

TIP TOP WEEKLY

"An ideal publication for the American Youth"

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year, Entered as Second Class Matter at the N. Y. Post Office by STREET & SMITH

No 52.

NEW YORK, April 10, 1897.

Price Five Cents

FRANK MERRIWELL'S DASH

OR
YALE
AGAINST THE
FIELD



By the Author
of

"FRANK MERRIWELL"

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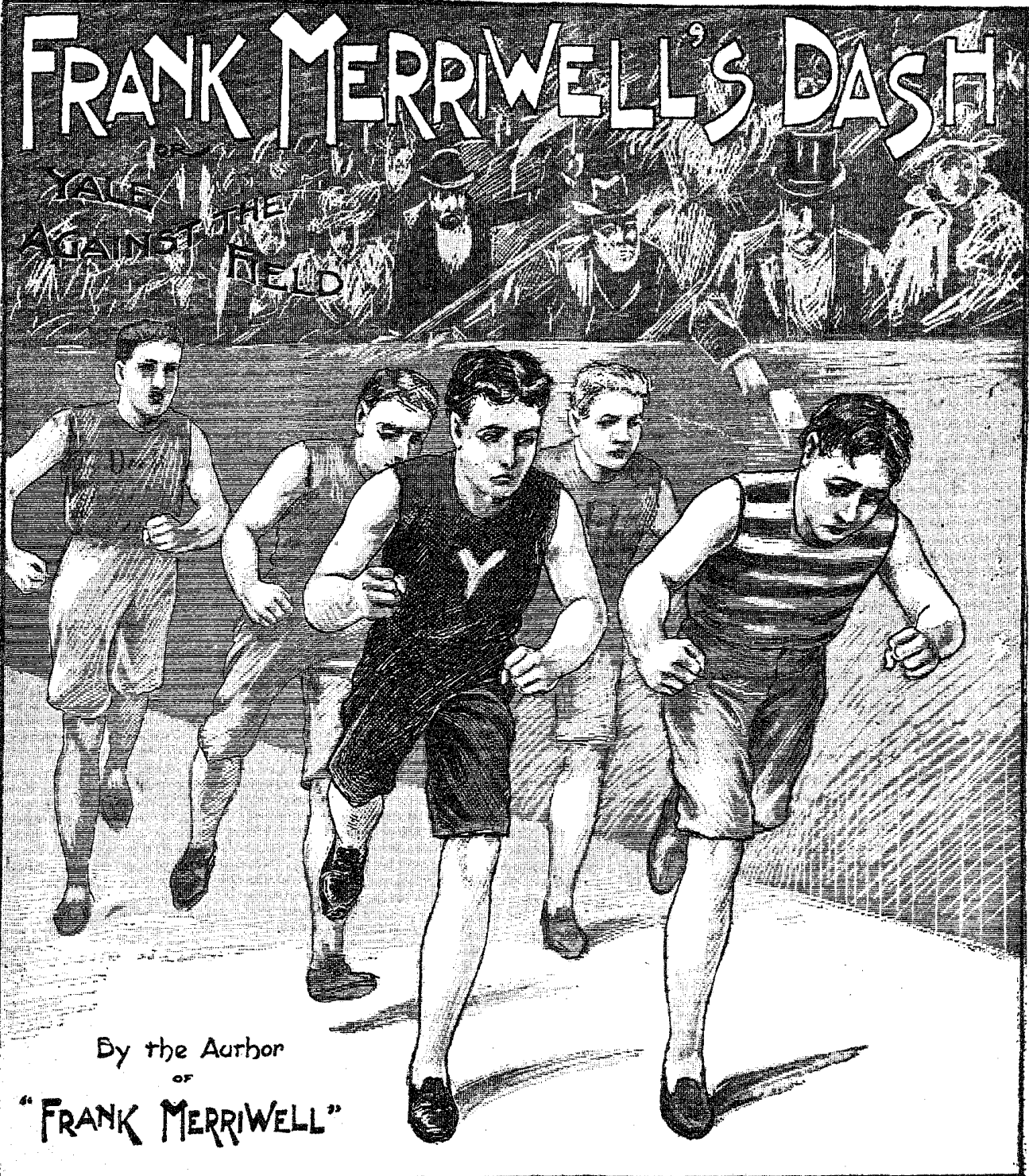
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Read the Novel Premium Offer on Page 32.

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FRANK MERRIWELL'S DASH;

OR,

Yale Against the Field.

By the Author of "FRANK MERRIWELL."

CHAPTER I.

FRIENDS OR FOES?

Thump—bang! thump—bang!

"Open this door!"

Thumpety — thump — bang! bang!
bang!

"Open this door, or I will dake it brown—I mean I will break it down!"

Harry Rattleton was excited.

"Hold on a moment, can't you?" cried the laughing voice of Frank Merriwell from within the room.

Harry was pressing against the door with one hand, having rained the heavy blows upon it with the other hand, which was clinched in a most threatening manner.

The door flew-open with a suddenness

that precipitated Rattleton into the room with a headlong rush and plunged him plump into the stomach of a young man who happened to be in the way.

"Ugh!"

"Wow!"

Bump! bump! — both went down, clasped in each other's arms.

Two other lads stood staring at the fallen ones. They were Frank Merriwell and Fred Flemming.

Tom Thornton was the unfortunate who stood in the way of Rattleton's headlong rush.

And Harry, quite unintentionally, had struck Thornton a smart blow with his clinched fist.

At that moment it did look as if the excited lad had rushed into the room

with the premeditated purpose of hitting Tom.

"Here! here!—break away!" cried Merriwell, sharply.

"Not much!" panted Tom, in excitement and anger. "Think I'm going to let him go, so he can hit me again?"

"Catch hold, Flemming," ordered Frank—"catch hold of your friend, and we'll part them."

He grasped Rattleton by the collar as he spoke, but Fred made no move to pull Thornton away.

Seeing this, Merriwell obtained a firm hold on the collars of both Harry and Tom, and, with a surprising display of strength, wrenched them apart, yanked them to their feet, and held them at arm's length.

"Steady, now!" he cried, as they seemed to betray a desire to get at each other. "Quit it!"

"He struck me!" cried Thornton.

"It was antirely excidental—no, entirely accidental," declared Harry, flourishing his arms.

Tom dodged.

"Well, you act as if you are trying to bring about another accident," he said. "I know you hit me intentionally, and I'll make you pay for it, too!"

"Bah! you can't make me pay for anything!" flung back Harry, his anger aroused by Thornton's words.

"Do you think you can run around punching fellows in this way without getting it back? You'll find you are mistaken!"

"You were in my way when I came in."

"I didn't have time to get out of your way."

"Well, what's all this about anyway?" demanded Frank. "Are you fellows trying to settle some sort of a score?"

"It looks to me," said Flemming, stiffly, "as if Mr. Rattleton took advan-

tage of our presence in this room to strike Thornton."

"Well, what are you chaps here for, anyway?" demanded Harry. "That's what I would like to know. We don't run in your class, and so—"

"Hold up, old man," interrupted Merriwell, promptly. "Mr. Flemming and Mr. Thornton called to see me about a personal matter."

"I thought so," declared Rattleton, "and I decided you would get the worst end of it, as they were two to your one—and the door was locked. If they are here to do you, count me into it. I'll take care of this fellow Thornton while you polish off Flemming."

"We did not come here to fight," said Fred, haughtily.

"Didn't?" exclaimed Harry, in surprise. "Then what sort of a game are you up to, for I know it is something crooked?"

Flemming tossed his head.

"Mr. Rattleton," he said, "your language is very offensive to me."

"Had to gear it—I mean glad to hear it," shot back Rattleton, rudely. "I didn't want you to misunderstand me."

"Mr. Merriwell," said Fred, turning to Frank, "I think we had better go. Our business was with you, and Mr. Rattleton seems determined to raise a quarrel with us. As you know, we did not come here to quarrel, and, regarding Mr. Rattleton as your friend, we will endeavor to overlook his behavior and insulting language."

"But we cannot forget it," added Thornton, giving Harry a fierce look. "It will be remembered."

"I am sure I don't want you to forget it," flung back Rattleton.

"Come, Tom," urged Flemming; "we will go. Good-day, Mr. Merriwell."

Frank released Thornton, who followed Flemming from the room, simply pausing at the door to say:

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"Here! here!—break away!" cried Merriwell, sharply.

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"Come, Tom," urged Flemming; "we will go. Good-day, Mr. Merriwell."

Frank released Thornton, who followed Flemming from the room, simply pausing at the door to say:

"Good-day, Mr. Merriwell."

"Good-day," smiled Frank.

And then, when the door had closed behind them, Frank dropped into a chair and laughed softly but heartily.

"Well, I fail to see anything sunny about it—I mean I fail to see anything funny about it," growled Rattleton, prancing fiercely up and down the room. "If you'll tell me where the laugh comes in, I'll snicker, just to keep you company."

"The whole thing is very funny," laughed Merriwell. "Why, you were eager to hammer Thornton, and the fellow was afraid you would, for all the bluff he put up."

"It would have given me great satisfaction to thump him," confessed Harry; "for I know it is exactly what he deserves. What were they up to, anyway? That's what puzzles me. I expected to find that they had done you up."

"Oh, nothing of the sort!"

"But they were up to some crooked game—I know it. I thought they had fastened the door, so that they could do the job without being interrupted."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Frank. "That explains why you looked as if you were literally thirsting for gore when you lunged into the room and grappled with Thornton."

"Dit I hit him?"

"You had your fist clinched, and you may have given him a slight rap in your excitement."

"Well, I did not give him that rap intentionally; if I had, he'd found something entirely different. By jingoes! I may get the chance to show him the difference some time!"

"You'd better drop it, old man."

"Eh? Drop it?"

"That's what I said, Harry, and that is what I meant, my boy."

"But why? I don't think I understand

you. Those fellows are your enemies, and that makes them mine."

"They have been my enemies, but we have had a peace conference."

"The dickens!"

"And we buried the hatchet."

"Well, I didn't suppose you could be fooled so easy! I knew they were up to some sort of a game—I knew it."

"Well, what sort of a game do you think it was?"

"They're trying to fool you—trying to make you think they are ready to bury the hatchet, while they are still waiting to hit you behind your back whenever they can. That's the kind of chaps they are. They can't fool me, if they can you. If they can lull you into carelessness till their opportunity comes, they will drive the knife into you, and sink it deep. Don't mink I'm thisted—I mean don't think I'm twisted. I am dead certain of the sort of cattle I'm talking about. You will be playing right into their hands if you get the idea that they have let up on you in the least. When they get a good chance, you'll get it in the neck."

CHAPTER II.

JOLLY LADS.

"Well, Harry," said Frank, "you may be right; but I have reasons to believe that Flemming is anxious to call a truce just at present. He made a serious mistake when he tried to enlist David Scott against me. Scott pretended he was my enemy, and, in that way, he found out all of Flemming's plots and secured enough evidence of the fellow's rascality to cause his expulsion from Yale if it were made public."

"Well, it should be made public immediately."

"Oh, I don't know about that! Expulsion from college might mean the ruin of Flemming's future."

"If he keeps on, he'll do that, whether he is expelled or not."

"If he does it himself, I shall not have it on my conscience. If I were to bring about his expulsion, and he went to the dogs, I might blame myself for it, thinking he would have done differently had he remained here. Do you catch on?"

"I catch on that you are dead easy with your enemies till they force you to down them for good."

"But when they do compel me to down them——"

"I will acknowledge that you always do a good job," said Rattleton, with an approving grin.

"Mr. Scott believed that I should be severe with Flemming and Thornton," admitted Frank; "but I knew that Thornton was dragged into the business by Flemming, without having any real heart for what he was doing. If I were to expose Flemming, it would implicate Thornton, and that seemed too much of a retaliation. I thought the whole matter over carefully, and decided to give the fellows a chance. Then Mr. Scott went to them and nearly frightened the life out of them by saying he meant to expose them to the faculty. That brought them to their knees immediately."

Rattleton expressed his satisfaction by a vigorous pantomime.

"Finally," continued Frank, "when they had begged and promised, Mr. Scott agreed to let up on them if they would come to me, offer apologies, and give me their pledge to let me alone in the future."

"And that is how they happened to be here to-day?"

"Yes."

"Why was the door locked?"

"I locked it to prevent any of the fellows from dropping in on us while we were talking the matter over."

"Well, Jones told me he had seen those chaps come in here, and I decided they

were looking for bother, so I made a hustle to get here. When I found the door locked, I was sure they had you in a corner, and so I threatened to break it down if it was not opened without delay."

"And, when it was opened, you came in like a raging lion."

"Well, I was ready for any scrim of a shortage—I mean any sort of a scrimmage."

"You showed your readiness," laughed Frank. "I have the word of those fellows that they will let me quite alone if I drop the past."

"I wouldn't believe either of them under oath!"

"You are a doubter anyway. We'll wait and see what will occur."

There was a rap on the door, which immediately popped open, and in bobbed a head, thatched with carrot hair, upon which was perched a crumpled cap. A freckled, jolly face was wrinkled into a cheerful grin, and a voice that was made up of bubbles and hollows cried:

"Hello, chaps! I just looked in to see if you were doing well, as the cook said to the lobster, when she lifted the saucepan lid."

"Come in, Stubbs," invited Frank, promptly—"come in and make yourself as big a nuisance as possible."

"No need to tell me to do that," piped the lad at the door, as he bounced into the room. "I always make myself a nuisance wherever I am. It is my policy."

He was a little short-legged fellow, with a roly-poly body and twinkling eyes. Good nature bubbled out all over him. At a glance you could see he was the sort of chap who would try to be merry under almost any circumstances.

This was Bink Stubbs, a lad with whom Frank and Harry had recently become acquainted. Frank had picked him up because of his merry ways and quaint sayings of the wise and humorous order.

"Have you fellers got any smokers?"

asked Bink, as he deposited himself on a chair.

"No, we haven't got any smokers," answered Harry. "And the last time you were here, Bruce Browning said you swiped a whole package of cigarettes from him."

Stubbs tried to look horrified, and then cried:

"Well, I'll be hanged! as the picture said when it found the cord was tied to it."

"You know neither of us smoke," said Merriwell.

"I know you pretend you do not, but I don't know that you are not bluffing when you say so."

"What's that? Do you mean to insinuate that I am lying. Why, I'll step on you, Stubbsie!"

"In that case my days are numbered, as the calendar said to the blotter."

There was a sound of voices outside the door, and then, with very little ceremony, three lads came filing into the room.

They were Browning, Diamond and Griswold.

"Get up, you little villain!" said Bruce, as he collared Stubbs and yanked him off the easy chair. "Don't you know enough to let other folks have a chance to sit down, you lazy little rascal?"

And then, with a sigh of relief, Bruce deposited his corpulent form on the chair.

Stubbs bristled up, as if he meant to fight, then seemed to change his mind, and shook his head and remarked:

"Such things are bound to a cur, as the dog said when he looked at the tin can that was tied to his tail."

The boys were welcomed by Frank and Harry, and Merriwell said:

"I'm glad you fellows dropped in. I want to find out how many of you are going to take that bicycle trip across the continent during the summer vacation."

"Jeewhiskers!" grinned Danny Griswold, who was, like Stubbs, a little fel-

low. "Think of Bruce Browning, the champion lazy man at Yale, riding a bicycle across the continent. The exertion of riding across the campus would utterly prostrate him."

"Um!" grunted Bruce. "It's singular that small things annoy one worst."

"Oh, yes," returned Danny, promptly; "even a little mosquito bores me frightfully."

"Say, Griswold," piped Stubbs, "that's a bad habit to get into."

"What's a bad habit to get into?" demanded Danny, bristling up resentfully.

"That suit of clothes you have on," said Stubbs, whimsically. "It's a miserable fit."

"Well, you'll have a bad fit if I get after you!" exclaimed Griswold, hotly.

"You're a base fraud and an impostor!

You are trying to steal my thunder by reading the same comic papers that I do.

If you keep this up you'll use up all of my original jokes."

"Oh, well," said Stubbs, "cough up a cigarette and I'll let you forgive me. I'm dying for a whiff."

Griswold hesitated, and then flung a package of cigarettes at Bink, who skil-

fully caught them, extracted one, closed the package, and tossed it back. A mo-

ment later the little chap had lighted the cigarette, and, as he deposited himself at

full length on a tiger-skin rug, he puffed out a great whiff of smoke, and mur-

mured:

"Now I have something to blow about, as the cyclone said when it lifted a house and barn into the next State."

"Speaking about clothes," said Browning, languidly, "did you see Goldstein, the tailor, to-day, Rattleton?"

"Yes, I saw him," nodded Harry.

"And did you tell him I said I would settle that little bill?"

"Sure."

"That's kind of you. Did he seem convinced?"

"He said he was."

"Was what?"

"Convinced that you lied."

This provoked a laugh. When the laughing had ceased, Griswold sagely observed:

"It is remarkable that man is the only animal that can lie standing up."

"Say, you chaps," called Frank, "drop this sort of chatter, and answer my question. How many of you are in for spending the summer vacation in a bicycle trip across the continent?"

"You'll have to excuse me," said Griswold, as he followed Stubbs' example and lighted a cigarette. "I'm going down to Bar Harbor, and play tennis on my vacation."

"I can't endure tennis," drawled Browning.

"I should say not. Too much exertion for you."

"It is not that. I don't like to be around where others are playing it."

"Don't? Why not?"

"Because it so noisy."

"Noisy? Christmas! How do you make that out?"

"Why, you can't play it without a racket," said Browning.

Griswold staggered and clutched at his heart.

"What papers have you been reading?" he gasped.

Diamond spoke up for the first time:

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Merriwell—I'll go on this bicycle trip across the continent, if I can secure my mother's consent."

"Will you?" cried Frank, eagerly.

"Then see her as soon as possible. I couldn't ask for a better fellow than you. Harry thinks he can go, and that makes three of us. We'll do the trick, even if we can't get another fellow. Is it agreed?"

"It is agreed if I can get my mother to agree to it," assured Jack.

"Well, let's talk about another matter," said Bruce. "The tournament at Madison Square Garden is right upon us. Are you on for anything, Merriwell?"

"Yes," answered Frank, "I shall take part in several contests."

"How about the mile run?" questioned Diamond.

"I believe Yates is in for that," said Merriwell.

"That's something I want to speak to you about," drawled Bruce.

CHAPTER III.

BROWNING'S DETERMINATION.

Frank was rather surprised, as Browning had taken very little interest in athletics of late. During his early days at Yale Bruce had been a pusher in athletic matters, being at that time an athlete himself, as he kept himself in form and held back the threatening development of flesh by the severest sort of training.

But Bruce could not continue to resist the temptations of his appetite, and it became more and more difficult for him to keep in trim. As long as he was a freshman he had done so, but when he became a sophomore he gradually abandoned the struggle.

Still he had remained active as a leader, and had been known at one time as "the King of the Sophomores." His final effort at training had been when he put himself in condition to meet Merriwell in a four-round hard-glove contest.

The bout had been pronounced a draw, but Browning afterward acknowledged that he must have been knocked out had it continued to a finish.

From that time Browning's interest in athletic matters waned.

He lost ambition in that line, and he soon became so overburdened with flesh that nothing save a question of life or death could have induced him to go into training.

It was not so very long before Bruce was known as the champion lazy man at Yale. All that he seemed to care about was to eat, drink, smoke and loaf. He seldom was known to "grind," and his attempts at "skinning" were pitiable failures.

Then he was dropped a class, and, as he still stuck to Yale, he found himself arrayed with Merriwell and the fellows whom he at one time had regarded as enemies.

In that class Merriwell was regarded as a leader in athletic matters, and Bruce seldom mentioned anything of the kind. Now, however, to Merriwell's surprise, he displayed sudden interest in the great inter-collegiate tournament to be held in Madison Square Garden, New York, directly at the close of the spring terms.

In the various contests Yale was to be represented by her best men. There had been some uncertainty concerning the one who would wear Yale's colors in the mile run, but the belief grew that Duncan Yates, a junior, would be the one finally settled on by the committee in charge of the matter.

"Why don't you go into that race, Browning, old sylph?" grinned Danny Griswold. "You would astonish the public."

"Some time I'll sit on you, runtie," growled Bruce.

Stubbs remarked:

"That will settle it, as the sugar observed when the egg dropped into the coffee."

Rattleton threw a slipper at Bink, who grunted as it struck him in the ribs, but serenely continued to smoke, his mottled face wrinkled into a quaint grimace.

"What is it that you want to say about the mile race, Browning?" asked Frank, his curiosity aroused.

"I want to say that I do not believe Yates is the proper man to represent Old Eli".

"He is fast, and he has a record."

"It's no use to talk about his record."

"Why not?"

"Orton, of U. P., lays over him, and this will be a case of Yale against the field. Better men than Orton may show up."

"Yates may break his own record."

"That word 'may' is all right, but it can be applied both ways. He may not."

"There's Van Tassle," said Diamond.

"He claims to be a record-breaker."

"A record-breaker!" sniffed Griswold. "Why, that fellow couldn't break an egg!"

"That's right," nodded Rattleton.

"He breaks records with his mouth. Don't talk about him."

"Well, there are others," laughed Frank.

"Name a few of them," invited Browning, with more animation than he had displayed for some time.

"There's Hickson."

"He's stiff in the joints, as you know."

"Walter Gordan."

"He's no stayer. That fellow can run, but he has not the sand to make himself a winner."

"He thinks himself the biggest thing on ice," said Rattleton.

"By the way," broke in Griswold, "what is the biggest thing on ice?"

"The profit," promptly answered Stubbs, and then he made a scramble to get out of Griswold's way.

"It's no use, I can't shine when that chap is around!" exclaimed Danny, with attempted seriousness. "He has an answer for all my conundrums."

"That makes me think of one for you," piped Bink, who was now perched on the back of a high chair, like a monkey.

"Why is a duel a quick affair?"

"Answer it yourself. I'll never tell."

"Well, a duel is a quick affair because it takes only two seconds to arrange it."

"There won't be a duel in this case,"

grunted Browning; "but there'll be a cold-blooded murder if you kids keep on. I'll assassinate you both!"

Frank laughed.

"Oh, let them go it, Bruce," he said. "It seems to amuse them, and it doesn't harm anybody else."

"I think Browning is right about Yates," declared Diamond. "He is not the proper man to represent Yale in that race."

"Whom would you suggest?" asked Frank.

"Frank Merriwell, by all means."

"Now that is folly!" said Merriwell, seriously.

"I fail to see why it is folly," cried Browning. "You are the man I have had in my mind all along."

"But I have no record."

"To the dickens with your records! What we want is a man who can run. He'll make a record."

"Why do you think I can run?"

"I have seen you run, and I have heard the fellows tell about your speed. That is enough in your case."

Frank shook his head.

"It is not enough," he contradicted. "I know I have a record as a base runner in a ball game, but the best base runners are not always able to make good showings in races. Besides that, base running is dash work, and this is a case of running a mile. There is a vast difference."

"That's all right," spluttered Harry, quickly. "You can run a mile—I mean run a mile with the best of 'em. I've seen you on a long run."

"When was that?"

"When we had that turkey chase. You led us all, and it didn't bother you a bit. Then, after you made the run out into the country and back, Pierson got after you before you could get to our rooms. You ran away from him, and held on to the turkey. That settled in Pierson's mind that you could hustle along all

right, and it had something to do with his giving you a place for a trial on the ball team."

"That is true," Frank was forced to confess.

"Have you ever been in any races?" asked Diamond.

"Oh, I took part in some races when I was at Fardale Academy."

"What did you do in them?"

"I believe I won, but you must remember that I had no such rivals to go against as will be found at the tournament."

"And you were in no such condition as you are now. Is that right?"

Frank was forced to confess that it was. Then Browning tried to pin Frank down and make him answer the question whether he did not have confidence enough in himself to believe he could race Duncan Yates for a mile.

"Of course I could race him," smiled Frank, "but the matter of winning is another question."

"Well, I believe you are the man to run for Yale in that race," said Browning; "and I am going to use my influence to see that you, and not Yates, are entered. That is settled, and it is no use for you to make any objections."

CHAPTER IV.

A HOT RUN.

Soon it became evident that Bruce Browning had not lost his old-time push entirely. When there was something to arouse him, he could bestir himself and get to work in a marvelous manner, as long as it was not necessary for him to again go into training.

Browning knew Paul Pierson, who was one of the committee of arrangements for the coming tournament, and he knew that Pierson was well aware of Frank Merriwell's general ability. Bruce had heard Pierson express a belief that Merri-

well was one of the persons who, by sheer determination and sand, as well as ability, was bound to win in almost everything he attempted.

Bruce went to Pierson immediately after leaving Merriwell's room. Pierson was one of the sort who seldom said much, and Browning left him without knowing whether he had made an impression or not.

Late that afternoon, however, Pierson accidentally met Frank, who was crossing the campus.

"I say, Merriwell," said Paul, in his abrupt manner, "can you run?"

"Some," answered Frank, sententially.

"Hum!" grunted Pierson.

Then he looked Frank all over, as if he had never seen him before and was taking his physical measure.

"You keep yourself in the very best condition all the time, I see," he finally observed.

"Well, I seldom do anything to abuse myself."

"Are you in training for a race?"

"Not exactly."

"How long would it take for you to put yourself in condition?"

"Possibly a week."

"What are you good for—a short dash, or a long run?"

"I think I can do either fairly well."

"Fairly well does not go at Yale, as you know, Mr. Merriwell. You must do things exceptionally well. You are altogether too modest. If something had not brought you out, nobody could have known you could do anything at all. You have been pushed in various ways by others, but you fail to push yourself."

"Oh, I do not go about blowing my own horn," said Frank, smiling.

"You will find you'll have to blow your own horn when you go into business, or my brother is a liar. He keeps hammering at me that the man who does not blow

his horn is the fellow who gets left. To a large extent, it is that way here at Yale. The fellow who keeps still and sits back gets left. That's my sermon. I'm not going to say any more now. Get into training for a long run. I'll come round at nine this evening and go you a sprint of a mile or two, just to see how you show up."

That was all. Pierson turned and sauntered away, without another word.

Frank whistled softly, and smiled.

"This is Browning's work," he muttered. "Pierson takes things for granted. How does he know I will take any part in a race? He does not ask if I will, but he tells me to go to work and get into shape. He is coming round to-night to see how I show up. All right."

At ten minutes of nine that evening, Paul Pierson rapped on the door of Merriwell's room, and was invited to walk in. He was in a rig for running, and he immediately said:

"Come, come! get out of those duds, Merriwell. You are to run with me to-night."

"How far?"

"From one to five miles, as I take a fancy."

"Oh, well, I won't change my clothes for a little thing like that," said Frank, carelessly.

"You'd better," declared Paul. "I'm going to give you a hustle, and you'll find you can keep up better if you are in a suitable rig."

"I'll take the chances of keeping just as I am."

Pierson's teeth came together with a click. He did not like that, although he tried not to show it.

"The fellow thinks he can outrun me on a long pull, as he happened to do so for a short distance once on a time," he thought. "I'll see if I can fool him."

Pierson considered himself an excellent long-distance runner, although he seldom

took part in races, realizing that, good though he was, there were still better men.

Frank had on a loose thin shirt, and a light-weight suit of clothes. He caught up a cap, and announced that he was ready to go with Paul.

They went out, and soon were crossing the campus. Having arrived at a point quite outside the college grounds, Paul paused and said:

"We will start from here and make a run out into the country. I will set the pace going out, but when we turn to come back, it will be a case of the best man gets home first. The termination of the run will be your room."

"That is satisfactory," nodded Frank.

Far away a band of jolly students were singing "Stars of the Summer Night," their melodious voices making sweet music beneath the great elms. The soft breath of June came across the campus, seeming to gently bear the words of the beautiful song to their ears.

"Are you ready?" asked Pierson, sharply.

"All ready."

"Then here we go."

They were off, shoulder to shoulder.

Although Frank had not seemed to prepare for the run, he had put on his running shoes, feeling that he might absolutely need them.

Along the streets of New Haven they went, attracting but little attention, as it was not an uncommon sight at that season to see some of the college lads taking a night run in that manner.

They passed a group of fellows who were standing beneath a street light near a corner.

"Here!" softly exclaimed one of the group; "who are these chaps?"

The entire party turned to take a look at the runners.

"It's Pierson——"

"And Merriwell!"

"What did I tell you, Yates!" exclaimed Fred Flemming, a ring of satisfaction in his voice.

"Well, may I be kicked!" growled Duncan Yates, as he stared after the two lads, who had passed and were scudding along the street at a steady trot.

"Flem seldom makes a mistake," murmured Tom Thornton.

"But Merriwell is not in his rig," said Andy Emery, the fourth one of the group.

"That doesn't make any difference," declared Flemming. "He is taking a run with Pierson, and that proves what I told Yates. You all know how that chap undermined me on the crew. I don't say that he can't row, mind you—I do not claim that I could have done any better than he did; but I do claim that he is full of such sneaking underhand tricks, and I knew he was trying for something when I saw him stop Pierson on the campus today."

Yates was silent, staring along the street, down which the two runners had disappeared.

"Come, old man!" cried Flemming, slapping Yates on the back, "let's go into Morey's, and sit down, where we can have a drink and talk this matter over."

Duncan shook his head.

"I won't go in there," he said.

"Why not?"

"I am in training, you know, and somebody would see me drinking there. That would kick up some talk."

"Well, will you go anywhere?"

"Yes, I'll go somewhere that we can sit down in a quiet room, where there is no chance that fellows who know me will drop in. I feel just like having something."

"I know the very place," declared Flemming. "Come on."

Then the quartette moved away, Flemming leading.

In the mean time Merriwell and Pierson had continued on their way. As had been

agreed, Pierson set the pace. At first he ran along at a gentle trot, but by the time the outskirts of New Haven were reached he had begun to increase his speed.

"Now," he thought, "I'll put Merriwell to the test, and I do not fancy he will be in condition to make a very hot run on the return."

Faster and faster went Paul, and still the lad at his side kept there with apparent ease. With their clinched hands held close to their breasts and their heads thrown back, they ran on and on.

There was a slice of a moon in the western sky, shedding a thin white light over the world. From far to the south came the shrill whistle of a locomotive, cutting through the air like a keen knife.

The road which Pierson had selected was one over which there was considerable travel, and it was in very fair condition.

Without appearing to do so, Paul slyly kept watch of Merriwell, wishing to see just how Frank stood the strain. He was forced to acknowledge that, for a time at least, Merriwell was standing it very well.

"Oh, he is endeavoring to show me how easy he can do it!" mentally exclaimed Paul. "Wait—wait a bit! I think I will give him a hot push for a bit."

Faster and faster ran Pierson, and soon he was rather gratified to hear Frank beginning to breathe heavily. Yes, although Paul had hoped that Merriwell would show up well, he did feel a momentary sense of satisfaction when it seemed that he was making the pace a hot one for his companion.

Then Frank began to lag. He did not fall far behind Paul, and still he seemed unable to keep his place at Pierson's side.

"I won't do a thing to him coming back!" decided Paul. "Browning was dead wrong. The fellow is capable of short dashes, but he is not the man for a long run. I am rather sorry."

At last, he decided that they had gone far enough into the country, and so he turned about, without stopping, calling to Frank:

"Now for the hustle into town, and let's see what you are made of, my boy. I am going to run away from you as if you were standing still."

"I wouldn't do that!" flung back Merriwell, as he wheeled about.

Somehow it seemed to Paul that there was a touch of sarcasm in the way Frank uttered the words. That aroused the committeeman still more, and he retorted:

"No, you wouldn't do it, because you couldn't; but I am going to."

"All right," laughed Frank. "I don't suppose there is any danger that somebody will steal me for my beauty if you leave me alone out here in the country. Go ahead and run away from me."

"Good-by."

"Good-by."

Then Pierson did run. He skimmed over the ground in a wonderful manner, but the sound of running feet clung close behind him, and, when he glanced over his shoulder, Merriwell was still there.

"Hanged if he doesn't hold on well!" mentally exclaimed Paul.

Then, as he glanced around, it began to seem that Merriwell was running with still greater ease than he had at any previous time. Somehow it appeared as if he was keeping close behind Pierson without any particular effort.

"You're doing well," Paul finally flung over his shoulder. "Can you keep it up?"

"I think so," was the half-laughing answer. "I am holding myself in so that I can make an attempt to follow you a short distance when you get ready to run away from me."

"Great smoke!" thought Paul. "Is he guying me? or does he fancy I have not been doing my best?"

After a little, he confessed:

"I am beginning to think that won't be an easy trick, Merriwell. You will not be far behind when we reach your room."

At this, Frank suddenly came up beside Paul.

"Judging by the way you talk, you are somewhat out of wind," he said.

"Not at all," declared Pierson.

"Then I presume you are in condition for a little dash?"

"Oh, of course! But you may beat yourself out if you crowd yourself too hard."

"Think so?"

"Sure. Better not."

"Oh, I think I'll chance it. Come on, old man, let's tear up some dust."

Then Frank spurred.

Pierson set his teeth and made a desperate effort to keep up, but, despite his determination not to fall behind, he found that Merriwell was steadily and surely drawing away.

"Come on," called Frank, in a rather tantalizing manner. "It can't be that you are going to let me run away from you?"

Paul did not answer.

"What's the matter?" called Frank, again. "Are you ill?"

Still no answer.

"Well, you are not sociable at all," laughed the lad in advance, tauntingly. "I don't seem to like your company, and so I think I will move along. Good-by."

With that, Pierson could see that the tantalizing fellow actually made an increase of speed.

"Confound him!" grated Paul. "I believe he was fooling me all along when he seemed to be having a hard time to keep up. All that panting and heavy breathing was put on."

It was decidedly humiliating to be "jollied" in such a manner; but Paul found he could not hold his own with Frank, and he finally gave up the strug-

gle. Still he continued to run on, thinking that the lad ahead would use up his wind by such a burst of speed, and believing there was a possibility of overtaking Merriwell before South Middle was reached.

This did not happen, however, and when Paul burst into Frank's room, he found Rattleton there, listening to a funny story that Merriwell was telling.

And Merriwell? He had his feet resting comfortably on the top of a table, while he lay back in an easy chair, looking remarkably cool, as if he had not lately made a run of several miles.

More than that, he had changed his clothes, as the suit he had on was not the same he had worn during the run!

Paul staggered in, and dropped limply on the couch, staring at Frank, as if he saw a ghost.

"Look—here—Merriwell," he panted, "what—are—you—made—of? Are—you—run—by—steam?"

"Oh, no!" laughed Frank. "I beg your pardon for leaving you in such a manner, but you know you had become so very unsociable that I had to do——"

Pierson made a weak gesture, and interrupted with:

"Don't apologize for that—it was the agreement that one should run away from the other, if possible, on the way back. You had a right to do it."

"What the dickens is all this about?" asked Rattleton, in a mystified manner.

"What have you fellows been doing?"

"Don't you know?" cried Paul, amazed.

"No, I don't know," declared Rattleton. "Frank walked into the room a short time ago, went into his bedroom, took a sponge bath and changed his clothes, and we have been telling stories since then."

"Took a sponge bath?" shouted Pierson, popping bolt upright. "Jerusalem! You talk as if he had been here half an

hour! I will admit that this beats anything I ever experienced!"

Then he flopped down on the couch again, as if utterly overcome.

CHAPTER V.

AN INCITIVE TO WIN.

Paul Pierson had made a discovery that night, and, before he left, he told Frank Merriwell to put himself into condition to enter one of the races at the Madison Square Garden tournament in New York.

"You seem to be in pretty good condition now," he said, with a grim smile; "but you know whether you can improve your condition or not. If you can, do it, for you are liable to be pitted against men who will give you a decidedly hotter time than you have ever struck."

"All right," said Frank, quietly. "You'll find that I shall be in shape, and I'll do my best to be a credit to Old Yale."

"You have been a credit to Yale ever since the day you entered college," said Pierson, sincerely. "To-night has settled one thing in my mind. I believe you are a wonder in almost anything in the way of athletics."

"Oh, not a wonder!" said Frank. "But you can be sure that I am bound to do my level best in anything I attempt."

"I know it! I am not sure I'll be able to get you on, but I am going to try to run you into the one-mile race. We have some men for the shorter dashes, but do not seem to have but one man besides yourself who can be considered for the mile run. He has been in training for some time, and the committee had nearly decided on him. Now I am satisfied that you are the better man, but I'll have to satisfy the others."

"I want you to bear witness that I have not worked to fill the place of any other fellow."

"It might be better for Yale if you

would work for such things," growled Pierson. "You will not find other fellows holding back. If any chap is capable of filling your place at anything, you may be sure he will fill it, and he'll never stop to consider your feelings about the matter."

"That is rust jite—I mean just right!" cried Rattleton, approvingly.

"Well, I am going to my rooms and take a rub-down," said Paul. "Good-night, fellows."

"Good-night, Mr. Pierson."

When the door had closed behind Paul, Rattleton executed a grotesque dance on the carpet.

"Whoop!" he softly cried. "Didn't I knock him silly when I pretended not to know anything about the run this evening! Oh, wheejiz—er, jeewhiz! he nearly fainted when I told him you calmly walked into the room, took a sponge bath, put on another suit, and then we had been telling stories."

"You rascal!" cried Frank, laughing and giving Harry a shake. "That was all your own work. I didn't know you were thinking of running such a bluff on him."

"Never thought of it myself till he came in," chuckled Harry. "Between us we managed to get you out of your other clothes, give you a quick rub, and jump you into a fresh suit before Pierson showed up."

"It has been a very enjoyable evening," smiled Frank, as he again deposited himself on the easy chair. "If I had planned to have sport with Pierson, I could not have worked it better. You should have heard me panting and puffing along behind him on our way out! You should have heard him bidding me good-by when we started to come back! And then you should have heard me asking him if he was ill when I got ready to leave him!"

Harry laughed in the heartiest manner, as his imagination supplied the picture.

"It is too good!" he cried. "And you will go into the mile run sure! Browning caused Pierson to tackle you."

"It seems that I have done pretty well in athletic matters this spring," said Frank, "and I was rather indifferent concerning the matter of taking any prominent part in the tournament at Madison Square. However, if I can do anything to uphold the standard of Old Eli, I want to do my best."

"Frank, if you run in that race, you will win," came soberly from Harry's lips. "I shall stake every dollar I can rake on you. If you do win, I'll have enough cash to take me through the summer vacation we have planned."

The door had been softly opened, and the most of Rattleton's speech was overheard by a third person, who now exclaimed:

"And I'm going to bank my cash on you, Merriwell! If you win, I'll—I'll—why, hang me! I'll make that trip across the continent with you!"

It was Bruce Browning, who advanced into the room.

"Are you in earnest about that, Bruce?" asked Frank.

"You bet I am in earnest!" was the assurance.

"You will try to pump a bicycle from New York to San Francisco?"

"Try it! Confound it! I tell you I'll do it if you win the mile run for Old Yale!"

"Then," said Frank, "I have a double object to work for, and I am going to win if it is in my body to do so!"

Rattleton was astonished to see Browning show so much animation.

"Why, you actually appear like your old self!" he exclaimed.

Bruce sat down.

"Tell me about it," he invited, speaking to Frank. "Some of the fellows said they saw you and Pierson chasing your-

self, and I caught what Rattleton was saying just as I came in."

Frank told Bruce all about the night run, and a lazy smile spread over the fat lad's round face as he listened.

"That's a corker on Pierson!" he exclaimed. "He thinks he is some when it comes to a long-distance run, and I'll wager something that you have fixed him so he will fight to get you into that race. I can see him bidding you farewell! Ha! ha! ha! And then I can see him when you took your turn! Ha! ha! ha!"

Bruce laughed in a hearty manner, and, for some time they talked over the events of the evening.

"What sort of a fellow is Yates?" asked Frank. "I've never met him to have a talk with him."

"Oh, he isn't half bad," answered Bruce, in a somewhat non-committal manner.

"I presume he will feel injured if I am chosen to run, instead of him?"

"What if he does? That's none of your business."

CHAPTER VI.

THE RUN TO THE STATION.

The final ball game of the series between Harvard and Yale was to take place at Springfield. The day of the game arrived, and there was an exodus from Yale.

There was a rush for the last train by which the college lads could reach Springfield in time to witness the whole of the game.

On their way to the station, Frank and Harry fell in with Jack Diamond and Danny Griswold.

"We've got to hurry," said Diamond, glancing at his watch. "There is no time to waste if we want to catch the train."

They soon overtook Flemming, Emery and Yates. These fellows were in the company of several other lads, among

whom were two of the committee of arrangements for the tournament.

"You fellows seem to be in a great rush," one of the party called to Frank and his friends.

"You had better rush a little, if you want to catch the train," flung back Griswold.

"Ah!" said Andy Emery, with an undisguised sneer; "it's Merriwell and his trainers. They are putting him in condition to beat the field in that race he expects to enter."

"Go him to the station, Yates!" exclaimed one of the lads accompanying Duncan. "Just show him he doesn't know how to run."

"Yah!" flung back Griswold, quick as a flash. "Yates knows better than to try that. Where would he be when Merriwell reached the station?"

"Buying his ticket inside," sneered Emery, in return.

That aroused Jack Diamond, who flushed hotly and turned on Andy.

"I'll go you ten even that Merriwell beats Yates to the station platform," he flashed, producing a roll of bills. "This is business! Take me if you have the nerve!"

"Oh, I'll take you!" cried Emery; "and, when the business is over, I'll take your money, too."

He promptly produced a ten-dollar bill, and the money was quickly thrust into the hands of a stakeholder, who was chosen by mutual agreement.

"It strikes me you men are pretty swift," said Yates, in a manner that showed his disapproval. "How do you know I will run?"

"'Sh!" warned Flemming. "You'll have to run now, or they'll say you were afraid to go against Merriwell."

It was plain that Yates did not feel at all pleased by the situation, but he said:

"If I must run, I will, and I'll beat the fellow, but I don't care about getting into a sweat just now."

"Never mind that," said Emery, in Yates' ear. "If you beat Merriwell to the station, it is pretty sure that you spoil his show for getting into the mile run. This is your chance to do that little job, so don't let it slip."

Frank had said little very It was not

easy to tell if he felt satisfied or displeased over the situation.

The party turned a corner, and came in view of the station.

"Here is a good starting point," said Emery. "Does it satisfy you, Diamond?"

"Perfectly," bowed Jack.

"Then that's all right. Are you going to run, fellows?"

"I leave that entirely to Mr. Yates," said Frank, quietly.

"Oh, I'll go you—and I'll do you!" exclaimed Yates, as he tore off both coat and vest and flung them at Flemming, who caught them.

That started Rattleton, who excitedly cried:

"I'll tet you ben dollars—I mean I'll bet you ten dollars you don't do it!"

Yates paid no attention to this, but Flemming said:

"I'll have to go you, Rattleton. Put up the tenner."

The money was quickly posted, and then the rivals stood side by side, with their coats and vests removed, ready for the word.

Merriwell seemed quiet and indifferent, as if it were an event of no particular moment; while on Yates' face there was a look that plainly showed he was determined to settle all dispute by winning the dash to the station.

One of the committee had been chosen to give the word, and he stepped out, sharply calling:

"Ready!"

The lads leaned far forward over the scratch in the dirt, which had been drawn by somebody's heel.

"Go!"

Away shot the rivals like leaping fawns. They seemed like two foxes, and the crowd of lads who broke away in pursuit resembled a pack of hounds.

It was a hot dash, and, for some time, the boys were running side by side, neither seeming to have an advantage.

"Wait a bit," panted Emery, at Diamond's side; "you'll soon see Yates spurt and leave Merriwell."

"What do you think Merriwell will be doing while Yates is spurting?" asked Jack, sarcastically.

"He'll seem to be standing still."

"Will he? Wait and see!"

The rivals were drawing near the station, and still it seemed that they were keeping side by side.

"Now they are spurting!"

Yes, they were spurting for the finish, but, to the amazement of Yates' friends, a single bound had seemed to carry Frank Merriwell two yards in advance of the other runner, and this advantage Merriwell maintained.

In another moment the station would be reached, and the race must end. Seeing this, Andy Emery was bitterly grinding out an exclamation of rage and disgust.

Suddenly Yates seemed to trip and fall heavily. He tried to spring up, but seemed to be hurt, and he was struggling to rise when Flemming reached the spot and lifted him to his feet.

"Are you hurt?" asked several, as they gathered around Duncan.

"Not much," he answered, rather thickly; "but I lost the dash by that fall."

"Rats!" muttered Harry Rattleton. "He had lost it before he fell."

"I was ready to make the final spurt, which would have carried me ahead of Merriwell at the finish," declared Yates.

"Oh, it is a case of beastly luck!" growled Andy Emery. "It is the way everything turns in Merriwell's favor. He never wins except it is by cold luck."

"Oh, come off!" chirped Danny Griswold. "You're sore, that's all ails you!"

"Shut up, or I'll wring your neck!"

"You can't catch me, you know," taunted the little fellow, as he skipped out of reach.

On the station platform Merriwell was quietly waiting the arrival of the others, fanning himself with his handkerchief.

It happened that Bruce Browning was at the station, and he had seen the race between the rivals. In his ponderous manner, he hurried to congratulate Frank.

"Yates was a fool to try it!" declared Bruce, his round face seeming to expand into one broad grin. "He might have known what would happen. I see Crockett and Gibbs, two of the committee, with the fellows. They witnessed

the whole business, and it must have settled matters in their minds."

"I wish Yates had not fallen," said Frank, with regret.

"He did not fall accidentally, and you can bet your greasy coin on that! It was plain enough."

"Then you think—just what?"

"That he saw he was beaten, and fell so that he might make a claim that you outran him by accident."

"I had the lead."

"Yes, and he could not have recovered and overtaken you in a week! But that makes no difference. Allee samee, I rather fancy Yates will not fool anybody very much."

The knot of fellows now approached the station, where there was a great throng of Yale lads who had seen the race.

Yates was very pale, but there was a burning light in his eyes. He advanced straight to Frank, and distinctly said:

"Mr. Merriwell, you beat me this time through an accident; but I will run you again, and I'll win."

Frank bowed with the utmost courtesy.

"Mr. Yates," he said, "you will find me willing and ready to run with you any time."

"Whoopee!" squealed Danny Griswold, turning a handspring. "That's business straight from headquarters!"

"Here comes the train!" was the cry.

Then there was a scramble for tickets and for seats on the train.

CHAPTER VII.

ENEMIES AT WORK.

It happened that Merriwell and his friends entered the smoker. They found Bink Stubbs curled up in a corner, puffing away at a cigarette.

"You seem to be well fixed, Stubbs," said Frank.

And the little fellow cheerfully returned:

"Oh, I've got a snap, as the bear said when he stepped into the steel trap."

Then room was made for a jolly little party in the corner, and all the fellows who smoked lighted up cigarettes or cigars.

The rivals were drawing near the station, and still it seemed that they were keeping side by side.

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Yes, they were spurting for the finish, but, to the amazement of Yates' friends, a single bound had seemed to carry Frank Merriwell two yards in advance of the other runner, and this advantage Merriwell maintained.

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"I've got ten more to put on the game to-day," cried Rattleton, gleefully. "And I took it out of Flemming. That is what pleases me the most."

Jack Diamond smiled.

"It pleases me to say that I pulled a sawbuck out of Emery," he said. "He squirmed a little, but it was too late to squeal."

"We'll all come back with our clothes stuffed with money," declared Browning. "Yale is sure to win to-day, and that will put lots of fellows on their feet. Some of the boys have soaked everything they could rake together to get money to put on the game, for Heffner's arm is in great form, and he says he will make monkeys of the Harvard Willies."

"Speaking about hocking things," said Bandy Robinson, "I let my unc. have a dozen white shirts, among other things. If Yale doesn't win, I won't have a shirt to my name."

"That's nothing," declared Ben Halliday, nonchalantly, as he blew out a big whiff of smoke. "I've soaked my entire wardrobe, save what I have on my back. But Willis Paulding did the slickest trick to raise the wind."

"Paulding?" cried Diamond. "I'd never dreamed he could do anything very smooth."

"He did, just the same. Last year, when Merry pitched the deciding game of the series, Paulding felt sure Harvard would win, and he stuck on 'em every last rag of money he could rake and scrape. Well, Yale won, and Willis was busted. He was forced to tell his old man the whole truth before he could get money enough to let him out of New Haven for the summer. More than that, the old man has taken precautions to prevent Willis from having any money to waste in betting this year. He has all of Willis' bills sent to him to settle, and keeps his son horribly short of filthy. Just as hard, Willis found out that the governor had told his tailor to make the boy all the clothes he wanted. That was enough. Willis ordered six suits at fifty dollars each, and he soaked every one of them at ten each as soon as he got them. So you see Paulding is provided with plenty of coin for this little racket, and he says he is going to put every red he

has on Old Yale. Last year cured him of betting against his own colors."

"If Willis thought of that scheme himself, he has more brains in his head than I fancied," smiled Diamond.

"Tell you how I made a strike," chirped Danny Griswold. "You know I've been writing a few things and giving them away to the papers. Well, the governor heard of it, and he decided I was making a fool of myself, so he sat down and fired a shot at me. He called my attention to the fact that Johnson said the man who writes for anything but money is a fool. This is the way I answered: 'Dear Gov: I observe you say some chap by the name of Johnson says the man who writes for anything but money is a fool. I quite agree with Mr. Johnson. Please send me one hundred dollars.' That must have hit the old boy about right, for he sent me fifty."

Danny ended with a gleeful chuckle, and the listening lads laughed.

"That's pretty good—for you," nodded Bink Stubbs; "but speaking about clothes reminds me that I had a little lunch in a restaurant last evening, and I found a button in the salad. I called the waiter's attention to it, and he calmly said, 'That's all right, sir; it's part of the dressing.'"

"Now he has broken loose!" cried Danny Griswold. "There is no telling what sort of a rusty old gag he'll try to spring. If we only had a few stale eggs for him!"

Bink grinned, as he observed:

"There's nothing like poached eggs, as the nigger said when he robbed the hencoop."

Diamond proposed a song, and soon the boys were at it. When they had finished one song, Browning soberly observed:

"It seems to me that there is one song which would be particularly appropriate for this season when all of us are soaking something in order to raise the wind."

"What is it?" shouted several voices.

"Solomon Levi."

In another moment the merry lads were shouting:

"My name is Solomon Levi, my store's on Salem Street;
That's where you buy your coats and vests
and everything else that's neat.

I've second-handed ulsterettes, and every-
thing else that's fine,
For all the boys they trade with me at a hun-
dred and forty-nine.

Chorus:

"Oh, Solomon Levi! tra, la, la, la!
Poor Sheeny Levi! tra, la, la, la, la, la, la!
"And if a bummer comes along to my store
on Salem Street
And tries to hang me up for coats and vests
so very neat,
I kick that bummer right out of my store,
and on him sets my pup,
For I won't sell clothing to any man who
tries to hang me up."

Thus the rollicking lads spent the time as the train rolled along bearing them to witness the great ball game of the season with Harvard.

Again and again Frank Merriwell's friends expressed regret because his hand, on which there had been a felon, prevented him from taking part in the game. They could not forget that he had pitched the deciding game between Yale and Harvard the previous year, and had won it.

Frank had also done some good work during the present season, and sporting papers all over the country had declared that he was one of the very best college "twirlers."

This however, was Hugh Heffner's last year at Yale, and, without doubt, the coming game was the last he would ever pitch for "Old Eli."

Until Merriwell appeared, Heffner had been Yale's mainstay in the box, and his admirers declared that it was pretty sure that a long time would elapse before he would have a worthy successor.

But Heffner was overworked, and he came near throwing his arm out. As it was, he strained his arm so that he was utterly unable to pitch at all.

Then it was that it was found necessary to find somebody to assist the "change pitcher," Dad Hicks, in his work.

Hicks was good for four or five innings, but he was unable to keep up the strain through an entire game.

Paul Pierson, captain and manager of the Yale nine, had seen Merriwell do some pitching for the freshmen, and he resolved to give Frank a trial.

Pierson's judgment was not at fault, and Merriwell quickly proved that he

was worthy to become Heffner's successor.

Of course there was much regret because Frank could not be on the bench, at least, ready to go into the game if needed; but all seemed to feel confident that Heffner would make his last game for Yale a hot one. He had done some marvelous work, and, as he declared himself in prime condition, there was no reason why he should not hold Harvard down on this occasion.

While Merriwell was surrounded by friends in the smoker, and the boys were having a decidedly jolly time, Duncan Yates was getting into a decidedly ugly mood in the adjoining car.

When Yates thought of his failure to beat his rival in the dash to the station he ground his teeth and muttered bitter curses.

And he was egged on by Fred Flemming and Andy Emery. Tom Thornton had joined the group, but he said very little, and, when he found an opportunity, he whispered in Flemming's ear:

"Better go slow. Remember the promise we gave Merriwell. If he finds out we are working against him, it will go hard with us."

"He won't find it out. I hate him too much to keep still if I can arouse another fellow against him. Give me your flask. Yates has killed all I have in mine."

Thornton took a whisky flask from his pocket, and slipped it into Flemming's hand. Then he left, for he did not wish Merriwell's friends to see him in such company.

Flemming and Emery made a pretense of drinking with Yates, but they did not take much. Yates, however, continued to "hit the bottle hard." His face became flushed, and his eyes glowed as Flemming continued to tell him of Merriwell's "underhand work."

"That fellow did me dirt," declared Flemming. "In this same sneaking way, he had me dropped from the crew this spring, and got on in my place."

"That's right," agreed Emery. "He has a way of influencing such men as he can get at, and he is using his influence to get the committee to throw you over."

"And he can't run with you anyway," said Flemming. "It is possible that he

can lead you in a short dash, like the race to the station to-day, but he would not be in it in a long run."

"That race was one of his tricks," asserted Emery. "I believe the job was put up by him."

"How?" asked Yates, huskily.

"Why, he saw you in company with the rest of us, and he thought he stood a good show of outrunning you for a short spurt, so he had Diamond and Rattleton make the talk that they did to bring the race about."

"If that was not crooked, I don't know what you could call it," nodded Flemming. "He sprung it on you when you were not suspecting, and he led you to go against him for a short run, in which he is at his best. All the time, he knew he was not your match for a long race. That doesn't make a bit of difference to him."

"Not a bit," said Andy. "He is not looking for the good of Old Yale, but he is looking to get into the big race at the tournament. He has been lucky in everything he has tried, and he is depending on his luck to win the race and acquire further glory for himself."

"Let's have another drink all round," suggested Flemming, as he produced Thornton's flask once more.

Yates took several swallows. Emery and Flemming pretended to drink in a hearty manner, but they allowed very little whisky to go down their throats.

This drink seemed to be the one that aroused Yates to action. He suddenly jumped to his feet, and there was a fierce look on his face as he cried:

"Come on!"

"What are you going to do?" asked Flemming, quickly thrusting the flask into his pocket.

"I am going to find Frank Merriwell!" came hoarsely from Yates' lips.

CHAPTER VIII.

MERRIWELL AROUSED.

There was a crush in the rear end of the smoker. A crowd had gathered there, and the lads were singing, shouting, laughing and making merry in various ways.

Some fellows were sitting on the backs of the seats. The trainmen could not

drive them down. It was useless to try with such a set of lads.

Danny Griswold was astride the shoulders of Dismal Jones, who was the only solemn-looking man in the car. Occasionally Jones would "break out" in his peculiar camp-meeting revivalist's style and would deliver fragments of a sermon on the frivolous things of the world. Each time he was quickly suppressed, however.

Into the midst of this jolly crowd came a lad whose face was flushed and whose eyes were gleaming strangely. His lips curled back over his set teeth, and he seemed to quiver with a strange eagerness.

"Let me through!" he growled, forcing his way along. "There is a fellow here I want to see."

There was something in his voice that caused them to give him room to advance till he was standing directly in front of Frank Merriwell. Then his hands clinched, and, as he tried to speak, he choked with passion, so that words failed him.

A sudden hush came over the throng, for they saw that there was trouble impending.

"It's Yates!"

Somebody muttered the words, and they seemed to break the spell that had fallen on the enraged lad who was glaring at Frank.

"Yes, it is Yates!" he snarled. "I suppose all you fellows are Frank Merriwell's chums, but that makes no difference to me."

He stopped a moment, but he did not take his eyes from Frank's face. He seemed to be gathering himself for the supreme effort.

"Merriwell," he said, his voice shaking, "you are a sneak!"

Every one expected Frank would leap to his feet and strike Yates, but he did nothing of the kind. The hot blood rushed to his face, and then fled away again, leaving him cold and pale. About his firm jaws there was a sudden hardening, and in turn he showed his teeth.

"Mr. Yates," he said, "you are not complimentary."

"I do not mean to be to such a fellow as you!" Yates shot back.

"You are insulting!"

"I am if the truth can be considered an insult."

"I demand an explanation."

"I do not propose to waste any breath in giving explanations to such as you. You know why I say you are a sneak—you know you are a sneak!"

Frank Merriwell laughed. That laugh was a warning that he was dangerous. Diamond knew it; Rattleton knew it. They held themselves ready to make room when Frank Merriwell saw fit to act.

"You put yourself in a bad light by calling a man a sneak and then refusing to tell why you call him that," said Frank.

Yates did not know Merriwell very well and that laugh had not sounded a warning to him. Instead, it really seemed that Frank was frightened, and he had laughed to conceal the fact.

"It is my conviction," he cried, "that you are not only a sneak, but you are also a coward! If that is not enough, I will make it still more forcible."

Quick as a flash, he struck Frank in the face with his clinched fist.

A gasp came from those who witnessed this act. There was no time given for further words.

Like a leaping panther, Frank Merriwell shot up and alighted on Duncan Yates. He clutched Yates in his strong grasp, snapped him off his feet, swung him into the air.

The spectators had fallen back in a wild sort of scramble to get out of the way. Thus enough room was made for Merriwell to act.

It was a warm day, and the car door was open. Almost before any one could tell what Frank thought of doing, he leaped out through the doorway, and, with the lad who had delivered the blow still poised above his head, seemed on the verge of hurling Yates from the flying train!

CHAPTER IX.

THE FORTUNES OF BASEBALL.

"Stop, Frank!"

Diamond shouted the words.

Cries of horror broke from the lips of the other spectators of the scene, but,

strangely enough, none of them made a move to prevent Merriwell from carrying out his apparent purpose.

If Merriwell flung Yates from the train the unfortunate lad who had aroused Frank's wrath must be instantly killed.

At first, when he had felt himself clutched, Yates had struggled, but, to his amazement, he seemed like a child in the grasp of the infuriated athlete.

As Frank reached the platform and poised Yates aloft, the latter seemed to realize his peril, and fear robbed him of nerve and strength. He was limp and helpless in Merriwell's grasp.

And then, almost as quickly as Frank had caught the lad up, he lowered him to his feet.

Again Merriwell laughed, but this time there really seemed to be something of amusement in the sound.

"If I had dropped you off, Mr. Yates, you must have been injured," he said, and his voice was soft and gentle.

Yates gasped.

"Jee!" chattered Bink Stubbs. "That was a regular hair-raiser, as the fellow said when he finished the blood-and-thunder story."

Yates swayed and caught at the iron rail. The flush had gone out of his face, which was ashen-gray.

"Better go into the car," said Merriwell. "You seem rather unsteady, and you might fall off here."

Without a word, Yates steadied himself by taking hold of the side of the door, and entered the car.

Merriwell followed, taking out his handkerchief and pressing it lightly to the spot on his cheek where a slight bruise marked the spot that had felt the enraged lad's fist.

The witnesses of this scene seemed to breathe freely for the first time. They stared at Frank as if his marvelous display of strength had been a revelation to them.

Yates had plenty of friends, as he had never seemed a bad sort of fellow, but the fact that he had struck Merriwell while the latter was sitting down was against him.

"He's been drinking," one declared. "Merriwell could not have handled him that way otherwise."

"Did Merriwell really mean to throw him off?" asked another.

There were some murmurs of disapproval at Frank's action, but the expressions of astonishment and admiration for his display of strength drowned all other sounds.

Yates turned and looked at Frank, but he seemed unable to express his feelings by means of words.

Jack Diamond was flushed with rage.

"It would have served the fellow right if Merriwell had dropped him off!" declared the hot-blooded Southerner.

Andy Emery was near at hand, but he had been unable to give Yates any assistance when the latter was grasped by Frank.

"Good heavens!" he kept repeating, as he stared at Frank Merriwell in a manner that showed his unutterable amazement.

It was plain that such a display of strength had been a revelation to him, and from that time Emery was bound to regard Merriwell with renewed respect.

"Mr. Yates," said Frank, quietly, "this is no place to settle any quarrel that has arisen between us; but I wish to say before witnesses that I consider you entirely in the wrong, and certainly you owe me an apology. You may not think so now, but I believe you will think so in time."

That was all. He returned to his seat and sat down. Yates seemed to hesitate, and then turned away, accompanied by Emery.

Flemming had kept himself in the background during the entire affair.

When the train reached Springfield Yates was in no condition to go to the ball ground. He had taken too much whisky to carry, and his pretended friends, Flemming and Emery, were forced to get him out of sight as soon as possible.

"That ought to be a settler for him," said Diamond. "A fellow who is in training for a race can't afford to get loaded."

Yale men had heavily backed their own club to win, and it seemed that the majority of the Harvard crowd was trying to put money on the blue.

It was expected by Harvard that Merri-

well would pitch the deciding game, for the actual condition of his hand had been kept a secret, and Harvard feared Merriwell.

To himself Frank confessed that he could pitch the game, as his hand was in fairly good condition, but, such improvement had not been expected, and it had been arranged that he should do no "twirling."

Besides that, it was Heffner's last game for Yale, and, taking into consideration the record he had made, it seemed no more than right that he should be placed in the box.

The usual crowd had gathered to witness the game, and there was the usual display of flags. Yale was over-confident; Harvard was hopeful, but filled with fears.

The game began, and for three innings Yale had the advantage. The "sons of Old Eli" were jubilant, and they made the air ring with their cheers and songs.

At the end of the third inning it was seen that Harvard must make a change if it had any hope of winning. Yedding, the great Cambridge pitcher, was "rocky." He could not find the plate, and he was "hammered" when he did "get 'em over."

Some Yale man with an inclination to rhyme had composed some doggerel verse, which about twenty lads were singing to some sort of mongrel tune.

"Poor Harvard she can talk—
(That's all!)

At other things she'll balk;
We'll beat her in a walk—
Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!

"Poor Harvard's lost her grip—
(That's so!)

She's let the pennant slip,
We've done her up this trip—
Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!"

"It is altogether too early in the game to crow," declared Frank Merriwell. "Several things may happen before the ninth inning is over."

"Oh, we've got the game nailed solid now!" declared Bruce Browning, in a satisfied way. "Robinson will be able to get his shirts out of soak."

In the fourth inning Harvard sent a new pitcher into the box. It was Coulter, who, as a freshman, had pitched against Merriwell.

Coulter was nervous and rather wild at first, but, he puzzled the Yale men, who could not hit him when he did get them over.

"If he steadies down, he will prove to be a bad man," said Frank, soberly. "This is his first trial on the regular team, and he is not at his best just now."

Yale secured one score in the fourth inning, while Harvard retired with her third whitewash.

In the fifth there was a change. Coulter did steady down in a most astonishing manner, for he sent the Yale men to the bench in one-two-three order.

That seemed to give Harvard new life, and, when she came to bat, she showed a determination to do something.

Right there was where Heffner took a streak of wildness, and Harvard scored three times.

Coulter kept up his work in the sixth, by allowing but one short single to be taken off his delivery, and no Yale man got further than second base.

Then it seemed that Harvard came to the plate with a determination to "pound it out." The defenders of the crimson jumped on Heffner's curves, and the way they banged the leather gave the Yale crowd symptoms of heart failure. A single, a two-bagger and a homer in quick succession caused Heffner to develop a bad case of "rattles," and it seemed that Harvard would never let up. There was consternation in the Yale ranks when Harvard tied the score with but one man out, and that consternation threatened to become a panic when two more scores came in.

Old Man Hicks was set at work "warming up," although it was felt that he must be a desperate resort. When Harvard scored again, Hicks was sent into the box.

The change seemed to work well, for Harvard's score getting was brought to an abrupt termination.

But Yale was in a desperate situation, for, at the beginning of the seventh Harvard was three scores in the lead.

Merriwell had been on the point of going down and offering to do what he could to check Harvard's wild career, but

it seemed that Old Man Hicks had done that, and so he sat still.

But Yale could not score. Coulter seemed to feel that the opportunity of his life had arrived, and he sent the Spatling's over the plate with all sorts of twists. The Yale men could not make fair and satisfactory connections with the ball, so no man reached home.

Hicks was lucky, and he succeeded in scattering the hits, which, with fine support, enabled him to retire Harvard with another goose's egg.

The eighth inning was disastrous for the blue, although Yale won a score by hard base running. When Harvard took her turn, she seemed to fathom Dad Hicks' delivery, and, for a short time, he was treated quite as bad as Heffner had been. At the end of the eighth inning Harvard was six scores ahead, and it was plain that the game was lost for Yale.

Scores of sad-faced Yale spectators were heard expressing regret that Frank Merriwell had not been used in the game. Some of the wearers of the blue left the field immediately, unwilling to witness the termination of the game.

With despair set upon their faces, the Yale men went to the bat, ready to fight to the last gasp. But Coulter was also determined not to let slip any of the glory he had won, and all Yale's efforts to score were fruitless. The game ended with Harvard still six in the lead.

Phil Coulter was the hero of Harvard that night, while poor Hugh Heffner returned to New Haven with his heart almost bursting with disappointment.

CHAPTER X.

KIDNAPED.

"We'll down Harvard in everything at the tournament," was the angry resolve of the disappointed Yale crowd, who returned to New Haven to find no band and no great gathering of cheering students awaiting them at the station.

Among them all, not excepting Hugh Heffner himself, no one felt worse about the defeat than did Frank Merriwell. In his heart, he blamed himself for not going to the manager of the Yale team and offering his services in case of emergency. He knew it was possible he might not have been able to save the game, but

still the possibility that he might have done so bore heavily upon him.

But Frank did not dream that his enemies would make capital out of the fact that he had not taken any part in the game. He did not know they were saying he had kept among the spectators where he could not be found when things seemed to turn against Yale.

"Merriwell didn't dare pitch any part of that game," they were saying. "He was afraid, and he knew it would dim his glory if Harvard won. He has his record, and you won't see him pitching out any games in order to pull Yale out of a hole."

But Yates had ruined his chance of running in the mile race at the tournament by getting full on the train. Directly after the next meeting of the committee of arrangements, Frank was notified that he had been chosen to represent Yale.

Each night Frank took a run out into the country. He was determined to put himself in the very best condition possible.

This practice of Merriwell's was generally known, and he was watched with interest by friends and foes.

The time for the tournament drew near. Arrangements for all the contests had been completed. The end of the spring term had come. Commencement was over, and another class had been showered with sheepskins.

In all the doings of this busy time of the college year Merriwell took little part, as he was putting himself in shape to do his best at the tournament, and the time he had to spare from "grinding" was given to hard physical work.

Then he went down to a summer cottage on the sound. The cottage was located near Southport, and there he continued his training, taking long runs into the country.

The day before the great tournament came at last. That afternoon Frank took his last run in training. He waited till near evening, and then jogged gently out along the country road.

It was dusk when he turned back toward the cottage where he knew Bruce Browning, Rattleton and Diamond were

loafing on the veranda and awaiting his reappearance.

As he was passing through a small patch of woods, a cord that was strung across the road, about six inches from the ground, tripped him, and he fell heavily.

Frank was stunned by the shock. Before he could recover, dark forms rushed out and flung themselves upon him.

Frank realized that he had been attacked, and he tried to make a fight of it, but the shock of the fall had taken away his strength, and then he found there were three against him.

"Work lively!" growled a hoarse voice. "He's worse than a tiger in a scrap!"

His hands were twisted about behind his back and held there, while a cord was bound about them. In a remarkably brief space of time he was rendered helpless.

Then Frank's feet were bound, and he was forced to submit to the tying of a blindfold over his eyes. Before this was accomplished, however, he saw the three men through the gloom, and discovered that all wore masks to hide their faces.

When Frank was blindfolded, the man who had given all the commands, and who seemed to be the leader, said:

"Bring out the team."

Frank's ears told him that one of the men went away, and soon, by the sound, the boy decided that a team was being brought from some place in the woods, where it had been concealed.

"What sort of a job is this?" thought the captive lad. "It seems to be a case of real highwaymen right here in Connecticut. And still they do not seem like highwaymen, for then they would have robbed me and let me go. They are up to something else."

He soon found that his captors meant to remove him from the spot, for he was lifted from the ground and tossed into the bottom of the wagon, like a sack of grain. Then the men climbed in, the horse was whipped up, and away they all went.

After a drive of at least two hours, during which Frank had several times asked where they were taking him, and had been repeatedly cautioned to "shut up," the team came to a halt.

Frank was glad of it, for much of the

distance had been made over rough roads, and he had been several times menaced in order to keep him quiet, and once choked into silence by two of the men, who sat upon him while they passed another team.

Frank was taken from the wagon, his feet were set at liberty, and he was marched into some sort of a building.

"There," said the hoarse voice of the leader. "He's safe and solid here."

Through the blindfold there was a glow of light, and then the cloth was removed from his eyes.

Frank found himself in a rough room, to which there seemed to be no windows and but one door. In the room there was a table, a broken chair, and a rude sort of bed.

One of the two men who had brought him into the room coolly sat down astride the chair, and stared at Frank, his eyes gleaming by the flaring light of the tall-dip that burned on the table.

"Set down," invited the man, making a motion toward the bed. "We offer our visitors the upholstered furniture out of courtesy. Make yourself at home."

"Don't care if I do," returned the boy, with equal coolness, "but in order for me to be thoroughly comfortable, it will be necessary for me to have my hands free."

"Sorry I can't accommodate ye just now, but I want to have a talk with yer first. Set down."

Frank obeyed.

"Well," he observed, "I suppose I might as well, as long as I do not seem to have much to say about it; but I'd like to know what this little game is."

"Thought you'd be kinder curious," said the man, with a hoarse laugh. "Well, ye see it's this way. We've heard so much about you that we thought we'd kinder like the pleasure of your company for a day or two, and so we brought you over here."

A day or two! Frank gasped for breath, as a sudden light dawned upon him.

If he were held there for a single day he would not appear at Madison Square Garden to take part in the tournament!

"This is the work of my enemies!" he mentally cried. "They have hired these

ruffians to kidnap and hold me till the tournament is over! Cæsar's ghost! I never dreamed such a thing could be done in this quiet part of the New England States!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE TOURNAMENT.

The interior of Madison Square Garden was decorated with the colors of a dozen colleges, and was aglow with hundreds of bright lights. The rows of seats, tier upon tier, were packed with people. The private boxes were all taken. A band was playing a lively air, and the tournament was on. Down in the great cleared space young men from the various prominent colleges of the country were struggling for victory in the athletic feats on the programme. At times some well-known amateur contestant was greeted by cheers as he appeared or accomplished a feat that was plainly remarkable. The favorites were greeted by the yells of the colleges which they represented, as they were seen preparing for some difficult attempt.

It was a scene of the greatest excitement and enthusiasm. Pretty girls were there in large numbers, their faces glowing with admiration for the young men who were struggling like gladiators down in the modern arena. The swell set of New York occupied the boxes. Fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, cousins and aunts of the contestants were on hand, watching with eagerness for the appearance of those in which their interest centred.

In some instances the parents of the young men engaged in the contests were plainly from the country. Their manners, their dress, their language indicated this. It was a wonderful occasion for them, and their hearts almost ceased beating when the favorite for whom they were watching showed himself and made his brave effort in some trial of strength and skill. Happy were they if he acquitted himself nobly.

The blue of Old Yale dominated one great section of seats. And when a Yale man won in some of the contests hundreds upon hundreds of strong-lunged young men arose to their feet and sent the college slogan pealing forth, while that

great mass of blue fluttered and swayed as if swept by a fitful tempest.

It was Yale against the field, and Old Eli was acquitting herself nobly.

One of the private boxes was occupied by the Hon. Andrew Flemming and his family. His wife and his two daughters were there. In a corner of the box sat two lads who were talking earnestly in guarded tones. They were Tom Thornton and Andy Emery.

Thornton and Emery had been entertaining Fred Flemming's sisters, but now, for the moment, they had drawn aside and were earnestly discussing some point that seemed to interest them greatly.

"It must be that the matter is settled, and Yates has been substituted for the one who is missing," said Thornton; "but it seems rather astonishing that Flem should be so sure Merriwell would not appear."

"But he did seem sure," nodded Emery. "He told me over and over that Merriwell would not be here to run."

"And you must know enough of Frank Merriwell to be sure he would be here if he could get here, even if he had to crawl on his knees."

"That's right."

"Then what has happened to Merriwell?"

"You tell!"

"I can't. I know Flemming would go to any extreme to carry out his desires. In fact, he is altogether too reckless and headstrong. I knew he did not mean it when he told Merriwell he was ready to bury the hatchet, and I have felt that he was not talking to hear his own voice when he told us Merriwell would not be on hand to race to-night."

At this moment Fred Flemming entered the box. His face was flushed, and there was a look of triumph in his eyes. He spoke to his mother, and then addressed himself to the two boys, saying:

"It's all right."

Some event below attracted the full attention of all in the box save the trio in one corner.

"Yates will run?" asked Emery, eagerly.

"You bet your filthy!" nodded Fred. "I told you he would."

"But where is Merriwell?"

Flemming smiled mysteriously.

"It is evident," he said, "that Mr. Merriwell decided not to attend the tournament."

"Look here, Fred," said Thornton, nervously, "you haven't done anything that will get you into trouble, have you?"

Flemming snapped his fingers.

"What is it to me if Mr. Merriwell sees fit to stay away?" he asked. "He may tell some sort of a wild story, but it seems that he was afraid to appear and run. All I ask of you fellows is that you keep your mouths closed on one point."

"What is that?"

"I don't care to have you breathe to a living soul that I knew in advance that Merriwell would not be on hand."

"We'll not say a word about it."

"Yates had no idea that he might be called on. I found it necessary to keep with him all the time and see that he did not get geared up. Then I had him where he could be found by the committee in case he was needed."

"And——"

"And he was found."

"He has gone to prepare for the race?"

"Sure."

"That settles it! Merriwell has failed to show up!"

A wild Yale cheer turned their attention to the arena at this moment. Big Hickok was preparing to put the shot, and he had been greeted in this manner by his admirers as he stepped out.

Hickok was a giant, and Yale had the utmost confidence in him. Thus far the best record made by any other man was forty-one feet and five inches. Hickok must do his very best to beat that.

The cheers died away as the Yale Goliath poised himself for the effort. He crouched, and then the heavy iron sailed through the air and fell with a thud to the ground.

The tape was quickly drawn, and then the score went up.

Forty-two feet and three inches!

Once more Yale let herself loose, and it seemed that the roof must crack.

Hickok quietly declined to take the two remaining trials open to him. He was the last man on the list, and Yale had

won. The hammer-throwing was to follow, and he was entered for the contest.

In the hammer-throwing contest Yale had another opportunity to yell, for Hickok was again the winner over all others, making a record of one hundred and twenty-three feet and nine inches.

The contests followed each other in swift succession, and Yale more than held her own. There was no reason why the wearers of the blue should not be jubilant.

At last, the races came on. Up in the Flemming box were three lads who were anxiously awaiting the announcement of the one-mile run.

Despite the triumph which he felt, Fred Flemming betrayed a sort of hilarious nervousness as he chatted with his sisters and his friends.

Watching Fred closely, Tom Thornton saw that he was under a strain. And again Thornton wondered what had become of Frank Merriwell.

Princeton won one of the shorter races, and Harvard won another. In each of these a Yale man was second.

"If Mr. Merriwell had contented himself with being less ambitious he might be here to-night," said Flemming, in an aside to his college comrades.

Emery and Thornton exchanged glances. There was a significance about such language that could not be misunderstood. Thornton shivered a bit, and, unconsciously, drew back from Flemming.

The excitement of the evening was at its highest pitch thus far. The contestants for yet another race were getting into position, and, in another moment, they were off like a pack of greyhounds.

This time a Yale man carried his colors to victory, and the "Sons of Old Eli" yelled their approval and delight. Yale was doing nobly. This night she was making a record for herself that would be remembered.

But now came the greatest race of all—the mile run. Preparations were made for it, and feverish anticipation swayed the great multitude.

Fred Flemming was literally quivering as he leaned over the rail of the box.

"Let's give Yatesie a great send-off!"

he exclaimed. "They are coming out in a minute."

He was watching the point where the runners must first appear. His hand shook on the rail.

The runners appeared. The first was Beatty, the Harvard man, and the Harvard crowd "hoo-rahed" hoarsely. Then came Mansford, of Princeton, and the Tigers let themselves loose. Jetting, of Dartmouth, followed, and the New Hampshire lads greeted him in a manner that brought the blood to his cheeks. Then little Judd, the U. P. man, trotted out, and he was received with howls of delight from the Quakers.

"Now—now comes Yates!" cried Fred Flemming.

The Yale man appeared, and Flemming stood up to cheer. He dropped into his seat as if he had been shot, his face turning ashen gray, and the cheer dying on his lips.

"Good heavens!" gasped Tom Thornton. "It is Frank Merriwell!"

But his exclamation was drowned by the mighty cheer which greeted the appearance of the Yale standard-bearer.

CHAPTER XII.

TO VICTORY.

"Merriwell! Merriwell! 'Rah! 'rah! 'rah!"

It was a mighty roar of voices. Then came the well-known Yale yell, which was repeated again and again. The entire Yale crowd was standing, wildly waving hands, hats, flags, handkerchiefs, anything and everything that could be found to wave. It was an ovation that might have gladdened the heart of an emperor.

It was not strange that the sound nerved the Yale man to vow within himself to die in the effort to win for dear "Old Eli," if he could not win otherwise.

But up in one of the boxes not far from the starting point were three young men who were utterly overcome with amazement and consternation. One of them had a face that was drawn and pale, as if he had received a mortal wound.

"What's it mean, Flem?" asked

Andy Emery, in Fred's ear. "Merriwell is here! Have you been horsing us?"

Then, for all that his parents and his sisters were present, Fred Flemming ground out a bitter oath. His voice shook and he choked, as he answered:

"You know as well as I what it means! Oh, curse the luck!"

He was utterly unmanned, and his mother, observing his pallor, asked him if he had been suddenly taken ill. He answered her with a snarl, like a mad dog.

The five runners came down to the line. Just as they did so, Duncan Yates burst into the Flemming box.

"What sort of a jolly business is this, Flemming?" he demanded, his face pale with anger.

And then, seeing there were ladies present, he removed his cap and mumbled an apology.

Fred did not introduce Yates; he was too much broken up to think of such a thing.

"That's what I'd like to know," he said, helplessly. "You know we were told Merriwell was not on hand to run."

"But he showed up in time to dress, and I was coolly informed that I wasn't in it. I object to such treatment, and I want to know if it was a job on me."

"If it was a job, I'll give you my word I know nothing about it," said Fred, in a weak and humble manner.

At this moment, as they looked down, Frank Merriwell was seen to gaze straight toward them, and something like a scornful, triumphant smile flitted across his face.

"I'd like to strangle him!" grated Flemming.

The runners were preparing for the start. Pistol in hand, the starter stood ready to give the signal. His voice was heard bidding them make ready.

A moment later, the pistol cracked, and the runners leaped away.

"Oh, if he'll come in the tail-ender!" panted Fred Flemming.

The band was playing its liveliest air, and the runners sped around the track like fawns. Graceful fellows they were, with the possible exception of little Judd. Judd started off bravely, however,

seeming to scoot into the lead like a squirrel, his short legs fairly twinkling.

The U. P. crowd let out a great cheer to encourage the little fellow.

Beatty, of Harvard, was likewise a quick starter, and he was right at Judd's heels, while Mansford and Merriwell got away side by side. Jetting, the Dartmouth representative, was slow about starting, but still he was a runner.

It had been expected that other colleges would take part in this race, but, for certain reasons, there were but five starters.

Around the track ran the lithe-limbed youngsters, with Judd holding the lead for two laps. Then he was passed by Beatty, who sputtered to get to the front, and this gave Harvard an opportunity to "hoo-rah."

From the very outset it seemed that Merriwell and Mansford were in for a neck-and-neck match. They clung together in a singular manner.

For a time the five runners were well bunched, but there came a stringing out at last. Little Judd began to lag, and Jetting, who had pushed past Merriwell and Mansford, went by the U. P. man and began to crowd Beatty.

The New Hampshire boys cheered him on, and the sound of the yell he loved to hear got into his head and worked his undoing. Otherwise Jetting must have been a dangerous man for the leaders at the finish. As it was, he pumped himself out some seconds too soon.

At the first quarter Harvard led, and she was still leading, with Dartmouth second when the first half was passed.

Then came a fierce struggle for the lead, which ended with the weakening of both Beatty and Jetting. Beatty weakened first, however, and fell back, but Jetting was seen to stagger a bit, recover and go on.

Merriwell and Mansford passed Beatty and narrowed the gap between them and Jetting. Mansford set his teeth and gained an advantage of ten feet by a quick break. This advantage he was resolved to hold.

Jetting fought like a tiger to hold the lead, but Mansford crowded him harder and harder, finally going to the front.

Then came a desperate struggle between Merriwell and Jetting, but Yale's colors were carried into second place at the beginning of the last quarter.

And now—now there was excitement. The finish was drawing near, and Princeton had the lead, although the distance was short.

As Frank passed the Yale crowd he was given a rousing cheer, which seemed to put fresh life and strength into his body. He crept up on Mansford, who was running like the wind. The difference grew less and less. Eight feet, six feet, four feet—could he close the gap?

Then, for a moment, a black cloud seemed to pass before Frank's eyes. His heart was in his mouth, where it lay hot and dry, like a stone that has baked in the sun. It seemed that he must fall.

"Win or die! win or die!"

Those words rang through his head as if some one had shouted them into his ear.

"I will!"

He knew the end was close at hand, and still the black and yellow was before him.

Then it was that Frank nerved himself for one last great effort, and dashed forward with a fresh burst of speed that seemed little short of marvelous. That burst carried him to Mansford's side—carried him into the lead—carried him over the line at the finish—a winner!

There was a grand supper in New York that night, at which Frank Merriwell was the guest of honor. He was toasted again and again by his admiring friends, and it seemed that everybody was his friend at last. There were speeches and songs and a general merry time. Old Yale had carved her way to glory once more, and among her standard-bearers Merriwell was the leader.

"Tell us, tell us, old man," cried Paul Pierson, "how was it that you happened to be so late in appearing at the Garden? Really we had given up hope that you would come, and were for getting Yates into running rig. You barely got along in time. What kept you away?"

"I was unavoidably detained," answered Frank, smiling.

"Yes, but that is an unsatisfactory explanation. Rattleton and the fellows who were with you reported your mysterious

disappearance, and we were for putting detectives on the case to-morrow. Can't you clear up the mystery?"

"Well, you see, it is like this: I fell in with some gentlemen who seemed to take a strong interest in me. Note the word strong there. In fact they were too strong for me. They seemed to like me exceedingly well, and they pressed me to stay all night with them. I was sort of roped into it, as it were. I found it difficult to get away without wounding their feelings."

This was said in a queer manner, and the lads about the table looked at each other inquiringly.

"But you managed to get away?" said Pierson.

"Yes, I offered them inducements in the shape of coin of the realm. They seemed to be out for stuff, and some person—who must love me dearly—had induced them to take charge of me and care for me tenderly. However, I worked on their greed by offering more than my friend had offered, and, as I promised not to make too much of a fuss about it, I was let off, but barely in time to reach here. I am not going to say anything more about this matter just now, but I expect to look around some and find out who my friend is who engaged the gentlemen to care for me so tenderly. When I find him—well, I won't do a thing to him!"

"Well, here's luck to you!" cried Pierson, lifting his glass. "Gentlemen, here's luck to Frank Merriwell, the best all-round man who ever called dear Old Yale alma mater. Drink—drink hearty!"

[THE END.]

The next number (53) of the Tip Top Weekly will contain as the complete story, "Frank Merriwell's Bicycle Boys; or, The Start Across the Continent," by the author of "Frank Merriwell."

TIP TOP WEEKLY

A PUBLICATION FOR YOUNG AMERICANS.

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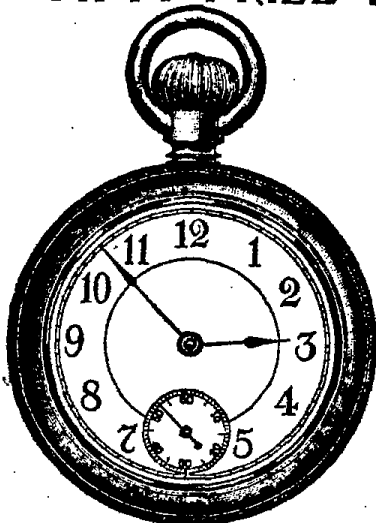
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STREET & SMITH'S TIP TOP WEEKLY,
232 William St., New York City.

Grand "Summer Sport" Contest. FIFTY PRIZE WATCHES.



To commemorate the FIFTIETH issue of TIP TOP WEEKLY, the publishers have decided to offer to their young readers fifty splendid watches, made expressly for this publication by a well-known manufacturer.

The Contest.

All American boys are fond of outdoor sports, and they take a keen interest in athletic pursuits. To further their interests, fifty watches will be given to the fifty readers sending in the best answer to this question:

"What is your favorite summer sport and why?"

The name of the "sport" must be written on the coupon printed below, coupon to be pasted on a postal card addressed to

TIP TOP WEEKLY "Sport" Contest, Street & Smith, New York City. The description (which should be brief) to be written on balance of postal card.

This Contest closes June 1, 1897.

The above cut represents (¾ size) the watch made expressly for this contest. It is a first-class stem-winding timekeeper, fully guaranteed in every particular.

The winning cards will be judged from these points, viz.:

1. Neatness of writing.
2. Brevity of description (the greatest amount of information in the least number of words).
3. Appearance of card.

(To be Pasted on Postal Card.)

"SUMMER SPORT" COUPON:

Name of Sport _____

"PROFESSION" CONTEST.

Replies by Postal Only.

"What would you like to become, and why?"

Have you chosen your future profession or trade? If not, think of one you would like to adopt, and write the name and your reason for making the selection upon a POSTAL CARD and mail to this office.

Four Splendid Prizes!

- 1st. For the best answer a prize of \$5 will be given.
- 2d. For the next best, \$3.
- 3d. A fine regulation full-size football.
- 4th. A Baltimorean printing press, complete with type and outfit.

This contest closes April 30, 1897.
Address Tip Top Weekly "Profession" Contest,
Street & Smith, 232 William St., New York.

The Prize Plot Contest.

This contest, commenced in No. 44 TIP TOP WEEKLY, is now ended. Its success has been phenomenal, and the number of plots sent in by our readers run into the thousands. The task of reading them required some time, but each and every plot received careful attention. The judges, after due deliberation, have finally decided that the first prize,

FIVE DOLLARS IN GOLD

be awarded to

HARRY S. ADAIR, McConnellsville, Ohio.

The plot submitted by him is now in the hands of Mr. Burt L. Standish, and the completed story will shortly be published.

Special Mention.

H. R. GLUTZBECK, Bay Shore, Long Island.

JOHN A. DOCKHAM, North Tonawanda, N. Y.

FRANK L. CAMPBELL, Chester, Pa.

(These plots are published on next page.)

Roll of Honor.

LYDIA WETZEL, Lincoln, Neb.

H. L. SHEDD, Huntington, W. Va.

LEWIS W. RAWLINGS, Hartford City, Ind.

HARRY H. BOYD, Meadville, Pa.

JOHN K. ARNOLD, Mount Sterling, Ky.

HARRY McCANN, Portland, Maine.

J. H. ANDREWS, Elmira, N. Y.

N. P. HAMPTON, Ponca City, O. T.

A. H. OPFETT, Vinton, Iowa

EDWARD METZ, Jersey City, N. J.

HERBERT M. BACHMAN, Allentown, Pa.

ERICH J. SCHRADER, St. Paul, Minn.

JAS. DOYLE, Holyoke, Mass.

FRANK S. SORGATZ, Concordia, Kan.

KIRBY RIFFEL, Little Rock, Ark.

DAVID IRELAND, Columbus, Ohio.

FELIX MORTON, Atchison, Kan.

BERT MONSON, Bridgeport, Conn.

FRANK DOOLEY, Fishkill on the Hudson, N. Y.

FRANCIS J. KELLEY, Bridgeburg, Ont.

ROBERT HARDING, Newcastle, N. H.

BAYARD F. RIFFEL, Little Rock, Ark.

JAS. B. MABRY, Belton, Texas.

HARRY BLOM, Fargo, N. D.

EDNA WILLMAN, New Harmony, Ind.

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DAVID A. ROBBINS, Malden, Mass.

JOHN E. GRAHAM, DeKalb, Ill.

J. JOSEPH GRAHAM, Cleveland, Ohio.

FLORENCE E. SHIPP, Kansas City, Mo.

P. E. BEAM, Anamosa, Iowa.

LEO M. DILLON, Braddock, Pa.

JAY ALLEN, Otsego, Mich.

ISIDOR HERSKOVITS, Toledo, Ohio.

PRIZE CONTEST PLOTS.

Frank Merriwell in Siberia.

(Submitted by H. R. Glutzbeck, Bay Shore, L. I.)

Frank Merriwell and his chum Rattleton decide to make a trip to Russia. On the journey from Berlin to St. Petersburg they make the acquaintance of a young man who gives his name as Nicholas Telski. He disappears when they reach the frontier, and suddenly turns up in St. Petersburg. He often spends the evening with them. A few days before their departure from Russia, as Frank and Rattleton are walking near Admiralty Place, they see a man attacked by two ruffians, one of whom is about to plunge a knife into the stranger. Frank rushes up and knocks the knife out of his hand. The two ruffians make off, and the stranger heartily thanks Frank and gives him an ivory image. If ever in trouble he is to show this image. The stranger disappears in the darkness. The next day Nicholas Telski rushes into their apartments and asks Frank to deliver a package to Uran Strelitz, chief of police, as he departs for Moscow in fifteen minutes.

Frank delivers the package and about a half hour afterward they are arrested, charged with trying to kill the chief of police by an infernal machine. They are hurried off to the penal mines along the Kama River.

Frank and his chum find a loose board in their prison, and by slowly working this board they force a passage and escape.

Frank overpowers the guard and secures his rifle. They make their way southward for about six miles, when they hear the booming of guns and they know their escape is discovered. A peasant's house is near, and Frank determines to see the power of the image which he had concealed from the police. He shows the image and they are given food and shelter. The peasant hides them in a secret closet while the house is being searched for them.

An English trader arrives in a few days afterward, and Frank and his chum go with him, disguised as two servants, as his passport called for himself and two servants. They make their way slowly to the frontier and escape.

They reach London in due time and with many a hardy good-by they part. Frank and his chum reach America, determined never to visit Russia again. Frank keeps the ivory image as a memento of his trip to Russia.

Frank Merriwell's Balloon Voyage.

(Submitted by John A. Dockham, North Tonawanda, N. Y.)

Chapter I.—A Strange Meeting.

Merriwell and his old friend Hodge meet again. Hodge tells Merriwell of the perils of his sister, who has gone to Cuba to visit an uncle, who had since died, leaving Hodge's sister in the care of an old servant. Merriwell promises to help his old friend find a way to get his sister safely out of the country.

Chapter II.—Merriwell's Plan.

Merriwell plans to go by balloon to Cuba, to the interior province where Hodge's sister is cared for by an old servant. The plan is discussed and finally adopted as the best that can be found. Professor Scotch agrees to accompany them.

Chapter III.—Preparing for the Voyage.

The balloon is bought and the necessary equipments secured. Everything necessary is secured for the voyage.

Chapter IV.—The Voyage.

For the sake of secrecy they have the balloon filled and depart in the night from an island near Key West. Going high up, they find a favorable current of wind and are carried rapidly toward Cuba.

Chapter V.—Arrival in Cuba.

Hodge, who knows something of the country, directs the course and they arrive over the province where his sister is stopping. They descend. A brush with the

Spanish guards, who destroy the balloon, and our friends escape into the near-by forest.

Chapter VI.—Cuba Libre.

Meeting with some patriots, who guide them to the little village, where they find the old servant who has charge of Lena Hodge. The joyful meeting between Bart and his sister.

Chapter VII.—In the Nick of Time.

Destruction of the village and slaughter of the people by the Spaniards. Our friends escape on horseback and start toward the coast.

Chapter VIII.—Captured.

Our friends are captured by a band of Spanish guerrillas and confined in an old hut around which the guerrillas mount guard. Hope deserts Frank and his party.

Chapter IX.—A Fortunate Discovery.

The old hut had been built close up to a mountain, and Merriwell, who has been carefully examining all sides of the hut, found that the side toward the mountain was hollow. Silently tearing away the side of the hut they discover a tunnel, into which they pass, and hasten forward.

Chapter X.—The End of the Tunnel.

The tunnel came out at the edge of a swamp, through which ran a wide, high-banked path, and traveling over this they reached a forest. Guided by their compass, they came to the coast three days later, after several adventures.

Chapter XI.—A Lucky Event.

On reaching the coast they discover a small steam yacht in the offing, which Frank signals. The yacht sent out a small boat and Frank recognized the owner as Mr. Gilette—an old friend whom he had known in the South Sea Islands. He offers to carry them all home.

Chapter XII.—The Voyage Home.

Safe arrival home and conclusion.

CAMPING OUT;

OR,

Frank Merriwell's Adventure in the Maine Woods.

(Submitted by Frank L. Campbell, Chester, Pa.)

Frank Merriwell still at Yale. Story opens with Frank, Harry Rattleton and Jack Diamond discussing coming vacation. Frank has a plan to go camping in Maine woods, and have a good time hunting, fishing, etc. Harry and Jack take to plan at once and arrangements are made. Vacation soon comes and party of three start for the woods up in Maine. A second party goes also unnoticed by first. Second party consists of Harlow, Harris and Browning. Harlow has hated Frank since he showed him up at a game of cards. Harris hates him because Harlow is his friend, and Browning is easily induced to join party. They go up one day after Frank's party starts, bound for revenge. Frank's party reaches a village called Ramsden. They hire a guide named Jim Hardwood, who takes them to a small lake in thick of woods called Deer Lake. Two days later Harlow's party arrive, hire a guide and follow the other party. Camp on opposite side of lake, their camp being concealed by bushes and trees. Frank takes first turn at cooking for his party, and gets up early one morning to cook breakfast. As soon as he steps outside tent he utters a cry of pain. Upon looking down he sees that he has stepped into a bear trap. All three deny leaving it out there set, and mystery is unsolved. Later other minor accidents, such as cutting of tent strings, sawing of poles, hiding of guns, etc. The party goes on a deer hunt. Frank follows trail of a doe, and while crossing small ridge he hears a shot and falls to the ground stunned. He feels himself being lifted bodily, and when he comes to he hears a shout, followed by the words, "Harlow, drop that and throw up your hands." Harlow drops Frank, and turning, sees Diamond covering him with a rifle. Diamond conducts him to camp. Frank is able to walk there. Presently Jim and Harry come in with Harris between them, they having caught him aiming at Frank with a rifle. The whole party return to Ramsden, and the prisoners are put in jail. Frank finds Browning was with them, but he and the guide got away. Trial soon comes off, but Frank intercedes and the culprits escape with light sentences.

Hunting Big Game.

BY DUNCAN MONRO.

No. 6--SEVERAL NARROW ESCAPES.

One time while on an expedition across the frontier, I had slept one night as usual wrapped in my cloak, beneath a tree. On awakening at daybreak the first object I perceived on raising my head from the saddle which served as a pillow, was the tail of an enormous lizard lying across my breast, the head of the reptile being muffled under the folds of the cloak close to my body, whither it had betaken itself, apparently for warmth, during the night. There was extreme hazard that if I alarmed it by moving, it might bite me in a vital part. Seizing it, therefore, softly by the tail, I pulled it out with a sudden jerk, and threw it violently to a distance. By this means I escaped without injury, but had I unwittingly offended this uninvited badfellow before I was aware of his presence, I might in all probability have I fatally atoned for my heedlessness.

During my stay in India, having chanced to ramble into a jungle adjoining the encampment one day, I suddenly encountered a royal tiger. The meeting appeared equally unexpected on both sides, and both made a dead halt. I was without firearms, and in my extremity determined to try what the eye could effect. I did so, and in a few moments the tiger, which appeared about to spring upon me, grew disturbed, slunk aside, and attempted to creep round from behind. I turned constantly on the tiger, which still continued to shrink from my gaze, now and again darting into the thicket and issuing forth at a different quarter in order to catch me by surprise. This continued for about an hour, when the tiger gave up the curious contest and left me to continue my walk, which you may readily believe, was now in the direction of my camp.

It was the good fortune of my friend and myself to witness a conflict between jealous lions. And if it but serves to show the treacherous nature of the lioness in contrast with the splendid chivalry of the male, it is worth relating.

We took up our quarters in a light scaffolding in the branches of a tall tree that overhung a water pool much frequented by the animals of that vicinity.

I was beginning to feel sleepy, and to nod, when the roar of a lion close at hand broke the silence. Instantly we were wide awake and grasping our guns nervously. In another instant the roar was answered from a spot below us, and looking down we saw a lioness crouch at the foot of a tree. Her head was imbedded between her forepaws, and her long tail waved to and fro. Another "woof" from the opposite direction, and two magnificent males stepped into view, while the lioness continued to purr and wave her tail from side to side.

And there she lay purring gently while as terrific a conflict ensued as the eye of man ever witnessed, and words cannot paint the picture or describe that combat. Over and over the two males rolled after meeting in mid-leap with their fangs at each other's throats, while they filled the air with their frantic roaring and the noise of the thrashing of their bodies through the whirling sand.

By this time my nerves were so wrought up that I could stand the terrific spectacle no longer, and taking deliberate aim at the lioness behind her shoulder-blade, I let fly. Above the rumble of my smooth-bore sounded the shriek of the lioness as the heavy ball crashed into her body. The two duelists at once ceased their encounter, and as one of them turned, he received my friend's rifle-ball in the hollow over the eye, and death was instantaneous.

The other male, with a mighty roar and a powerful spring, landed half way up the trunk of our tree, nearly shaking us from our perch. He fell back, and, probably only grazed by the shot, disappeared into the darkness toward where the moans and cries of the lioness grew fainter and fainter every moment. In the morning we tracked the lioness to her lair, and after she had received eleven more of our bullets, and made five determined rushes, succeeded in killing her.

She had traveled nine miles before we caught up to her, and kept a brave front to the last, redeeming herself in a degree in our eyes from the stain of her cruel behavior of the previous night.

Sports and Pastimes.

BICYCLING.

Second-hand Wheels.

The second-hand-wheel question seems to be one of the most important that is engrossing the attention of local dealers everywhere. Just what to do in the matter is a knotty problem. The best interests of both customer and dealer is involved, and to adjust the matter that both receive justice is no easy task. That a maximum price be fixed that no dealer may have advantage over the other seems a feasible plan, yet one which should have restrictions. There is such a wide range in values and conditions in which bicycles are offered for exchange that, with a uniform price system in vogue, it would be almost an utter impossibility for each merchant to deal justly with each individual. All sorts of subterfuges would be resorted to by the public under such conditions. Opinions both pro and con have been expressed in many of the papers, showing how the question is viewed. Cases are cited of localities in which a uniform price system is in vogue where parties have clubbed together and sent their second-hand wheels to other towns, where a high price was allowed on them. This, of course, worked to the disadvantage of the uniform price system. Other cases are shown where, unless a limit was placed on the allowance dealers should make to their customers, many dealers would suffer heavily, especially those whose profits were none too high and whose expenses were heavy. One firm suggested allowing larger discounts on old wheels which were exchanged early in the season, making the maximum allowance less for each month, and making it of marked advantage for the customer to dispose of his old wheel early in the season. This seems a suggestion worthy of consideration, and would come nearer to working satisfactorily than any yet offered. It would result in a stimulus to early trade; those who were not in a position to take advantage of this offer would have to suffer just as the person of limited means must ever sit by and see the man with surplus capital pick up the snaps. The dealers would have opportunity for disposing of the second-hand machines to better advantage; and, all in all, it really seems the best method yet suggested for settling the question.

A Novel Bicycle "Ad."

There are enterprising bicycle people in England as well as in this country. A year or more ago London was flooded with the following circular by a bicycle repairer, which is ingenious enough in its wording to have been the product of a Yankee: "Bicycle surgery. Acute and chronic cases treated with assurance of success. Languid tires restored to health and vigor. Tires blown up without pain. Wind free. No cure, no pay asked. We understand the anatomy, physiology and hygiene of wheels, and homoeopathic and allopathic treatment, as individual cases require. Sure cure guaranteed. Testimonials—'My wheel had three ribs fractured, and you cured it in one treatment.' 'My tires were suffering from a case of acute aneurism, which had been pronounced fatal by other bicycle doctors, but you cured the disorder, and I did not lose a day of my tour.' Thousands of testimonials like the above sent on application. Dr. Blank, B. S. (Bicycle Surgeon)."

Care of a Tire.

Keep the tire well inflated when riding. From twenty-five to thirty-five pounds, depending upon the weight of the rider. Many riders believe a tire to be properly inflated when under sufficient air pressure to prevent the rims from striking the ground. Others prefer to ride so because the cushion is easier. This is not the way to get service out of the tires.

Don't keep the tires near heating apparatus. Rubber is vulcanized by heat and all tires have had enough when they left the factory. More heat will make the rubber stiff and destroy its life.

Rubber can be torn by the brake.

Applause.

(Letters from TIP TOP WEEKLY readers are always acceptable. Views and suggestions will be welcomed.)

San Francisco, March 1, 1897.

Gentlemen: The Merriwell series of your Tip Top Library is something novel and new, and the pranks which occur during his college career are very amusing and interesting to read. My prejudice against paper novels has long since disappeared, and I sincerely trust your novels in future will equal those of the past.

Don de Oro.

Chicago, Ill., March 1, 1897.

Dear Sirs: I have been reading your Tip Top Library from No. 40 on. I wish the Tip Top Library was published every day instead of once a week. When Saturday comes I can hardly wait for it.

William Gebhardt.

San Francisco, Cal., March 2, 1897.

Dear Sir: I want to let you know what I think of the Tip Top Weekly. I think they are the best books I ever read. I wish they were published twice a week instead of once.

George Boyle.

Providence, R. I., March 3, 1897.

Dear Sirs: You have received letters from boys, but you have not said anything about girls. Although I am a young lady, I think they are immense. I've read every one from the first to the latest. My parents think they are as good a book as there is in my library. Hoping you will continue them forever, I remain,

Yours truly
Rubie Starr.

Galveston, Texas., March 6, 1897.

Dear Sirs: I take great pleasure in writing you a few lines concerning your famous library, Tip Top, or better known as Frank Merriwell. I take all the books you issue, but there is none like Tip Top. I have read every number from 1 to date.

Sydney Patton.

Union City, Tenn., March 6, 1897.

Dear Sirs: I will let you know who the Tip Top readers are in this town. We have a Tip Top Club, and I am the president. The club comprises five persons:

Clyde Colley, President.
Vade Davis,
Babe Kinley,
Hermon Irvan,
Irvan Bley.

Detroit, March 7, 1897.

Gentlemen: I write to let you know what I think of the Tip Top Library. I think it is all right. It's something swell. I admire it; I think it's the most interesting story I have ever read. I am also a reader of your Red, White and Blue Library. I think it's fine. I get both libraries every week. I am a newsboy and know a good thing when I see it.

H. J. Paul.

Rochester, N. Y., February 8, 1897.

Dear Sirs: I have read the Tip Top Libraries ever since the first one was published, nearly a year ago, and think each one better than the one before it. I like those that speak of school and college life best, but the rest are all right too.

Frank Raymond.

Philadelphia, Pa., March 8.

Dear Sirs: Please allow me to congratulate you on the success of the publication of the Tip Top Weekly; but I think it would be more interesting if Bartley Hodge (Frank Merriwell's former room mate and chum at the Fardale Academy) would again be brought before the public, as I, as well as the rest of us fellows, were interested in his welfare.

William Fletcher, Jr.

Atlanta, Ga., March 8, 1897.

Gentlemen: We have been reading your Tip Top Weekly Library from start to finish so far, and we can say that it is the best library we have ever read. We have a library in which we keep Nick Carter's, and Diamond Dick, Jr.'s, Red, White and Blue, and others which we need not mention, and we can truly say that Tip Top is the best.

C. M. Hood,
Edgar Jones.

New York, March 8, 1897.

Dear Sirs: I thought I ought to let you know that I think the Tip Top and the Red, White and Blue are the best libraries ever published. I have read them from No. 1 up.

Joe Lindsay.

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