Real Boys

By
THE AUTHOR OF
"THE REAL DIARY OF A REAL BOY"

REAL BOYS

Being the doings of Plupy, Beany, Pewt, Puzzy, Whack, Bug, Skinny, Chick, Pop, Pile, and some of the girls

BY

HENRY A. SHUTE

AUTHOR OF "THE REAL DIARY OF A REAL BOY," "SEQUIL," ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
F. R. GRUGER

G. W. DILLINGHAM COMPANY
PUBLISHERS NEW YORK

Issued August, 1905

Real Boys

Press of J. J. Little & Co.
Astor Place, New York

TO

THE YOUNG LADY WITH THE PIGTAILS

THE PUG NOSE

AND THE CHEERFUL DISPOSITION

MY DAUGHTER NATHALIE

THIS BOOK IS

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

HENRY A. SHUTE

TO MY READERS

"Were any of you born in New England, in the good old catechising, church-going, school-going, orderly times?"—Stowe.

IN bringing these sketches before the public in book form, I have been greatly influenced by the unexpected favor with which other books of mine, relating to the same characters, have been received, and by the many letters from those who professed a desire to know something more of Plupy, Beany, Pewt, and the others.

The books already issued were written from a boy's point of view. This book is from a man's point of view, but, I trust, a man who has not forgotten and never will forget a happy boyhood in a delightful old New England town.

Many of the characters, who appear before the public under their true names and nicknames, and, I may also state, in their true light, are still living, and all are, strange as it may seem, my friends.

With them I passed many of the happiest and most eventful days of my life, and by the recital of some of these events I hope to interest you.

Henry A. Shute.

Exeter, N. H.
June 1, 1905.

REAL BOYS

CHAPTER I

"I know it's folly to complain
Of whatsoe'er the fates decree;
Yet, were not wishes all in vain,
I tell you what my wish would be;
I'd wish to be a boy again,
Back with the friends I used to know;
For I was, oh! so happy then—
But that was very long ago."

—EUGENE FIELD.

One Saturday afternoon in March, 186—, a small boy, twelve years old, was busily engaged in arranging a miscellaneous collection of small wares in a shed in the rear of a substantial frame house on Court Street, in Exeter, a little village near the coast line in southern New Hampshire.

The youth in question was absorbed in his task, and had evidently worked hard and faithfully to establish himself upon a firm business basis, and

was anticipating retail transactions of a most gratifying nature.

In front of the shed a smooth board bearing the inscription,

> "Fansy Goods and
> Sweatened Water."—*Harry Shute.*

had been nailed up by dint of vigorous but unskilful use of a hammer, as the dents in the wood surrounding the nail heads plainly showed; while the elaborate nature of the inscription indicated that however painstaking the young merchant had been in his efforts towards legibility, his spelling was not all that one might have wished.

Within the shed a long plank, propped up at both ends by empty barrels, did triple duty as counter, bar and show-case combined, while the rough pine walls were nearly covered by a most amazing assortment of gaudy and impossible wares, fastened with large pins and small tacks.

Jacob's ladders, cunningly manufactured out of long strips of colored paper pleated together; snappers, of oblong sheets of whitey-brown paper,

and folded in such a manner that when taken by one end and vigorously snapped they would straighten out with a loud pop (it is worthy of remark here that the first and last blank sheets of "Godey's Magazine" in its old form made the best snappers); cocked hats, made of ingeniously folded sheets; paper boats, the result of the same process carried one fold further; fly boxes, of stiff sheets of old copy-books, this invention a triumph of mechanical art, and I am glad to say not a lost one at this late day; pictures cut from the magazines and the "Police News," and framed in colored and gilt paper; and, lastly, a wretched and remorseful looking pitcher with a large bite taken out of its rim, and filled with about a gallon of sweetened water, the quality of which depended upon the persuasiveness or predatory ability of the proprietor of the establishment in accumulating the necessary ingredients.

The pitcher had been carefully placed at a safe distance from the counter, as the wide-awake merchant evidently distrusted the self-restraint of the improvident among his customers.

Underneath the counter, and likewise removed from public gaze and reach, stood a large box,

partly filled with bolts, nails, scraps of old iron, lead and steel. It was evident from the contents of the box that business had been brisk, and, indeed, the boy had scarcely finished his task and arranged his goods for public inspection, when loud whoops were heard in the street, and several boys noisily entered the yard and clamorously ordered cigarettes.

While I am glad to say that the tobacco abominations of the present day were not then on the market, still candor compels me to state that a considerable variety of more or less nauseous compounds were in stock, and were cheerfully produced by the salesman. The choicest brands of sweet fern, hayseed, grapevine, rattan, corn-silk, and mullen leaf were on sale at prices ranging from three to ten nails each.

Sweet fern commanded the maximum price, as delicate in flavor and mild in effect; rattan came next, the scarcity of material keeping the price up, while the concentrated villainy of its taste, and the common belief that it dried up the blood of the smoker, tended to make the sales rare and the market somewhat unsteady; while hayseed, corn-silk and mullen leaf were very cheap, as the mate-

rials were easily produced and the flavor not particularly exhilarating. Only the most reckless youths attempted to smoke rattan, and they

basked in the evident admiration of their less seasoned companions, while their mouths tasted as if they were lined with hot ashes.

After the youthful customers had made a careful selection of the choicest brands, a modicum of sweetened water was ordered and drunk, and when the necessary payments were adjusted, which was not effected without an acrimonius dispute

with one purchaser, who was detected in the attempt to pass counterfeit money, that is to say, sheet iron, that article not being legal tender, the cigars were lighted, and a general conversation ensued.

"Say, Fatty," said one, addressing a light-complexioned, corpulent lad, more fashionably attired than the rest in a short reefer, blue trousers and rubber boots, "have you seen Pewt Purington's store? He's got some Jacob's ladders made outer gilt and silver paper, and some of the bulliest fly boxes I ever seen. He charges more'n Skinny does." Skinny was the young merchant before described, whose painfully spare proportions only too clearly indicated the origin and startling appropriateness of the name.

"Well," said the fat youth, whose name was Ned Gilman, "Pewt is a fraud anyway. He skins you every time you trade there, and his sweetened water ain't half so good as Skinny's, an' he don't more'n half fill the glasses, 'n charges ten nails and won't count crooked ones."

"That's so," rejoined the first speaker, John, who rejoiced in the sobriquet of "Bug" Chadwick. "Beany Watson went into partnership with him

last spring, 'n they had a bully store in Pewt's shed, 'n had a big trade, and they failed, and Beany said it was all Pewt's fault."

"Well, you ought to hear Pewt's side before you lay the blame on him," chimed in a quiet and pleasant-faced boy, known to his friends as "Potter" Gorham, why "Potter" nobody could ever give a satisfactory reason. "Pewt said that Beany drank up all the sweetened water, and what they gained on cigars and other things they lost on sweetened water, and that Pewt had to furnish all the molasses, and when they settled up Beany owed him."

"Well," said Fatty, "they agreed to leave it out to Nipper Brown, because he was a good arithmeticker, and Pewt backed out."

"Yes, but after Beany had agreed he laid for Nipper and told him he would lick time out of him if he didn't decide that Pewt owed him thirty-five cents," retorted Potter.

"Oh, now," said Fatty, "Pewt had invited Nipper to supper and treated him to corn balls, and Beany knew it."

"How did they settle it?" queried Skinny, as

he finished draining a mottled teacup without a handle. "Did they have a fight?"

"No, Beany stood over on his side of the street, and Pewt on his side, and they stumped each other to come over, and neither would come. They didn't speak to each other for nearly a week, and then made up and sold out to Medo Thurston and went snacks."

"Pewt is a good fellow in the woods," added Potter, "and sees everything. He found the only oven bird's nest that has been found for two years."

"Hullo!" suddenly cried Fatty. "Here comes Whacker, Puzzy and Tomtit," as three alert youngsters entered the yard, having sent a few tentative snowballs to announce their approach, adding an occasional hideous yell, in case the snowballs left some uncertainty in the minds of those assembled around the bar.

Whacker and Puzzy, who were known in the family Bible as Alfred and Austin, were Chadwick boys, brothers of the guileful Bug. Whacker was an extremely straight, slight and dignified boy, and derived his name from the effect that a little couplet had on him. This little couplet was of a slightly personal nature.

> "Chaddywhacker chew tobacker,
> If you die it ain't no matter,"

and was a challenge that Whacker always accepted, whenever the scoffer's prowess was not too marked.

Puzzy had been christened so for no apparent reason. The last of the trio, Roswell Thomson, owed his appellation to a grievous error in loudly proclaiming on "speaking day" in school the little nursery rhyme,

"Tommy Tommy Titmouse
Lived in a little house."

Alfred, who had undergone severe physical castigation at the hands of his teacher in school that morning, was at once saluted by derisive shouts of "Whacker got licked, Whacker got licked," accompanied by pantomimic writhing and contortions expressive of great anguish, by his companions.

"Ow, now, cheese it, fellers," said Whacker, coloring a ruddy hue. "Fatty was licked every day this week, and you didn't holler at him."

"'Tain't so," shouted the irate Fatty. "I didn't get licked Tuesday."

"Well, you got licked twice Wednesday, anyway," insisted Whacker.

"Heuh, I didn't howl like you did," sneered Fatty.

"You howled good when you tried to crawl through a chair yesterday. 'F I was so fat I couldn't crawl through a chair without gittin' more'n two whacks I wouldn't say much," retorted Whacker contemptuously.

"Who yer callin' fat?" roared Fatty.

"You," piped Whacker, undauntedly.

Whereupon Fatty walked deliberately up to his small but determined opponent and roughly shouldered him out of the path. Whacker valiantly returned the shove with interest.

"Paste him one, Fatty," shrieked Bug, delighted with the prospect of a fight, and utterly regardless of the ties of blood relationship.

"Lend him one in the eye, Whacker," urged Skinny, otherwise known as Plupy, cautiously emerging from beneath the counter, his countenance beaming at the delightful prospect.

"Oh, hold on, fellers, what's the use of fighting?" remonstrated Potter, the pacific, trying to get between the belligerents.

"Let 'em alone, Potter. Give 'em a fair show," yelled Tomtit, dancing with excitement, as the two squared up to each other in true sporting style, with many "Aw, nows" and "Would yees" and other expressions indicative of fell design on their part.

What the result of the fight might have been was never known, for a vigorous rapping at the window caused the pugilists to quickly drop their belligerent attitudes, and playfully seize each other and try to wash faces in the snow, while the dis-

appointed youngsters, to complete the deception, cheered them on, and laughed with well dissembled enjoyment. Then Potter, with the best of intentions, ordered refreshments anew, and Plupy blithely crawled beneath the counter, hitting his head an appalling bump in the transit, and peace prevailed once more.

"Tell yer what le's do," said Bug, yearning for excitement. "It's just bully snowballin'. Le's go down to the library buildin' an' plug stewed cats,"

this being the euphonious name by which the students of Phillips Exeter Academy were known, between whom and the townies there was always a state of war.

This proposal was received with loud acclaim. The boys rapidly and skilfully made and stowed away snowballs about their persons until they looked as hunchy as bags of marbles, while Plupy closed the emporium, and locked it by leaving a piece of joist against the door. Having completed these hasty preparations, the boys departed on the run, as Plupy's mother called from the window, "Harree-ee, be sure and split your kindlings before dark," which we may be equally sure Harree-ee forgot completely in the exciting times that followed.

CHAPTER 2

"Oft round my hall of portraiture I gaze,
By memory reared, the artist wise and holy,
From stainless quarries of deep-buried days."
—LOWELL.

The scene of the events described was in the beautiful town of Exeter, in southern New Hampshire, situated about ten miles from the sea-coast. Its stately, old-fashioned mansions, gable roofed, and shaded by gracefully drooping elms, spoke well for the quiet and cultivated tastes of its citizens. Its busy factory, its machine shops, its substantial row of business blocks, argued a solid business foundation for its evident wealth and prosperity. Situated at the head of tide-water, it boasted wharves, a fleet of small fishing and coasting vessels, and a nondescript sort of coaling craft, indigenous to this particular stream, and known as the gundalow.

Emptying into this broad and shallow basin, a deep, winding and most beautiful stream flowed

through the centre of the town, and lost itself in tortuous turns amid velvety meadows and groves of pine, hemlock and oak. The river was the dividing line between the east and west halves of the town, formerly known as "Hemlock Side" and "Pine Side." Between the residents of these there had once been deep jealousy and much bitter feeling, which, in the case of the boys and young men, had frequently culminated in pitched battles between the massed forces of both sides.

At the time of which I write this feeling had died away, and was only remembered as a tradition, a matter of local history, undeniably true, and not particularly creditable to the town. How this feeling was subsequently reawakened to bitter and short-lived intensity I shall relate in the course of this story.

The town lay in a pretty valley, walled in by green and wooded hills, from the summits of which nothing could be seen in summer save a few white church steeples towering above a mass of dark green foliage.

Flowing into the main fresh river from different points were three beautiful brooks, known as "Cove Brook," "Little River" and "Great Mea-

dow Brook," clear, shady streams, abounding in perch, pickerel, sunfish, shiners and huge snapping turtles. Along these streams gaudy kingfishers, small green herons and huge blue herons peopled the shallow coves in the long summer days.

In the winter the frozen surface of the main river and its tributaries was alive with skaters, and in the cold, crisp evenings was aglow with bonfires, which were lavishly fed by the windfalls from the abutting woods. In the early spring the swollen stream, disdaining banks and barriers, roared like the March wind, bearing on its swirling eddies huge floes of ice, which, crowding, crushing and breaking into a thousand fragments in their mad rush over the upper dam, and on the rocks and rapids between the three bridges, caused grave apprehensions for the safety of these structures, and exercised a horrible fascination over the small boys of the town, who used to watch the stream for hours and speculate on the chance for life a boy or man would have in the rushing, icy waters.

To the east of the town extended a rich and fertile slope of ten miles to the sea-coast, to which hard, smooth and level roads led to superb white beaches, and rocky headlands that commanded a

magnificent view of the coast line from Portsmouth to Cape Ann.

The citizens loved the town, believed in its traditions, its past, exulted in its present and gloried in its future. Phillips Academy was the source of much boastful comment, and, to tell the truth, was perhaps the one thing that made the town famous as an educational centre throughout the entire country. That the Academy was famous every citizen would agree; to the proposition that the town became so only in the reflected glory of the Academy every native born and loyal citizen—and I am glad to say that a native born citizen of Exeter who is disloyal is a *rara avis* indeed—would enter a most vigorous dissent, and would argue the same forcibly, obstinately and to the bitter end at any and all times.

What! Did not the Continental Congress assemble here? Did not the tax rioters do great deeds "in the brave days of old?" Shades of our old families, the Gilmans, the Smiths, the Odlins, the Bells, the Sullivans, whose descendants still treasure up remarkable collections of priceless relics of their forbears' participation in the wars of the Revolution and of 1812! The Academy!

Zounds! Did not the town enjoy nearly two hundred years of unexampled prosperity before the Academy was founded, and did she not challenge the respect and admiration of the whole country?

Even as I write I feel a thrill of the same jealous pride in my town that prompted me as a boy to vigorously "plug" the unhappy academy student, and to yell shrill encouragement to the "townie" who came into fistic collision with him. And thus there was always war between the student and the townie, war without special ill-feeling, without malice, but still war, especially in the snowball, green apple, or over-ripe cucumber season.

And yet the little townies admired and imitated the students, ran after them, did their errands, carried their surreptitious notes to the town girls, boasted of the prowess of individual heroes and looked forward to the time when they could be students. Yea, some of them preferred the life of a student to that of a hackman, which was the normal ambition of every Exeter boy.

And so when our young friends departed so hastily, loaded down with hard snowballs, you may be sure there was no malice, hatred or ill-will rankling in their boyish bosoms, but merely the true

spirit of adventure which should animate every live boy. It was in the good old days when men of substance wore black broadcloth frock coats of wondrous sheen and velvety softness, and light, almost white, trousers, which hung in folds about their manly legs. When lofty, and oft-times shiny, domes of thought were surmounted by tall beaver plugs of great price, while their feet were brave in closely fitting calfskin boots, which were always kept in the highest state of polish.

Their mouths were smoothly razed, presenting an astonishing expanse of almost prehensile upper lip; their beards opulent in the extreme; their hair, when copious, combed into a fold or wave on the top of the head, and elaborately parted in a straight furrow down the back of the head, and brushed forward toward the ears. When sparse, it was allowed to grow long and stringily on the sides, and then brought upwards and smoothly pasted over the shiny spots, in the well-meant intention of deceiving the critical gaze of the public, which device, however, only made the defect more dreadfully apparent.

These worthy men never seemed to have anything to do beyond standing in the doorways of

grocery stores, at times when the local photographer, or daguerrotyper, saw fit to immortalize the establishment.

Occasionally one might be seen with a square-edged, yellow, polished stick covered with lines and figures, which he carried under his arm, and occasionally laid it across logs in the mill-yard, removed his hat, mopped his brow and entered certain memoranda in a yellow pocketbook. Next to their passion for basking in the admiration of the public, and the open-mouthed and wide-eyed awe of the youngsters, their sole ambition in life appeared to be to have their pictures taken.

One is before me now, gazing at me from an old-fashioned photograph, with an expression in his face never before seen: an expression in which pride, shame, determination, uncertainty, joy, despair, complacency and anxiety are blended. He sits in a straight-backed mahogany chair, that chair you and I have seen so often, that chair with the bunches of grapes adorning its vulnerable parts, that chair whose shiny horsehair covering used to hide needle-like pricks to torture our small legs, when with pride and affection beaming from her sweet old face our grandmother lifted us into its

uncomfortable lap, and with her forefinger raised stood by while we paid an involuntary tribute to art, and enriched it with our speaking images; that chair—but there was but one, and but one photographer, and both are gone. But their counterfeit presentments stare at you from the pages of old albums, and you stare back, and smile, often with tears.

In the picture there is another article of furniture, alike immortal, a hard, round-topped table, upon which the tall hat lies in state. On his knees lies a heavy, brass-bound book, from which a gilt book-mark with fringe pours forth and mingles with the many folds and pleats of his trousers, prodigal in cloth. And thus does he remain forever with us, and by his pictured presence enrich memory.

Their good wives, our grandmothers, though less given to daguerreomania, are still to be seen in albums of the past, occupying positions of great prominence, great stiffness and martyr-like endurance. They wear their hair smoothly parted, and brushed in waves over their ears. They wear lace collars and stiff black silk dresses with voluminous sleeves. At their throats are lockets con-

taining the hair of persons who have died, persons whose pictures sometimes appear in the daguerreotypes of an earlier period. They look old, much older than when we knew them, and much older than they ever did in later years.

They were delightful old ladies, who wore dolmans with beads, and lace mitts, and cloth shoes without heels, and carried steel-beaded reticules with peppermints therein. And when they rode in state they screened their faces from the sun with long-handled, jointed sunshades about the size of a saucer.

And they entertained in the most delightful fashion, and their suppers were always of raised biscuit, sliced chicken, currant jelly, preserved pears and seed-cakes.

This was the time when the young man, in gala attire, sported the slouch hat, very much on one side of his well-oiled head, the short velvet coat, the gray trousers, tucked into his boot-legs; when the young woman of fashion wore the mammoth and dreadful waterfall, with its two long curls hanging on the shoulders; the balmoral boots and the plaid shawl, the coral earrings and the heavy

bracelets, and bent her back into the hideous "Grecian Bend."

The time when one could acquire a prodigious roll of legal tender by the simple process of changing a five-dollar bill into ten-cent scrips, and when the large copper cent was even then current in sufficient numbers to make literal holes in the pockets of its possessors, and when the postage stamp currency of war time was a recent memory.

Romani fuerunt.

CHAPTER 3

"So high at last the contest rose,
From words they almost came to blows."

THE BATTLE.

Arrived at the library, which was at that time located in the old town building on Court Street, they were joined by a round-faced, plump boy, who came bolting out of a small house with great precipitation, and who was welcomed with loud shouts of "Here comes Beany Watson," "Beany is comin' now, fellers." "Hi, Beany! Seen any stewed cats?"

"You fellers had jest oughter been here about ten minutes ago," said Beany. "Cutler an' Sloan come along, and me an' Pewt plugged 'em, and Pewt hit Sloan right in the ear with a hard one, and they chased us up Maple Street, and in through old Fifield's yard, and out back of the Unitarian church, and caught us and washed our faces good and rolled us in the slosh. I just changed my clothes, an' Pewt has gone home to

change his. Here he comes now," he added, as a thin-faced boy came over the fence, stopping occasionally to squeeze a snowball between his knees with such vigor that he made preposterous faces.

The entire force having arranged their snowballs in convenient piles, crouched low behind the snow-banks that lined the sidewalks, and waited with a patience that would have been a credit to Isaac Walton. It was not long, however, before a tall, thin, spectacled student came walking toward the library with such briskness that his coat tails flapped in consonance with his stride. As he passed under the large elm tree in front of the building, a snowball whizzed by his head and struck the tree with a spattering crash. Instantly he ducked and wheeled about. Nothing was to be seen, the high, discolored snow-banks affording perfect shelter for the boys. After a searching glance around, and a few ominous remarks, he turned to enter the building, when a missile thrown by the master hand of Bug took him between the shoulders with a startling thud, and a perfect hail of balls rattled around his head as he, like a prudent youth, bolted into the welcome shelter of the great barnlike doors.

A second and third unfortunate were treated in the same manner, and with discretion born of long and bitter experience in the ways of townies, escaped with slight injuries. In a moment a group of five or six students approached, and the boys prepared for warfare of the most vigorous description, when Professor Cilley came out of the library, and having pleasantly accosted the students, crossed the street near the spot where our young friends lay in wait. Dire was their dismay and deep their disgust at the loss of so good a chance, but with the idea of actual hostilities when the students came out they prepared a perfect magazine of ammunition, which they hardened by pressing between their knees or under their arms.

While thus engaged, behold a gorgeous youth, arrayed like the lily of the field, with his ambrosial locks breathing sweet odors, came tripping. Bradley, Bradley the Pompous, Bradley the Senior, Bradley the youth much given to personal adornment and worship at the shrine of the fair maidens of Exeter. As this tempting mark approached, the nerves of the young warriors tingled with excitement, and as he came opposite the ambuscade he received a volley.

With commendable courage, but with an utter lack of discretion, owing perhaps to the fact that Tomtit's snowball had burst into chocolate-colored pulp full in his polished shirt bosom, he dropped his books and cane, gathered a double handful of snow without removing his kid gloves, and rushed in the direction from which the snowballs came. This was the reward for which the boys had so patiently waited. Forth from their hiding place they rushed with yells of delight, and from all sides poured a fusillade of hard balls upon the almost defenceless Bradley.

> "Ill fared it then with Rhoderick Dhu
> When on the ground his targe he threw."

Bradley made blind and ineffectual rushes at his small opponents, who easily avoided him, and from behind inflicted dire punishment upon his head, back and shoulders. Yea, even the plump and comely legs, encased in tightly-fitting lavender trousers, received a generous share of attention as shining marks for particularly hard and stinging missiles.

Matters were becoming serious, when there was a shout and a banging of doors at the library, and

a half score of students came rushing to the rescue. And now the victors were put to great straits to avoid reprisals, and scattered like a flock of partridges, and owing to their more intimate knowledge of fences and back yards and alleys made good their escape.

All, alas! but Fatty and Plupy. The former, whose over-robust proportions were not conducive to speed in flight or scandatorial ability in shinning fences, and the latter, whose attenuated legs were wobbly and unreliable, were quickly overhauled, were soundly cuffed, their faces washed in muddy slush and their necks filled with snow, despite their kicks, struggles and incendiary remarks.

While these indignities were being perpetrated upon the persons of these worthies the other boys had not been idle. Although they had retreated, and retreated with such abruptness that Puzzy, in climbing a picket fence, had been caught on a picket, and had only saved himself from the dreadful fate that had overtaken Fatty and Plupy by leaving a segment of his trousers on the fence, yet they were not conquered. Far from it. They had simply executed a flank movement, and scarcely had the students finished the execution of their vic-

times when another broadside was poured upon them from behind fences.

Again they charged, and again did their wily foes escape, only to renew the attack as the students moved off up the street. And now reinforcements were at hand, for down Maple Street came on the run, with a prodigious clumping of rubber boots, Micky Hickey, Honey Donovan, Pop Clark, Herb Choate, Skinny and Rob Bruce, and attacked the students furiously, while the other boys harassed them from the sides. Straight through Maple Street the students charged, the townies retreating, but contesting every inch of the ground. Snowballs zipped by their ears, thudded against their bodies, spattered against trees, fences and houses. The students, although far stronger, were outnumbered by these smaller but superior marksmen, whose numbers were constantly increasing. Hats were brushed off, shirt bosoms wilted, ears filled with icy snow and eyes endangered.

And now the students were reinforced, and in good time, for as the battle raged up and down Maple Street, from the court leading from the rear of Towle's stableyard came rushing the combined

force of students from the Towle and Jamieson boarding-houses, good ball players, strong throwers and fighters every man of them. Back they drove the townies, forcing their way into the street, and escaping from the *cul-de-sac* which had proved so disastrous to their companions. As they reached the broader thoroughfare they took things easier, and had no difficulty in holding their opponents in check.

But at this point a new element entered into the battle. Snowballs were still flying, but at longer range, and comparatively little damage was done, while the combatants were taking breath and repairing damages, when with body half bent, and with a peculiarly graceful and rapid gait, came a tall, thin, wiry boy, dark-complexioned, with snapping black eyes, who was greeted with cries of "Here's Pacer, fellers. Now we'll fix 'em!"

That their confidence was not misplaced was at once demonstrated, for Pacer, with a most peculiar twist of his wrist, sent a shot like lightning which struck a student plump on the forehead. A second shot landed like a cannon ball amidships a prominent student, doubling him up like a shrimp, while a third carried away the cap of one who rose from

a stooping position just in time to head off the flying missile.

Again the students charged, and again the townies fell back, fighting as they retreated, sending volley after volley and receiving broadside after broadside. In the meantime some of the townies had raced through Towle's yard and alarmed the Spring Street gang, and they came rushing to the fray, Pheby and Billy Taylor, Flippity Flanagan, Buenos Ayres Ellenwood, Dinky Lord, Ame and Herman Nudd, closely followed by the Town Hill gang, Ticky Moses, Shinny Thyng, Ned Walker, Sammy Ricker and Sam Gadd, while from a passing grocery team Chitter Robinson and Scotty Brigham dropped; and the new-comers, racing up the street, attacked the students in the rear, who again found themselves hemmed in between two fires.

And now the battle raged fiercer than before. The whole air seemed full of missiles, and the charges of the students were met at close range and great execution done. The place was too hot for the students, outnumbered as they were, and turning their backs to their old opponents they charged through the new-comers desperately,

while the others smothered them with snowballs from behind.

Up the street, toward the Academy yard, the fight surged and eddied, the townies heading off the students, hanging on their flanks, assailing them from all sides. But as the battered remnant of the students came in sight of their yard they made a last desperate stand, while the war cry of the student, "P. E. A. This way," rang out like a call for help. It was at once answered from within the yard, and in an instant scores of students from Abbot Hall, active, lusty young fellows, came jumping the Academy fence to the rescue, scattering the townies, bowling them over and pursuing them across lots and down side streets. In a short time they came panting back victorious, while from afar off, still uncaught, still unconquered, that human catapult, Pacer, sent shell after shell into the "Ranks of Tuscany" until they disappeared, and white-winged peace settled over the little town.

CHAPTER 4

"When the down is on the chin
And the gold-gleam in the hair,
When the birds their sweethearts win
And champagne is in the air."

—LOWELL.

The next Monday morning the boys were promptly in their places when the school bell rang. Puzzy triumphantly exhibited a black eye, while several others bore marks of the exciting battle of the previous Saturday. Plupy appeared with a flannel lined with pork adorning his manly throat, and coughed a cough of portentous hollowness, caused by his immersion in the wet slush of the day of battle.

The Grammar School was at that time in charge of Mr. Sperry French, one of the most efficient and thorough teachers Exeter boys ever had. The old brick school-house behind the old County Building, where the new library now stands, now, alas, removed to make room for a more pretentious

structure, had been for many years the scene of much hard study, a considerable amount of vigorous discipline and an almost unlimited quantity of pure fun and healthy enjoyment.

Mr. French's theory and practice was to keep his pupils thoroughly interested in their work, and up to concert pitch during school hours, and to that effect he introduced at times abrupt and startling methods of instruction to present doubtful and intricate problems in the clear light that practicality alone affords.

And so when Jack Melville was befogged in a dense fog of fractions, and was utterly unable to comprehend the rule of the inversion of the divisor, he was seized by this ingenious instructor and turned bodily upside down before the amazed and delighted scholars, everyone of whom saw the point, while Jack, with a cheerful grin, said, "I guess I know it now, sir." Fractions were Jack's strong point after that.

Mr. French's punishments, while just and vigorous, were frequently so original and amusing as to appeal to the victims themselves, and like statutory penalties, were held out as warnings to the culprit

and to others of mischievous tendencies rather than as punishments to individual transgressors.

Of the propriety of compelling two boys who had been detected in the heinous offence of fighting to stand on the platform, in the full glare of

publicity, with arms fondly encircling each other's necks; of obliging one who had been guilty of malfeisance in chewing gum to give a public exhibition from the same platform of rapid mastication, until the luckless victim's jaws nearly fell apart; of

constraining the offender who had been discovered in the act of surreptitiously eating an apple behind the friendly shelter of a "Guyot's Common School Geography" to instantly march to the platform and publicly perform the gastronomic feat of eating apple, core, seeds and worm-holes; of the propriety of this, I maintain, there can be no question.

At this day his school was a mixed school of girls and boys, and the friendly rivalry in scholarship and good behavior between the sexes was fostered to the utmost by this keen and far-sighted instructor.

He was a good musician, and our shrill childish voices were trained to render with vim and expression the school songs of the old "Nightingale," such as "Annie Lyle," "What's the News," "We Love to Sing Together," "Speed Away" and others, while our teacher pranced about the aisles and platform waving his stick and book and singing vigorously, now a little bass, now a little alto to help out the girls, and now a good deal of lusty tenor.

Indeed, it was a sight to see Bug and Chick Chickering, who sat in adjoining seats, while lustily singing "We All Love One Another," watching

a chance when the teacher's attention was temporarily diverted to get in a few solid punches on each other's anatomy.

As Mr. French's name may not appear in these

pages, I will say that after thirty-three years of continuous service in the same school he resigned, and the popular demonstration in his honor is still talked of as one of the events of the decade, and to this day none of his old pupils revisit Exeter

without first inquiring about and then visiting their old teacher.

On this Monday morning it was evident that something was in the wind. Jennie Morrison, one of the prettiest, most vivacious and most admired girls in the school, for whose favors all the boys sighed, and most of them sighed in vain, was seen talking in a most animated manner with Whacker,

Bug and Puzzy, who were mysteriously dignified and important.

It leaked out at recess that the Chadwicks were to have a party. At once they became the objects

of the most flattering attentions on the part of their friends and acquaintances. Those of the boys who had apples urged the cores upon them. Those who rejoiced in gum were anxious to literally divide the last mouthful with their prospective hosts. Others praised their skill in various games of strength and daring, or purposely allowed themselves to be "spelled down" by these young gentlemen; and one ambitious youth, whose claims to the honor of an invitation were of the slightest, purposely picked a quarrel with the pugnacious Bug, and designedly allowed himself to be "licked," in the hope that the victor's heart would be so warmed by his victory as to move him to invite the conquered to the party, bearing a black eye or a swollen lip as a living proof of his host's prowess.

As for the girls, they unbent, and shamelessly bestowed their brightest smiles, the most lurid of candy mottoes and the most seductive of jujube paste upon the happy Chadwicks, for a party at their house was an event to be long remembered.

As the function was to take place on Wednesday evening, and as the invitations were pretty generally distributed, it is safe to say that only the unremitting industry of Mr. French kept his schol-

ars up to the scholastic mark during the three days preceding the festal occasion. The approved method of bestowing invitations was as follows:

Bug, loquitur: "Hi, Plupy! Wancher to come to my party Wensdy. Goin' to have a big time. We'll git the twin Browns fightin'. Lessee" (consulting a list), "I've got to invite you, and Pewt, and Beany, and Pop and Nigger, and Tady and Nibby, and Priscilla and Stubby; and Puzzy has got to invite Diddly and Fatty, and Zee and Skinny, and a lot of the fellers; and Whack and Annie are to invite the girls. You'll be on hand, woncher, Plupy?"

"Betcher I'll come, fi don't git sent to bed for somethin'."

In this way delightful anticipations were kindled in many a small bosom, and even the retail stores felt the influence, inasmuch as the traffic in paper collars, false bosoms, blue string neckties with white spots and Day and Martin's blacking became quite feverishly active.

On Wednesday a somewhat mixed assemblage thronged the spacious parlors of Captain Chadwick's hospitable mansion. The olive branches of the courtly captain and his stately wife were numer-

ous, descending in regular gradations like a flight of steps, from the eldest daughter, a young lady of sixteen, to the youngest son, a tot of five; and as each individual step was allowed the privilege of bidding to the feast a certain number of other steps of like size and age, "irrespective of race, color and previous condition of servitude," the natural result was a very numerous and rather bizarre gathering, and as everyone came promptly at the hour named it was a veritable tidal wave of youngsters.

The boys came dressed neatly, and for the most part provided with light slippers, for which their heavy boots were exchanged as soon as they entered the house. A few of the older boys, special guests of Miss Annie, had attained their ambition, the bob-tailed coat, the *toga virilis* of budding manhood; while the youthful hostess and a few of her bosom friends had, in honor of the occasion, discarded the braids of the schoolgirl for the coiffure of the woman of fashion, and their smiles were much sought after by the older boys and the few students who were present.

The rooms presented a scene of animation boisterous to a degree. In a corner of the library, dur-

ing the absence of the host and hostess, the fight between the twin Browns, two sandy-haired, lank, white-eyelashed youths, was being pulled off according to promise, while a ring of choice spirits alternately cheered them on and kept a sharp eye out for those in authority.

In the sitting-room the tots were playing "Ring Round a Rosy" and "Bushel of Rags," while in the parlor "Virginia Reel," "Copenhagen" and "Post Office" had their quota of devotees; and occasional glimpses of white-coated and capped caterers' assistants whetted the anticipation of the guests in a most delightfully tantalizing manner.

Promptly at the stroke of nine the dining-room doors were thrown open, and the eager guests, restraining themselves with great difficulty from pushing, marched in a most orderly manner to their places in the dining-room, where long tables, short tables, big tables, little tables, card tables and lacquered Japanese tables were loaded with substantial fare, and literally flung themselves upon it.

What a supper that was! What prodigious feats of gastronomy were performed, aided and abetted to the utmost by Mrs. Chadwick, who knew by

domestic experience the capacity of her own boys, and wisely judged that it was not exceptional.

After supper there were more games, blindman's buff, charades, clap in and clap out, winding up with a grand sing and good-night.

Unfortunately, among so many gallant youths and pretty girls it was impossible for an evening so spent to pass without occasioning some heart-burning, and something occurred to mar the perfect enjoyment of the luckless Fatty, something fraught with the most weighty consequences, as the subsequent chapters will show.

Fatty, upon whom the fascinating Jennie Morrison had smiled, and whose attentions for the past few weeks she had openly encouraged, had noticed with great concern that on this particular evening she betrayed an all too evident inclination to bestow her smiles upon the Academy students present, and in turn received their attentions in what was undoubtedly a delightfully friendly manner, at least to them, while to the unhappy Fatty, who was treated by her with well-bred indifference, these social amenities were gall of an exceeding bitterness.

One of these students in particular, named

Bates, and who was known to the townies under the appellation of "Fishy," was unremitting in his attentions to the fair Jennie, and it was only too evident that his attentions were fully appreciated and his friendly feelings cordially reciprocated.

In vain did the fat and fatuous Fatty endeavor to slap her hands in the Copenhagen ring. Deftly she avoided him, only to fall, willingly as it seemed, into similar traps laid for her by the wily and triumphant Fishy. In vain did the jealous swain attempt in "Button, button" to obey the command to "rise and redeem her." For him there were no letters in the "Post Office," and the lottery of forfeits held for him naught but blanks.

For a time he feigned a hollow merrimnet, too ghastly to be real, but finally retired in disgust from the room and took refuge in the dining-room, where he drank deep draughts of "Malvoisie"—*i.e.*, colored lemonade—and darkly communed with his trusty friends, the redoubtable Bug, Puzzy, the foe of students, still bearing the black eye received in the snowball fight; Tomtit, who urged immediate violence; Whacker, who counselled a concerted attack with hard snowballs after the party broke up, and the highly sympathetic but less pug-

nacious Plupy, and the pacific but scandalized Potter, who, however much he may have deplored the condition of affairs, willingly sunk his own identity where the welfare of a friend demanded it.

That the undoing of a friend and compatriot should have been the work of a "stewed cat" was regarded by the boys as an insult, an insult to be wiped out by blood and by blood alone. For while individually they would have striven earnestly each to cut out the other in the affections of the fickle one, their common cause against the students bound them together in bonds of "brass and triple steel."

And so, after as guarded a conference as the interrupted nature of their seclusion would admit, considering that they stood near the punch bowl, they resolved upon a council of war upon the morrow, drank a bumper to the confusion of the common enemy and returned to the gay scene just as the guests were preparing to depart and a dishevelled scramble for rubber boots was in progress.

Now hope "triumphant o'er his fears" again animated the manly bosom of our corpulent friend. Perhaps, yes, perhaps all might be well; perhaps she was only trying to dissemble her affection; per-

haps she was testing his; perhaps a dozen things.

Hastily crowding on his boots and squirming into his pea jacket, the newly hopeful Fatty took his station at the foot of the front stairs, amid a group of bashful and sheepish looking youths, and as the coquettish Jennie appeared, becomingly arrayed in an astrachan jacket and hat, boldly pushed forward, with the usual "Can I see you home, Miss Morrison?" but fell back in mortified amaze as she coolly declined the offer and deftly slipped her red-mittened hand through the extended arm of the despised "stewed cat."

At this crowning humiliation Bug, who with the rest of the family was engaged in speeding the parting guest, loudly yelled "Stewedcat! Stewedcat!" and was only restrained by force from sending a rubber boot full at the offender's head.

A stern maternal command to the three Chadwick boys prevented an immediate expedition to waylay and destroy the marauder on his way from the dwelling of the inconsistent damsel, and Fatty, temporarily crushed, and as one well stricken in years, was escorted home by Tomtit, Plupy and Potter, who vainly tried to revive his drooping spirits and beguile his sadness with entertaining gossip and jovial converse.

CHAPTER 5

"And never shall in friendly clasp
The hand of such as Marmion clasp."

—Scott.

The next day was rainy, windy, dreary, a typical March day. The piles of dingy snow, already shrunken under the warm sun of the previous day, melted away and became rivulets to swell the gutters into raging torrents.

As the brown and sodden earth came into view after its long winter's concealment hundreds of bones, thrown by thrifty housekeepers into the back yard, likewise appeared, and as they had a distinct value as articles of commerce they were gathered by the boys and sold to the hardware dealers, and were popularly supposed to be used to make ivory articles of great value. At all events, the collecting of refuse bones was a regular spring trade, in the pursuit of which our young friends amassed many coppers and three-cent pieces.

The prudent and far-sighted Plupy, anticipating

a sharp decline in the prices of his stock in trade, now sadly depleted by the generous patronage of his associates, made a deal with a confiding friend who aspired to a mercantile life, sold out the remainder of his stock at a great sacrifice, disposed of his net receipts of iron and lead for the not inconsiderable sum of twenty-eight cents and retired wealthy.

As he was a youth of the most hospitable nature, he without much difficulty obtained his parents' consent to invite a few of his friends to share the proceeds of the mercantile venture, and incidentally to discuss the momentous case of Fatty *vs.* Fishy.

Accordingly he bade his friends to make merry with him, and at eight o'clock that evening Fatty, Bug, Puzzy, Whacker, Tomtit and Potter were to be seen in a comfortable back room of Plupy's domicile, busily engaged in disposing of a collation bought with the nail money. Pewt and Beany had been invited, but the former had been seriously bitten by a tame gray squirrel which he was exhibiting to a friend, and the latter had eaten too much at the Chadwick's party and was reported to be in a most critical and alarming condition.

The collation, which had absorbed the entire contents of the till, had been chosen with great judgment by the host, and was so liberal and varied in assortment as to justify detailed mention. Seven huge cream cakes from the local baker, each a brown leathery envelope enclosing a very sweet paste. One dozen large jumbles, bought at the same place. Slightly damaged and shop-worn, they were purchased at such a discount as to be regarded in the light of a great bargain. Seven gooseberries, hard, round balls of candy, slightly transparent and decorated with alternate opaque stripes. They were hard as white marbles, and the strongest teeth could make no impression on them, but when persistently sucked they would dwindle steadily for a long time and diffuse an agreeable sweetness until exhausted. They were indeed "pieces de resistance."

Seven corn balls, likewise bargains, and for similar reasons. Seven taffies, brownish concoctions of molasses candy and minced cocoanut, much in vogue at that period, and usually exposed for sale in the windows of small shops, neatly stuck on strips of white tissue paper. It was no violation of the rules of polite behavior to eat the paper also.

One huge cocoanut, untapped, which when shaken gave forth an agreeable gurgle and swash, promising refreshing drink for the thirsty and substantial meat for the starving. A pitcher of sweetened water and an unlimited supply of the finest sweet fern cigars saved from the wreck of the stock in trade.

The eyes of the guests, at the unprecedented magnificence of the entertainment, sparkled, and a joint and several attack was made on the provender with marked effect. At the expiration of a half hour spent in this agreeable fashion the last of the eatables, saving the gooseberries, which were spared for disposal during school hours, had disappeared, and the guests, choosing and lighting a sweet fern cheroot each, began a high-pitched discussion of the absorbing events of the preceding evening.

"It's pretty tough," sighed Bug, "that the rain came just in time to spoil the snow. 'F mother hadn't stopped us last night we would have just lammed time out of Fishy."

"S'pose 'twon't do to wait till green apple time," said Tomtit reflectively.

"Huh! Course not," sneered Puzzy.

"We might trip him up some night with a string," suggested Whacker.

"You don't catch me trying that again," said Fatty. "Las' fall me an' Pewt were layin' for Nipper Brown, and old John Quincy Ann Pollard came limpin' along 'n fell down whack, 'n broke a whole pailful of eggs, 'n mother made me pay for the eggs out of my 'lowance, and kep' me in the yard for a week. That's always the way, if you lay for one feller some other one comes along and tumbles down."

"I'll tell you, boys," said Potter in his quiet way, "I think Fatty ought to send Fishy a challenge to fight, just as Tom Brown and Slugger Williams fought in that story. Fishy can have a few of his friends for seconds and we will all be Fatty's seconds, and we will have a ring and sponges and bottles and everything."

"That'll be bully," said Bug, with great enthusiasm. "No clawin', nor rasslin', nor pullin' hair nor kickin', but just stand right up and punch each other square in the mug."

"S'pose he won't fight?" queried Tomtit.

"He'll fight fast enough," said Fatty, who appeared to have misgivings as to the result.

"You can lick 'im easy. You're bigger 'n he is and can fight like time," rejoined Tomtit, with deft and reassuring flattery.

"I'll fight him," said Bug excitedly.

"What yer got to do about it?" asked Whacker.

"'Cause he's an old 'stewed cat' an' Fatty's afraid."

"I ain't afraid, neither," roared Fatty, incensed at the imputation. "I can lick him in two minutes."

"I think," said Potter, quietly coming forward as usual to smooth things over, "that Whacker and I had better take a challenge to Fishy to-morrow, and have the fight next Saturday."

"What yer want to wait so long for?" demanded the impatient Tomtit.

"Perhaps he'll be expelled before that or Fatty'll back out," said Bug, who perceived the necessity of spurring the reluctant Fatty to action.

"I won't neither," bawled Fatty indignantly.

"Well, anyway," explained Potter, "you've got to train your man if you want him to put up a good fight."

"Train? What's that?" asked Plupy the unsophisticated.

"Why, Fatty's got to run a mile every day, can't

eat no pastry nor candy, or smoke no sweet fern cigars, and has got to punch with the fellers every day with gloves so as to get into practice," explained the learned Potter.

"That's great," chimed in Bug, sparring in a highly scientific manner, evidently anticipating interesting developments.

Even Fatty manifested some enthusiasm over the matter put in this light, although the prospect of a pastryless week was anything but alluring to a youth of his robust appetite, and caused him to pull a very long face.

"I knew a feller once," said Tomtit, who was remarkable for his imagination, "who lived in North Hampton, and he and my uncle John used to practice boxin' an' rasslin' 'til they could lick fellers three times as big as they were, an' they got as hard as rocks, an' you couldn't hardly jab a pin into 'em anywhere."

"What sort of a challenge are you goin' to send?" asked Whacker.

"Got to have a gauntlet to throw at him, haven't you?" demanded Puzzy, who was literal and literary in his tastes.

"Tell yer what," cried Bug, always ready with startling suggestions, "le's put a half brick in my

mitten an' give it to him right in the ear, 'n then he'll fight."

This brilliant but truculent suggestion was pronounced decidedly irregular by the oracular Potter, and after much consideration the following challenge was dictated to and signed by the darkly determined Fatty:

"March 6teenth, 186—.

"Fishy Bate.

"Stewedcat.

"You are respectively challinged to meet me ennywheres, saturday afternoon, for a fight to a finish. You are aloud to bring not exceding 6 secons.

"NED GILMAN."

This was justly regarded as a triumph of diplomatic art, and well calculated to bring on hostilities of the most lively nature.

Further discussion was cut short by the ringing of the nine o'clock curfew, and the seven worthies, after promising to inaugurate a vigorous system of training on the morrow, prudently threw away their cheroots and wended their noisy way homeward, smelling like a bonfire of dry leaves. Considering the quantity and indigestible quality of the refreshments, this course of training was in the highest degree advisable, provided any of them survived the night.

CHAPTER 6

"And the more stupendous our
Preparations the less the bloodshed,
And the shorter the struggle will be."
—DOUGLAS.

The next day, however, found them all in school, winking mysteriously at each other whenever the teacher's back was turned. Indeed, the luckless Bug was detected in making vigorous passes in the air indicative of pugilistic aspirations, and was promptly sentenced to spend the rest of the morning in the cavernous depths of the wood-box, where he was speedily joined by Ticky Moses and Shinny Thyng, caught red-handed in a game of tit-tat-two. The last named youngster had spent so much of his time immured in this dungeon that he could see in the dark like a cat.

At dinner that day, and for several days afterwards, Fatty astonished the members of his family by eating enormous quantities of meat and refusing pastry and sweets. This was so abrupt a departure from his ordinary habits that he was

closely questioned as to the state of his health, and narrowly escaped the usual dose of castor oil, the family panacea.

After dinner the somewhat unusual sight of seven or eight small boys in their shirt-leeves, with coats thrown over their shoulders and handkerchiefs bound around their heads, amazed the worthy people of the town, who were, however, gradually becoming used to any eccentricities in garb or conduct in these boys.

As soon as school closed Potter and Whacker were dispatched with the challenge, and the five remaining boys repaired to Taylor's barn, where training was vigorously resumed. When asked to choose his sparring partner Fatty, with commendable prudence, chose Plupy, to the avowed disgust of Bug, who longed for a more active part in the preparations.

The contrast between the two as they stood up for the initial bout was comical in the extreme. Fatty, round, plump and protuberant; Plupy, lank, knock-kneed and wobbly. Poor Plupy, it must have been a long week of penance to him. Every afternoon from five-thirty to six o'clock he was thumped, banged about and knocked down, and

sustained a variety of contusions and bruises frightful to behold, yet he manfully stuck in the ring until Potter, as the recognized authority on the

subject of training, decided that his man had exercised enough.

On the afternoon in question Potter and Whacker returned and announced a successful mission. Fishy would fight, and would be ready Saturday. He was expecting his father to visit him, but if the old man didn't come he would fight.

These good tidings so revived the drooping spirits of Bug that while Fatty was being scientifically treated by Tomtit and Potter, and while Plupy was

endeavoring unaided to pull himself into shape, he donned the gloves and rudely smote his brother Puzzy in the nose.

Puzzy, although a year younger than Bug was a trifle larger, and no mean antagonist, and quickly retaliated by delivering what is known in the vernacular of the ring as a "side-winder," and a lively bout was the result, which still further intensified the interest in the great event.

The next day Fatty was as stiff as a soda cracker, to quote the apt simile of Tomtit, but the enforced discipline of his trainer, aided by frequent maxims from an odd volume of "Boxiana" which Potter possessed, served to bring him on in fine style.

The next few days were a repetition of the course of training, and brought an equal share of misery to the plucky but out-classed Plupy and the harassed Fatty. The course of training, like that of true love, which brought about this condition of affairs, did not run smoothly, and was marred by an accident that threatened to put an end to the fight and the future usefulness of Fatty at the same time. Among the rules of training prescribed in Potter's book was "Exercises calculated to stretch

the muscles of the arm and add to the quickness of delivery."

At that time the students had a sort of open-air gymnasium in the Academy yard, near the old dormitory and under the shade of the trees. Here were erected climbing ladders, swinging rings, horizontal and parallel bars and a trapeze. The astute Potter opined that the swinging rings were admirably adapted to stretch the muscles of the arm and develop tenacity of grasp, which might, when judiciously exercised upon an opponent's hair, work to manifest advantage.

With these good intentions Fatty was induced to grasp the swinging rings, while as many of his companions as could lay hold of him from behind strongly propelled him skyward.

The first few swings were safely taken, but finally by concerted action he was sent to a great height, when either he became frightened or the momentum of his plump body was beyond the power of his hands to restrain, certain it is that he lost his hold on the rings, and with a blood-curdling yell came to the ground, striking on his head and shoulders with a prodigious thump, and lay as one dead.

For a moment the attendant squires of the fallen knight remained rooted to the ground in terror, and with open mouths and staring eyeballs gazed at the recumbent form of the gladiator; then, ani-

mated by a simultaneous desire to quit the dreadful place, turned as one man to fly, when a loud and sustained bellow and a lusty kicking by the supposed corpse showed plainly that the vital spark had not fled.

With careful hands he was raised from the ground, his clothes brushed and his bruises tenderly rubbed, each of his friends loudly proclaiming his individual innocence of blame in the matter. On examination it was found that he had fallen into a pile of sawdust used about the buildings, and had sustained no injury beyond a severe fright and a severe shaking up.

Convinced, however, that some expiation should be made, the party, with the exception of Potter, united in laying the entire blame upon Plupy, who was promptly set upon by Fatty and soundly thumped.

Plupy, however, did not allow so slight a matter as this to interfere with his allegiance or his interest in the fight, and the next day training was resumed, leaving the stretching of the muscles to nature and youth.

CHAPTER 7

"The next gale that sweeps from the North will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms."

—Old Reader.

The eventful day dawned clear, warm and bright. The seven sporting gentlemen were early at school, and secretly discussed the mill in subdued voices. Fatty appeared in good condition, and except for a slight stiffness in his neck seemed none the worse for his fall.

However great his misgivings about the result of the fight might have been in the early stages of his training, the ease with which he had fought Plupy to a standstill and the fulsome praise of his friends had given him unlimited confidence in his ability, and he spoke of the humiliation of his detested rival as an accomplished fact, and gloried in anticipation of the manner in which he would rib-roast him, and side-wind him, and cross-counter him, and draw his claret, and tap his ruby, and give him bellows to mend, and other gruesome accomplishments which a careful perusal of Potter's book

seemed to indicate as a *sine qua non* of a properly conducted mill.

How the boys had managed to get through the week without betraying their secret I cannot understand or explain, but the certain knowledge that the least slip would infallibly result in prompt interference by their legal custodians kept them as dumb as oysters.

The long forenoon wore slowly away, and at the close of school they held a hurried conference, in which Fatty was solemnly warned, under the most severe penalties, to avoid yielding to the seductive pleasures of the table or the enervating influence of mince pie.

The providing of the proper appurtenances of the ring was fairly divided between the boys. Plupy was to provide a bottle of sweetened water, Whacker a sponge, Potter some raw meat and brown paper, humanely intended for application to the wounds, bruises, abrasions and other severe injuries to be sustained by Fishy. To Puzzy was intrusted the difficult duty of providing a suitable sentiment or motto for the occasion, as this was deemed necessary by Potter.

By agreement, the ring was to be pitched behind

the Grove Street School House, all concurring in the idea that the most isolated spot in the universe is a school yard on a half holiday.

A little before the hour six of the boys were at the ringside, anxiously awaiting the approach of the enemy. Plupy was a little late, as his mother, from recent experience, had deemed it wise policy to compel that youth to split his kindlings before he left the house. He arrived on the ground bearing the bottle of sweetened water, flushed with running and very shaky in his knees.

The different articles had been in some way amassed by the boys. Whacker brought a huge sponge which had been used in the stable for washing carriages, and had incidentally done duty in rubbing down the horse, which latter operation had rendered it very smelly and quite fuzzy in appearance. Tomtit brought a roller-towel that had done a hard week's work.

The provision that showed great research and patient labor was the motto contributed by Puzzy. Literary in his tastes, as I have already said, he had chanced upon this Latin maxim, "*ex nihilo nihil fit.*" This struck him as remarkably appropriate, indicating, as it plainly did, an encounter

between two persons of somewhat similar names. So interested had he been in the matter that he had spent much time in searching the Encyclopædia and ancient histories for details of the encounter, but had been unable to find anything, and had not dared to ask for fear of betraying his secret. Some discussion preceded the adoption of his sentiment, Plupy suggesting the insertion of an "and," but he was voted down, although he argued strongly, and to the point, that if "ex nihilo fit nihil, nihil probably fit back, or if nihil fit ex nihilo, ex nihilo fit back; that is, they both fit, and there wouldn't have been no fight if both hadn't fit."

At this point Fishy came in from the street accompanied by his seconds. Distrustful of the fairness of his opponent and anticipating a large gathering of turbulent townies, he had chosen for his seconds six of the largest and most powerful students in the Academy, who came grinning into the yard, highly amused at what promised to be a very entertaining adventure.

Fatty won the choice of corners, and chose the northwest corner, which differed in no whit from any other corner, but as he was bound to choose

something he chose with great promptness, aware that promptness is a business trait, and might im-

press his opponent that he was getting himself into very serious complications indeed.

As an additional precaution Fatty had eaten a raw steak thickly besprinkled with pepper, to make himself savage, as befitted the occasion, and had

drunk a wine-glass full of strong vinegar, to add sharpness to his physical and mental make-up. Thus provisioned, he looked with confidence to the utter demolition of his adversary, and glared at

him with a baleful look that ill became his handsome and good-natured face.

The necessary preliminaries were soon dispatched, and the combatants, after a brief handshake, stood forth to do battle as did Dares and Entellus of old. While they are standing on guard let me say a word about fighting. It is customary,

I am aware, at this stage to give a sort of moral lecture about the sinfulness of fighting. I propose to do violence to a tradition and do nothing of the sort, for I have always been inclined to defend the practice.

Now, my dear madam, finish this chapter before you throw the story into the fire. If my ideas do not harmonize with yours it won't hurt you to hear what my ideas are on the subject. Your son is just the age of mine. You love your boy and desire his welfare above all things. I have the same feeling for my own son. So far we are agreed. Have you forbidden your son to fight under severe penalties? And have you sent him to a public school hampered by this injunction? If so, I am afraid you have placed him under a serious disadvantage, and have thus done him a grievous wrong. This is the infallible result: either he will fight and deny it to you, which is far more blameworthy than fighting, or he will, if a strictly obedient boy, refuse to fight or to resent imposition, and thus gain the reputation of a "milksop" or "sissy," and his school days will be made miserable by the injustice of this stigma, and by the indigni-

ties and annoyances to which he will be subjected by his mates.

If you find your boy quarrelsome, and inclined to impose upon other and younger boys, punish him as severely as you wish. I am fully in accord with you there, for a quarrelsome, tyrannical bully is a nuisance in any school; but as long as there are schools, so long will there be quarrelsome, tyrannical bullies, and you and I, my dear madam, wish our boys to take these bullies in hand and thrash them. Now, isn't that so?

Do you suppose that Fatty was any the worse for his fight with Fishy? And when, in after years, Fatty became one of the best football players and cane-rushers that Dartmouth College ever boasted, and one of the best business men in New Hampshire, is there any doubt but that this fight had some influence—a slight influence, perhaps, but still an influence—in producing this development?

And do you suppose that he was any the less a gentleman and a good citizen from having learned to stand up for his rights and resent improper interference with his affairs? Did not these qualities contribute to his success, and will they not, when

properly directed, contribute to the success of your son and mine?

Let your boy learn to box, to wrestle, to fence, and so develop every muscle. I never yet saw a boy who knew how to box strike with a club, stone or dangerous weapon.

But really I have taken so much time in this little sermon that I must postpone the result of the fight to the next chapter. Truthfully, my dear madam, are you not the least bit disappointed?

CHAPTER 8

"They fit n' fit n' fit
And Jim wouldn't give up
And Hall wouldn't give up."
—JOHN ROBINSON.

How the hearts of the little townies thrilled, and how their eyes sparkled as their hero stood up clad in full ring costume, knee breeches, belt, sleeveless shirt, knickerbockers and laced shoes, his face aglow with health, his under jaw so firmly set that his plump cheeks stood out like two ripe Baldwin apples, while his head was closely clipped by the searching shears of the village barber. Indeed, so far had the lust for battle got possession of them that even the overtrained Plupy would have willingly entered the ring.

Firm and unyielding Fatty looked as he stood with his guard a perfect copy of a picture of John C. Heenan hanging in the aforementioned barber's shop. A close observer would have noticed a heaviness in his motions and a stiffness in his attitude which contrasted unfavorably with the lithe

and graceful movements of his lighter and older opponent.

Rejoice in him while you may, boys, for in a few short rounds his renown as a pugilist will have departed, and the banner of the townies, with the classic motto thereon, will have been trailed in the dust. Through no fault of Taylor's however, for too late it was ascertained that Fishy was nearly nineteen years of age, while Fatty was but fourteen. In sporting parlance, the students were "playing a ringer."

And now I am again violating all precedent in allowing the hero of this chapter to be beaten in a contest of the kind. Did not Tom Baily whip Conway, although, as he says, "I could stand very little and not see at all" when the contest was over? And did not Jack Hazard whip Lon Gannett in the entry of the school-house? And if Tom Brown didn't whip "Slogger" Williams, he had him pretty nearly finished when Dr. Arnold interfered and stopped the fight. And in many other stories for boys that I have read the hero, a mild, soft-voiced boy, polite to his teachers and elders, modest in demeanor, prompt at church and Sunday-school, when provoked to battle, lays aside his

coat, rolls up his sleeves, displaying an arm knotted with curving muscles (although but fourteen years of age), remarks that he is very sorry to be obliged to fight and promptly sails in and whips the bully of the town, a massive youth seasoned by years of battle, and leaving him cowed and beaten, turns down his cuffs, replaces his coat and walks away, to be stopped by a rich merchant and rewarded with a position in his counting-room.

I am really very sorry to be obliged to chronicle a different result and sorry to violate tradition. But the unfortunate part of the matter was that Fatty, although a good, hearty, healthy boy, was not soft-voiced, modest or particularly polite; that although he was reasonably constant at church and Sunday-school, he, like his friends, often went as one driven. In short, he had but little in common with the priggish individual just described.

And so virtue, if virtue was supposed to lie on Fatty's side, was not triumphant. Although I cannot see, in looking upon the matter in the calm, dispassionate way that the lapse of years enables me to see it, that there had been anything culpable in Fishy's conduct, albeit the boys were each and every one of the opinion that he had in some way

worked great injury to Fatty by his successful attentions to Jennie, and that his conduct merited the severe thrashing that they were confident would be administered.

But now let us return to the gladiators, whom we have kept standing on guard for a long time. They have become impatient, and so, perhaps, have you.

After a few moments of cautious manœuvring Fatty, urged on by the frantic yells of his adherents and their shrill admonitions to "paste him one," made a leviathan rush at Fishy, who deftly avoided him, and landed a solid, left-handed punch on Fatty's nose, which caused him to give utterance to a loud "ouch!" and seize that organ with both hands, while he looked cross-eyes at his opponent, who good-naturedly refrained from taking advantage of this opening to land several good ones.

Stung by the loud laughter of the students and the shrill "Aw, now, Fatty, what yer doin'?" of his friends, he rushed again, but failed to land, and received two body blows that evoked a hoarse crow from the recipient.

Potter at once claimed a foul, arguing that a blow in the stomach was below the belt. This

The extreme irregularity of introducing *la savate*.
Page 83.

claim was disallowed, but it was agreed that no blows below the chest should be allowed. When the dogs of war were loosed again Fatty at once made another rush, and this time landed on Fishy's brow, but was promptly countered on the sore nose, whereupon he lost his temper and launched a terrific kick at Fishy, who caught the uplifted leg, gave a heave and brought Fatty to the ground with a thump, gaining first fall and closing the round.

The rest between the first and second rounds was spent in fanning and rubbing down the gladiators, and in trying to convince Fatty of the extreme irregularity of his conduct in introducing *la savate* into the rules of the P. R.

In the second round Fatty, acting under the instructions of his handlers, disregarded the vociferous encouragement of Bug and Tomtit to "Lam him, Fatty," "Paste him, Fatty," and essayed to keep Fishy at a distance. These tactics were a dismal failure, for Fishy easily dodged back and forward, and with much skill and great precision delivered several sounding thuds on Fatty's roseate countenance, and finally in a clinch backheeled and threw him heavily.

Second round for Fishy; Fatty's action marked by great gallantry.

This time the united persuasions, expostulations and entreaties of the entire squad were hardly sufficient to induce the reluctant champion to come to the scratch, but finally the magic words, "'Fraid cat! 'Fraid cat!" thrown in his teeth by Bug, prevailed, and he again strode forth to do or die.

And now for the first time he scored a temporary advantage, for as they advanced to the centre of the ring Bug suddenly darted forward and dealt Fishy a stinging blow on the ear. As Fishy turned on this fresh antagonist Fatty threw himself forward and fairly overwhelmed him by his weight, all three coming to the ground together.

They were immediately separated by the students, and Bug was removed to a safe distance from the ring and securely pinioned, from which position he shouted shrill defiance at the students.

This temporary advantage greatly encouraged the partisans of Fatty, but proved his speedy undoing, for while up to this time Fishy, conscious of his strength, science, and superiority in age, had fought with the utmost good nature, and had carefully avoided the exertion of his full strength, he

was now thoroughly enraged, as much from the gross violation of ring precedents as from the stinging nature of the blow he had received from Bug.

From the apparent ease with which Fatty had rolled Fishy in the dust, his seconds sagely judged that Fishy could not stand a scrimmage at close quarters, and advised their man to go in and finish him at short range. The first part of this command he promptly started in to execute, but made bad work of the second, for his rush was met with staggering lefts and rights, and before he could collect his wits such a rain of blows was showered upon him that he dropped in the ring and utterly refused to rise, claiming loudly, and with good reason, that he had had enough.

Whereupon Potter and Whacker, who had during the entire contest punctiliously observed all the formalities of the ring, solemnly threw up the sponge, and Fishy was hailed the victor, and after putting on his coat left the field accompanied by his friends, and deaf to the repeated challenges of Bug, who offered to "lick any man of them for a cent," which under the circumstances seemed a liberal discount on the usual terms.

Poor Fatty was led to the pump, and his bruises, consisting of a black eye, a swollen lip, and a sprained thumb, were scientifically treated by Pot-

ter, while the rest of the party struck the shackles from the downtrodden and imprisoned Bug, and discussed the fight with great earnestness.

While it was admitted that the fight was fair, and that Fatty had exhibited both pluck and endurance, still there was a harrowing suspicion in

their minds that in some occult way the entire party had been tricked and taken in.

Bug, whose imprisonment had for the time soured his genial disposition, was inclined to lay the blame upon the course of training, and indulged in remarks aspersive of his brother Whacker, which that gentleman resented, and a second fight began between combatants much more evenly matched, and lasted several rounds in the most hearty fashion, but led to no definite result except in the restoration of perfect good feeling. The Chadwicks were all so evenly matched, and had fought so much, that their fights seldom resulted in any decided advantage to either.

But alas! there was no longer any pleasure in life for Fatty, in whom even the excitement of the second fight failed to awaken an interest, and he was escorted home through devious ways, and left in the back yard to explain his condition as best he might.

The next Monday morning he was, with the exception of a discolored eye, none the worse physically for his misfortune, but for several days he avoided his friends and seemed a prey to melancholy. Later he was seized with an enthusiasm for

hard study, evidently ambitious to dazzle a certain young lady by his scholastic triumphs, a course of procedure which much puzzled his friends, none of whom were accustomed to devote much time to their studies.

Gradually, however, he was taken into favor by the fair enslaver, to the deep but unspoken distress of Plupy, whose small bosom was nigh to bursting with his feelings for her.

Under the sunshine of prosperity Fatty rapidly regained his spirits, but the desperate condition of mind to which he had been reduced by her studied coldness, as well as his hitherto unsuspected literary resources, was evidenced by the appearance of a carefully folded paper which dropped from her desk one day, and which contained a wisp of tow-colored hair, and the following tender but darkly prophetic verse:—

"Hair. Ned Gilman to Jennie Morrison."

"This lock of hair
I once did wair,
I now preside it to your care.
Perhaps when I am dead and gone
You may have this to look upon."

Brigadier Fatty Gilman sat in his headquarters.

Page 89.

CHAPTER 9

"Stout Lartius hurled down Aunus into the stream beneath;
Herminius struck at Seius and clove him to the teeth;
At Picus brave Horatius darted one fiery thrust,
And the proud Umbrian's gilded arms clashed in the bloody dust."—MACAULAY.

The following Saturday afternoon Brigadier Fatty Gilman sat in his headquarters dictating dispatches to the members of his staff, Aids-de-Camp Billy Swett, Dutchy Seamans and "Parson" Otis, who galloped furiously on foaming chargers, carrying orders that the battalions form for an immediate asault on Lookout Mountain (Jady Hill), and that the commander "expected every man to do his duty."

Instantly the drummers sounded the long roll, the war-worn and battered veterans sprang to their places, the artillery limbered up. A brief inspection, and the command, "Battalion, attention! Right, forward—fours—r-i-g-h-t, mar-r-c-ch!" And the battalion, with drums beating and flags flying,

marched down the turnpike, and after a brief skirmish crossed the bridge to Roanoke Island, which they reduced, and having stationed a guard there, pushed their way across Harper's Ferry (String Bridge), through Frederickton to the edge of the plain surrounding Lookout Mountain.

Here a halt was made, a line of pickets thrown out, and a hasty meal of coffee and hardtack eaten. Cartridge boxes were filled, belts tightened, and all put in readiness for the assault.

General Gilman himself addressed them. He told them, with voice trembling with emotion, that he could not close his eyes to the sad and solemn fact that war did exist, that the government must be maintained and its enemies overthrown; that the more stupendous their preparation the less the bloodshed, and the shorter the struggle. That it was a sad task to discuss questions as fearful as civil war; but that, sad as it was, bloody and disastrous as he expected the war would be, it was his conviction that it was the duty of every American citizen to rally round the flag of his country. That should he perish in the glorious struggle—as perish he might—this his last feeble and lingering glance might behold the gorgeous ensign of

the republic, now known and honored through, ah, —through, ah,—through,—ah,—and that if Plupy Shute didn't stop laughing he would punch time out of him in two minutes.

At the conclusion of his speech the soldiers cheered vigorously, and loudly resolved to give no quarter and to accept none.

At this moment the sound of rapid firing was heard, and the pickets were slowly driven in. "Advance, batteries, to line of wall, and unlimber and give 'em canister!" roared General Gilman. It was a sight of a lifetime to see batteries dash forward, unlimber, and amid a storm of bullets pour volley after volley of grape into the ranks of the enemy, who charged again and again, only to fall back riddled with grape, torn with canister, shattered with chain shot.

As they retreated, General Gilman issued the famous order, "Forward the Light Brigade, charge for the guns he said," and the noble band of six hundred, each man with his reins in his teeth, his revolver in his right hand, his sabre in his left, spurred reckless to the charge, led by the heroic Fatty, notwithstanding the historic inconsistency of the appearance of this famous military company.

On they went, cutting their way through the massed forces of their foe, cutting, shooting, yelling, and being shot.

> "Flashed all their sabres bare,
> Flashed as they turned in air.
> Then they rode back,
> But not, not the Six Hundred."

To another order by the gallant General, "*En evant les gants glaces*," which he pronounced Enn eevant less gants glacies,—the pick of the French army, another slight incongruity, was dispatched to carry the redoubt, and recoiled after prodigies of valor. As Grouchy was confidently expected with reinforcements of sixty thousand, the Imperial Guard was formed into an attacking column, and under the leadership of the great Napoleon himself, who had just departed this life as Captain of the Light Brigade, swept in a compact, irresistible mass upon the enemy. Men dropped from the ranks singly, in dozens, in scores, by the hundreds, only to pick themselves up after the line passed them, run to the extreme right or left, march, fight, and fall again. Napoleon fell, mortally wounded, and was carried from the field. Human nature could do no more, they bolted,

wavered, "The whole world knows the result. Grouchy failed to appear; the Imperial Guard was driven back; Waterloo was lost!" But, no! Spurring down the long dusty road from Winchester, his black horse gray with foam and dust, his eyes

aflame with the light of battle (the horse's, not its rider's), waving his sword (the rider's, not the horse's), and firing his eighteen-barrelled navy plug Colt's revolver (also the rider's), into the ranks of the enemy, came General Fatty Sheridan, crying, "Rally, my brave men! One more charge,

and little Round Top is ours! One more advance, and we plant the glorious stars and stripes within their battlements!"

An exultant cheer broke from the ranks of the confused rabble of fugitives,

"And the wave of retreat checked its course there,
For the sight of the master compelled them to pause."

Springing from his exhausted charger, by the simple expedient of letting fall the richly caparisoned corn-stalk which he bestrode, General Fatty Sheridan reformed the lines, threw up breastworks, unlimbered batteries, threw out a line of skirmishers and also his chest, and himself led the assault.

It was sublime. At the very first volley General Sheridan was for the third time mortally wounded and carried from the field, shortly to reappear as Stonewall Jackson. At this the harmony of the occasion was broken.

"Aw, now! Fatty, what yer talkin' about?" shrieked Puzzy. "Stonewall Jackson was a rebel."

"No, he wan't neither," roared Fatty. "Leave it to Dutchy."

"Aw, Puz, 'f I didn't know more'n that!" yelled Beany. "That was Andy Johnson."

"Huh, Beany, you don't know nothin' about it. Andy Johnson, aw!" sneered Bug, for once sustaining Puzzy.

"I leave it to Potter, anyway," said Puzzy.

"Puzzy's right," decided Potter, promptly. "Stonewall Jackson was a rebel. Of course Fatty can't be a rebel."

"Well, I can be General Debility," said Fatty. "He was a Union General."

No one being prepared to gainsay this statement, no objection was made.

"Anyway, I ain't goin' to play any more if Fatty gets killed again. I ain't goin' to keep luggin' him off to die. I 'bout broke my back now," complained Plupy.

"And so have I," "and I," "and me, too," chimed in Pile and Pop and Diddly.

"All right. I won't get killed again," asserted Fatty, who feared defection in his ranks. Then raising his voice, he roared: "The foe, they come."

"Yet my last thought is England's fly," bawled Whacker, unmindful of punctuation, rallying the troops in the right wing.

"Edmands is down, my life is reft," groaned Bug, falling headlong from his horse with a can-

non ball in his brain, and immediately becoming, by a process of metamorphosis peculiar to the occasion, Black Darnley.

"I am Bill Biddon, the Trapper," stoutly vociferated Pewt, kneeling and sighting the enemy across the barrel of his trusty rifle, and bringing them down by dozens.

"Remember the Alamo!" roared Cawcaw.

"Abolsom, Abolsom, my son!" wailed Beany, innocent of impiety and pronunciation.

Thus encouraging each other with warlike cries and boastful demonstrations, they again charged up the hill. They gained the wall, leaped over the ramparts, and drove the enemy helter skelter from their guns, across the open field to the river bank, where, in their mad lust of victory, they shot hundreds of fugitives, struggling through the deep and rapid current to the farther shore. Sad it is, as General Fatty Napoleon Sheridan Balaclava Gilman said, to discuss a question so fearful as civil war.

At dusk that evening, when the mere remnant of the noble band that hours before had marched proudly to the fatal field, had quenched their thirst in bumpers of sweetened water provided by

their noble General, that illustrious warrior himself appeared in the doorway of the spacious kitchen of his mother's house and delivered himself of these pregnant words, " Hi, fellers, all those who haven't drank come and drank."

CHAPTER 10

"There was a frog that lived in a spring
Rig dum pully mickatimo."

The spring term was a thing of the past. The last day of school, Exhibition Day, had waxed, waned, and passed into history. The smilingly complacent friends and relatives had been told that

"The consul's brow was sad, the consul's speech was low,
And darkly looked he on the flood, and darkly on the foe."

had been entreated in the most touching manner not to

"Lift him from the bracken, leave him lying where he fell,
Better bier ye cannot fashion, naught becomes him half so well."

had been impressively informed that "The beams of the rising sun were gilding the lofty domes of Carthage"; had been confidently given to understand that, "Not many years ago where we now

sit, surrounded by all that refines and embellishes civilized life, the rank thistle nodded in the wind and the wild fox dug his hole unscared;" with other gratuitous information to the effect that

"Edmunds is down, my life is reft,"

and earnest advice that "Clan Connell" should be summoned. From which information they apparently derived unbounded gratification and no little astonishment.

Tomtit, who had loudly called for "Mike" Connell instead of Clan Connell, to the modest Michael's great confusion, had been summarily banished to the woodshed; and "Squawboo" Bowley, who had openly and from the platform proclaimed a trembling but undying intention to

"Tear down that 'tittering' ensign down,"

had been sent home in disgrace.

Prizes had been distributed, none of which fell to our friends, except to Potter, who absorbed learning without apparent effort, and easily stood first in his class. Indeed, so far were the rest of these young gentlemen from gaining any rewards of merit, that only by the most desperate efforts

had they been able to obtain the minimum percentage that entitled them to promotion.

Plupy barely escaped being plucked, as his papers showed him to be weak in arithmetic, shipwrecky in grammar, erratic in spelling, and indictable in geography. Indeed, the amusement the examiners got out of his papers must have been in a measure responsible for his success, for in answer to the question, "What is grammar?" he astonished them by insisting that "Grammar is the science of numbers and the art of computing by them;" and furthermore, when asked to compare "fore," he produced after much thought the triumph of ingenuity, "Positive, fore; comparative, five; superlative, six."

However, in some mysterious way they had succeeded, every man of them, in passing the examinations that entitled them to admission to the High School, and had entered into the full enjoyment of the long vacation, with deep feelings of thankfulness for their well nigh providential luck.

There is a delicious feeling of freedom in the first day of the long vacation; an absolute freedom from care that comes but a few times during life. The amount of planning a boy does during those

first few days would, if carried out to the letter, furnish constant effort and continuous travel from boyhood to extreme old age.

Among other plans, our friends had long contemplated a day's trip up the river, and immediately upon the closing of the schools arrangements were made for a combined fishing and bullfrogging excursion, to be prolific in huge strings of fish and vast quantities of frogs' legs.

At that time there were but two boats on the river; the "Dido," a small white punt, and an enormous centre-board, known from its color as the "Blue Boat." A more capacious, stouter, or safer boat for boys could hardly be imagined, and early one morning the boys loaded it with a miscellaneous collection of supplies—a kettle, a spider, several dozen ears of green corn, a bag of potatoes, a piece of salt pork, a paper bag of meal, ditto of salt, ditto of sugar, a jug of coffee, several bottles of sweetened water, knives, forks, fishing tackle, butterfly nets, specimen cases, bottles of ether, etc., the latter articles belonging to the scientist of the expedition, Sir Potter Gorham.

The boat had been secured by cash payment to its owner, the proceeds of a joint contribution, and

a further consideration in the shape of a joint note or listed indebtedness of seventy-five cents, maturing during the summer.

The supplies were distributed with no casualty beyond the accidental stepping upon the paper of meal by Fatty, which necessitated the careful scraping up of the same with the bailing dipper. Then the bold buccaneers embarked, and amid a chorus of shrill directions the boat pursued a somewhat unsteady and erratic course up the winding stream.

The sun shone brightly, the big blue dragonflies darted here and there, stopping suddenly in mid-air to point and balance on gauzy wings; hundreds of black, shiny lucky bugs swam around in dizzy circles; above, the kingfisher flew by, sounding his metallic watchman's rattle, and the hearts of the youngsters thrilled with expectation and delight.

As they passed " Cove Brook," two cows, standing half submerged in the water, stared with mild amazement at the boat and its noisy occupants, and at its approach lumbered up the bank with much floundering and splashing, their retreat ac-

celerated by a shower of well-aimed potatoes from the boat.

The objective point in all such expeditions was the " Eddy," a point in the river where the current had cut a sudden widening at an abrupt twist of the stream into a broad deep basin, abounding in perch, pout and huge eels. On the north side of the basin a steep, high bank projected over the edge of the pool, forming the edge of a table-land of several hundred yards in width, covered with a growth of magnificent pines, each tree of great height, and as straight as a ship's mast.

On the south side lay a long, low peninsula, covered with lush grasses, but treeless, save for a single graceful elm in the centre. The table-land was a favorite resort for picnic parties, and the residents of the town, appreciating the generosity of the owners in throwing it open to the public, took great pride in keeping it neat and trim. At the foot of the bank a beautiful spring of clear, cold water had been deepened into a well by sinking a barrel in the ground, and furnished a never failing supply.

As the Eddy was nearly two miles from the boat landing, it took quite an hour for the heavy boat,

propelled by the persistent but ill-directed exertions of Tomtit, Fatty, Puzzy and Stiffy, to reach that haven. Finally the boat turned the last corner and entered the basin, and the oarsmen, considerably exhausted, but too proud to acknowledge it, dropped their oars, and prepared to wage relentless warfare against the inhabitants of the pool.

And now an amusing misadventure befell the volatile Bug. The anchor of the boat was a heavy stone with an iron ring, secured to the boat by a long rope. As Bug lifted the heavy stone, clutching the ring with both hands, and prepared to heave it overboard, Fatty attempted to pass from one seat to another, stumbled, and fell heavily, which caused the boat to careen just to cause Bug to lose his balance.

For a moment he tottered, twisted and writhed in complicated gymnastics, but finally went overboard with a yell, still retaining a spasmodic grip on the anchor, and disappeared like a flash, the taut line rasping groaningly over the gunwale. In a few seconds a host of ascending bubbles announced that the anchor with its precious human freight had reached bottom, and in another mo-

ment Bug reappeared, gasping, spitting, choking, and clawing wildly for the boat. At once willing hands seized him and dragged him into the boat, where he was stripped, and his clothing wrung into knots, and then spread out to dry as well as they could do it, for they were weak with laughter over the accident.

Bug, who pronounced himself none the worse for the ducking, skirmished around for the next two hours in a state of nature, which in the warm sun he pronounced "bully."

The boys then gave their undivided attention to fishing, with the result that a good string of perch and roach were obtained, when the growing appetites of the fishermen could no longer allow any delay in the preparations for dinner. The anchor was quickly raised, and the boat grounded on the bank.

While some collected dry wood, others carried the supplies and material to the shore, cut forked sticks for a crane, hung the kettle, and in a short time a brisk fire had been started, and the corn was merrily bobbing up and down in the boiling, bubbling water.

Meanwhile Potter had neatly cleaned the fish,

and carefully rolling them in meal, had them browning and sputtering in the spider. As soon as the corn was pronounced done, and the fish browned, the coals were raked and the potatoes put to roast in the ashes, with a dozen or more eggs. Then each boy took a fish in one hand, and an ear of corn in the other, and addressed himself to the all-important task of the day.

And what a feast it was! Did any of them in after life taste a meal equal to the delicious, dirty fish, or the hot, fragrant corn? The jug of coffee, and the bottles of sweetened water passed from hand to hand, while each boy quaffed deep, gurgling draughts.

Suddenly there was a loud explosion in the ashes, another and another followed, scattering hot coals, mealy potatoes, fried fish and eggshells in every direction. Bug, Puzzy and Tomtit dived over the bank like frogs; Plupy, Potter and Whacker fled frantically for the woods; while Fatty, unable to get on his feet quickly enough to suit the urgency of the occasion, rolled over and over with loud yells until he reached a large stump, behind which he crouched.

For a few moments there was a scarcity of small

Bug, Puzzy and Tomtit dived over the bank like frogs; Plupy, Potter and Whacker fled frantically for the woods.

Page 106.

boys in the neighborhood, but after a while Bug's head appeared, cautiously peeping over the bank.

"Gosh, Fatty!" he piped. "What was it?"

"Dunno," said Fatty. "Have any of you fellers put cannon crackers into the fire?"

"How many times did it go off?" asked Whacker.

"'Bout a hundred," replied Plupy, gingerly tiptoeing along from the shelter of a clump of bushes.

At this moment a slight puff of steam from the fire caused them all to dive again for shelter, but as nothing happened they reappeared, and loudly marvelled at the occurrence. Plupy laid it to spirits; Puzzy to the probability that some hunter had been buried there during the Indian wars, and that his powder-horn had exploded; and this idea was favored by the majority, who were discussing the advisability of digging for the skeleton when Potter asked if anyone had pricked the eggs before putting them in the ashes.

"Course not," sneered Fatty. "What yer want to prick 'em for? You don't prick 'em when you boil 'em, do you?"

It required nice scientific explanation before the rest comprehended, but finally they approached

the fire and made a careful examination. Sure enough the camp was smeared with bursted eggs and strewn with scattered coals and ashes, and the force of the explosion had broken the cross-pole, bringing the kettle down on the fire and causing a vast cloud of steam. Luckily the fish had nearly all been eaten, and enough of the corn remained, albeit in a somewhat sandy condition, and a few roasted potatoes, to furnish a hearty meal.

After dinner all hands went in swimming. What splendid dives from the old beech tree that leaned from the apex of the high bank over the pool; what bursting efforts were made to "sound" and bring up bottom from the middle of the basin; and what a delicious shivery feeling one experienced whenever hands or feet struck the muddy, snaggy river bed.

The boys were all good swimmers, and could float, tread water, turn backward and forward somersaults, "lay" their hair, and do other tricks that might excite the envy of professional swimmers.

After they came out, and while drying in the sun, and running races up and down the bank, they were startled by wild yells from Plupy, who had

been sitting on a hollow stump at some distance from the rest, who were rather inclined to pelt him with mud, tie his shirt sleeves into hard knots, or take other and unwarrantable liberties with him and his personal belongings. Looking in his direction, they were convulsed with merriment and delight to see a naked, skinny form streaking it

toward the river, wildly waving his arms and emitting hoarse howls, and surrounded by a cloud of vicious, yellow-bellied hornets.

Straight to the river bank this apparition flew, gave a leap like a frantic bullfrog, and disappeared in a shower of spray. For several seconds nothing was seen but the swarm of irate insects circling around the spot where Plupy was last seen, "laying for him," as Tomtit tersely put it. But soon Plupy's head popped up about fifty yards away, and snivelling and sobbing he swam rapidly to the lower bank, where such of his companions as could stand—the most of them were rolling on the ground in convulsions of mirth—plastered his anatomy, now bearing a striking resemblance to a cranberry pudding, with mud to allay the sting.

When the pain had in a measure subsided, Plupy dressed without removing the mud, and the rest of the afternoon was devoted to the exciting sport of pickerel fishing, a part of the boys fishing from the bank and the rest from the boat. Before the sun set their united catch, including some fine fish, was strung on a long beech withe, and anchored in shallow water to keep fresh, while the fishermen proceeded to take a slight refection from the remains of the dinner.

While thus engaged, suddenly Potter cried, "Cracky, fellers, look at that snapper," at the

same time pointing toward shallow water, where could be seen an enormous snapping turtle, with head outstretched after the manner of its kind, moving slowly toward the bank.

"Easy, now, fellers," cautioned Whacker, "get a line and drop a hook in front of him, and we'll snatch him out lively."

While Tomtit ran for a pole, the snapper caught sight of the string of fish, and, swimming rapidly to them, seized the nearest one by the tail, and before the astonished fishermen could rush half way down the bank, it had backed into deep water and disappeared, dragging with it the entire string of fish.

Great was the wrath and keen the disappointment of the boys, who had been so proud of the fine fish that they had caught, from the sale of which they had planned to extinguish the debt for the boat.

Puzzy sneeringly remarked that "if Plupy had any spunk he would have div in and got 'em." Whacker remarked that "if Potter had known anything at all he would have plugged him at first." At this point Fatty gloomily said that it was after seven o'clock, and they had better stop

jawing and start for home, and after grumblingly packing up their kettle and pans, the disappointed fishermen piled into the boat and started on the long row home, which they reached without further mishap, except that Bug left his coat and vest drying on a stump at the camp. These he recovered the next day, in a very shrunken and wrinkled condition.

CHAPTER 11

"Och! the Coronation! what celebration
For emulation can with it compare?"
—Thomas Ingoldsby.

For nearly a year the good people of Exeter had been greatly—yea, at times tumultuously excited over the location of the new Seminary building. A few years before, one William Robinson, a native of Exeter who had spent many years in the South, and had accumulated a fortune in dealing in resin, spruce gum and other marketable commodities, died, leaving a will in which he made comparatively little provision for his family, but with a somewhat optimistic disregard of their future, bequeathed the bulk of his large fortune to his native town, ostensibly for the purpose of rendering young women—and Exeter young women in particular—accomplished in art, science, *belles lettres*, etc., and at the same time delightfully domestic, severely businesslike and eminently practical.

For several years the town had been unable to realize on this estate by reason of a contest over the validity of the will, in which contest the widow very properly sought to recover of the estate something more tangible than a wealth of memories.

But about the time our story opens, the suit had been amicably adjusted, and the estate, considerably depreciated by lawyers' fees, court costs, and the widow's portion, became the prize for which different factions of the town warred fiercely.

The location of a building site excited the fiercest contention. There were two sites in the town, which, of many lots, seemed the best adapted to the needs of such a school. To a disinterested party the needs of a school must have been regarded as air and water, for the lots chosen, the Thyng lot and Prospect Hill, were replete with both, and with little else.

The Thyng lot was on the pine, or western side of the river, and consisted of several acres of hilly and marshy land, honeycombed with springs. An aqueduct company had at one time endeavored to lay a line of bored logs through this tract, but as they found that their logs sank out of sight faster than they could furnish them, the enterprise had

to be given up, and the pits, ditches and holes their operations had left, became the abiding place of hideous water-bugs, snakes, and creeping things. At night the place resounded with the bellow of the bullfrog and the shrill piping of the hyla. Dismal stories of men and animals that had been mired and had sunk to a gruesome death were freely circulated by those opposed to this location.

Prospect Hill, on the contrary, was a high and dry ridge of land on the east side of the river. It was very high, very bleak, and commanded an uninterrupted view of a gravel-pit on one side, and the back doors of several parallel rows of small houses on the other. On the east there was a clear sweep for the piercing winds from the Atlantic, which had literally blown all but the largest bowlders from the crest of the hill.

The "Hemlockers," as the residents east of the bridge were called, claimed the inestimable advantages of natural sanitary conditions; the "Pineys," or westenders, unsurpassed railway and rapid transit facilities. The Pineys called the Hemlockers "old fogies"; the Hemlockers retorted by stigmatizing the Pineys as "greasy mechanics."

Those Pineys who owned land in the vicinity of Prospect Hill, and who from prudent and selfish motives favored that location, were roundly abused by their neighbors and erstwhile friends; while the lives of those Hemlockers who, for similar reasons, preferred the Thyng lot, were made a burden. Families were embroiled, the welfare and unity of churches seriously endangered, and the foundations of society shaken. Old friends became deadly enemies, and two of the oldest and most respected Christian gentlemen and citizens, from mild arguments proceeded to expostulation, from expostulation to vituperation, from vituperation to vigorous blows about their heads and shoulders with knotted canes, until separated by their scandalized friends.

After several hotly contested town meetings, in which the Marquis of Queensberry rules were considerably more in evidence than Cushing's Manual, the matter was compromised by an agreement to locate the building on the Thyng lot, and to give the Pineys a majority of the governing board. And now the lot had been thoroughly drained, the location staked out, ground broken, and the entire energies of a reunited people were concentrated

upon a proper observance of the ceremony of laying the corner-stone.

Owing to a clause in the will, by which the town was to furnish the superstructure, there had been a considerable reluctance on the part of the taxpayers in accepting this legacy, and a serious question arose which threatened to deprive the town of the bountiful provision; but the voters, with that financial optimism and buoyancy that distinguished them then as now, promptly borrowed some fifty or sixty thousand dollars of the estate, giving in payment notes without interest maturing on the thirtieth day of February in the year one million two hundred and fourteen, and payable in Confederate scrip.

The local band had been engaged, and nightly for weeks had made hideous preparation for the event. The most clarion-voiced of local orators had long been gesticulating before their mirrors, and had spent long, toilsome hours in looking up and committing to memory long-forgotten quotations from the Latin and Greek, and in other preparations for impromptu remarks. The school children, cadets, secret societies, and societies not secret, had been carefully drilled by veteran sol-

diers. Ox-teams had been trimmed with evergreens and gay ribbons; carriage and cart horses had been trained to do duty as thoroughbred saddlers, and an unlimited quantity of fireworks had been secured and placed in the hands of responsible persons.

The morning of the —th dawned bright and fair, with a fresh west wind to temper the heat—an ideal day. Our young people were early abroad, neatly attired in yellow linen suits, false bosoms over checked flannel shirts, paper collars, string ties, and with their shoes, at least the fronts thereof, neatly blacked.

The procession was to start at ten A.M. from in front of the town hall, and long before that time hundreds of teams from the adjoining towns brought loads of gaily dressed country people, all of whom felt a prospective interest in Exeter's new school.

School children, cadets, secret society men with crimson yokes on their manly shoulders, glittering decorations on their padded breasts, and shiny side arms, ran to and fro to take their stations, while the occasional view of a uniformed bandsman, who, with well assumed carelessness, strolled about with

the bell of his instrument peeping from under his arm, whetted the anticipations of our friends to an exceeding sharpness.

When Fatty appeared with a riding whip in his hand, and announced with pardonable pride that he was to ride the old family horse Chub in the procession, their envy knew no bounds.

There was unexpected delay in starting the procession, owing to the fact that at the first blare of the band the chief marshal's horse insisted upon an immediate adjournment, and at once proceeded to transport that gentleman some two miles into the open country, despite his frantic sawing and profane comments.

Upon his return the procession got under way without further mishap, and as the town had gotten itself up without regard to expense, the decorations were marvels of magnificence, and the procession, in the eyes of the populace, and of the small boys in particular, imposing in the extreme.

At the head rode the chief marshal, ablaze with crimson sash and varnished boots, and with his sword hanging hilt down and on the wrong side. Next came the Exeter Cornet-a-Piston Band, in new and long-tailed uniforms, every man blowing

himself black in the face. Next, escorted by a company of veterans, a float, upon which was a figure of Lincoln in the act of striking the shackles from a slave, surrounded by—according to the grammar school legend—"Thirty-six states, ten territories, and the District of Columbia," each represented by a young girl, dressed in red, white and blue, and bearing the name of the state in gold letters upon a white ground. The float was surmounted by a young lady impersonating the Goddess of Liberty.

Following the float came the gaily decorated barges, containing school children singing patriotic airs in jerks, as the heavy carts jolted over the uneven roads. Then came the trades procession, made up of tin peddlers' carts, grocers' teams, bakers' wagons, and druggists' outfits with huge bottles labelled with the names of local panaceas, such as "Goodwin's Grand Grease Juice," "Dr. Dearborn's Family Salve," Goodwin's Greeting Beer," with the then familiar couplet:

"Lest lead lead thee to thy bier,
Let not lead lead to thee thy beer."

Then came carriages containing the orators of

the day, the members of the Building Committee, the Trustees, invited guests, and local dignitaries.

The band played, the horses pranced, the dignitaries smiled, bowed and waved their gloved and perspiring hands, and the small boys whooped, cheered, ran, and jostled the bystanders.

Our young friends kept abreast of the procession, keeping Fatty in view as he sat proudly on the old horse, and encouraging him with loud shouts whenever that venerable charger showed signs of friskiness. This tendency in that ancient animal became more and more apparent as the march wore on. Either he recollected similar scenes in his far-away colthood, or became unduly exhilarated by the hoarse melody of the trombones; certain it is that he suddenly reared straight up and slid Fatty over his tail to the ground under the noses of the leaders on the float.

The leaders at once backed on the pole horses, and the float came to an abrupt stop. The driver flew out of his seat and on to the backs of the pole horses, while the Goddess of Liberty toppled from her proud height, and fell with a wild shriek on the head and shoulders of the President, crushing his

tall hat over his eyes, as he in turn crushed almost flat the unhappy colored brother.

For a few moments the "States" were threatened with disunion, and narrowly escaped being dissevered, discordant and belligerent, and with one accord screamed wildly, while the representative of the down-trodden race, taking his emancipation as a fact beyond dispute, disengaged himself from the wreck and fled to the sidewalk, where he somewhat profanely "'lowed someone gwine git killed by dis yer foolishing."

The prompt action of the bystanders prevented an accident, and the Goddess of Liberty having been reinstated in her former commanding position, and further secession of the states prevented, the procession gaily continued its march. In the meantime Fatty, sound in limb, but dusty of garments, had joined his friends, and the old horse, with uplifted head and tail, and distended nostrils, had galloped home, dodging fat women, apoplectic old men and baby carriages in a manner marvellous to see.

After the parade there was a big dinner in a tent on the Seminary Grounds, to which none of our friends had tickets necessary for admission.

This fact, while in a measure a disappointment to them, "To see," as Whacker expressed it, "a lot of bald-headed old pods a-hogging down ice-cream," did not prevent them from thoroughly enjoying the many attractions afforded in the way of punching machines, lung testers, lifting machines, peep shows, patent medicine men and electric batteries.

What could equal the exquisite pleasure of seeing a friend clinging with a deathlike grip to the handles of a galvanic battery, while he danced frantically in a vain endeavor to let go? After witnessing Fatty's and Plupy's performance, which would have conferred distinction upon a professional acrobat, it seemed to the other boys that life held no greater pleasure.

In the evening, with their ranks reinforced by such hard citizens as Beany, Cawcaw, Micky, Dutchy, and Stubby, they swarmed over the grounds like a cluster of bees, climbing upon the bandstand, trespassing upon that part of the ground sacred to the fireworks and being driven out by the keeper in charge, interrupting the speaker with cat-calls, chasing each other, and making nuisances of themselves after the manner

of small boys, and visiting in turn the tubs of free lemonade.

It was the first time in their lives that unlimited lemonade had fallen to their lots, and that opportunity was made the most of, and their capabilities were so evenly balanced that to this day it is their proud boast that they absorbed during that evening thirteen glasses each of that delectable beverage. But not one of them cares to speak of the night that followed. Thirteen was in truth an unlucky, but not quite a fatal number in their case.

CHAPTER 12

"Contrary to the form of the statute in such case made and provided, and against the peace and dignity of the State."—JUSTICE AND SHERIFF.

The long vacation ended the first week in September, and the fall term of the High School opened. As early as half-past eight the "High Schoolers," as they were called, assembled in the big school yard on Court Street. The yard, so quiet during the long summer months, now resounded with shouts, whoops and shrieks, as the boys chased each other, wrestled, tussled, and in various ways sought to work off their superabundant spirits.

The incoming class was a large one, and was disposed to resent any patronage on the part of the next higher or third class. The second class was beginning to feel the dignity of its position, while the first class was composed chiefly of young men who had assumed the *toga virilis*, ordinarily known as the bobtailed coat, and who had forever

discarded the false bosom for the complete linen shirt and paper collar of swelldom.

Between the members of the higher and lower classes there was good-natured tolerance on one side and affectionate reverence on the other. Where were greater heroes in the eyes of the younger boys than Glynn, who threw Darlington the famous Academy athlete? Or Eastman, who could "plug" a hard rubber ball from the High School yard to the old Brewery on River Street? Or Fatty's brother Dan, who was supposed to be a knowing dog, and who drove fast horses and smoked real cigars? Or Jamieson, who was rumored to have had an unfortunate love affair with a prominent society lady, and who held himself apart from his friends and looked as one bereft of hope?

Between the members of the third and fourth classes there was but little love lost, for at least the first week of the term. Indeed, the recesses, and the morning hour before school, were taken up for the most part in trying the strength and skill of the new boys in "rasslin," knocking off hats, and punching with bare fists, "no fair hittin' in the face."

After these preliminaries had been disposed of, and before the usual subscription had been taken, time hung somewhat heavy on their hands.

It happened that the old town hall, which stood

on one side of the High School yard, was unoccupied. This venerable building, which had echoed to the eloquence of Webster, Butler, Jeremiah Mason and John Sullivan, had been discarded by the town, and stood alone and neglected.

One morning before school, Bug proposed to the boys that they should try and see who should throw a stone nearest the upper back window without striking it, and taking careful aim led off with an excellent shot, perilously near the glass. He was followed by Fatty, who from prudent motives threw so wide of the mark that his attempt was greeted with loud hoots of derision.

Several others followed with but indifferent success, until it came to Plupy's turn. Now Plupy's ambition was to excel in every sport, but he was seriously handicapped by a lack of natural ability to accomplish his aim. He now saw a chance to beat Bug, and selected a missile with great care and let drive. Alas! it was a scaler, and after describing a beautiful curve went smashing through a different window than the one aimed at, with a crash and jingle of flying glass.

As Plupy, holding one leg in the air in horror, lifted it higher and higher as with bulging eyeballs he followed the deadly course of the stone, there was a silence of guilt, then a loud cheer.

Then Bug, not to be outdone, picked up a larger stone and hurled it through one of the lower windows.

At that moment the bell rang, and the boys trooped into school, casting curious and defiant glances at each other, as if they anticipated some stirring developments.

It is a curious fact that whenever a peculiarly inexcusable piece of mischief is done by a boy, at once every other boy in sight and hearing is possessed of the demon of mischief to repeat the act. Whether the result of heredity or the inherent depravity of boys, rest assured that not once during the afternoon did the boys forget the rattle of glass or the fascinating excitement of doing a dangerous and forbidden act. While Puzzy and Tommy Titmouse were apparently engrossed in Hilliard's Sixth Reader it is safe to say that they were mentally calculating the effect of particularly jagged stones they had in mind.

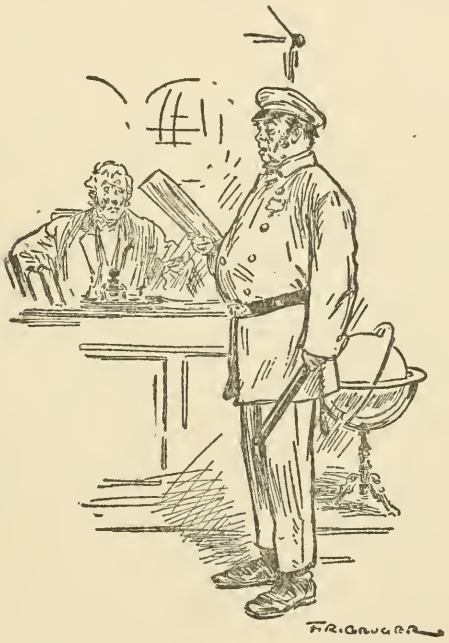
That afternoon before school several panes of glass were broken, and as nobody interfered the boys began to grow bolder. It was interesting from a scientific standpoint to see how smoothly and silently a small round pebble would go through a pane, and how small a hole it would make; and exhilarating to mark the results that could be accomplished with a well-aimed brick.

For several days the mischief continued, and the boys began to use large stones and heavy clubs, their aim being to see how many sashes could be broken.

But Nemesis was on their track, and if one could have looked in on the selectmen's room one evening they would have seen these three worthies in earnest conversation with the Chief of Police. The next day, after roll-call, there was a loud knock on the school door, which being opened disclosed the burly proportions of the latter gentleman, armed with a bundle of papers.

There was an instant of horrified silence, and each guilty boy, with a gasp of consternation, buried himself behind the open covers of his atlas and studied frantically, as he mentally calculated the remote chances of escape, while the officer, after stating that great outrage had been committed upon the town property, proclaimed that he had warrants for the arrest of thirty-five scholars, whose names he proceeded with painful distinctness to read. The suspense of this reading none of those present at that time will forget. The feelings of the boy whose name came last, and who had been hoping, vainly hoping, that he

would not be called for, can well be imagined. It was Plupy, who had only broken one window, and that by accident. The school was at once dismissed, and the thirty-five delinquents, escorted



by the police and accompanied by the High School teacher and several of the parents who had got wind of the affair, proceeded at once to the office of Justice Bell, where, more dead than alive, they

were arraigned and forced to listen to the reading of the warrants, which stated the complaint with a wealth of repetition and innuendo, and a cruel adroitness of description and a bewildering melange of unknown verbiage, calculated to strike conviction to the hardest and most unrepentant heart.

The proceedings were somewhat brief, as all the respondents pleaded guilty, and the Court, after a sharp reprimand, fined them each three dollars, and gave all those who were unable to pay at once ten days in which to raise that amount. The culprits were then allowed to go to make arrangements for raising the money. The feelings of the boys can well be imagined. Bug was defiant, Puzzy depressed, and Whacker deeply mortified, as his dignity had received an almost mortal blow. Plupy was led forth in an almost dazed condition, completely overwhelmed with the severity of the sentence and the certainty of paternal wrath and condign punishment. Fatty didn't care much provided his mother didn't find it out. He knew he could borrow the money of Dan, for he knew some things about Dan which that gentleman didn't care to have come to the knowledge of the family

circle, and he had, presuming on this knowledge, for some time exacted tribute from Daniel, and reckoned with considerable certainty upon doing it another time.

How the culprits finally adjusted matters with

their parents is to this day not definitely known, but it was noticeable that for several weeks there were no more gatherings after supper, and that the Wednesday and Saturday half holidays were set apart by many of the boys for sawing wood, raking lawns, or working around yards and barns.

For about a fortnight after the day of trial,

glaziers worked industriously in replacing the three hundred and fifteen broken panes. In spite of the severity of the lesson it was evident that the authorities still distrusted the boys, for the windows were for complete security covered with a strong wire netting, which, after so many years, remains in place.

CHAPTER 13

"To-day the vessel will be launched,
With fleecy clouds the sky is blanched,
And o'er the bay,
Slowly in all his splendors dight
The great sun rises to behold the sight."

The expensive experience of our friends in wrestling with the strong arm of the law, added to the debt incurred by them in hiring the blue boat, led to a council of ways and means. They had long wanted a boat, and about this time Potter had been presented with a copy of that delightful volume "Every Boy's Book of Sports and Amusements," which contained a chapter devoted to boat building, in which was demonstrated beyond a peradventure that any boy of ordinary ingenuity can make a very serviceable craft with a board, a few barrel staves, and a half pound of shingle nails, or something to that effect. This article, on being read to the boys, created great enthusiasm.

Naturally enough it seemed as if the opportunity for owning a boat was well nigh providential,

and must be improved. It happened that Fatty's mother owned large piles of boards on the edge of the big field on Court Street, and was about to build a new barn to replace one recently lost by fire, and it was confidently suggested to Fatty that he could furnish all the necessary lumber without expense. Such confidence as this Fatty could not break, and at once assented, whether or not with his mother's assent the boys did not ask, as they very properly felt that it would be in the highest degree indelicate to pry into family affairs.

It would take a very long chapter to chronicle the ludicrous mishaps of the boatbuilders during the next week; to detail the fingers that were pounded, the splinters that penetrated almost every part of their little bodies; the pile of boards that fell on Tomtit, and his rescue by the other boys; the gash in Fatty's leg caused by a vigorous but misdirected drive with a hatchet, and his journey home astride of a board, supported by the united efforts of his sympathetic but over-loaded companions, would make a complete story by itself.

Suffice it to say that by the following Saturday a flat-bottomed, square-ended bateau, capable of carrying eight or ten persons, was ready for

launching. It was terribly heavy, but practically watertight, as it had been carefully caulked with rags, and soldered with pitch and tar, in which the architects had immersed themselves to the elbows.

On this day great preparations had been made for the launching. A slide, built on the edge of the river, had been lavishly greased by liberal applications of butter and lard, donated, as Fatty said, by the cook. A bottle of sweet cider, from the juice of

early Astrachan apples, had been secured by Puzzy in the same darkly suspicious manner, and quite a gathering of the girl friends of the boys had been bidden to the launching, and had arrived, gay with ribbons, and coquettish in the extreme.

Fatty furnished the requisite horse-power for the occasion in the person of old Chub, equipped with work harness and chain traces, and he was at once hitched to the boat for the journey through the field to the river's bank. Now Chub, as an ancient servitor of the Gilman family, had taken unto himself some of the independent airs peculiar to old retainers, and was occasionally somewhat unreliable with the boys. In the carriage or under saddle he would jog along as sedately as you please, but when put to special or unusual work he was liable to resent it.

So in this case, when he comprehended the nature of the work to which he was about to be subjected, he baulked. Various experiments were tried without success. First Tomtit tried to put beans in his ear, but he swung his head round so quickly as to send that vigorous youth rolling several yards away. Next the confiding Plupy was induced to mount him, upon the supposition that as a peaceful saddle horse he would at once amble

off, but he at once dropped his head and elevated his hind quarters, and poor Plupy shot over his head in a most abrupt manner.

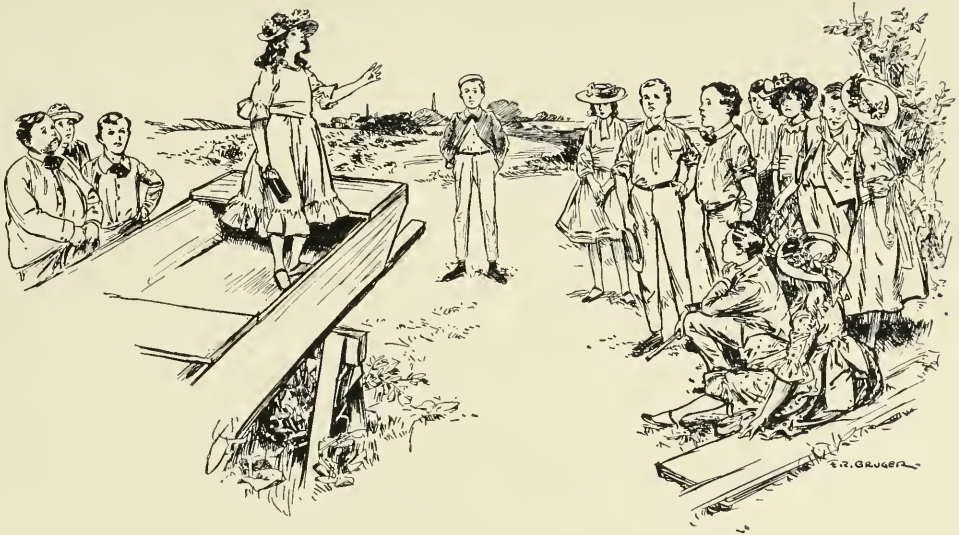
Then, when further persuasion had failed, and despair had seized upon them, he suddenly started with a jerk that threw Puzzy and Whacker, who were seated on the rear seat with their respective best girls, over backwards, and left the girls swaying wildly and clutching each other, while the boys raced after the procession yelling whoa, and striving in vain to head off the fiery beast.

Finally, after frightening the girls about out of their wits, he stopped of his own accord, and became as docile as a lamb. The boat was then without much trouble pulled upon the slide, and the stays adjusted. Not without accident, however, for while the boys, several on each side, were busy with them, the boat suddenly started diagonally, and before they could get out of the way it shot off the incline sideways and turned completely over, burying Fatty, Puzzy, Whacker and Plupy.

At once all was confusion. Loud howls of "Get off my legs!" from Plupy, who was not quite all under the boat, and muffled entreaties to "Get off my head!" from Puzzy, who was pinned down by the stalwart form of Fatty, were distinguishable

amid the tumult. At once all rushed to the rescue, and girls and boys, with pieces of timber as levers, finally lifted the boat enough on one side to allow the imprisoned martyrs to crawl out, which they did with great expedition and with an entire want of dignity.

Again the boat was elevated to the slide, and this time securely kept in position until the exercises were complete. These were impressive. In the bow of the boat one of the girls stood with the bottle of cider in her hand, and recited with great fervor "The Launching of the Ship." The programme contemplated the breaking of the bottle on the bow of the boat at the close of the oration, and just before the boat started. Unfortunately, the boys to whom the duty had been entrusted performed it so promptly that the boat started almost before the last line had passed her lips. Not to be behindhand, she struck vigorously just as the boat slid by Fatty. Unlike the great Lord of Luna, who, "Missed the helm but gashed his thigh," she struck Fatty a resounding blow squarely on the top of his head, breaking the bottle and drenching him with the contents; while the boat, like a thing endowed with life, plunged down the greased incline, and slid across the stream,



Recited with great fervor "The Launching of the Ship."

Page 140.

leaving the young lady sitting in the green ooze and mud on the edge of the water, from which disagreeable position she was rescued in a most forlorn state.

After the ladies present had discreetly retired behind various trees, Plupy and Bug peeled and swam across the river after the boat, which they secured, and in which the ladies were treated to a sail, not including the elocutionist, who had gone home mad.

CHAPTER 14

THE BOYS GIVE A PICNIC

"The was cowld ice-crame 'n crame thot wuz hot,
The wus Roman punch froze up in snowballs,'n sparrowgrass,
Paty de foi grass, whativer thot may be
Made out ov goose livers in grase,
The wuz rid-headed dooks, 'n salmon 'n peas
Bottle nosed pickeril, paruvian ostriches,
Corn bafe 'n cabbige, 'n biled Mur-r-phy praties
'N ivery thing ilse thot wud plaze."

—The Christening.

The advent of a new boat on the river turned the minds of the proprietors of that remarkable conveyance to thoughts of hospitality. The boys had for several days indulged in earnest discussion over the proper method of entertaining their lady friends. Indeed the discussion had on one occasion taken quite a personal turn, and the participants had indulged in much recrimination.

Whacker, who entertained a passion for a young lady living on Town Hill, had been taunted with that fact by his brothers Bug and Puzzy, and had at once dared "Three among them to face

him on the bloody sand." There being but two, and those two accepting the invitation with enthusiasm, a most interesting fistic argument was the immediate result.

Plupy, too, had rather more to say than usual, owing to his good fortune in the possession of certain attractive sisters, whose fascinations had so worked upon the sensitive natures of Doctor (Willy) Swett and Dany Wingate, that they deemed an offensive and defensive league with the ever verdant Plupy much to be desired.

Indeed, in the course of the discussion, when Fatty intimated a fell intention to put a "tin ear" on Plupy, a proceeding utterly unnecessary in view of that stripling's ample equipment, he was dumbfounded at the promptitude with which Doctor and Dany stepped out and informed him that before he licked Plupy he must lick them.

These unexpected but welcome reinforcements so encouraged the hitherto peaceful Plupy that in language suitable to the theme he walked into Fatty and soon stripped that gentleman of every shred of character, secure in the protection so opportunely vouchsafed.

Notwithstanding the apparent acrimony of the proceedings, it was impossible for these young-

sters to nourish ill-feeling for more than a few minutes at a time, and an amicable adjustment of the matter was finally arrived at by the terms of which it was agreed to hold a picnic at the Eddy on the following Saturday.

Each boy was to invite a companion dear to his heart, for whose comfort, safety and well-being he was to be severally responsible during the day. He was to importune the young lady honored with his invitation to cook, boil, bake, fry or otherwise prepare sundry viands for the refreshment of the assemblage, or failing in this, to procure and provide the same by cajolery, persuasion, entreaty, right of discovery, trover or petty larceny, from blood relations, collaterals, or chance acquaintances.

As the boat would accommodate but eight persons, half the boys, with their respective partners, were to start for the Eddy by boat, and the remaining half were to walk, reversing the method on the return.

On Saturday morning a brilliant assemblage met on the river bank, the girls brave in ribbons and many-colored plaids, the boys in yellow linen suits of exceeding stiffness and starchiness. Several of the young ladies wore their hair in be-

coming ringlets, while those whose hair had been, in deference to a prevailing custom, cut the previous spring, confined their abbreviated tresses in beaded nets of the latest style.

And now, for some inexplicable reason, quite common, however, in gatherings of this sort, great formality and precision of address prevailed. The gentlemen commonly known as Bug, Fatty, Plupy, Puzzy, Potter, etc., now were known to each other by the less familiar but more euphonious Gilman, Chadwick, Shute, etc., and to the ladies as Mister Gilman, Mister Chadwick, Mister Shute, etc.; while the young ladies known upon less ceremonious occasions as Lil and Jen and Keene and Nell and Cele, and by other affectionate and familiar appellations, now were addressed as Miss Lilly and Miss Jenny and Miss Keene and Miss Nelly.

All the ladies turned out their toes when they walked, and held their heads very high, and shrieked delicate little shrieks when the boat rocked, while the young gentlemen looked brave and fierce, and talked knowingly about keeping her trim and on an easy keel, and passing the supplies aft, and looking out for the starboard sweep

and other nautical expressions pertinent to the matter in hand.

As the boat, bearing its precious freight slowly breasted the current the rest of the party on invitation of Fatty repaired to his barn, where, to their great delight, they found a capacious farm wagon had been provided with chairs, and, to quote the polite formula of that gentleman, "The carriage was waiting, ladies."

Plupy, having no partner, owing to his being, if not a "laggard in love" at least unfortunate in that pursuit, was at once elected as charioteer and took a seat on the dash-board, while the others, arranging themselves in pairs on the seats provided, shouted to the impatient Plupy to "let him go."

Plupy improved the occasion to administer a sharp cut to poor Chub as an incentive to well doing. There was a snort, a plunge forward, a chorus of shrill screams, a waving of legs, plaid skirts and yellow linen, a rattling of chairs, and a breaking of wagon wheels, and the entire load of happy passengers was unceremoniously dumped on the driveway, while the excited and justly resentful horse made a break for the yawning stable

door, unmindful of Plupy's frantic efforts to pull him down.

The dishevelled ladies were rescued, brushed, dusted and consoled by the graceful and tactful courtesy of Fatty's mother, whose presence alone prevented the immediate mobbing of Plupy.

All thoughts of again mounting the conveyance being out of the question, they started on foot for the Eddy, Fatty, whose plans had been prematurely ruined by Plupy's malfeasance in office, covertly shaking his fist at that lanky youth and breathing maledictions and threats to "just wait and see if I don't lam you."

In spite of the delay occasioned by the accident they arrived at the picnic grounds considerably in advance of the boat, and without special incident, except that Plupy, in attempting to shin a picket fence, had split the leg of his trousers nearly to the waist line, which had occasioned that worthy considerable mortification, as, holding himself together with one hand and with the other clutching his hat, he sped for home to make a necessary change of apparel.

And now joyful shouts and the regular thump of rowlocks announced the approach of the boat, which soon swung round the bend with Doc and

Whacker pulling sturdily, although in a highly apoplectic state, the ladies now waving their handkerchiefs and now trailing their fair hands in the water, which greatly added to the labor of the oarsmen, who were, however, too polite to speak of it.

Arriving at the landing place, a tree stump projecting over the pool, the boat, like Mary's little lamb, was tethered to a stone, and the gentlemen contended for the honor of assisting the ladies to alight, which with delicate little screams and with great agility three of them proceeded to do. And now dire misfortune befell Dany's companion, for when Fatty, standing on the narrow stump, gracefully extended his hand to assist her from the boat he forgot that his plump proportions left about as much room on the stump as might be safely occupied by a chipping bird. In consequence of this, when she jumped, impelled by a vigorous pull from the powerful arms of Fatty, she struck him full in his manly stomach, at which he sat violently down with a gasping "oof," while she, rebounding from the impact, sank to her neck in the cool waters and remained clinging frantically to the stump and shrieking fortissimo.

Instantly the most tremendous excitement took possession of the picnickers. While the girls

shrieked wildly the boys with one accord tore down the bank, shouting words of cheer and shrill directions. In a trice a human chain was formed, the idea emanating from the practical mind of Potter, who had read of similar feats performed by the monkeys of South America, and the imperilled fair one was snatched from her uncomfortable position and with such rapidity that her arm was nearly pulled from its socket, whereupon she showed proper gratitude by calling Fatty a "big lummux" and taking refuge in tears, while the boys heaped ignominy on that much-tired youth, who stoutly repelled the insinuation that he "done it a-purpose."

At this juncture an event occurred most opportunely to dissipate angry feelings. Plupy, who had made the best of his time in changing his raiment, and running and walking through the woodpath, had heard the shrieks and shouts of "Keene's in the river!" "Keene's in the river!" and came charging up the path at a rate of speed perfectly phenomenal, and with a look on his countenance of horrified interrogation.

Noting the tears and commotion, and believing his sister at the bottom of the river, he rushed to-

ward the bank shouting: "Where did she go down? Tell me, fellers, where she went down!"

Bug, seizing the opportunity, pointed to a place a few feet from the lower bank where a few bubbles were rising, and Plupy, tearing off his coat and casting aside his hat, dived from the bank like an otter.

Unfortunately the water at the place indicated by Bug was only about two feet deep, and when Plupy struck his body seemed to shut like an accordion, while his legs apparently flew in every direction, and when he arose his head was plastered with slime, mud, pickerel weed and water snails, while his state of mind was not improved at the unbounded merriment of his friends.

After he had washed off the coating of mud he waded ashore and retired to the forest primeval to remove and wring out his garments and rehabilitate himself, while his companion in misfortune, accompanied by one of the young ladies, to soften the maternal wrath and secure her return, sloppily trailed homeward, whence they triumphantly returned after about an hour's absence.

During their absence the fire had been kindled, the cloth laid with an enticing supply of provisions. There was a certain similarity in the con-

tributions, however, while the lass from Town Hill contributed apple tarts and pickles, the girl from Spring Street furnished gooseberry tarts and picklelilly, while the diminutive lady from Front Street produced cranberry turnovers, Astrachan apples, and jumbles, and the Court Street representatives disclosed cream pie, seed cakes, and green gage jam sandwiches. Lemonade and currant shrub furnished the liquid part of the entertainment, to which they applied themselves with the appetites of youth, all present consuming vast quantities of semi-solids and liquids, although the ladies protested that they could not eat a mouthful, their nerves having been so upset by the thrilling rescue of the imperilled.

After dinner, in response to invitations of the gentlemen, the Sisters from Court Street sang that cheerful ditty "The Gypsy's Warning," nearly reducing the company to tears by their lugubrious rendering of those pregnant words:—

> "Lady, in that green grave yonder-r-r-r-r
> Lies the Gypsy's only che-e-e-e-e-ild."

This was followed by another duet in thirds by the young ladies from Court Street, entitled

"Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep," evidently intended as a hit at Fatty, who, crouched up against a tree, was apparently developing somnolent tendencies to a marked degree.

Indeed the entire company gradually became very quiet. Suddenly Fatty, upon whose brow beads of cold perspiration had started, and whose complexion had suddenly taken on a most unhealthy greenish hue, feigned a desire to see if he could find a squirrel's nest, and bolted for a clump of dwarf cedars, from the depths of which shortly arose hideous sounds of distress.

Now whether from that spirit of imitation that is pronounced so flattering to its object, or from other reasons of a purely physical nature, several members of the party were taken violently ill and groaned dismally, to the great dismay and terror of their companions.

But their illness was of short duration, for a sudden crackling of flames and clouds of pungent smoke arose and smote their childish hearts with terror. During the concert the fire had crept unnoticed to the edge of the underbrush, and now gathering force from the sun-dried brush was rapidly making for the large timber. In an in-

stant sickness was forgotten, and all hands became heroic, desperate fire-fighters.

With pails, pitchers, tin cans and bailing dipper, a bucket-line to the river was formed, while some beat the flames with hemlock boughs, and others drenched the ground. The flames roared at them, scorched their faces and singed their shoes, yet they fought on despairingly, conscious that an awful forest fire would ensue should the fire get to the belt of thick trees.

And now there was a sound of trampling hoofs, and from far down the Eddy path came old Chub, with ears laid back and outstretched neck, while erect in the long wagon, with shirt thrown open, and snow-white hair and beard flying in the wind, stood a magnificent figure, old Edward Giddings, the Superintendent of the farm, urging on the old horse with hoarse shouts, while clinging to the swaying wagon were his men, Gilroy, Flanagan, and Elliot.

Oh, it was a grand sight to see the horse with great bounds sweep around into the clearing, the wagon careering on two wheels and the erect figure balancing like a centaur, and a fine sight to see those seasoned fighters charge the common enemy. Even then it was a hard fight, and not

until all hands were nearly exhausted was the danger over.

And now behold our children, children now, with all their airs and graces forgotten, children

with downcast, hot faces and tearful eyes, standing before their grim judge to hear their fate.

As the stern old man looked them over a quiet twinkle appeared in his shrewd, gray eyes and he

grimly muttered: "Waal, yer plucky youngsters, anyway, but don't ye—don't ye ever kindle another fire in these woods agin as long as ye live."

And it was this same stern old man who lifted the tired girls tenderly into the wagon and bade the boys "pile in," and who carried them to their homes; and it was his kindly words that reassured their parents and brought them praise instead of blame in the home circle.

Indeed, to quote from the old school reader, but for him "Many a rod, I grieve to say, was put in use on that unlucky night."

CHAPTER 15

THE COUNTY FAIR

"Some boyish vision of his Eastern village,
Of uneventful toil,
Where golden harvests followed quiet tillage
Above a quiet soil."

—Bret Harte.

One of the events that with each returning fall threw the town into violent commotion, banished business, and promoted a willy-nilly interchange of ideas between the town as a temporary metropolis and the neighboring towns as suburban attachments, was the County Fair.

The promoters of this gigantic enterprise were men of great adroitness and ingenuity. The closing of the schools during the three days of the Fair was brought about by the ingenious expedient of placing the entire School Committee upon the board of judges for the various horticultural exhibits. In a similar manner a vacation for the mill and machine shop employees was achieved by drafting the superintendents and proprietors

thereof upon the staff of the chief marshal, which opportunity, as it enabled these gentlemen to ap-

pear in public astride of mettlesome chargers, and resplendent in crimson sashes, yellow gauntlets,

and little round rulers covered with gold paper and adorned with blue silk ribbons, was not to be neglected.

What wonder that the idea of having a Fair of his own should suddenly occur to the fertile mind

of Beany, as he sat idly drumming his heels on the fence in front of his house?

The inspiration struck him so suddenly that he nearly fell off the fence backward, but recovered himself in time to jump to the sidewalk and rush over to Plupy's, to whom, after many injunctions to strict secrecy, and many a "Hope to die" and

"Cross my throat" on his part, he entrusted the momentous secret.

Now what could have been more natural than that Plupy, feeling his shoulders unfitted to bear so heavy a load of secrecy, and desirous of sharing the burden with some comrade, on the principle that two could keep a secret better than one, should impart that secret to Pewt, or that Pewt, in turn finding the secret uneasy on his soul, should communicate it to Puzzy, who should promptly call in the aid of Bug and Whack to help keep it from escaping.

And so when a council was called by Beany the next day, he was hugely disgusted upon finding that the secret had escaped, especially as most of those bidden to the council declared that they had thought of that long ago.

However, the idea was certainly popular and appealed strongly to their fancies, and the conference was long, and, for them, remarkably harmonious. It was decided to hold the Fair after one week's preparation, in the spacious grounds on the east side of Fatty's house. As there was a fine gravel walk running around these grounds, no better place for a race track could be found.

Fatty was immediately elected judge of the

races, starter and time-keeper, and Dany, conductor of the band, which was disappointing to Plupy, who was consoled by being asked to play first E-flat cornet, that is, a tin tunnel through which he was to ta-ta and tu-tu *viva voce*. Tomtit, Arthur French, Jack Melvin and Skinny Bruce were entered in the races as Empress, Nelly Locke, Regulator and Old Sheepskin. Beany, Pewt, Micky Hickey and Nipper Brown were named as drivers in the races. Whack was the official announcer; Bug the Superintendent of the stock entries; Doc and Parson judges of horticultural exhibits; Cawcaw, Pile and Dutchy, committee on premiums and respectively second whistle and first and second horns in the band. Pile was to impersonate the Wild Man of Borneo in the side show and in the procession; Skinny Bruce was to superintend the poultry exhibit; and other assignments were made to the great satisfaction of the participants.

That afternoon and the next day were devoted to preparing the grounds and race track. The second day was rainy and the grand stand was built in the barn. Great pains were taken in its construction, and such a solid structure was built that, when completed, it was found to be so heavy that

the united efforts of the stockholders, aided by the mature muscles of Pat Gilroy and the other farm hands, failed to budge it.

This occasioned great disgust and some recrimination, until Potter suggested a practical solution of the difficulty in taking it apart, transferring it to the Fair grounds, and putting it together again, which was accomplished after prodigious labor.

On the third day a large cage for the Wild Man of Borneo was constructed of a crockery crate, and smaller cages built for poultry and pet stock. Some temporary disappointment was occasioned when it became known that Pile's father, the Honorable Alva Wood, had forbidden his son to play the rôle of Wild Man; but this disappeared when it was found that Skinny Bruce, who at once volunteered to substitute, could howl louder and make noises of a more hideous nature than Pile. Considerable persuasion had been brought to bear on Plupy to induce him to impersonate the Living Skeleton, for which he was eminently fitted, but he firmly declined.

A small tent had been erected for the horticultural exhibits, which were of an extremely varied assortment, consisting of currants, Astra-

chan and Porter apples, cucumbers and tomatoes. With the promise of a bright day, many exhibits, and good racing on the morrow, the boys went to bed in a great state of expectancy, which, as their labors for the week had been excessive, did not prevent them from falling asleep at once.

The next day was clear and cool, a perfect day. The exhibitors were early at the grounds making the final arrangements. Against the fence, and beyond the track, were the exhibits. Plupy exhibited Rocky Mountain fowl and Seabright Bantams; Tomtit, Bolton Grays; Pheby Taylor, Cochin Chinas. Potter exhibited a really fine collection of birds' eggs, butterflies, and a large aquarium of fresh water fishes. Fatty had with much difficulty persuaded Mr. Giddings to let him take a three weeks' old calf for an exhibit and had securely anchored him to an apple tree.

On arriving somewhat late at the Fair grounds, Pheby found his Cochin China rooster in a much damaged condition, as several of the boys, urged thereto by the experienced Plupy, had made a competitive test of the relative merits of that bird and Plupy's old Rocky Mountain, in which the Cochin was badly worsted.

The attendance was gratifying, even in view of

the low price of tickets, which had been placed at one cent. Several of the visitors refused change for ten cent scrips, and two gentlemen, Judge William W. Stickney and the Honorable Amos Tuck, who stopped on their way down town, not only warmly recommended the exhibition, but donated each a crisp new twenty-five cent note to the treasury.

In his stout cage in a prominent part of the grounds, the Wild Man of Borneo, with a sheepskin thrown around him, grinned, chattered, and raised horrid shrieks to heaven, to such an extent that little Willie Chadwick, who came under the protection of his three brothers, was frightened nearly to death, and was taken home in a state of mind impossible to describe.

At ten o'clock the races were called, and Fatty, accompanied by the Clerk of the Course, Doc, and the Treasurer, Parson, ascended the judges' stand, and rang vigorously upon an old dinner bell. While the horses were being brought up, the band struck into the Wood-up Quicksteps, to the great delight of the youngsters, and the equally great amusement of the adults present.

The first race was between Regulator (Tomtit, with his trousers rolled up to his knees), and Em-

press (Jack Melville, similarly attired). Regulator was driven by Nipper, while Micky Hickey held the lines over the mettlesome Empress. After scoring a few times they got away on even terms, Empress having the pole. Around the first turn the pace was very fast, but just before they reached the wire an accident happened to the Empress' sulky, and her driver was thrown and dragged some distance, his weight so retarding Empress' speed, that she came under the wire fully two lengths behind the black horse.

Micky at once claimed a foul and the race, but he was called before the judges and fined two cents for pulling his horse, and a new driver was put in his place, upon which he stumped the judges to come down and intimated a willingness to "paste time out of them."

Before the next race was called, the Official Announcer drew attention to the fact that Seenyor Plupilo Shuto would play that world-renowned composition "Departed Days" upon the key bugle.

This announcement was greeted with great applause, and that virtuoso modestly arose, feeling the eyes of the world upon him, and placing his in-

strument to his lips, launched forth into that delightful *morceau* in true artistic style.

Now there was a certain ripe, yellow cucumber that had up to that precise moment peacefully and quietly reposed in a fold of Bug's jumper, awaiting some suitable opportunity when it could be properly introduced into society. To Bug it seemed that the proper moment had arrived, and just as Plupy was performing a most difficult cadenza, with eyes rapturously closed, and with much in-drawing and out-puffing of cheeks, Bug launched the juicy missile. Straight as an arrow it flew to its mark, and striking full in the bell of the instrument, drove several inches of the mouthpiece into the performer's mouth, and deposited about a gill of juice and a few dozen seeds in that gentleman's bronchial tubes, with immediate and astonishing results. Throwing aside his instrument, poor Plupy, with wide open mouth and distended eyes, alternately bent himself double and straightened himself out, while he coughed, whooped, and strangled in his spasmodic efforts to repel boarders. After he was pounded on the back by the sympathizing bandmen the foreign elements were expelled from his system, quiet was restored, and the second race was called.

This occasioned the appearance of the Wild Man of Borneo, who now entered the track as Old Sheepskin with Pewt up, while Nelly Locke with Beany up made a preliminary circuit of the track for a warming up heat. On the last quarter Sheepskin's driver, to avoid being distanced, used the whip freely on Sheepskin, who stopped, smote his driver on the ear, and called him names.

The next and last race was the most exciting of the day. Tomtit and Arthur French were easily the fastest runners of the boys, and the horses they represented were famous racers of the local track, and dear to the heart of every boy in the town.

On the stretch the prettiest race of the day occurred. Without a break or skip Empress went like a bullet, while inch by inch and foot by foot her white rival steadily wore down her lead, until they flashed under the wire with the white flyer a short head to the good.

The finish was so close that the decision of the judges was doubted by some, and so indignant was Empress that she declared that not only could she beat her rival but she could lick him in two minutes, which she was only prevented from doing by the presence of ladies.

In order that there might be no decline of in-

terest in the succession of events, the boys, with the spirit of true showmen, had reserved the most exciting event to the last. There were, moreover, other reasons for its position on the list of events. At five o'clock each afternoon Fatty's adult relatives rode in the family carriage and remained away until six.

It was natural therefore for Fatty and his cronies to perpetrate all especially mischievous or hazardous undertakings during their absence, and it was wisely concluded that this particular event, which was heralded by the Official Announcer as "The most terrific and blood-curdling event of the day, a fearful battle between the Wild Man of Borneo and a fierce and untamable bull," might have received a stern and authoritative veto.

As soon as the announcement was made, most of the young ladies climbed to places of vantage and safety, while the boys, with a fine and ostentatious disregard of danger, which lent added interest in the eyes of the young ladies, strolled into the open space surrounding the post to which the bull was to be tied.

Fatty, who had frequently fed this animal with carrots, now came leading him from the barn, a fine black cross-bred yearling, with short horns

just peeping out of his curling front. From occasional persecutions he had become rather vicious and now blew his breath out sharply and swung his head outward and upwards, while Fatty, hastily throwing the last carrot before his nose, tied him firmly and quickly got out of reach.

And now the Wild Man of Borneo, holding a short blunt wooden spear in his firm and freckled right hand, chattering his teeth, rolling his eyes, shrieking discordant gibberish while he bent his body and danced a grotesque war dance, slowly approached the bull and waved a bright red petticoat that Fatty had removed from the line containing the family washing.

The bull was eager to take up the challenge, and lowering his head, and stiffening his tail, made a bellowing rush at the Wild Man, only to receive full in his thick forehead the spear, which bounced back out of reach as he was brought up short by the rope. Twice again did he rush at his gibbering tormentor and twice did he receive a resounding thump with the spear, while the Wild Man fairly outdid himself in the variety and hideousness of his howls. The third time the spear dropped inside the dead-line, and the Wild Man, fitting an arrow to the thong of a short bow, sent it whizzing

into the bull's ribs. Again he drew an arrow to the head and again it left the bow with the twang of the thong, but missed the bull and struck the poor little calf a cruel blow in the side, which caused it to utter a hoarse "blat" of surprise and anguish.

"I am Kebokibopugatorywhack, the deadly spear thrower of the Flathead Indians of Kamschatka, oskinna wah wah wonny kahoop, yowk, waw wow," shrieked the Wild Man. "I fear not man nor beast, never have I turned my back upon a foe, yah wow," he howled, contorting himself fearfully.

At this moment and while all present were speechless with admiration over the unexpected excellence of Skinny's impersonation, there was a crash of the barnyard fence, and through a whirlwind of splintered boards, with lowered head and tail aloft, old Speckled Face, the famous fighting cow, the Queen of the Upper Road, came charging to the rescue of her calf. Straight toward the renowned "Kebokibopugatorywhack, the deadly spear thrower of the Flathead Indians of Kamschatka, who never turned his back upon a foe," she charged, and that valiant warrior, throwing aside bow, arrows, buffalo robe and all other im-

pedimenta, put the speed of his fleet arrows to shame as he fairly flew across the yard and hurled himself over the fence, whence he took the straightest possible route for Tan Lane at marvellous speed.

Balked of her prey, old Speckled Face rushed back, fighting mad, but found none who dared to cross her path. Seeing the red gleam of the cambric with which the exhibit booth was lined, she charged through it, producing an appalling crash of cheap crockery and a shower of fruit and vegetables. This demolished, she turned her attention to the band-stand, crowded with terrified performers, who howled lustily as she bore down on them. What would have been the result had her attention not been distracted is dreadful to contemplate, but catching sight of the bull, she at once charged him, and was met in the most valiant manner head to head.

The plucky little animal was, however, no match for the enraged Amazon, and was rushed back so rapidly that his hind legs sank beneath him and he was forced completely over upon his back, when she leaped over his prostrate body and ran to her calf, which she licked and nozzled in a most affectionate manner, and with which, after many at-

tempts and much persuasion, she was finally led to the barn by that redoubtable but grumbling worthy, Pat Gilroy.

After the field of battle had been cleared, and the crestfallen little bull had been led limping to his stall, one and all were invited to feast on the remains of the horticultural exhibit, and a combined rush was made to the booth, a rush in which the race-horses, judges, time-keepers, the band and the living exhibits, led by the tattooed man who, in short sleeves and undershirt, displayed a maze of intricate and beautiful figures that had been imprinted on his youthful neck and arms by that facile artist, Charlie Woodbury, all took a vigorous part. In a few minutes every edible vestige of that admirable display of fruit was swept away, while a pitched battle, with potatoes, cucumbers and tomatoes as ammunition, engrossed the attention of the boys until every one bore innumerable spots, stains and marks of the encounter.

Upon an equitable distribution of the proceeds, each boy became the fortunate possessor of eleven cents, in which affluent circumstances they joyfully hied them to their several abodes, deeming the future secure indeed.

CHAPTER 16

"An ambling palfrey, when at need
Him listed ease his battle-steed."
—SCOTT'S "MARMION."

Fatty's ambition in life was to seek military glory, and miltary glory as he viewed it was impossible to consider apart from horsemanship. This argued a sincere love of a horse, which in truth was one of the strongest traits in his nature.

Plupy had no love or desire for a martial life, except such part as pertained exclusively to the manipulation of military band instruments. He had an intense love for music, and would at every opportunity, and forsaking all other pleasures, cleave unto a brass band until dragged therefrom by an irate parent.

Perhaps next to his delight in music was his longing for a horse of his own. For a few delightful and never-to-be-forgotten months he had possessed a small and spavined animal, a purchase of his father, but as it shortly became, if possible, more halting in gait and more depressed in appear-

ance, the old gentleman, with the rare judgment that characterized him, traded the animal off for a line-backed cow, of great age and exceeding uselessness.

As for Beany, his whole existence, apart from mischief, ringing doorbells, playing tit-tat-too on neighbor's windows, and raising particular Cain at all hours, was wrapped up in horses. Such leisure as he spared from his other pursuits was spent in riding on coaches, leading stable horses to water, and performing other offices of a menial nature, in return for an occasional chance of riding or driving a horse.

Fatty of course could get old Chub for an outing, but that animal's engagements on the farm and in the family carriage were so numerous and engrossing, that Fatty's opportunities seemed to him woefully infrequent.

It chanced that one Nat Mason, a semi-itinerant gentleman of the ne'er-do-well but inoffensive class, owned a particularly sorry looking white mare that had for many years defied the old gentleman with the beard, the scythe, and the insufficient attire.

Anything more impressive as an equine ruin than Lady Clara—such was her name—was sel-

dom if ever seen. She was ewe-necked, cow-bellied, and sway-backed; she had no foretop, and her mane was reduced to an unsightly wisp; her tail, once a fashionable bob, was hairless and ratty; she was gaunt to emaciation, and abounded in splints, quarter cracks, windpuffs, and bone spavins. She was indeed picturesque.

In addition to Lady Clara, a cur dog, and the tottering wreck of a dish-wheeled wagon, Nat possessed a large wen on the back of his neck, which he affirmed had the sustaining qualities peculiar to the camel's hump. He also laid claim to a thirst for ardent spirits to an immoderate degree.

In some way it became known to Beany that Nat would be willing to part with Lady Clara for the inconsiderable sum of two dollars and fifty cents, which, considering the fact that there was and could be but one Lady Clara, was a modest sum indeed.

Beany communicated this to Plupy, and after viewing the matter in all possible lights, they decided that Fatty would be more likely to be able to raise this sum than any of their acquaintances.

They were reluctant to make the undertaking a joint stock corporation, but wisely preferred a limited partnership, which promised more and in-

dividual opportunities to use the assets, that is to say, Lady Clara and the dish-wheeled wagon.

To their chagrin they found Fatty in an exceedingly bankrupt condition, owing to lavish indulgence in jujube paste and Jessup's Candy, but, with the optimism that characterized him, anxious to pursue the fascinating possibility of horse ownership.

Several meetings were held between the owner of Lady Clara and the would-be purchaser, in which the utmost diplomacy was unavailing to obtain credit. At last, however, the following agreement was entered into. Lady Clara, wagon, and harness were to be delivered to the boys upon the receipt of the following goods and chattels, to wit: Beany's six-bladed knife, dear to his heart; Plupy's sawed-off musket, and Fatty's silver pencil case. These articles were to be held by Nat as security for the payment of five dollars within one calendar month from the date of the exchange of commodities, on penalty of forfeiture.

On the evening of the same day the boys bolted their suppers with unusual haste and ran all the way to Nat's shanty, nearly a mile from town. They had arranged with old Jethro Simpson, who lived on Hall Place and was known to be the

meanest man in town, to board Lady Clara in exchange for certain labor to be performed by them.

When they reached Nat's modest dwelling they found that gentleman placidly smoking in the simple room of his castle, from which, after critically examining the articles brought by the boys, he proceeded to the ramshackle stable. Some annoyance was manifested by him upon finding Lady Clara reposing on her side in her stall, and when after repeated kicks and jabs with a stick she still refused to rise, he became very profane in his remarks.

This having no effect, he deliberately climbed over her, raised her head until her nose projected over the edge of the manger, climbed back, and by loud yells and sharp cuts with the whip so stimulated her that she floundered and struggled until, aided by the leverage of her nose in the manger, she managed to scramble to her feet.

"Thar, blast yer hide," he grumbled, "that thar'll larn ye not to lay down agin, not fer a spell. She don't a'most never lay down. Some o' the best on 'em never do," he continued, eyeing the boys as he rubbed his gnarled hand over his bristly chin. "Thar was Flory Temple; she never did but onct or twict, 'en they du say Dexter 'n Flyin'

Dutchman never did, 'n ez fer Regilater, 'n Nelly Lock, 'n Empress, they don't none of 'em more'n onct a month."

"How old is she, Mr. Mason?" queried Beany, patting her on the neck.

"Waal, boy, now ye've got me," drawled the old man. Fi-sh'd tell ye she wan't more'n eight, I sh'd be shore lying to ye, but my 'pinion, mind ye, 's only my 'pinion, she'll never see twelve agin, but she's good fer thutty."

"Can she go any?" asked Plupy.

"Go? can she go?" he reiterated scornfully. "Git her waked up, 'n ther hain't any hoss in Exeter that kin head her fer a half mile. Long 'go's Hirum Woodruff druv her agin 'Merican Gal she putty nigh tuk fust money."

"Le's see ye make her go," urged Fatty.

"I'll show ye," boastfully replied the old man, as he threw the crazy old harness over her back, tied and buckled it around her gaunt ribs, and backed her between the shafts of the rickety wagon.

Then he mounted to the driver's seat and leaned very far forward as he started the venerable trotter up the road, while the boys, perched on the old stone wall, impatiently awaited his return.

In a few minutes back he came, Lady Clara,

urged on by whip and voice, doing her best and displaying a combination of gaits never before seen, heard of, or imagined. But she *could* go, and that was enough for the boys.

As the old man pulled up and dismounted, Lady Clara stood with outstretched neck and with flanks heaving in spasmodic jerks.

"What's she breathe that way for?" demanded Fatty, looking dubiously at her jerking ribs.

"That thar's hickups, boy, hickups. Don't ye ever hev hickups when ye hev yer dinner and go out 'n run fast? Course ye hev. Ye see trotters is more like to hev it cause they kin eat more'n go faster than common onery plug hosses. Lady Clara thar's a little gi'n to hickups, but if ye wet her grain 'n fodder, she won't trouble ye none to speak of."

Thus encouraged, and Lady Clara's gasps becoming less stertorous and her heaving sides gradually subsiding, the boys in great glee climbed into the wagon, their wagon, clucked and chirrupped to Lady Clara, and proceeded at a peaceful amble townwards.

They found the harness defective in some particulars, not the least of which was the extreme shortness of the reins, which compelled any driver

not endowed with arms like an orang-outang to stand up while driving, which, as it gave extraordinary prominence to the driver, was regarded by the boys in the light of an unexpected merit.

Carefully avoiding Front and Court Streets, they crossed by the way of Winter Street, up Spring Street, to avoid the brightly lighted Water Street, through Bow and Clifford Streets, across Great Bridge, and arrived at Hall Place after frequent and clamorous changes of drivers, and with no mishaps beyond many abrupt stops on the part of Lady Clara which rendered the foothold of the driver precarious in the extreme.

Old Jethro was expecting them and showed them where to put their beast, and when they had taken turns in rubbing down that ancient charger with a discarded curry-comb that Fatty had rescued from the ash heap, they carefully wet down the scanty supply of hay doled out to her by the mean old man, and the generous supply of grain furnished by Plupy which had nearly wiped out his entire supply of poultry food, and hurried home full of plans for the future.

The next morning at an early hour they returned and again rubbed and curried and scraped and washed their animal, and then sat down and

gloated over her while she ate the grain brought by Fatty from the home granary. This morning Lady Clara had no hay, for the old man insisted that a horse couldn't work when stuffed full of hay, but as soon as she had done her work she could have all the hay she could eat.

Breakfast over, they vied with one another in hooking her into a rattle-cart, in which they drove to the woodlot, accompanied by old Jethro, where under his directions they loaded the cart with pine limbs and cordwood, and drove to his barn, and carefully and neatly piled the wood into his shed.

It was hard, blistering, backbreaking, dirty work, but all day long they labored, and load after load they carried and piled, and when night came the shed was nearly full of neatly piled wood, and their task was finished. As the last cartful was unloaded they gladly started to unharness the hungry and weary animal, when to their amazement and unspeakable distress the contemptible old man told them roughly to take their horse and wagon and get out of his yard for he didn't want them there any longer.

"But you said," expostulated Fatty, that if we'd haul you wood enough for winter, that you'd let

us keep our horse in your stable all winter and give her hay."

"Don't make any diffunce what I said, I won't have ye round here, d'ye hear?" roared the old man, blusteringly. "I warn ye to tek yer old plug an' git outer here, or I'll tak a stick to ye."

Sullenly the crestfallen contractors hooked up and departed. When at a safe distance Beany shouted, "Old Skinflint Simpson! old Skinflint Simpson! see if we don't pay ye for this!"

It chanced that old Jethro's nearest neighbor was a widowed lady of as generous and good-natured disposition as his was miserly and crabbed, and perceiving that she had a large shed that abutted on his barn, to her in their dire need went the three boys. On hearing their story, which was a rather difficult one to disentangle from the torrent of words poured in by the three boys at once, she was all sympathy, and readily placed her shed at their disposal, gave them a lantern and told them to put Lady Clara in her shed and keep her there as long as they pleased.

When the grateful boys led Lady Clara into the shed, they made an important discovery. One of the boards of the shed had become loose and had fallen off, leaving exposed the back of old Jethro

Simpson's barn, through the cracks of which projected wisps of hay, and within easy reach.

"Look at the hay the mean old cuss skinned us out of!" said Fatty, bitterly.

"Gosh, fellers," said Beany, "le's see if we can't get some of it."

"That would be stealing," remonstrated Plupy.

"'Taint neither," snapped Fatty. "You fellers know I wouldn't steal nothin' no quicker 'n anybody else. Of course apples 'n watermelons 'n walnuts is different, but I wouldn't steal anything real any more 'n you would, Beany, or you, Plupy. But don't this hay belong to us fellers? We 'greed ter haul his wood, didn't we, fellers? And we done it, didn't we, fellers? 'n he 'greed to give us a hoss stall and plenty of hay, didn't he, fellers?" he continued, in great excitement and indignation. "'N I say, fellers," he continued, "that this hay is ourn, and belongs to us, and 'taint stealin' to take it."

And having delivered himself of this "Oration against Verres," he mopped his heated brow with his hat and challenged contradiction.

But the house was with him to a man. "That's so, Fatty," said Plupy. "Yer right, Fatty," quoth

Beany. "Gosh, won't we get even with old Jethro Skinflint!"

With a little care they found they could spring back a board several inches, and in a few seconds a bountiful supply of hay was across the border and in front of the almost starving Lady Clara.

Plupy suggested that they pull out hay enough for bedding, but to this Fatty objected, and upon consideration the proposal was voted down as inconsistent with the strict interpretation of the agreement, and Lady Clara was compelled to couch her gothic framework upon a bed of dry sawdust.

And now for nearly two weeks did Lady Clara lead a life of comparative ease and plenty, and in a great measure at the expense of old Jethro. Early each morning the boys fed, watered, and curried her. Every noon they did the same, and every night they hitched her into the ancient wagon and explored the back streets and distant highways. As nothing happened to them, they became bolder, and occasionally took her out in the daytime, to the huge ridicule of their friends, none of whom however had the least suspicion of the true state of affairs.

There were, however, certain drawbacks to their

complete enjoyment of their purchase. Several times Lady Clara lay down, and the united strength and skill of her owners were required to get her on her feet again. Indeed, on one occasion they were utterly unable to resurrect her in time to take their usual evening ride, and as the nine o'clock curfew pealed forth its brazen summons to bed, they were compelled to leave the recumbent Lady Clara to her meditations, only to renew the struggle the next morning, and after unheard-of exertions to succeed in raising her to a locomotive condition.

Besides this little failing on her part, she had developed a strong tendency to pull, due in a great measure to her improvement in strength and spirit, and when warmed up, it sometimes happened that the pulling and sawing powers of the trio were put to severe tests in bringing her to a stop, and as her roaring and wheezing when thus excited could readily be heard for a long distance, the boys took pains not to unduly excite her.

Then again the uncertainty of the required cash payment at the end of the month, and the fear of losing her in consequence of failure to meet their financial obligations, worried them extremely.

One Saturday afternoon, about two weeks after their purchase, the boys started out for a ride. There were many strangers in town, strangers with smug faces, long-tailed coats of broadcloth, white chokers, and beaver hats of bell-crowned style and seedy appearance.

These gentlemen were in Exeter to attend the annual, semi-annual, or quarterly meeting of the Ecclesiastical Synod, which was to be held in the Upper Church, and inasmuch as great difference of opinion had arisen over the proper method of packing barrels for the heathen, and whether or not dismantled hoop-skirts and cast-off fur tippets constituted the proper evening dress of the benighted natives of Zulu and Caffraria, the most logical debaters of the faith flocked in crowds and with doctrinal chips on their shoulders to the old white church in the Academy Yard, and the culinary ability of the united sisterhood was put to the most severe tests in providing elaborate banquets of corned beef and cabbage, brown bread and beans, hogs-head cheese, pan-dowdy, and pork scraps for the worn and hungry debaters and their still more worn and hungry partisans.

CHAPTER 17.

"First flew Eumelus on Pheretian steeds;
With those of Tros bold Diomed succeeds."

A pillar of the church was the Honorable Woodbridge Odlin, business man, banker, financier, and land-owner. Energetic in business affairs, he was equally so in the interests of the church, and on occasions of this kind his stately mansion on the "Hemlock Side" of Great Bridge, now, alas, and long since shorn of its glory and given up to the material needs of a factory boarding-house, was thrown open for the entertainment of the most prominent and noted of the visiting divines, and, it might be said, to them only.

The Honorable Woodbridge Odlin had recently purchased a magnificent pair of black horses which, in obedience to the prevailing New York style, appeared with docked tails, to the open-mouthed admiration of his less fortunate townsmen. He had also purchased a shiny and resplendent landau and a silver-mounted harness ajingle with chains and pendants.

What wonder, then, that when it became known that the Right Reverend Eusebius Starr King Scroggins, President of the United Society for the Relief of Heathen Widows, and Deputy Missionary to the districts of Bechuanaland, Kalahari, and Bahr-el Ghasel, Aminadale Whitefield Pettibone, Missionary Extraordinary to Fashoda Addisabeba, and the Reverend Thankful Whittaker, Secretary of the United Endeavor to Prevent Sin, were to be present, that the Honorable Woodbridge Odlin should deem it fitting that he should meet them at the station and convey them to the church in his elegant equipage!

He was particularly gratified at hearing that the Reverend Thankful Whittaker was to be present, for that energetic and pious gentlemen had been instrumental in introducing measures into the legislatures of various States, making it a felony to instigate, aid, abet, or be present at any race, competition, or contest between trotting, pacing, or running horses; and, next to safe breaking, burglary, and highway robbery, the Honorable Woodbridge Odlin placed horse racing.

And so when the stately landau, bearing in its deeply cushioned hold the portly and broadcloth-

robed forms of the Honorable Woodbridge Odlin and his distinguished visitors, swung majestically out of Lincoln Street and alongside the sorry nag and the rattling wagon of our friends, the magnate, possibly fearful of contamination, sharply ordered his driver not to loiter but to drive quickly.

This order, perfectly audible to the boys, rather nettled Beany, who was driving, and he at once gave Lady Clara a resounding crack with the splintered stock of the old whip, and let out a loud yell of encouragement to the surprised trotter.

Away went Lady Clara and away went the black horses, two lengths in advance and under the whip. It took Lady Clara a few seconds to strike her gait, but when she did she went after the flying blacks at a most tremendous clip. The boys yelled like fiends, the dish-wheeled wagon bounced, rattled, and threatened to come to pieces at every jump, and the old mare's raucous breathing sounded like an up and down mill-saw going through a nail.

People who were crossing the street ran for their lives, while an Irishman driving a coal cart, seeing the furious horses bearing down on him, whipped his horses upon the sidewalk and grinned

broadly as he let out a genuine Irish yell to encourage the flying racers. And now they were neck and neck, Lady Clara breathing tornado-like, with neck outstretched and tail standing straight up like a wornout broom; the blacks going like the wind, one at a trot the other at a gallop.

The boys were leaning forward and screeching like maniacs, the reverend gentlemen holding on to the sides of the landau for their lives, and the Honorable Woodbridge Odlin, who had lost his hat in the excitement, purple in the face with rage, and gesticulating violently to attract the driver's attention.

At the head of Elliot Street Lady Clara was a length ahead, and the Reverend Eusebius Starr King Scroggins, who had arisen to lay violent hands on the coachman, was precipitated with great force into the arms of the Reverend Aminadale Whitefield Pettibone, and in their frantic efforts to right themselves these gentlemen presented to the horrified eyes of the members of the congregation, hastening to welcome them, the appearance of drunken roisterers engaged in a rough-and-tumble fight, at which the Academy students from their ball grounds gave them a tre-

mendous cheer, and loudly bet on the man with the bald head and the long siders.

The Reverend Thankful Whittaker, who had for some time been wildly waving his hat to attract the attention of the driver, presented every appearance of urging that gentleman to do his best, and raised serious doubts in the minds of the amazed onlookers as to the sincerity of his previous sin-rebuking professions.

By this time the driver had got it through his head that it was about time to stop, and, leaning back in his seat, with some difficulty pulled the excited horses to a stop in front of the church door, before the grim and disapproving faces of the scandalized flock. But it was a different thing to arrest the mad flight of Lady Clara. She was in the race to stay. Vainly the boys tugged and sawed on the reins; they might as well have tried to stop an express train.

"Run her up Factory Hill," gasped Fatty, doing a tug-of-war on the reins. "If she turns the corner she'll break our necks." Vain hope, Lady Clara was bound for home by the usual route, and although the boys braced, strained, and pulled

themselves almost to bursting, she turned the corner.

Alas! the overtaxed wagon could not stand the strain. Crash went the near wheels, over went the wagon, and out flew the boys like peas out of a pop-gun, while Lady Clara, with the shattered remains of the wagon bouncing and clattering behind her dashed over the bridge and disappeared.

The boys were not hurt in the least, owing to that special providence that so constantly watches over boys, and their one idea was to follow their fast fleeting possessions, which they did with delightful unanimity and at a high rate of speed.

When they arrived breathless at the shed they found Lady Clara standing in her stall, panting but unhurt, and surrounded by a crowd of curious and amused bystanders, who watched the boys' solicitous care for the old trotter and chaffed them unmercifully on her points.

After they went away, the boys made her comfortable for the night, and went home elated over the result of the race, but somewhat depressed at the loss of their rolling stock.

The exciting nature of the race and runaway caused much comment and some inquiry, and with-

in an hour the secret of the ownership of the horse was a secret no longer. And when Plupy's father returned from Boston on the evening train, he was astonished and not a little dismayed at the reputation his son had acquired in so short a time, and after a somewhat acrid interview with that young man, he went over to see Beany's father, and they soon proceeded to Hemlock side to view the animal.

Judge of the grief of the boys when they found that Lady Clara had breathed her last, and lay outstretched on her pile of sawdust, stiff and cold. Whether she had overstrained her aged organs in the excitement of the race, or had wisely concluded that her victory marked a fitting end to an honorable career, and had taken her own life, we can but conjecture.

Plupy and Beany shed tears—tears of unfeigned sorrow. Fatty, of sterner mould, coughed and strangled to avoid shaming his manhood, while as for the old gentlemen, it were well to draw a mantle of charity over their picturesque and kaleidoscopic language when the full nature of the transactions involving the purchase of Lady Clara

and the method of accumulating her supplies was laid before them in all its originality.

In justice to these gentlemen it is well to state that they did not whip the boys, but read them a moral lecture of great severity, and then chipped in and redeemed their personal property from the former owner of the late lamented Lady Clara.

It may also be of interest to know that Mr. Jethro Simpson received a visit from the elder Shute, who gave him a most thorough dressing down, and fully demonstrated that the art of vituperation in the mouth of a skilful disciple could approach the limits of the sublime.

Poor Lady Clara! She played her part well, and her memory is still fresh and green in the hearts of her boy owners.

CHAPTER 18

"This is what we call a scrimmage, gentlemen, and the first scrimmage in a school-house match was no joke in the consulship of Plancus."

—*Tom Brown at Rugby,* HUGHES.

For weeks the High Schoolers had been training for a football game with the students. Most of the townies were expert football players, and as games were played every day during the fall term they were always in first class condition.

Their expertness was recognized by the students, and arrangements for a match had been made soon after the opening of the term. The students had given but little attention to systematic preparation, as they relied on the strength of numbers and the prowess of individual players, while the townies had faithfully studied the game, knew the ability of every member of the team, and played together constantly.

The sporting element was deeply interested in the result, and had laid heavy wagers. This excitement had spread to our friends. Fatty had wagered a driving whip with an ivory handle, be-

longing to Dan, against a meerschaum pipe and a brass pistol. Plupy had rashly ventured his all, a pair of Seabright bantams, against an old musket with a sawed-off barrel. Whacker, Potter, Beany, Pewt, Puzzy and Bug had plunged heavily in the event, and stood to win largely or to face absolute ruin.

The first of November was a clear, bracing day. The ground was dry, and there was no wind, an ideal day for the game. By half past one o'clock the Academy yard was alive with students and small townies. By two o'clock the fence and sidewalks in front of the yard were filled with spectators, and the street lined with carriages, grocery teams, and family vans, filled with earnest partisans.

At quarter past two the grounds were cleared of all but the upper and middle classmen. There was a stir, a craning of necks, a clapping of hands, and the townies, two by two, came at a jog through Maple Street, crossed by the old county building, passed through the lower gate, and entered the field amid the whoops and cheers of their friends. And indeed they were a goodly lot. Forty-two alert, well built, muscular young men, of from seventeen to nineteen, looking fresh and

hard, and able to play a fast and punishing game.

There was Glynn, broad, stocky, and powerful; Eastman, lithe as a panther and quick as a cat; Blodgett, whose rush was resistless, and whose coolness proverbial; Brigham, a born fighter; the Robinson brothers; Langley, Ware, Warren, all dangerous men to encounter in the rush line, with many other powerful and skilful youngsters who feared neither back trip, fall, nor fence-rush.

They will need all their pluck, strength, and knowledge of the game, for they are playing against tremendous odds in the way of numbers, and the other side has many skilful and powerful players. Indeed, the students outnumbered the townies nearly two to one; about seventy-five of the former were arrayed against the townies. Among the students are Nichols, the best athlete, fastest runer, and quickest dodger in the Academy; James, known as "Spartacus" from his well known prowess; Briggs, bow-legged and active; Rhett, a Southerner, a great runner and kicker; Hall, a terrific kicker and fighter; and Bennett, whose breadth of beam quite equalled that of Glynn.

And now the captains, Eastman and Spartacus, meet at the centre for a choice of position, and a

coin is flipped up. The town has the choice, and takes the kick-off. As the sides separate and prepare for the game, a great difference in the arrangement of their respective forces is apparent.

The town has arranged a line of battle with the fighting men at the front, quite close together and close behind the ball. On each side, and deployed across the field, are about a dozen or fifteen active men; while the remaining players, including the coolest men and the safest kickers, are placed behind as goal tenders.

On the school side you see little attempt at systematic arrangement. The players are for the most part left to follow each his own method and position.

Perhaps before the game begins, you young men who play the modern game, with its elaborate system of rules, signs, and trick plays, as well as its correspondingly elaborate uniform and armor, and who are prone to regard the old-fashioned game as a tame affair, free from excitement, skill, or danger, would like to look over the rules of the game.

It was played in an open field, the distance between the goals varying from one hundred to one hundred and fifty yards. The goal lines extended

the width of the playing space, and a ball kicked or struck over the goal lines in any part thereof counted a game, and the players changed sides. The side lines were usually bounded by the fence when the field was not too wide. The game was started by a place kick from a point some fifteen to twenty yards in front of one goal, according to the length of the field.

After the "kick-off" or "warning," the ball was in play, and the game only ended in driving the ball over the end line. The ball must be kicked or struck, but could not be held. The players could not strike, hold, or punch each other with their hands, but must shove with their shoulders, or, as it was called, "root" each other. Each player must keep on his side of the ball, and should the ball be kicked back, he must at once run back until he is behind it before taking part in the game. A violation of this rule was called "playing peanuts," and it was considered a disgrace to be caught "peanutting."

The game being free from holding and clinching, was very fast, and only those in the best of condition could stand the fatigue and hard work of a well-fought game.

After a short consultation with his men, Captain

Eastman calls "warning," and with a short run gives the ball a vigorous kick well toward the school goal. The town rushers at once follow the ball as hard as they can tear, but before they can reach it it is kicked over their heads. Back they come with a rush. Again the ball goes spinning toward the school goal, but a short grounder, and the two sides come together with a dull crash. The ball is now in the centre of a swaying, struggling mass of players, and the muffled thump of the kicks is heard above the shouts of the contestants. Men are bowled over in every direction. Some are borne off their feet by the momentum of the mass, and crawl out from amidst a vortex of frenzied, kicking, gyrating legs. One or two limp away to the fence and sit down, but the majority struggle to their feet and rush into the fray.

"Mass behind the ball," rings out Eastman's voice, "follow it for short gains."

Now the difference in the training of the two opponents becomes apparent, for the townies, holding themselves in a compact mass, and keeping the ball just in front of them, by a series of short and desperate rushes are rapidly driving it toward the school goal, in spite of the efforts of

their more numerous but less disciplined adversaries.

In vain do Spartacus, Bennett, Hall, Gleason and others fling themselves upon the advancing wall and valiantly contest every inch of ground. They are forced back, fighting like bulldogs. And now the ball is close to the line, and one desperate rush will send it over, but the town is too fast, the ball escapes them, and before Eastman, the watchful, can reach it, Nichols, who seems omnipresent, seizes it, and with a magnificent drop-kick sends it far over the heads of the players, and three-quarters of the distance to the town goal, while a loud cheer from the school sympathizers greets this brilliant play.

Back it comes, high in air, and again is sent toward the town goal, and kicked back and forward several times, neither side gaining much by this interchange of kicks. While the players are rushing to and fro in their efforts to follow and keep behind the ball, great deeds are done, and many valiant "roots" exchanged between the heavy men of both sides. Bennett and Glynn, the heaviest men on the field, come together like two bison, and the student is rolled over, to the huge delight of the assembled townies, while the stu-

dents in turn cheer to the echo when spectacled Spartacus causes the older Robinson to bite the dust.

Again the ball falls near the centre of the field, and again waves of turbulent townies and strenuous students rush over and around it; but the students, learning wisdom from experience, mass behind it, and by weight of numbers prevent the town from direct advance, and the rush of players boils toward the fence, where a fearful jam occurs. The ball becomes wedged under the lower rail of the fence, the umpire calls time and pronounces it out of bounds.

It is brought in, and the sides line up about ten feet apart. Half way between the sides stands the umpire, with Nichols and Brigham facing each other at arm's length. Both declare themselves ready, and the umpire tosses the ball about ten feet in the air and directly between the two, who spring lightly up and strike viciously at the ball. That was a good jump, Brigham, but not quick enough, for Nichols has already struck it over the head of the town. Back it comes like a return ball, Greenough kicks it, it strikes Glynn full in his broad breast, and bounces back, and the townies are on it before the scattered line of the students

can prevent it, and drive it with a mighty rush straight toward the school goal. In vain do the heavy men of the school fling themselves before the rush line, they are toppled over or hurled aside. And now it is over the line, and the umpire calls "goal and game." A ringing shout goes up from the crowd about the grounds, and the small townies—and you may be sure that our young friends are among the shrillest—cheer and shout and shriek with delight.

The sides now change places, and during the ten minutes intermission the school leaders hold an earnest conference. Spartacus, Hall, Greenough, and others vigorously lay down the law and arrange a line of battle. The town boys put on their coats and saunter out among the carriages, where they receive the delighted plaudits of their friends, and their earnest counsel for the next game. Just before time is called, Eastman, who has been carefully watching the school leaders, calls his men together, and instructs them to play carefully, and to keep behind the ball and close together.

Time is called, and the school arranges its lines in close imitation of the townies': the great body of men, with the heavy rushers in the centre and well to the front, the fastest runners and more

active men deployed across the field, and a few of the best kickers and safest men, including Nichols and Hall, well to the rear. Spartacus himself takes the kick-off, and as the ball rises in a beautiful curve, the entire body of students comes charging down the field like a squadron of cavalry.

And now, boys, show what you are made of, for the last game was but a breather to what is coming.

Spartacus had shrewdly kicked the ball high in the air, to give his men time to get down the field before the return kick—a good trick, it is met by one equally good. As the ball touches the ground it falls near Warren, who kicks it diagonally across the field to a point about twenty yards forward of the line on which he stands, at the same time shouting to Gerrish, who is on the extreme right, to look out for it, which that shrewd player does to perfection, kicking it far toward the school goal. Back it comes to the centre of the field, where the most active men meet and kick and root and fall over and about it, until the sides close in a terrific scrimmage, and nothing can be seen but a dust cloud, in the midst of which are struggling forms and prostrate figures.

After a moment the school, by dint of numbers, gradually forces the town back, but not far

before the rush is broken and the ball driven back. Again and again does the school, with the ball before it, charge down the field, and again and again is the line broken by the desperate resistance of the solid men of the town line. But still they come on with indomitable pluck, and rush follows rush in rapid succession. Heart and lungs cannot stand it forever, and the townies are driven steadily back, striving desperately to regain lost ground. And now the ball is near the town goal, in the clump of trees near the fence, and here the townies make a desperate stand, and a terrible scrimmage takes place, which ends in the ball being driven out of bounds. But alas for the town! Eastman is carried from the field with a badly sprained ankle, and Glynn takes the leadership.

The ball is brought out to a point half way between the sides and barely twenty feet before the town goal. Again the sides line up, with Nichols and Brigham in the centre. Now Nichols, you must strike it over, as you are fresher and more active than Brigham. It is an anxious moment for the town, and some of the players climb upon others' shoulders, with arms outstretched to block the ball. It is thrown up, and both strike quickly, but Nichols reaches it first. It is a glancing blow,

however, and the ball is caught by Tady Finton, and kicked to the centre of the field, before the school rush can reach him. Indeed, so narrow is the margin, that before he can recover from his fierce kick Greenough reaches him with his shoulder, and poor Tady is sent ploughing the ground for several yards.

The ball is blocked about a third of the distance from the town goal, and again the town is driven slowly backwards. It is growing dusk, and game will be called in a few minutes. The school must make a goal soon or be beaten, and if the town can hold a few minutes it will win. The town is in bad shape. Ware can hardly stagger through the game; Robinson senior was hurt among the trees and retired. Several of the best men are bruised and limping, and all are covered with earth from head to foot. Glynn, smeared with dirt and grime, and panting from his fierce exertions, is unhurt; while Tady Finton is still cheerful despite the fact that he looks as if he had been struck by a runaway team.

The students, barring numbers, are in no better shape. Both sides, however, go in with a will, and the town slowly gives ground to the furious onslaught on its line. It is no time for kicking or

fancy playing, but for grim earnestness. Spartacus has called in his backs, and the entire body of students is hurled against the town line. The charge is irresistible. Back, back they are driven until their goal line is almost reached. And here a foul occurs. Greenough, from the centre of the rush, seizes the ball, and crawling between the legs of the rushers, carries it over the line.

The school claims goal, but the claim is promptly disallowed by the referee, "No holding the ball." It is brought out and the sides line up, the school triumphant and aggressive, the town dogged and determined. What is Glynn meditating? He has sent two men off to each side, while Spartacus has called in his backs. The crowd near the fence is as silent as death. A forlorn hope of Glynn, for surely the town can't get the ball through.

It is thrown up by the referee, and immediately Nichols is flat on his back. Brigham has "rooted" him instead of trying for the ball, clearly a foul. Before the referee can speak Nichols springs to his feet, and, furious with rage, lands a sounding left and right full in Brigham's face, and the two are fighting like gamecocks. Both sides have their blood up, and for a moment a general fight seems imminent. But here Glynn comes in strong.

Seizing the combatants he tears them apart as if they were children, while at the same time he pushes his huge bulk between Warren and Greenough, who are on the point of settling a few little difficulties of their own. The referee forces his way through the angry crowd, and the yard police with difficulty keep back the spectators, who are swarming over the fence to take part in the scrimmage. "The first man who strikes a blow leaves the field, and his side forfeits the game," declares the referee, in tones as even and hard as steel. He means it, and they know it, and the crowd falls back. The sides line up again, with Brigham and Nichols facing each other and glaring like wildcats.

Again the ball is tossed up, each springs and strikes it fairly, and it falls a little to one side; and the sides close in what proves to be the last scrimmage of the game. "Now, boys, we've got to take it over," shouts Spartacus, and the school strains every nerve to force back the town. It is do or die this time, and both sides know it. The townies, leaning forward until their hands almost touch the ground, and digging their hands deep in the soil, refuse to yield an inch, and keep the ball wedged in place. Again and again the school

surges, and the pressure is so great that some of the foremost men are forced completely off their feet and over the heads and shoulders of the town rushers.

While they are frantically rushing back to regain their positions the town gains an inch, six inches, a foot, when a gasping bellow is heard from Glynn, "Now, boys, to the right all together, give 'em hell!" In an instant every pound left is swung to the right, and before the school masses can sweep round to check it, the town breaks through with a rush, and Gerrish and Sullivan, the two active fellows who have been placed there for the purpose, have the ball past the school with a clear field before them, and dart toward the school goal amid the frantic shouts of the spectators.

Back rushes the school, dusty, hoarse and furious. Nichols runs as he never ran before. Spartacus speeds along like a man pursued by an evil spirit. Hall jumps clear over a bunch of townies who try to block him, and Bennett ploughs through the atmosphere like a runaway hippopotamus. But they had too good a start. That was a bad mistake, Spartacus, to call in your backs, and you may run and shout, it is too late now, and the two runners, pursued by both sides, who root,

tumble, and roll each other in the dirt, are not headed, and easily carry the ball over the line for game.

Think of it, two games to none, and against great odds. The enthusiasm of the townies knows no bounds, and the players are escorted back to their homes by throngs of gossipy, excited partisans, while the school, silent and discomfited, scatters to the boarding-houses.

And our young friends retire, to discuss the game, and to glory in their new possessions, and to wonder loudly which would have "licked," Nichols or Brigham.

CHAPTER 19

"Heap on more wood! The wind is chill;
But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our Christmas merry still."

—Scott.

As winter closed in, after a wet and disagreeable fall, the attention of the boys and girls was for a time fully taken up with skating. The river, at this season deep and rapid from the fall rains, froze slowly and unevenly, and was too dangerous to be attempted. But Giddings' brickyard pond, Gordon's overflow, and every pool and shallow sheet of water was covered with muffled figures, while the crisp singing of the rocker blades was punctuated by the dull thud of small craniums on the hard ice, and the shrill shouts of "Shinney on your own side," "Who yer hittin'?" "No fair holdin'," "Tiddly benders, tiddly benders!" and other cries appropriate to the season.

An early snowfall put an end to skating, and the sleds were put in use for a while, but coasting was poor, and the two weeks before Christmas began to drag slowly. Of course Christmas was the

theme of conversation, and the staple of thought and dreams.

How to obtain the greatest amount of entertainment out of Christmas was the problem for the youngsters which taxed their ingenuity to the utmost.

Exeter, in comon with most country towns rejoiced in a plethora of churches. Her worthy citizens, delightfully harmonious in many respects, did not wholly agree as to the best method of obtaining salvation, and the result was an astonishing number of churches and religious societies, all of which were exceedingly zealous in the pursuit of proselytes for the aggrandisement of their faith, and parishioners for the payment of expenses incidental to the maintenance of the local society.

To this effect, and in compliance with the demands of the seasons, they held May fairs, where the credulous public were led to part with their wealth for a small percentage of return; June breakfasts, where well-intentioned burghers were led to forego the pleasures of their own table for the tribulations of a public grab bag; strawberry festivals, where disastrous results were only avoided by the small purchasing value of a quarter; midsummer picnics at the Eddy, where people

rowed in boats, swung in swings, and ate hugely of ill-assorted and indigestible lunches to the lasting detriment of their constitutions, and oyster sociables, where deep sea soundings were required to accumulate evidence of title.

But the great event of the year was the Christmas festival. Each church society planned to make their Christmas festival a little better than that of any other. There was no ill feeling, bless you, no! To be sure the Phillips Church, which, some time in the previous century, had seceded from the old Orthodox Church, for reasons so shrouded in the dusts of antiquity as to be known to no man, afterwards known as the Upper Church from its geographical situation on Front Street, thought it just as well to show that Lower Church that it was quite capable of administering its affairs. And *per contra* the First, or Lower Church, while taking great pains to speak well of her sister church, managed in some mysterious way to instil into the latter the complete realization that, while the roads to Paradise might be parallel, they were at least separate.

Likewise, the two Baptist churches, while lustily singing on each and every Sunday reassuring and comforting words to the effect that "Salvation

was free to you and me," none the less persisted in pursuing separate and parallel roads, which put them to great straits to maintain separate houses of worship, separate pastors, subscription lists, and separate traditions, and to the thinking pilgrim rendered the words of the dear old hymn misleading in the extreme.

The Orthodox, Methodist and Baptist looked with a sort of good-natured tolerance upon the Episcopal and Catholic, which in turn regarded them as worthy but somewhat jog-trot and common, and all completely ignored the existence of the small but united band of Adventists.

The Unitarian, however, like the Secretary, "stood alone," and unlike the Secretary modern degeneracy had not only reached but sadly soiled them, at least in the opinion of the other churches. "Alone, alone, and every step the mist thickened about them," was their situation in the minds of every devout follower of other faiths. Was there a convention to which all the old churches were invited, the Unitarian remained away, uninvited and solitary, while the members of her sister churches shook hands guardedly, after the manner of pugilists at the call of time, and rejoiced that they were not as other men, even as did the Pharisee of old.

Consequently it is not to be wondered at that the Christmas festivals were exclusively sectarian, not perhaps to the point of requiring the establishment of a dead line, but still sectarian to a point that practically kept everyone within the shadow of his doctrinal vine and fig tree.

These festivals were very similar. They began with a supper, which was hugely enjoyed by both young and old. This, commencing with prayer, was followed by recitations of a religious and uplifting nature, the singing of Sunday School songs, the unveiling of the Christmas tree, and the distribution of presents and pop corn, after which the people went home jaded but happy, and confident that no other festival could equal their own.

Now the one society that openly violated tradition was the Unitarian. These misguided people, with the praiseworthy desire of accommodating the public and securing the greatest good to the greatest number, held their festival in the town hall, which, after weeks of preparation, was beautifully decorated for the occasion.

The exercises began with a bountiful supper served at long tables, and when the tables were removed the distribution of presents from two and sometimes three trees began from the plat-

form. After the presents were distributed an hour or more was spent by the children in playing games, sliding, falling, and bumping their heads on the polished floor. At nine o'clock the children were wrapped up and taken home, and amid a tuning up of violins, the liquid tones of clarinet, and brazen tones of cornet and trombone, the young, the middle-aged, and sometimes the old, joined in a jolly old-fashioned dance until twelve o'clock.

What wonder, then, that the ambition of every boy and girl was to go to the Unitarian Christmas Festival. What wonder that the Unitarian Sunday School assumed the appearance of a congested town meeting for a few weeks prior to Christmas.

Of our friends, the majority were legitimate members for various reasons. Plupy's father favored the Unitarians, for his daughters were tuneful members of the choir, and there was no church in the afternoon. Pewt's father had painted the edifice, and was a solid member of the parish. Potter's grandfather was one of the early members, while Nipper's uncles had secured the contract for the erection of the building, and the entire family became ardent supporters of the faith.

Beany, an alien, was blowboy of the organ and a functionary of importance, albeit somewhat prone to slumber during the sermon and to be awakened with a pin in the hands of the basso, the Hon. Alva Wood, Pile's father. Fatty's mother was the godmother to whom the society, one and all, turned when in trouble, financial or otherwise. On the other hand the Chadwick boys were occasionally allowed to attend, on account of the fact that their father, Captain Chadwick, a staunch supporter and attendant of the Upper Church, was so firm a friend of the Unitarian pastor as to frequently attend his church, and always contributed liberally to its funds. Indeed it was that redoubtable gentleman who, when the Unitarian pastor had been invited to a conference with some irate saloon keepers who were intending to give that outspoken man a rough handling, casually strolled in upon the assemblage with the identical gold-headed cane with which he had unaided quelled a mutiny in his ship, and the deference of those saloon keepers was beyond precedent.

So it can easily be seen that this selfsame Unitarian society counting as its friends Pewt and Beany, Plupy and Fatty, Potter and Nipper, Pile and Whacker, Bug and Puzzy, Micky and Hoppy,

could not find time to be lonely in its isolation, and was in fact a very lively institution at all times.

Regularly three nights a week for two weeks before Christmas the young ladies and young gentlemen of the parish gathered at the vestry and wound evergreen and made hemlock wreaths of the bountiful supply that the boys, under the leadership of Fatty and the motive power of old Chub, had amassed during the afternoon.

It was during one of these excursions that an accident happened poor Plupy that nearly put that ingenuous youth out of the running for good and all. One of the most fascinating pursuits of the boys was that of "bending birches." There may be some persons who do not know what it means to bend a birch, but at that time and in that community it was a common and most fascinating sport, dangerous enough to be exciting, but seldom productive of accidents. It consisted of selecting a tall, slender live birch, large enough to allow one to climb fifteen or twenty feet before it swayed too much to support his weight. Then at the proper moment the climber swung outward, with his full weight hanging by his hands, and the birch bending came to the ground with a stately sweep, when the climber let go, and the tree

sprang back into place. The sensation was absolutely unique.

Whenever the boys went after evergreen and hemlock they spent a large part of the time in this pursuit.

Now there was a large birch that none of the boys had dared to bend. It stood apart from its kind, surrounded by a group of small pine trees. On the afternoon in question the boys had filled the rattle cart to the brim with green, and before starting homeward had bent all the birches in the neighborhood but this one.

Much to their astonishment Plupy, when "stumped" to bend the big birch, announced his willingness to try it, and spitting on his hands and wrapping his long legs snakewise about the tree, began with many grunts and wry faces to make the toilsome ascent. When he had ascended about a dozen feet he began to waver in his fixed purpose, but the jeers of the boys drove him higher, until he had reached the height of about twenty-five feet, when the swaying of the tall tree warned him that he could not go any higher with safety. Then, on looking down, he was appalled at the height and afraid to swing out.

"Aw, Plupy's afraid!" sneered Whacker, and a

chorus of shrill "aw's" cut the air, and the cheeks of Plupy, already empurpled with the exertion of climbing, took on a still more apoplectic hue.

"I ain't afraid neither, only I ain't got any good holt."

"Plupy's 'fraid." "'Fraid cat!" "'Fraid cat!" shouted the boys.

"Huh!" sneered the much badgered youth, "you needn't be so smart. None of you fellers dast to try it."

"Yah-h-h, come down, old 'fraid cat," they scoffed, "and see if we're afraid. Plupy's 'fraid, Plupy's 'fraid!" and each one yelled as loud as he could, and vied with the others in heaping odium upon poor Plupy.

All at once a sort of desperation took possession of him, and tearing his cap from his head he cast it to the ground. At this all shouting ceased in a respectful silence, for it was an unwritten law, which no boy ever thought of disobeying, that wherever one threw his hat there would he follow.

As they gazed open-mouthed, Plupy took a firm hold, a long breath, and having chanted the well known couplet,

"What goes up must come down
On the head or on the ground,"

swung outwards, and the tree, bending gracefully to his weight, came toward the ground in a majestic sweep. But not to the ground, however, for, unfortunately for him, the birch in bending crossed the top of a small pine and stopped, leaving Plupy dangling in mid-air about fifteen feet from the frozen ground.

"Git something to ketch me, fellers," he sputtered, trying vainly to curl up his body so as to get his legs around the tree.

"Shin back to the pine tree hand over hand," yelled Fatty.

This Plupy tried to do, but the stiff twigs pointing towards him prevented.

"Do something for thunder's sake," bawled Fatty, his eyes protruding with excitement.

"Git under him and let him fall on you, Fatty," urged Bug. "'Twon't hurt much."

"Hold on, Plupy, till we cut down the pine tree," shrieked Potter, tearing around like a cat in a fit.

"I can't. I can't," gurgled Plupy, whose arms were stretched to their utmost tension.

"Drive the team under him," shouted Puzzy, as he ran for old Chub.

Amid shrill encouragement from the others to

hold on, Fatty and Puzzy untied Chub and drove at a gallop, the cart bounding over the hummocks and the evergreen streaming behind.

"Hurry up, I'm slippin', I'm slippin'!" gasped Plupy despairingly.

Alas! before the team reached him his hands relaxed their grip, and with a hoarse bellow he came shooting through the air like a limp scarecrow, just in time to strike full on old Chub's fat round back, from which he rebounded like a rubber ball into a thick snarl of wild blackberry vines, where he lay unhurt but howling like a maniac, while the astonished horse, plunging wildly to one side, tipped the wagon over and dragged it some distance before he brought up and was firmly anchored between two trees.

After righting the wagon, and rescuing the limp and recumbent but uninjured form of the sadly bedraggled hero, the boys drove to the vestry, where they delivered their load of evergreen to a committee of young ladies, who were assisted by several Academy students.

For several evenings the boys attended the vestry, and worked their fingers to the bone in stripping hemlock boughs for the girls, who, each attended by an Academy student, wove the twigs

into streamers and wreaths, and who, at ten o'clock, were escorted home by the selfsame Academy students, who were in turn waylaid by our boy friends and mercilessly "plugged" with hard snowballs.

The Unitarian Festival was to be held on the evening of the second day after Christmas, and in the afternoon the boys were on hand working like Trojans. Their first duty was to remove the settees from the hall. Ordinarily the settees were lowered through a trap-door to the basement, but as some repairs were being made in the basement there was only room for a part of them, and accordingly the rest were piled up in the east end of the hall in two great stacks. This should have been superintended by the janitor, but that worthy man was so in demand that he could not personally attend to it.

After completing two huge but exceedingly unsteady stacks, the boys mounted ladders and helped hook up streamers, tacked the bunting around the platform, lugged in the Christmas trees, and ran here and there after gimlets, screwdrivers and other necessary articles, while the students flirted with the young ladies, the super-

intendent fussed around and gave directions, and all went merrily.

At five o'clock the boys were excluded, and peeped through the keyhole and the blinds, while a select committee hung the presents on the trees

and adorned them with strings of pop corn, tinsel, gold and silver stars and colored candles.

At six o'clock the doors were thrown open and people began to troop in singly, in pairs, in bunches and in platoons. The ante-rooms resounded with the thump of heavy boots as they were exchanged for light shoes or slippers, while the chatter of tongues was incessant as woollen scarfs and clouds were unwound, muffs laid aside, beaded reticules hung up, and dolmans and fur tippets shoved into corners.

Soon the long tables were filled, and jests and repartee flew, while ham and tongue, rolls and tarts, and jellies disappeared. Then there was the roar of chairs and settees dragged across the room, and the squeaking of long tables as they were unjointed and removed.

Then amid breathless excitement the superintendent of the Sunday School, assisted by athletic young men, began removing the presents from the trees and shouting the names of the favored ones.

What delight when Plupy, whose musical longings were well known, received a trumpet which when blown discharged a strong jet of water into his face; when Fatty received a huge doughnut

made of pine wood, and artfully covered with a thin coating of frosting sugar, whereon he nearly broke his jaw; to see Bug's distorted countenance and bulging eyes when he attempted to devour the chocolate cream filled with cayenne; and Whacker's speechless and gasping indignation when he found that the pretty little cologne bottle marked with his name contained strong ammonia.

None of the boys escaped, and indeed none expected or hoped to, for each knew that his hand was against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and each had been planning mischief for weeks.

But the pop corn and the candy in bags of mosquito netting were plenteous and delightful, and the evening one to be remembered.

And after the smaller children were sent home, and the cornet sounded its brazen call, and the prompter, with violin in hand and hair greased and parted even to the back of his neck, made through his raven dyed mustache the time-honored announcement,

"Gents, take pardners for a plain quadrille,"

the boys gathered at the side of the hall, and to them it seemed as if fairy land had opened.

While the dancing was at its height the outer

doors had been opened to cool the hall, which was becoming a trifle over-heated. Attracted by the music a half inebriated individual had wandered into the hall, and leaning against the stack of settees watched the dancers with tipsy gravity. His unlooked-for appearance attracted the boys, who, on the lookout for fun, gathered around and watched him.

Perceiving that he had an audience he began to beat time to the music and to perform a *pas seul*, to their unbounded delight, and suddenly, his mind changing, he began to address a solemn warning against the sin of dancing to the amused urchins. Now the huge stacks of settees had been nodding and trembling for some time under the measured tread of the dancers, and as he lurched, and steadied himself by holding on to the seats, at once, with a grinding, shuddering crackle, the entire stack toppled over. The boys scattered with warning cries, but the poor drunkard was caught and buried under a huge mass of seats.

Instantly the dancing ceased, and a crowd of excited men and women gathered, asking questions and getting in each other's way, while the men began to drag and lift the settees away from the supposed lifeless body of the imprisoned one.

"Those are my murderers."

Page 227.

But even as they worked a far-off, muffled and maudlin voice chanted:

> "Hark, from the tombs a mournful sound,
> Mine ears attend the cry."

Reassured, they worked like Trojans, when again the voice droned:

> "Lift up your heads, ye gates of brass,
> Ye bars of iron yield."

And then again, as if impatient of delay:

> "Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates,
> Behold the King of Glory waits."

And then, in a resigned and patient but still maudlin voice:

> "Sun and moon and stars decay,
> Time shall soon this earth remove;
> Rise, my soul, and haste away
> To *seats* prepared above."

By this time the settees were removed and he was found prostrate but unhurt. As he was removed from the hall he solemnly stared about him, and pointing an accusing finger at the boys said, "Those are my murderers." At once the entire blame for the accident was laid at their doors. In

vain their denials; they were at once sent home in disgrace, and the dance went on.

As Plupy slowly and sullenly crawled into bed, the fun of the whole thing struck him so forcibly that he laughed and laughed until he laughed himself to sleep, as did each and every one of his condemned but innocent companions.

CHAPTER 20

"And now, farewell! 'Tis hard to give thee up,
With death so like a gentle slumber on thee."

Some of the pleasantest recollections are associated with Potter. He was a peculiarly gifted and brilliant boy. Slight in build, quiet and self-contained, he was one of those quietly observant boys who never let anything escape their notice. His grandfather was a noted physician, his father a cultivated gentleman, also a physician, whose health did not permit him to practise. From them he had inherited an intense love of natural sciences, and his knowledge along these lines was well nigh intuitive. He had a remarkable memory, and his mental powers were otherwise remarkable.

All his spare time was spent in collecting, classifying and arranging birds' nests, bugs, butterflies, and geological specimens, and Dr. Gorham's office, where he was allowed a free rein, was a veritable museum of curiosities, and a favorite lounging place on rainy days for the other boys.

With the exception of Plupy, who was an ardent but somewhat unsuccessful votary of science, and Chick Chickering, who was much more successful than Plupy but less interested, the other boys were not particularly interested in these pursuits, but preferred to spend their half-holidays in the village, always active and restless, and almost always in mischief. Fatty's barn was perhaps the most favored resort. A horizontal bar and a trapeze had been erected there, and the amount of hard work the boys went through, in their ambition to become circus gymnasts, was wonderful. Most of the boys could circle the bar, skin the cat, do the muscle grind, hang by the legs and drop through the hands.

Fatty's memorable experience in the Academy yard during his preparations for the fight had completely cured his ambition to shine as an acrobat, while Plupy's lack of muscle militated against success in that line, though his ardor was undiminished. He could, however, do two things which were always rewarded with prolonged and ironical applause. By dint of making hideous faces, and much gyrating of legs and body, he could pull himself up and chin the bar, and accomplish one other feat that no one else dared try. Plupy's

heels being by nature more protuberant than was consistent with the strict lines of beauty, gave him a purchase by which he could, on firmly inserting those heels into the angles formed by the trapeze ropes and bar, hang head downward with almost as much security as if he were suspended by hooks.

Unfortunately he did not have strength enough in his legs and body when extended at full length and head down, to curl up and grasp the bar with his hands, and it was a regular part of the performance for two of the boys to lift him back to the bar, whence, after spasmodically disengaging his heels, he descended, triumphant, and purple of countenance. One afternoon, however, the rest of the boys, conspiring together for his undoing, *contra formam statuti, et contra pacem et dignitatem reipublicae*, left Plupy hanging, and finally the overstrained heels relaxed, and poor Plupy fell to the floor on the top of his head, which induced a species of mental and physical collapse, which was, I rejoice to say, but temporary.

It was, however, in other pursuits that Arthur Gorham took the greatest pleasure. Accompanied by Chick Chickering, Plupy, and Luke Mannix, who was the most daring climber in town, with an unerring instinct for the woods and fields,

they ranged far and wide, amassing great stores of curious woodland plunder, running some risks, but gaining in health and instruction.

In winter how impressive were the woods after a heavy snowfall. Absolute silence, not a sound or movement. But see, at the foot of that beech tree are tiny, interlacing tracks of mice, and here is a large one, perhaps a weasel; yes, here are marks where he went along in long leaps, and here is a small stain of blood in the snow marking a tiny tragedy. Further on are tracks showing where he leaped, where he loitered, and where he squatted in the snow. Gracious, what's that? A sudden and delicious excitement sends the blood rushing through one's veins, as an old cock partridge rises with a roar of wings, and goes booming through the woods like a solid shot.

And now a sharp chir-r-r is heard, as a red squirrel querulously protests against unwelcome visitors. There he is at the top of that tall pine. Watch his tail jerk in time with every chitter and squirrel oath. Now he has gone, and everything is quiet. Not quite, though, for a clear and distinct chic-a-de-de-deee is heard, and half a dozen tiny bunches of drab colored down flit in and out among the trees. How tame they are, as they

come almost within reach, hanging head down, and searching for minute insects in the crevices of the bark, and regarding the visitors curiously with their bright and beadlike eyes, while keeping up their cheerful song with its peculiarly long-drawn last syllable. How black their caps are, and how ridiculously fat and puffed-up they look.

But we must get on to our traps. Yes, here we are. "Now, fellers, go easy. Shut up talking, Plupy, and see where you are stepping. Now wait and keep quiet, and let me look. All right. Not sprung." And so from one trap to another the boys go, generally finding the traps empty, but still full of hope and excitement, until at last a capture is made of a gray or red squirrel, which succeeds in biting its captors one and all severely before it is secured at home in a cage.

And sometimes the boys stopped and built their campfire at the base of some tall pine or giant oak, and ate their small lunch of hard boiled eggs, doughnuts and sandwiches, which they spoke of as jerked meat, pemmican, and buffalo tongue, and imagined themselves trappers and Indian fighters, and recounted hairbreadth escapes and hand-to-hand struggles with desperate dime novel and Mayne Reid renegades, while the dead gray

leaves still clinging to the oak saplings fluttered and rustled with an eerie sound in the cold wind.

Do you remember, boys, and girls too for that matter, the heroes of the dime novels we used to read—" Bill Biddon, the Trapper," " Nat Todd," " Billy Bowlegs "? Do you remember " The Desert Home," and " Young Yagers," and " Bush Boys," and Groot Willem, Hendrich, Swartboy, Hans, Klass, and the lion that got stuck in the chimney? And do you remember " Scalp Hunters," and " Snarleyow," and " Masterman Ready," and " Bruin," all great stories to read during the long winter evenings?

And late in March, or early in April, these young trappers used to haunt the orchards with bows and arrows, and shoot at little black-and-white woodpeckers. And how the boys would run and shout and go wild with excitement. I cannot remember that they ever hit one of these birds, who had a habit of dexterously slipping round a limb or trunk of the tree and avoiding the best aimed shafts.

And what a delightful sound was the first note of the bluebird, and how eloquently the sharp, clear and sweet calls of the robins spoke of warm days, soft wind, and bright sunshine. Yes, even

the distant cawing of the rusty, ragged and weather-beaten crows, which had been living during the winter on a limited diet of frozen apples and refuse, had a spring-like sound that was inspiriting.

In May and June these boys were in the habit of rising early, and tramping through the wet grass to try and surprise the bobolinks on their nests, so hard to find, for the old birds were so wary as never to perch and sing in the neighborhood of their nests.

But if one has sufficient enthusiasm to get up about three o'clock in the morning, one can have better luck. How wet is the grass, it fairly drips moisture, and a damp, white mist rises from the river. It is not yet light enough to see clearly, but already the male birds are astir, and joining in the wonderful chorus of bird voices that fairly fills the air. How can people sleep through it? Now sit down here on this knoll, and keep your eyes peeled and your tongue quiet. While you wait, listen to the birds, and see how many voices you can recognize. There you hear the mellow morning song of the robin; the rattling, bubbling, jolly song of the bobolink; the chatter and scream

of the blue jay; and the clear and beautiful trill of the song sparrow and the hermit thrush.

Now a catbird, over in the alders by the rivers, spoils its beautiful mocking song by the harsh whine from which it derives its name; and the rasping file of the nighthawk, returning from making a night of it, is heard far aloft. "It's getting light, old fellow, time to feel for your latchkey."

It is quiet for a moment, and the homelike twitter of the chipping sparrow, and sweeter yet, the plaintive question and answer of the pewee, and the triumphant "kankaree" of the red-winged blackbird, as he flies from his nest in the half-submerged bushes in the little swamp on the edge of the river, are heard. "All right, old fellow, we will take a look through those bushes later." Yes, there is the indignant chink-chink of the ground sparrow, who has a nest somewhere within a mile of you, and objects to your presence anywhere within three miles of the spot.

Up comes the sun, and look! There goes the little gray bird from under that clump of tall weeds, where the nest is found; a hollow in the ground, well lined, and almost perfectly concealed. How pretty are the eggs, and how anxiously the old birds hover around, the female giving utter-

ance to a sharp and distinct note, the male nervously singing as if to split his throat.

Sometimes, in the sunny afternoons of summer or fall, they scoured the fields in pursuit of butterflies, racing, chasing, hot and breathless. Here is a fine Archippus, perched light as a thistle-down in the cup of a wild rose. See how he slowly expands his wings, and then shuts them together like the leaves of a book. Crawl up carefully now and try the net. Down it comes, but not quite quick enough; the flower is a wreck of pink petals, but the butterfly, with a dancing flight, "*voltigeant*" as the French put it, the only word to properly express the airy motion, leads the boys a chase. Now they have him, and with careful fingers, to avoid brushing the velvety gloss from his wings, get him in a corner, and a drop of ether on the black head ends the brief, fluttering, sunshiny life.

Oftimes, in the evenings, they haunted the gaslights, which attracted all manner of flying moths and curious night creatures. And once it was their great pleasure and delight to entrap a gigantic gauze-winged moth, a most rare specimen, almost as large as a chipper bird. With what pride and delight he was shown to various young

collectors, and when the local papers made a prominent mention of the capture, it seemed to the boys that they occupied a very large niche in the temple of fame.

And in the fall, when the fields began to look bare and brown, and the blackbirds began to collect in vast troops for their southern flight, Plupy and Potter took to the fields on slaughter bent; Plupy with the sawed-off musket, Potter with a muzzle-loading duck-gun of fabulous length. Plupy's gun was the weapon won in the football match, and was a curious looking and somewhat unreliable instrument. As his financial condition generally hovered on the border line of insolvency, he was compelled to economize and buy cheap powder and the cheapest of G. D. caps. Occasionally he would eke out his shot with the smallest of pebble stones.

The first time he fired that ancient field piece it recoiled with force enough to send him flat on his back. Occasionally it would go off with a prolonged "woosh," somewhat like the bent firecrackers in a "cat-and-dog fight." At other times it would hang fire for a moment, and then go off with a deafening report, and land poor Plupy heels up. With a weapon of this disposition, while the

bag was never great, there was the fascinating element of uncertainty, which added much to the enjoyment of the occasion.

I have known that gun, when aimed point blank at an almost solid flock of blackbirds, and within easy range, to explode with an ear-splitting bang, and never start a feather, and at another time to bring down a squirrel from the top of a tall pine in such a mangled condition that Buffon would never have been able to classify the remains.

Potter's gun was a very good one, and Potter a very good shot, and as Plupy was not at all jealous of his companion's success, their hunting trips were thoroughly enjoyed, and the prospect of new guns that their parents had hinted at kept them on the *qui vive*.

Did it seem to any of these boys, in the brightness of their lives, in the fullest enjoyment of their health and strength, in the careless happiness and vigor of boyhood, that death was near? That the light would fade from the eyes, the laughter from the lips, and the bloom from the cheek of the best beloved of them all? That the black shadow of a crushing sorrow would fall upon the home of one in their circle that never would be lifted?

One afternoon in November Arthur had made

arrangements to go duck-shooting at Hampton Beach with two older boys. Much to Plupy's regret his father had forbidden him to use the musket again, and he was unable to go with them. That afternoon the three boys passed Plupy's house with Dr. Gorham's old horse and buggy, and Arthur leaned from the buggy and proudly held up a new double-barrelled shot-gun. It was the last time Plupy ever saw his friend alive. A few hours later a horse, furiously driven, passed the Academy yard, where the boys were playing, and stopped at Dr. Gorham's house. In a few moments it was known that Arthur Gorham had been instantly killed by the accidental discharge of his gun.

The horror of these tidings none of the boys will ever forget. How they got home that night I think no one of them has any distinct idea. They were benumbed by the dreadful suddenness of the blow. When Clark was drowned by breaking through the ice, it cast a gloom over all his acquaintances, but Clark was not so well known. When Garland fell from the upper rail of the staircase of the Town Hall it was dreadful indeed, but nothing in their experience ever affected them like this.

How could it be, that the brightest and best among them should be taken? The one to whom they were indebted for so many kindnesses, to whom they all turned for advice, instruction and sympathy? The one whose quiet and gentle disposition always prompted him to smooth over the ill-feeling that often arose between the boys; the only one who was absolutely generous, modest, manly, sweet-tempered and pure-minded. True, too true, it is that death loves a shining mark. Can it be wondered at that the most devoutly religious souls find it hard not to rebel against the decrees of the Great Father, all-wise and all-powerful though they be?

It seemed hard, bitterly hard, that he should go so young, so full of promise, but the reason he knows and approves, and in good time the veil that obscures our earthly vision will be rent, and the last lingering doubt of divine omniscience dispelled forever.

They saw him dimly through their tears as he lay in his little coffin, so strangely quiet, cold, and pulseless, and he seemed no longer to belong to them or to earth, but to have passed beyond and above them, and they were hushed and awe-stricken at the sight. And afterwards, when the

simple services were over, and they returned to their daily round of work and play, for a long time there was no ardor in their work and no pleasure in their play.

It is often said that the sorrows of youth are fitful and fleeting. I do not think so. Affections are never stronger, or sorrows keener than in youth. True enough, there is more buoyancy to rise above them. Life is before one, and hope is strong. But one does not forget, and they have never forgotten the bright boy in whom was centered their dearest affections. The rest of them have grown to manhood, have experienced the sharp edges and rough places of life; have been successful or not, according to their environment, their ability, their temperament; have contracted new ties, new affections, new interests; but they have never forgotten their little friend, and the sight of the little white cross in the cemetery, with his name graven thereon, never fails to awaken a deep and unspeakable regret.

Twenty-five years later the old Gorham place was sold, the family having left it years before. The party purchasing it found in the old office a few articles which he thought would be of interest to Plupy. The parcel, when opened, disclosed a

few birds' eggs, a small, square paper box, containing the very same gauze-winged moth, the capture of which so many years ago had afforded the boys so much delight, and had merited an article in the local paper; and a small red book, an English work on angling, a book they had studied many times, upon the fly-leaf of which was written these words:

"Arthur Gorham.
"The best angling book out
I am told by an experienced angler.
"Xmas 18—.
"Uncle Bob."

Could there have been anything better calculated to awaken the old sorrow? It seemed almost as a message from the dead.

CHAPTER 21

Vorbei, Vorbei! Und so geht es
Mit allen Geschichten.—ANDERSON.

In looking back thirty or more years it seems hard to realize that a generation has been born, and has grown to maturity, since we were boys and girls together, and that children then unborn are now dictating to us measures in business, politics, and social matters.

To such of us as have lived our uneventful lives in our native town, and have watched the growth of these youngsters, the realization of the dignity of middle age comes upon us slowly and reluctantly. We feel a slight wonder and bewilderment when one prefixes the " mister " instead of calling us by our first names, and do not quite like it when we are addressed as " Squire," or " Deacon," or " Colonel," or by some other title that our different interests or pursuits have given us.

It is only when a boyhood acquaintance who has lived in a distant city returns for a visit, bringing a family of grown children, himself bald,

gray, with a face furrowed with lines of thought or care, that we begin to realize that we are progressing a little faster than is agreeable, and we mentally cast a balance, and trust that we do not look as old as our friend Blank. And if he is bald and we are not, we feel quite cheerful over the comparison; and if the reverse is true we cling to the idea that our figure is still youthful and our digestion unimpaired.

And when our social duties compel us to take out the daughter of our friend, a charming bud of nineteen, and to try to adapt the measure of the "hop waltz," resurrected with difficulty from the dust of ages, to the graceful step of the modern and up to date waltz, we feel our age acutely, and retire most ungracefully, and quite out of breath.

And when, mopping our heated brow on the side-lines, we overhear a group of young men laughingly asking her who the "ancient blade" was, and otherwise referring to us as the "trilobite," or the "last year's almanac," or "old Mr. Turveydrop," our confusion is increased four-fold, and we feel well stricken in years.

We ought to have known it, for we have been fencing with middle age for some years. We have carefully parted our hair in the middle, because

the old side parting was rapidly expanding into a path of undesirable width; grown a full beard to conceal deep furrows in our once smooth cheeks, and have promptly shaved it off when gray hairs came faster than we could pull them out.

We have spent vast sums in the purchase of the most natural looking of false teeth; and how jauntily we have walked, and how ardently did we welcome the bicycle that placed the old on an equality with the young. Yea, years ago we conquered the old "boneshaker," the velocipede of our youth and strength, and e'en to-day bear upon our person various marks and scars received in honorable combat with this fiendish invention And we, at least such of us whose physical development equalled the responsibilities that the golf stocking imposes on its wearer, adopted the game and the costume with effusion.

We long ago lost our wonderful instinct for the woods, and can no longer distinguish a trillium from a dog-tooth violet. We feel no desire to run when the fire alarm rings; cats and dogs pass us by unharmed, even in the snowball season; and even the appearance of an unaccustomed plug hat upon a personal acquaintance awakens but a faint emotion, although the snow is soft and of the

right consistency. A street dog-fight has lost in a measure in absorbing excitement, although we cannot deny that we sometimes hurry to our office window to see such affairs. We no longer run after hand-organs or street bands.

In short:

> "We were happy youngsters then,
> And now we're sober-sided men,
> Half through life's journey,"

But in looking back over our adventures, our pranks and games, the unpleasant experiences seem in a great measure to have slipped from our memory, while the pleasant recollections—and they are legion—remain. With no bicycles, no golf, no tennis, with baseball yet in an undeveloped state, without many of the resources of our own boys and girls, it yet seems that our lives were full of enjoyment, health, happiness, and high spirits.

Do you remember, Tomtit, the time you attempted to play a trick on old Mr. Pollard, by springing suddenly upon a fence with a shriek as he hobbled by? And do you remember the lightning-like crack upon the head he gave you with his knotted cane? Do you remember, Hickey, the time you made insulting remarks to a deaf man, wholly in fun, for you knew he could not

hear a word, and it never occurred to you, until too late, that he could see and read the motions of your lips, and your painful realization of that fact?

And do you remember, Beany, the time you rang your father's doorbell, and the time we broke the gaslight, and the fight we had, and the countless other joint transactions in which we were engaged?

We had races in Fatty's yard, on the circular walk around the great lawn, an ideal race-track. Tomtit was the fastest runner; Arthur French, the schoolmaster's son, came next, the other boys stringing along, while Fatty and Plupy struggled to avoid being last. And we all remember the day that Beany's sister Mary defeated Tomtit and Arthur French after a most exciting race.

The huge vacant lots on Pine Street, where we used to play football and "three old cat," and marbles, "First in a hole and no fudging," have been entirely built up. The vast field on the "Plains," in which the county fair was held, with the half mile track where we have so often seen old "Wake-up Robinson" and other horsey spirits dashing down the stretch behind "Sheepskin," and "Regulator," and other flyers, and where the excitement in our small hearts was intense at the nip and tuck contests between such cracks as Nelly Locke and Topsey, and where the black cart-horse Regulator easily left the field trailing and distanced, has been converted into a business colony.

Our best swimming places, the "Oak," the "Eddy," the "Stump" and "Sandy Bottom" have grown up with weeds and alders. The

"Raceway" no longer swarms with boys, and the "Gravel" alone is left. Why is it? Don't Exeter boys swim now, and is the art perishing from disuse?

Has the age of nicknames passed? I hope not, for a good nickname seemed to establish a sort of free-masonry between the boys as nothing else could. I am sure that Exeter boys were particularly gifted in that line of word coinage. Shall we ever forget Jabber and Nipper and Pewt, and Beany and Cawcaw and Plupy? And Diddly and Priscilla and Bobberty and Phœbe and Tabby? And Chitter and Crusoe and Nibby and Skinny and Stubby and Pacer and Tongley? And Buck and Boosey and Lubin and Zee and Markeye? And Dutchy and Tickey and Blobsy and Gameeye and Nigger and Pop and Pile?

The transition period between roundabouts and bobtailed coats, between false bosoms and linen shirts, was marked by developments in other directions. We no longer disdained to openly affect the society of girls, but competed with one another for the chance to skate cross-handed with them. And we know just how those little red mittens felt.

And in the spring we used to organize may-

flower parties and scour the woods. How carefully we would bend back the branches and pull aside briars, that they might not touch the hem of their garments. How carefully and tenderly we would help them over brooks and puddles and fences, and how we vied with one another in risking life and limb in wading, shinning, and climbing for the woodland prizes.

And we began to go to dancing school, and to take lessons in deportment, which heaven knows we needed badly enough, and to display great expanse of shirt collar and cuffs at church sociables. We received many rebuffs, but with the buoyancy of youth persisted. Will Plupy ever forget the time he asked five girls in succession to dance with him at a Seminary reception, and received five prompt and unconditional refusals? I feel for that gawky youth this moment, as I see him in memory cheerfully approach the first and receive his first snub; with slightly diminished spirits he tries another, and a firm "No, I thank you," is received; with heightened color he assays a third atempt, and a sharp "no" punctuates the silence; with consternation depicted on every line of his countenance he advances trembling to the conquest of a fourth, and she turns her back and

giggles; almost demented, and conscious that the eyes of the world are upon him, he feebly stutters forth his simple plea to a fifth; she regards him with a cold stare, before which he wilts entirely, and in a dazed and mechanical fashion he drifts to a seat, where he sits with his hand to his head.

In literary lines we began to shine, and if the world never heard of "Strombolibomcatch, or Lightnings Let Loose on the World's Grand Palladium," the joint production of Puzzy, Stiffy and Tomtit, the world is indeed unfortunate. We scorned the familiar little couplets that once delighted us, from the disturbing effect they had upon the persons at whom they were aimed, and no longer

> "Chaddywhacker, chew tobacker,
> If you die it ain't no matter,"

excited instant war, as did the equally familiar

> "Ed Towle fell in a hole
> And couldn't get out to save his soul,"

and

> "Gran Miller the barber
> Went to shave his father,
> The razor slipped and cut his lip,
> Gran Miller the barber,"

excite reprisal on the part of the insulted ones. Curiously enough Gran Miller fulfilled the prediction so poetically proclaimed, and became a barber, although whether or not he ever sliced the paternal physiognomy history does not state.

Our dignity began to be ponderous, and had it not been for the natural outlet that the rapid development of baseball opened, I do not know what might have become of us. We went into baseball with our whole souls, and the old "Eagle B. B. C." was for several years a famous aggregation of famous players, with Whacker, Bug, Puzzy, Sammy Ricker, Cawcaw, Pacer, Billy Byington, Hen Safford, Billy Folsom, Crusoe Robinson, Shinny Thyng, Ham Welch and others.

"We played the "Atherletics" on our knees, boys," defeated the "Flying Tigers," goose-egged the "Stewed Cats," and generally made mince meat of any local or foreign nine that stood up to our famous pitchers, Cawcaw, Shinny and Sammy. Who will ever forget the two Fourth of July games netting the two famous scores of 104—3 and 53—2, and when the ball went over "Janglings" faster than the fielders could follow it.

Well, all these things are past and gone, and a new generation has taken our place, but it is very

pleasant to think of old times and talk them over with old timers. I was told by a city man who had never been in Exeter, but who had been thrown into contact with several Exeter boys, that he greatly regretted not having had an opportunity of passing his early days in our town, because he had always remarked, and greatly envied, the warm friendship and good fellowship between Exeter boys, and the pleasure they took in talking over their past pleasures.

A short time ago I was asked by a lady if it didn't break my heart to think of the good times we used to have, when it was a wonderful delight to live. No, it seems to me that a happy boyhood and girlhood must always exercise a great influence over the mature years of life, an influence for the better.

If a person is unfortunate in life, how much deeper is that feeling if one has bitter memories of an unhappy childhood. There appears to be a special and all-wise providence that allows the misfortunes, the mistakes, and the bitter things of our past, to gradually fade from our minds, while the memory of the pleasures, the sweets, and the successes remains ever fresh and enduring as our years accumulate and weigh us down.

It is in our children that we are enabled to actually live over the past, and our own past should be the means of guiding them through their childhood and youth. If we have been successful, they should double our successes in their lives; if we have failed, then our failures should clearly indicate the mistakes they should avoid making. In so far as our past affects for the better their future, then we should never sigh for the days that are gone, or unavailingly long for their return.

On the whole I think Exeter boys have done pretty well. The aggressive and pronounced qualities that characterized our friend Bug, have forced him into a business position of great responsibility in our largest city, where he brings up his boys to row and swim I have no doubt. That we see him so seldom is our loss, and we like to hope that he feels it his.

The quiet persistence and striking qualities that marked his brothers Puzzy and Whacker, have made them solid business men in a neighboring city, occupying positions of trust and honor, and still keeping in touch with their native town. Tomtit is bringing up a family in a college town, and occasionally a letter finds its way to his old town

containing glowing and entertaining accounts of his doings.

Ned Gilman died recently in the prime of splendid mental and physical endowments. The qualities that made him a leader among boys, developed in him a power in the business of his native town and state, and his eminent success and hard work may have contributed to his sudden and unexpected death. He loved his native town, and was admired and loved by its citizens, one and all, for his rugged honesty, his unfailing kindness, cheerfulness and evenness of temper.

With few exceptions the other Exeter boys have done well, and in whatever lines their duties have fallen, they have shown the true Exeter spirit.

But wait a moment, what about Plupy? It wouldn't do for a moment to leave him out after the ludicrous prominence he has occupied in this story. Well, Plupy entered one of the liberal professions, and to this day is puzzled to know just what the word "liberal" means in this connection.

He was urged to do this by the advice of his friends, who assured him there was plenty of room at the top. Whether this is true or not he has

long since come to the conclusion that there will never be any less room there on his account, and as there is a comfortable amount of room at the bottom, and as it requires no effort to remain there, the result is obvious.

In the ancient forays of the Gauls, it was the custom to look to all the able-bodied men for actual warfare, and leave the old and sick and worn-out men to tend the camp. It happened that there was always some man not old enough to shirk duty, but of no value in the rude sports, the forced marches, and the fierce conflicts of the time.

Such a one was usually employed to chronicle the events, to sing of the descriptions of battles and the prowess of heroes. This position was usually accorded him not because he was in any degree better fitted for it, but because he was fit for nothing else. And so, perhaps for similar reasons, this position has fallen to Plupy's lot, and if his description pleases, he is indeed fortunate and grateful.

Mighty High Praise of

"REAL BOYS"

A Book about *Real* Boys to carry *old* Boys back to *Boyhood* days.

"This morning I'm feeling 'pert and sassy,' because I have just finished Judge Shute's 'Real Boys.' And they are real boys. I know 'em and played with 'em, even if they have different names. You will say the same thing too, and find boyish counterparts for Plupy and Pewt, Skinny—all the long roll, in fact. What they did, too, will be paralleled in our own experiences and remembrances. It's a book to read and laugh at and sigh over now, and to dip into for a Ponce de Leon literary rejuvenation every time you feel particularly old."

—LITERARY EDITOR, *The Cleveland Leader.*

"Any one who has ever been a real boy, and wants to renew his youth, or any one who has never been a real boy and wants to imagine how it feels, had better read Henry Shute's book of reminiscences of 'Real Boys.'"—*Philadelphia Evening Telegraph.*

"It describes boy life, presented from a man's point of view. It was back in the sixties when these 'real boys' flourished, 'in the good old days when men of substance wore black broadcloth frock coats of wondrous sheen and velvety softness, and light, almost white, trousers, which hung in folds about their manly legs. When lofty and ofttimes shiny domes of thought were surmounted by tall beaver plugs of great price, while their feet were brave in closely fitting calfskin boots, which were always kept in the highest state of polish.' It is animated with a keen sense of humor and still further enlivened with the touch of human nature which make these pictures of boyhood complete."—*Toledo Blade.*

"'Real Boys' evidently was written by Judge Henry A. Shute for the delectation of old boys who were once real boys, and that they will thoroughly enjoy it we are convinced, in spite of the fact that it describes New Hampshire boys in particular. Their traits are much the same everywhere."—*The Rochester Herald.*

"As amusing as its predecessors, 'The Diary of a Real Boy' and 'Sequil.' It is a delightful volume. It will please all ages and all tastes. It would be difficult to read it without smiling and sighing, while the one pathetic chapter will cause many an eye to moisten."

—*Chicago Record-Herald.*

"There is something essentially human in every page of the book, and readers of all ages will be carried back to boyhood days, and find delight, not only in the pranks of these wholesome youths, but in the habits, dress and customs which the author describes so faithfully."

—*The Boston Herald.*

Full of that little touch of nature that 'makes the whole world kin.'"—*Worcester Gazette.*

Embellished with nearly 40 illustrations by F. R. Gruger. $1.25.

G. W. DILLINGHAM CO., Publishers, NEW YORK