches; expanded, 40½ inches; neck, 14½ inches; calves, 14 inches; ankle, 9 inches; wrist, 7 inches; waist, 20½ inches. What are my weak points, also my strong ones? Hoping to see this in print soon. I am yours for a strong, healthy, and clean body.

Colorado Springs, Col.

F. D. M.

You are in fine physical condition, friend. I thank you for giving "Tip Top" the credit.

PROF. FOURMEN: I am a reader of "Tip Top," and wish you to answer a few questions. Age, 20 years; height, 5 feet 6½ inches; weight, 160 pounds; neck, 15 inches; chest, normal, 30 inches; waist, 31 inches; biceps, 12½ inches; forearms, 11½ inches; wrists, 6½ inches; thighs, 21 inches; calves, 15½ inches; ankles, 9½ inches. How are my measurements? Point out my weak spots. Yours truly,

W. W.

Woburn, Mass.

Your only weak point, my boy, is avoidupois—too much flesh. You should only weigh 130 pounds and have a 27½-inch waist. You need strenuous training and less fattening food. But rejoice in the fact that your chest is fully up to the mark.

(A letter from Indiana.)

PROF. FOURMEN: Being a constant reader and a loyal Tip-Topper of your most valuable publication, I have taken the liberty to send my measurements in for you to give me the weak points. Age, 17 years; height, 5 feet 5½ inches; weight, 132 pounds; chest, normal, 30½ inches; expanded, 36 inches; waist, 30 inches. Am I heavy enough? What should my weight and measurements be? How may I increase my weight? Awaiting the answer to appear in "Tip Top," I am a most loyal Janeit.

L. M. HARMON.

You should weigh 117 pounds, chest nearly 35 inches normal, waist 27 inches, hips 34 inches, thighs 20 inches, and calves 14 inches. You are already about 15 pounds too heavy.

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TIP TOP BASEBALL TOURNAMENT FOR 1909

The great interest taken by enthusiastic amateur baseball teams all over the country in our contests for some years past, has induced us to once again enter the field with a tempting offer. So here it is, boys: The two teams which, at the end of the season, have the highest average—the members of which play the greatest number of games, score the most runs and have lost the least number of games, will be declared the winners. Of the two winning teams, the one having the higher average will be the Tip Top Tournament Team of the All-American Baseball Tournament for 1909, and will receive a beautiful silk pennant bearing a suitable device. Each winning team will receive a full equipment, consisting of trousers, shirt, stockings, shoes and cap for nine members. When possible send newspaper accounts of your games also to substantiate the score. Don’t fail to send in your coupon at once. No notice taken of any score not entered on a coupon cut out of Tip Top. Coupons must be properly made out, one for each game.

1909—TIP TOP BASEBALL TOURNAMENT COUPON.

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The following books in the NEW MEDAL LIBRARY contain numbers 1 to 417 of the TIP TOP WEEKLY. Many of the individual numbers before 417 are entirely out of print so that the thousands of boys who are interested in the early adventures of Frank and Dick Merriwell and who want to read everything that was written about them, will welcome this opportunity to secure their favorite reading in a form that is more readily preserved. PRICE, FIFTEEN CENTS.

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276—Frank Merriwell in Maine. 410—Frank Merriwell’s Set-back. Published About July 13th.
286—Frank Merriwell’s Struggle. 413—Frank Merriwell’s Search. 524—Dick Merriwell’s Test.
284—Frank Merriwell’s First Job. 416—Frank Merriwell’s Club. Published About August 3rd.
288—Frank Merriwell’s Opportunity. 419—Frank Merriwell’s Trust. 527—Frank Merriwell’s Trump Card.
292—Frank Merriwell’s Hard Luck. 422—Frank Merriwell’s False Friend. Published About August 26th.
296—Frank Merriwell’s Protege. 426—Frank Merriwell’s Strong Arm. 530—Frank Merriwell’s Strategy.
300—Frank Merriwell on the Road. 428—Frank Merriwell as Coach. Published About September 14th.
304—Frank Merriwell’s Own Company. 431—Frank Merriwell’s Brother. 533—Frank Merriwell’s Triumph.
306—Frank Merriwell’s Prince. 434—Frank Merriwell’s Marvel. Published About October 5th.
312—Frank Merriwell’s College Chums. 437—Frank Merriwell’s Support. 536—Dick Merriwell’s Grit.
316—Frank Merriwell’s Problem. 440—Dick Merriwell at Fardale. 443—Dick Merriwell’s Glory.
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