

TIP TOP WEEKLY

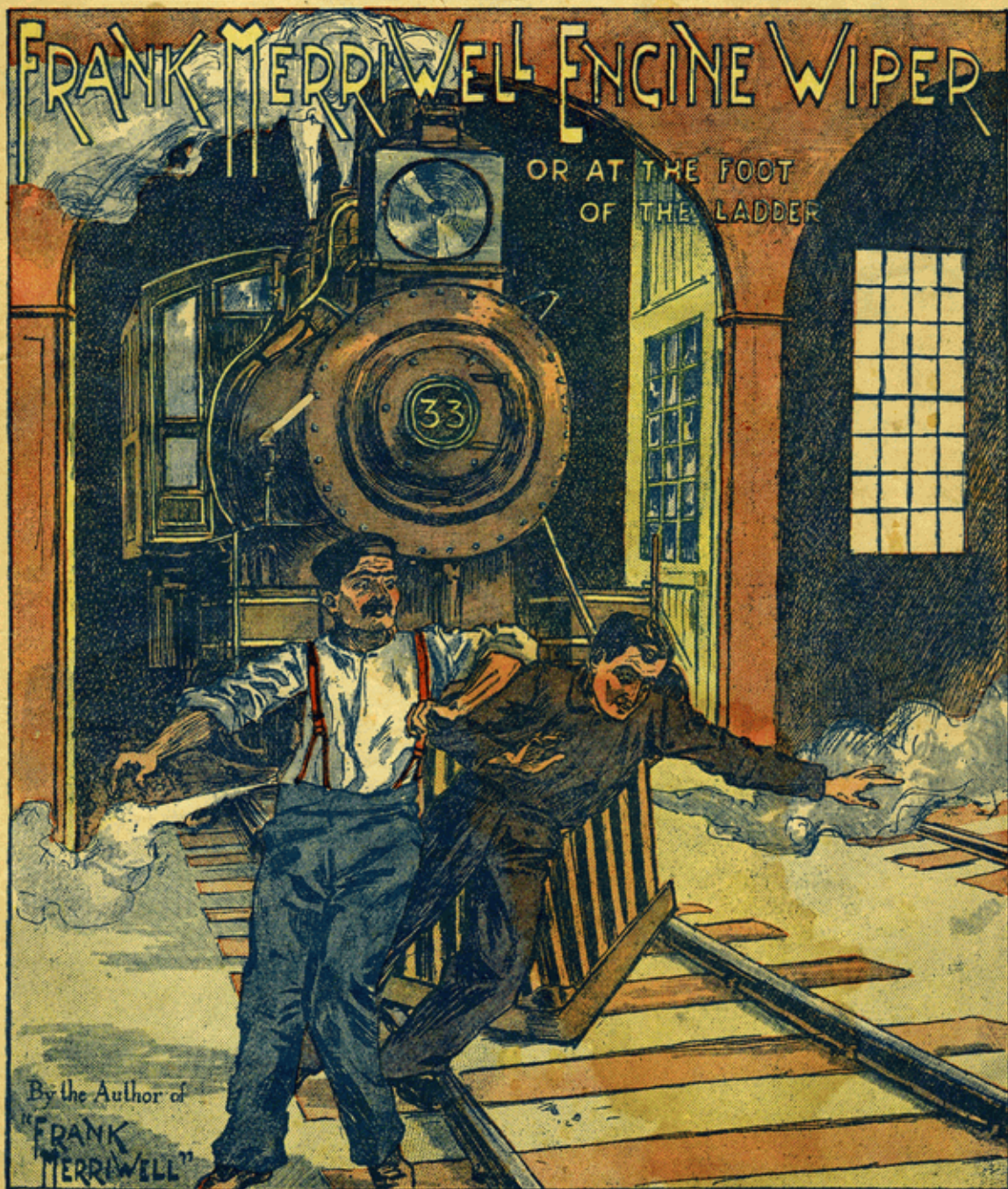
"An ideal publication for the American Youth"

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

No. 118

NEW YORK, JULY 16, 1898.

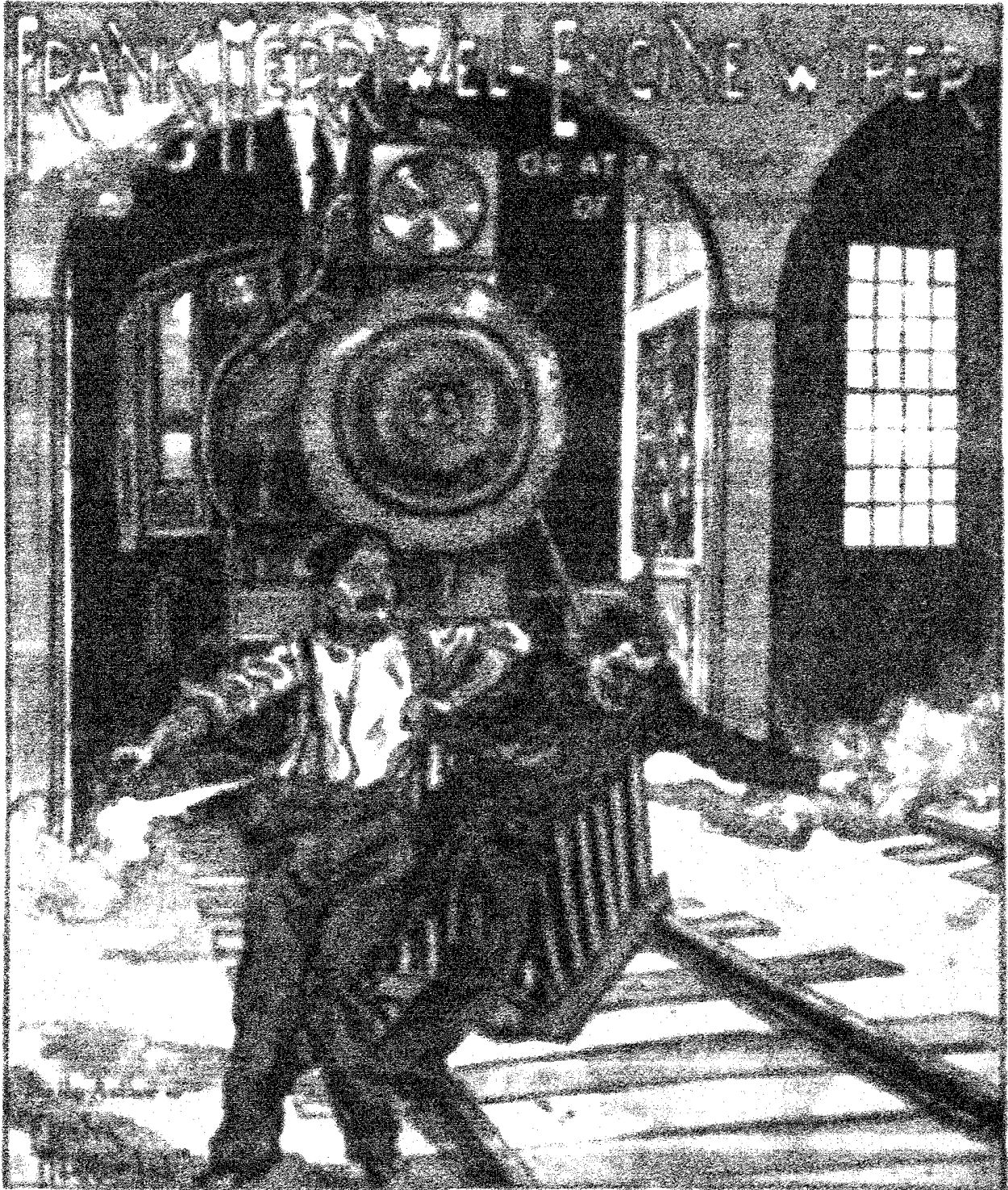
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JUST AS OLD 33 CAME OUT FRANK RECEIVED A JOLT THAT THREW HIM ON THE TRACK.

TIP TOP WEEKLY

An ideal publication for the American Youth



Frank the Engine, the hero of the story, is a steam locomotive who has a human face and arms. He is a very kind and helpful engine, and he is the one who saves the day in the story.

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Frank Merriwell, Engine Wiper;

OR,

AT THE FOOT OF THE LADDER.

By the Author of "FRANK MERRIWELL."

CHAPTER I.

THE BULLY OF THE ROUNDHOUSE.

"Will you please tell me where I can find the foreman?"

"Hey? The foreman?"

"Yes, sir."

"What do ye want?"

"I will explain my business to him, if you will be kind enough to tell me where I may find him."

The greasy man in greasy overalls and jumper straightened up from his position partly beneath the engine he had been wiping, and glared contemptuously at the smooth-faced, clean, well-dressed youth who had inquired for the roundhouse foreman.

In return, the youth regarded him with

calm indifference, quietly waiting for his question to be answered. He was a manly looking lad, with brown eyes that were calm and steady, an honest, open face, and a square chin that told of great determination. His finely-formed head was poised on a round, white neck that rose like a delicately-tinted column of marble from between his square shoulders. His attitude was one of grace and ease, with a faint suggestion of conscious strength and self-reliance.

It was in an engine roundhouse on the Blue Mountain Railroad. The place seemed dark and dusty, and smelled of smoke and grease. All around were engines, many of them with wipers of machinists working on them. One, with steam up, was standing ready to run out

BE PATRIOTIC—WEAR A BUTTON.

upon the track. The engineer was in the cab, while the fireman, with a long brass oiler in his hand, was making sure that every bearing was properly lubricated.

The well dressed youth had found admission to the roundhouse in some manner, but it was plain enough that he was unfamiliar there, or he would not have asked a wiper where to find the foreman.

The wiper was an ugly-looking fellow, with red hair and freckled face. He had a brawny arm and thick shoulders, and he glared at the stranger as if longing to eat him.

"What're ye in here for, anyhow?" he growled.

"That is my business. I asked you a civil question, but you have not seen fit to answer it civilly, so I see that I shall have to inquire elsewhere."

"Wait!" said the wiper, as the youth turned away. "You're puttin' on a heap of manners just because you can wear fine clothes and keep yer hands clean. I'm just as good as you be."

"We will not argue about that at all, sir."

"Mebbe you'll have to dirty yer hands some time."

To this the stranger made no retort, but, as he started away, the wiper said:

"Hold on. Stay here, an' I'll find the foreman."

"All right."

Then the man lounged away, growling to himself. He was gone nearly fifteen minutes, and when he returned he was accompanied by four or five other wipers, all looking just as dirty and greasy as he did.

The well-dressed youth was standing by the engine, his eyes taking in everything that was going on in the building.

He had seen the waiting engine run out on the track and another one back in off the turn-table. In a brief space of

time he had learned something about the work that went on in the roundhouse.

"Well," growled the red-haired wiper, "ther foreman ain't round. When he's out, I take his place. What d'yer want?"

"Never mind," said the youth. "I was looking for a job, but——"

"Hey? A job? What kind of a job?"

The wiper was astonished, as he plainly showed.

"Most any kind of a job," was the quiet answer. "I will call when the foreman is in."

"Well, dern my eyes!" shouted the red-headed man, bursting into a roar of coarse laughter. "Mebbe you wanted to hire out as General Superintendent, or President of the Road, or something of that sort? Haw! haw! haw!"

"Haw! haw! haw!" roared the other wipers.

Some of the machinists stopped work and came where they could watch and listen; a crowd was collecting around the applicant for work, who began to show embarrassment, his cheeks flushing.

"Look at him, fellers!" cried the big wiper, pointing at the stranger. "He's lookin' fer work—here! Haw! haw! haw!"

"Well, sir," said the youth, sharply, "will you tell me what there is so very funny about that?"

"Oh, it ain't funny a tall?!" said the big man. "It's just thunderin' ridiculous! I s'pose you'd be satisfied with a salary of ten thousand dollars a year?"

"Oh, I might be willing to accept that," dryly answered the youth.

"I s'pose likely. What d'yer know?"

"About what?"

"Runnin' a railroad."

"Nothing. I am not here to run the railroad, but to work for the men who do run it."

SEE OUR NEW COUPON OFFER—LAST PAGE.

"Well, you've got ter know somethin' in order ter be fit fer somethin'."

"I might be able to learn something in time."

"No, I'm afraid not. You'd have ter begin at the wrong end. You've made a mistake. This ain't no candy store. We don't sell dry goods here, either. You'd look pretty measurin' off ribbon for ladies, an' that's about all you'd be good for."

The stranger smiled in a cool manner, letting his eyes run over the wiper from his feet to his head and then back again.

"It strikes me that you must be a misfit at anything," he said, suavely. "About the only thing you can be real good for is to drink beer. It's plain that you are a tank."

"Yah!" snarled the man, ceasing to laugh in a moment and showing his temper. "You don't want to make any funny remarks!"

"I don't see anything funny about that. On the face of it, it is a truthful statement, and you are a living, breathing witness. If you can't have your booze regularly, you do not consider life worth the living. You would make a first-class advertisement for a cheap grog shop."

The big wiper actually staggered.

"What?" he faintly gasped. "What's that? Why, I'll eat him!"

"If you try it, you will find that I digest hard," came calmly from the stranger, who was watching the man closely. "I can read your history in short order. Numb, rum, bum. That's enough."

For a few moments it seemed that the big wiper would hit the stranger, but, instead, he struck one of the men who had caught hold of his arm and cautioned him. The force of the blow drove the man up against the rear driving wheel of

the engine and made a cut on his cheek, starting the blood. The man put up a greasy hand to wipe away the blood, saying huskily:

"That's all right, Mart. I was doin' it for your good. Knowed you'd be fired if you struck him and he complained on ye. That's all right."

And not one of the other men said a word. It was plain that every one of them was afraid of the fellow called Mart, whom the visitor saw was the bully among the wipers.

The lips of the youth curled with scorn as he surveyed the bruiser.

"So you are a brute as well as a drinking bummer!" he exclaimed. "It's a wonder to me how a man like you can hold any kind of a job."

"Ya-a-a-ah!" snarled the now thoroughly angered ruffian, showing his yellow, tobacco-stained teeth. "You get out of here, or I'll give you some of the same!"

"No you won't! I have dealt with brutes like you before."

This cool defiance of the stranger, scarcely more than a boy, with smooth face and dainty hands, was something the big, greasy wiper could not understand.

"If it wasn't for spoilin' yer fine clothes, I'd use ye fer a wiper ter finish the job on this machine," declared Mart. "I think you're too clean, anyhow."

Then he ejected into his hand the quid of tobacco that had been stowed in his cheek, and, with a flirt of the hand, sent it full at the white bosom of the shirt worn by the youth.

Spat! it struck and stuck there.

Smack!

With a leap, the youth had planted his fist fairly between the eyes of the bully.

Thud!—the man dropped to the ground.

CHAPTER II.

THE BULLY MEETS HIS MATCH.

It was a clean knock-out blow, delivered with marvelous skill and swiftness. The strange youth had not waited an instant before avenging the insult bestowed upon him.

The wipers gasped for breath and showed their excitement, while the engineers came hurrying toward the scene of the trouble.

"Now there'll be blazes to pay!" whispered one man, his eyes betraying his fear.

"Mart'll kill him!"

"In a minute! Look out for Old Slugs! He's gittin' up!"

The dazed and astounded wiper was sitting up. He looked at the youth in bewilderment. The visitor was calmly removing the tobacco from his shirt with a dainty white handkerchief.

"Did—did he hit me?" asked the bruiser.

"Yes, I hit you, you scum!" rang out the clear voice of the visitor. "If you will get up, I'll take great pleasure in hitting you again!"

One of the machinists got hold of the arm of the youth, and found it hard as iron. He whispered in the stranger's ear:

"You'd better get out! That's Old Slugs, and he'll kill you! He's dead nutty when he's mad."

"Thank you," said the visitor, quietly.

"Don't worry about me. That'll be all right."

"You took him by surprise before. Next time——"

"Next time I shall hit him harder."

The wiper scrambled to his feet, snarling savagely. He leaped backward as he got up, in order to be beyond the reach of the fearless youth, who seemed ready to come at him.

"Now," he grated—"now I'll smash ye!"

Then he rushed at the other.

With the grace of a fawn and the agility of a cat, the young man avoided the rush, and he planted a swinging blow under the ear of the wiper, sending the latter whirling and staggering away.

But the infuriated man quickly recovered and came at the stranger once more. This time he did not make such a fierce rush, but closed in as if he would prevent the youth from dodging.

The stranger laughed in the face of "Old Slugs," as the wiper was often called. It was a peculiar laugh, and it added to the anger of the man.

"Laugh, drat ye!" he snarled. "I'll make ye laugh outer t'other side of yer mouth pretty quick!"

"Marvelous!" smiled the youth, as, with uplifted hands, he slipped to one side and darted under the wiper's arm like a flash. "You surprise me, sir!"

Still snarling, Slugs whirled about and let out with his left for the head of the nimble visitor. The blow was neatly ducked, and the stranger countered on the wiper's wind.

A grunting puff came from the lips of Old Slugs, but he managed to avoid the youth's straight drive for his jaw. At the same time, he realized that, had he not escaped, the blow must have been a knock-out.

Such pugilistic skill on the part of the boyish-looking visitor was astounding, but still the wiper felt confident that he would be able to end the fight with a single blow.

Within a very few seconds he discovered that it was almost impossible to get in that blow. Only once had he been able to hit the stranger, and that was a glancing blow that simply seemed to put the youth on his mettle.

WAR BUTTONS FREE TO ALL READERS.

Old Slugs was a bulldog to fight, and, for that reason, the watchers were confident that he would be the victor in the end. For all that the stranger rained blow after blow upon the wiper's face and body, Slugs continued the fight as if he had not been hit. His face was cut by the hard knuckles of the visitor, and blood was running, but that made no difference.

"I should think there was a flea pesterin' me if I didn't know," said the man, with a sneer.

"How is this for a flea bite?"

The laughing stranger struck Slugs a terrible blow on the chin, hurling him backward into the arms of one of the spectators.

For a second the ruffian was dazed. He lay limply in the arms of the man, his eyes rolling, while he feebly lifted one hand to his chin.

Then, with astonishing swiftness, he recovered, uttering a howl of fury as he leaped out to confront the stranger once more.

Now the wiper made several attempts to close with the visitor, but each time he was avoided or beaten back with severe punishment. It was plain that the youth did not intend to let Slugs get hold of him if he could help it.

"If Slugs ever gets a hand on him, he'll tear him limb from limb," said one of the watching wipers.

"Sure," nodded the other. "And he'll get him before long. All that thumping don't bother Mart."

"That one on the chin shook him up for a minute."

"Notice how quick he recovered?"

"Yes; but the boy didn't foller up his advantage."

"He couldn't 'thout hittin' Mart when he was in Dave's arms."

This ain't no prize fight under rules.

He'd oughter finished it up when he had a chance. He won't get another."

The spectators were greatly excited. They applauded the stranger as much as they dared, but were universal in their belief that he must get the worst of it in the end.

But still the youth smiled and danced about the man, who was beginning to rush less and fight more slowly. The roundhouse men began to realize that Slug's efforts were telling on him, while the stranger seemed just as fresh as at the beginning.

"Oh, why don't ye keep still a minute?" grated the battered wiper, in disgust.

"All right," was the cool answer. "I will."

Then, to the amazement of all, the youth stood quite still, carelessly dropping his hands at his sides.

Slugs rushed, a cry of satisfaction breaking from his lips as he made a clutch to gather the other into his grasp, but his arms closed on empty air, and he felt something catch him about the knees, and he seemed to spin over and over, to strike the ground with an awful thud.

The crafty stranger had ducked close to the ground, caught him low, about the legs, and thrown him into the air.

It was an amazing feat, and the witnesses could hardly believe the evidence of their eyes.

Slugs lay still on the ground, breathing heavily and staring straight up toward the dirty, smoky roof."

There were some moments of silence.

"I believe he's finished!"

Somebody uttered the words, and they were heard by the fallen man.

"Who says so?" he hissed, sitting up.

"They lie—they lie!"

To his feet he sprang, although he staggered in a manner that told he was

READ THE GREAT PREMIUM OFFER ON LAST PAGE.

giddy. A torrent of fierce language poured from his lips. He looked scarcely human, with his bloodstained face and tobacco-colored teeth. Still the stranger did not appear in the least alarmed.

Now, however, the youth took the offensive. It seemed that he decided that the time had arrived to end the fight, and he went at Slugs like a whirlwind.

The ruffian tried to withstand the assault, but he was bewildered by it and his defence was feeble. Backward he was forced. The knuckles of the stranger played a tattoo on his face, while not one of his blows seemed to reach.

Smash!

With one swinging hook, the youth sent Old Slugs staggering across a track to drop on his hand and knee.

Up the man leaped but his opponent followed closely. Another blow sent the bully of the roundhouse to earth again.

The excitement was intense for the witnesses saw that the stranger was determined to end the fight as soon as possible.

Slugs got up but he was in no condition to carry on the battle and he fell again almost instantly. Then the fighting youth stood over him with clinched fists and flashing eyes demanding:

"Have you got enough?"

"Yes!" gasped the whipped ruffian. "I give up!"

CHAPTER III.

STRIKING A JOB.

A shout went up. For the first time since his entrance into the roundhouse Old Slugs was whipped. He had brow-beaten and bullied everybody except the foreman, and now this clean, boyish-looking stranger had defeated him in a square fight.

Such a thing had seemed beyond the

range of possibility, but it had happened.

"Here comes the foreman!"

Some one uttered the words, and there was a scattering as a dark-faced man was seen walking swiftly toward the group.

Old Slugs started to get up, but he fell back limply, as if all the strength had been beaten out of him.

The victor calmly took out a handkerchief and wiped the blood off his knuckles. He scarcely seemed to be breathing heavily after his recent exertions.

The foreman came up and looked the youth over.

"I don't know how you did it," he said; "but it was a pretty job, young man. I saw the whole thing from start to finish."

"I am sorry it occurred, sir," was the calm retort; "but, if you saw it all, you know I was not to blame."

The foreman nodded.

"Hall attempted to bully you—I know. I'll discharge him."

"Not on my account, sir. It strikes me that he has received punishment enough. I am satisfied, and you may be sure I shall make no complaint."

The foreman looked the defeated wiper over.

"Get up!" he growled. "Go wash the blood off your face and go to work again, if you are able. I should have fired you if this gentleman had requested it."

The wiper succeeded in getting upon his feet, but he staggered a bit as he walked away.

Something like a grim smile passed over the face of the foreman.

"He has received a good lesson," nodded the man. "It was what he deserved, and I'm glad you were able to give it to him. You are a wonder for a boy."

"I am hardly a boy, sir."

"Well, you are hardly more than that.

DO YOU WANT A FLAG BUTTON OR PIN?

Did I hear you say you were looking for work?"

"Yes, sir."

"What kind of work?"

"Any kind that I can get."

"Why, there is no work in here that you would do. You are not a machinist?"

"No, sir."

"Know anything about locomotives?"

"No, sir."

"I'm sorry, but it's no use to talk to you. The only work for an inexperienced man in this place is that of wiper, and you would not like that kind of work."

"I must do something. Can you give me a place as wiper?"

The foreman lifted his eyebrows and again surveyed the youth critically.

"It can't be that you understand what wipers have to do. It is the lowest and dirtiest work on a railroad."

"I presumed so."

"They have to wipe engines, turn the table, shovel ashes, wash out boilers and tanks, help the machinists to lug and lift, and do a hundred other things equally unpleasant."

"But there is a chance for promotion?"

"Oh, yes, for good men, but it comes slow. A man must wipe long enough to become familiar with every part of an engine, and know how one is run before he can get anything better. Even then there may be two or three others waiting ahead of him, and he is likely to lose his courage before he gets an opportunity to fire."

"But engine wipers stand a show of becoming firemen?"

"Yes."

"I wish you would give me a chance as wiper, sir."

"But you will not stand the work."

"Won't I? I am strong, and I think I can stand it."

"I do not mean that way. You will

become disgusted and quit before you have worked a day."

"Try me."

"Are you in earnest?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is your name?"

"Frank Merriwell."

"You have never done any hard work. Your hands show that."

"No, sir."

"I don't understand why you want such a job."

"Because I must do something, and I think I would like to become a locomotive engineer."

"Why are you forced to work, Mr. Merriwell? You look like a young man of means."

"I have lost every dollar I had in the world. I was in college, but the loss of my fortune forced me to leave. When I knew I must do something, I resolved to try to get a job on a railroad. That is all, sir."

"Parents living?"

"My mother is dead."

"And your father?"

"I know not where he is."

"Hum! You've had hard luck. But you are not fit to become a wiper. Why, the men would not give you any peace. They would regard you as a dude, and worry you to death."

The youth smiled.

"I think I can take care of myself, sir," he said, with quiet confidence.

"Haven't I proved that?"

"By George! I really believe you can! And you seem to be in earnest. I shouldn't like to bother with you if you are going to get sick in a few hours or a day or two and leave your work. Too many such chaps start in here."

"I give you my word that you need not fear that I will leave within a day, or a week—or a month."

"REMEMBER THE MAINE!"

WEAR A "MAINE" BUTTON.

"I hardly think you will. If you have the right sort of stuff in you, you will work up. I began as wiper, as did the master mechanic and nearly all the engineers on this road. There are some good men among them, too."

"I believe that."

"Have you any relatives to support—brothers, sisters, or anything like that?"

"No, sir."

"Drink?"

"Not a drop."

"That's good. You stand all the better chance. Drink is what keeps many a good man down. Of course, if a man wants to take a little beer occasionally, no one can really object to that. I suppose you take some beer once in a while?"

The face of the youth flushed.

"I told you, sir, that I do not drink anything."

"All right, all right. I thought perhaps you would not consider that drinking. Don't usually ask men these questions, but I'm interested in you."

The youth said nothing.

The foreman seemed to hesitate, and it was plain that he was not yet fully convinced that it was worth while to bother with this clean, dainty-looking stripling.

The applicant seemed to think that he had said quite enough, and he did not urge his case at all, but stood there waiting.

The sound of hammering was to be heard in the roundhouse. Another engine ran in on the table outside, and some wipers swung it round. Then the engine ran out again upon the tracks, instead of backing into the house.

Old Slugs, his face patched up with plaster, came back and went to work on the engine he had been cleaning. He moved slowly, as if he felt sore in every limb.

The foreman smiled the least bit as he watched the man. He nodded his head, and there was an expression of satisfaction on his dark face. Then he turned to Frank Merriwell.

"A fellow who could whip Martin Hall should have grit enough for anything," he said. "Come back to-morrow morning, prepared for work. You shall have a job."

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST FORENOON.

The following morning Frank Merriwell appeared at the roundhouse in overalls and jumper, ready for work. His working clothes were new and clean, in contrast to the clothes of the other wipers, who stared at him, grinned and made comments on his "dudish" appearance. Although Frank could hear nearly every word spoken, he paid not the slightest attention to anything the men said. He was there to work, and he waited for the foreman to appear and tell him what he was to do.

"He'll last quick," declared one of the wipers.

"It's two to one he'll quit before noon," said another.

"You'd win," chuckled a third.

"Nivver a bit can yez tell about thot, me b'ys," put in a young Irishman with a pleasant face. "He had th' grit to b'ate th' shtuffin' oout av Ould Sloogs, an' it's a fair chance he'll be afther havin' th' grit to shtay and worruk, no matter av he-don't loike it. Oi'll bet me money on him."

Frank gave the speaker a grateful look. He saw a begrimed but rather comely youth of twenty, who looked as if he had a heart overflowing with good nature.

The wipers went to work, relieving those who were there, and the machinists

appeared and began their tasks of the day.

After a little, Frank found himself left quite alone, and he began to feel restless and long to be doing something.

"Here boy!"

A man was beckoning to him, and he hastened toward him.

"Workin' here?"

"Yes, sir."

"Get hold of this casting and help me lift it. I'll carry the biggest part of it, for it's heavy."

Frank's pride was touched. Immediately he stooped and picked up the heavy casting without assistance.

"Where will you have it, sir?" he asked.

The machinist gasped.

"Well—you're—no—baby! Bring it over here."

Frank obeyed and put it down as directed.

"That's all right, young fellow," said the machinist; "but I advise you not to keep it up. If you do, you'll find all the heavy lifts shouldered onto you. I see you are new here. Don't be too ambitious to show what you can do."

"Thank you for the advice," said Merry, quietly.

Then he looked around to discover something else to do, and it was not long before he found a task shoveling ashes. He was working steadily at this when the foreman passed.

Frank expected the foreman would stop and say something to him, but the man did not seem to notice him at all.

"All right," thought Merry, grimly. "You told me to come prepared for work, and I'm here. I'm going to work, too."

He found plenty to be done, and also discovered that the other wipers took great satisfaction in giving him the very dirtiest jobs. Still he did not complain,

but, no matter what he was asked to do, he kept about his work steadily and quietly.

"How do you like it, Dudie?" asked one of the wipers, mockingly.

"Speaking to me, sir?" inquired Frank, placidly.

"Yes."

"My name is Merriwell."

"Oh, it is!"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, dudie is good enough, and that goes."

"Hey, Bill," called another wiper, "you don't know what you're chinnin' there."

"Why, I'm chinnin' the new superintendent of the road," grinned the taunting wiper.

"You're talkin' to the chap that knocked the stuffin' out of Old Slugs yesterday."

"The blazes I am! What, that soft-looking guy?"

"That's the oae."

"Well, may I be gosh darned!"

The man stared at Frank, as if unable to believe such a thing possible.

"Why, he's a kid!"

"If you think so, just get him after ye. Slugs gave you a thrashing, and you wouldn't last half as long with that kid."

After this, the man did not call Frank "Dudie" again, but there were others who did. Whenever two or three wipers were together in Frank's vicinity, they did their best to jolly him.

Merry did not get angry; he knew that would be the worst thing for him. He said very little, but occasionally he made some retort, and in every case it proved cutting for the one at whom it was aimed. The men began to realize after a while that the soft-looking youth could use his tongue quite as skilfully as his fists.

What surprised everybody was the fact that Frank did not show hesitation in taking hold of any kind of a job, no matter how dirty. He was not squeamish, or, if he was, he did not betray it.

Nearly half the forenoon had passed before Frank learned that Martin Hall, or Old Slugs, as he was generally called, had not put in an appearance that morning, but was reported to be ill in bed, unable to work.

Then some strange workmen came round to see the boy who had whipped Old Slugs. They looked him over doubtfully, and were inclined to disbelieve the story.

"Slugs could chaw him up in a minute," one declared.

"That's what everybody thought till they saw him try it," said a witness of the fight.

"Well, it must have been an accident if that boy knocked Slugs out."

"It wasn't no accident. It was the cleanest, smartest fightin' I ever saw. Why, look at him! He don't bear a mark, and Slugs is in bed, with his face all cut and plastered."

"All right, if you say so; but I don't understand it."

All this was very embarrassing to Frank, who regretted the unfortunate occurrence that had made him so conspicuous in the roundhouse. He continued about his work, pretending that he did not hear the talk.

Long before noon Frank was smeared with dirt and grease. It was a strange experience to him, for all his life he had been immaculate about his dress and his person.

But he had started out to make his way in the world, and he had begun at the very foot of the ladder. No one understood better than he that there was no room at the top for shirkers. It was hon-

est work, and he hoped for something better in the future.

He did not allow his mind to dwell on the pleasures that were past. He knew the winner in the battle of life is the one who looks forward, not backward.

Frank felt confidence in himself. He believed he would be able to rise in time, and he had entered the roundhouse with the determination to keep his eyes and ears open and learn everything possible as fast as possible.

Along toward noon, when it happened that there was no worse work for him to do, one of the wipers set him to aiding in cleaning up a locomotive.

It happened that the man was of a sociable turn, and he fell to talking with Frank, asking him many questions, all of which Merry answered truthfully.

"It don't seem to me that you was cut out for this kind of work," said the wiper. "But mebber you may have luck and get somewhere. It's mighty hard, though. Now I know every part of an engine, and I can handle one as well as half the engineers, but I don't get no show. I did think there was a chance for me to get on firing till the strike over on the P. B. & Y. That throwed lots of good men out of work, and some of them came right over here and found jobs firing or running engines, which knocked out us chaps who was waiting for an opening. No telling now when my turn'll come."

Frank did his best to cheer the man up, and then found his opportunity to ask a number of questions about the names of the different parts of the engine. Every explanation the wiper made to him he fixed in his mind, and, when noon came, he was satisfied that he had not let his first half day pass without learning something.

The foreman came up to him.

SHOW YOUR COLORS—GET ONE OF OUR FREE BADGES.

"I've had my eye on you this forenoon," he said.

Frank started. He had not fancied that the foreman was noticing him at all.

"Yes, I've had my eye on you," said the foreman. "You've worked all right, and you didn't stand round with your hands in your pockets waiting for somebody to tell you what to do. You found enough to do, and you did it. That's right. Keep on the same way. That's all."

Then he walked away, without another word.

CHAPTER V.

THE STREET MUSICIANS.

That afternoon Frank had a chance to help a machinist who was making some repairs on an engine. The work was difficult to reach, and the machinist kept Frank to pass him his tools as he required them. Frank watched to see how everything was done, and asked some questions. At first the engineer growled his answers, but Frank had a pleasant way of leading him on, so that, after a time, he became more agreeable. He was an intelligent man, and he appreciated intelligence in others. This being the case, it did not take him a great while to discover that Merriwell was different from the ordinary wiper.

When the machinist spoke of certain parts of the locomotive he found that his assistant knew something about them, or, at least quickly caught onto his meaning. Then he was astonished to learn that Merry was spending his first day in a roundhouse.

"How have you picked up a knowledge of so many things about an engine, young man?" he asked.

"I have two books on locomotive engineering which I purchased," answered

Frank, reddening somewhat. "It was a subject that interested me, and I have read the books pretty thoroughly."

"That's it, eh? Well, you can't learn anything of real practical value without experience, but those books may help you, my boy."

"I think they will, sir, for I have a good memory, and I do not easily forget anything I study."

"Keep on studying. Anything you want to know you can find out by asking me. They'll tell you old Tom Bowers is sulky and surly, but don't mind that. It's only my way. I rather like your appearance. I think you are a young man with get-there in him, and get-there is what counts in this world."

In this way Frank found another friend, much to the surprise of the other wipers, none of whom had been able to get along with Tom Bowers.

The work that afternoon was far more agreeable than it had been in the forenoon, and Frank was well satisfied when night came.

At the same time, he knew some of the wipers were already growing jealous of him, seeing that he promised to be something of a favorite, as he had been able to draw Tom Bowers into conversation. As a rule, Bowers swore and snarled at his assistants, but he had treated Frank in a different manner.

As Frank left the roundhouse, three of the wipers were talking together near the door, and one of them said:

"There goes the fellow now. I tell you we don't want such chaps here."

"We can't help it," said another.

"Why not? We've driven men out."

"If you think you can drive him, try it. Old Slugs didn't cut much of a figure with him."

"Oh, I'm not going to try it alone, but the whole of us——"

Frank passed on and heard no more of their talk. He was not disturbed, for he knew there was certain to be rivalries and jealousies among workmen, and he believed he could live down the dislike for him that was being shown at the very beginning of his career.

Frank had taken a room in a cheap quarter. He felt that he must live according to his means, and his pay as wiper was sure to be poor.

Merriwell's former friends would not have believed it possible for him to bring himself to one small square room, with bare floors and undecorated walls. He smiled as he fancied some of them looking in on him in his new quarters.

But no one realized better than Frank Merriwell that the young man who lives beyond his means forms habits that lead to certain ruin in the end, and he was determined to start right.

There is much in the right kind of a start in life. It is slow, heart-breaking work climbing the ladder of fortune, but the patient plodder wins in the end, for he makes sure of each step as he goes.

Frank had arranged to take his meals at a cheap restaurant, but he went home and washed up thoroughly before going out. He had bought some curled hair, which he knew would, with the aid of good soap, be very effective in removing the grime from his hands, and, after he had washed, scarcely a trace of his work could be discovered by the closest inspection. He knew that in time the dirt must wear in beneath his finger nails so it could not be removed, and so he had cut his beautifully shaped nails as short as possible, preferring to sacrifice them rather than carry them about "in mourning."

He had been fortunate in finding a place to eat, for, although the restaurant was cheap, everything looked clean, and

he was able to eat the food with relish.

Somehow as he sat there eating he was not cast down or dejected. Instead, a feeling of self-reliance and independence possessed him, and his heart swelled with something like exultation.

He had been cast upon his own resources, and he must make his way alone in the world and unaided. If there was any real ability in him, he firmly believed he would succeed, and he welcomed the test. Not a fear or a doubt concerning the future possessed him.

Having eaten heartily, he went out for a stroll about the city. He felt the need of a walk in the open air, after which he would go to his room and get a good night's rest.

Gradually he walked toward a better section of the city. At least he was attracted by the sound of music and of singing, and, in front of some shops he saw a boy and girl standing, while a small crowd had gathered near.

The boy was playing on a guitar, while the girl was singing. They were rather poorly clad, although their clothes were neat and clean. The boy might have been seventeen years old, and he had one short, crooked leg, making necessary the use of a crutch. The girl was not over fifteen, and she had one of the sweetest faces Frank had ever looked upon. There was something pathetic about her face—something that struck to Merry's heart with a pang.

The boy joined in with her on the chorus of the song, and there was something about it that brought a mist to Frank's eyes. He stopped and listened, feeling in his pocket for a piece of money.

When the song was finished, the boy passed round the hat. Few of the listeners gave anything, but each one was

thanked. Frank threw a dime into the hat. It was more than he could afford, but he felt that it was the only kind of extravagance in which he would indulge.

The boy and girl looked alike, and Frank decided they were brother and sister. The boy played again, and they sang.

A crowd of roistering young chaps came along and stopped. When the song was finished, they made some comments about the girl, bringing the hot blood to the cheeks of Frank Merriwell.

"She's good enough to hug," said one.

"That she is," laughed another. "She's a peach. What'll you bet I don't hug her?"

"She needs money. Perhaps she'd let you you kiss her for a quarter, Ned."

"By Jove! I'd give it!"

"You don't dare right here on the street."

"I'll go you the drinks on it."

"Done!"

The Frank Merriwell moved a little nearer.

The fellow called Ned walked up to the girl and chucked her under the chin, saying:

"Ah, there, my little daisy! You'll make a prima donna some day. Give us a kiss, and I'll give you a quarter."

The girl shrank away with a little cry of alarm, reaching out in a vague way toward her brother.

In an instant the latter was aroused. He uttered a cry of anger.

"Go way!" he exclaimed, excitedly. "She's my sister! How dare you insult her!"

"Oh, don't get gay!" said the youth. "I'm not insulting her. I made her an offer."

"Go way, or I'll strike you with my crutch!"

"You wouldn't hurt anything. I've got a bet on this, and I must kiss her or lose. Come, now, here's half a dollar. That should be an object."

"Jack!" gasped the girl.

"He shall not touch you!" exclaimed the boy, trying to push the fellow away.

"Get out!" ordered the aggressor, catching the boy by the collar and giving him a swing that threw him down.

"Shame! shame!" cried some of the spectators.

They started to interfere, but the young bloods jumped in, ready for a fight, and the witnesses hesitated.

With one exception.

Frank Merriwell's blood was boiling. His lips parted slightly, showing his white teeth, which were set together.

Just as the fellow caught the shrinking, terrified girl by the shoulder, Frank struck him a terrible blow.

CHAPTER VI. -

UPLIFTED HEARTS.

The fellow seemed to whirl end over end and strike out in the middle of the street, where he lay in a stunned condition, not even appearing to breathe.

Quick as a flash, Frank whirled and faced the others, knowing the fellow's companions would be sure to attempt to avenge him.

"Come on, you loafers!" he cried.

"He struck Ned!" shouted one. "Give it to him!"

They all jumped for Frank, but in doing so they bothered each other more or less.

Merry met them half way, his arms working like piston rods, his hard fists cracking on their heads.

It was an astonishing spectacle, for he went into them like a tornado, knocking them right and left.

YOU SHOULD HAVE A "DEWEY" MEDAL.

To Frank it seemed that never before had he felt so strong and able. He was perfectly confident that he could clean out the entire crowd of half-intoxicated young bloods, and he was doing a very satisfactory job when somebody cried:

"Police!"

Instantly there was a scattering. Somebody had aided to his feet the fellow Frank struck first, and in a few seconds every one of the gang vanished.

The policeman came up, followed closely by another, and demanded to know what it was all about.

The witnesses of this remarkable encounter quickly explained, while Frank was reassuring the frightened boy and girl.

The officer came and looked Merry over.

"That was Bloodgood's crowd," said one of them.

"And this chap fought the whole of them!" exclaimed the other.

"He didn't know what he was up against."

"It didn't seem to make any difference, if what the crowd says is true. He was getting the best of it."

"All the same, I reckon it's a good thing for him that we came along."

"Young man, you got off easy. We'll not arrest you, for the people who saw it say you were in the right."

"I think I was, sir," said Frank, quietly.

"Oh, Mr. Policeman," exclaimed the lame boy, "those fellows insulted my sister and threw me down. Nobody else dared interfere with them, but this gentleman fought them all. He knocked down the one who insulted Nellie."

"If we'd got along in time, we'd gathered some of them in. You want to look out for that gang, young fellow," ad-

dressing Frank. "They are a hard crowd, and they'll try to get even with you."

Then the officers dispersed the crowd that had gathered, and moved along themselves.

"Oh, how can we thank you, sir?" cried the boy, getting hold of Frank's hand. "You were so good—and so brave!"

The girl reached out in a strange, uncertain way, saying:

"I must thank him, Jack! Where is his hand?"

"She's blind," explained the boy. "She's my sister Nell, and we're all alone in the world."

"Blind!" gasped Frank, with a shock of horror. "Why, her eyes look all right."

"Yes, but a doctor said once that the optic nerve was injured by a fall she received."

"Blind!" whispered Frank, as he held both her hands and looked down into her blue eyes. "My poor little girl!"

Her hands trembled in his, and a thrill of sympathy seemed to pass between them.

"Oh," she said, gently, "I know you are good—so good! And I want to thank you for defending me from that—that person."

"Don't speak of that," murmured Frank. "It was a great satisfaction. You are looking straight at me now. Can't you see me at all?"

"No, sir."

"It is strange. Your eyes look all right save for an uncertain expression in them. Some time your sight will be restored. I feel sure of that."

A look of happiness came to her sweet face, and she almost panted as she answered:

"I am so glad to hear you say so! I don't know why, but it seems that you

RALLY ROUND THE FLAG—WEAR A FLAG PIN.

must be right. It is so strange, for I feel as if I had known you always. What is your name?"

"Frank Merriwell."

"My name is Nellie Norton. I wish I could see you, Mr. Merriwell."

"We are trying to get money enough together to have her eyes treated by a great oculist," explained the boy; "but times are hard, and people do not have much money to spare."

"Well, we'll see what can be done right here," said Frank, observing that a number of the original crowd had returned and were standing about.

Then he turned to them and said:

"Gentlemen, this girl is blind. She was not born that way, but sustained an injury by a fall that affected the optical nerve. She has been told that her sight might be restored by an operation, and, with her brother, she is trying to get together enough money to pay a specialist to do the work. This she and her brother have just told me, for I never saw either of them before this evening. Now I am poor and can afford no luxuries, but I can afford to give a dollar to help this girl recover her sight. I am going to put a dollar in my hat, and then I will pass it round. I hope others will give as much as they can afford."

He took off his hat and dropped a silver dollar into it. Then, talking in his most pleasant and persuasive manner, he went round with the hat.

Every person present gave something. One old Irish woman threw in a dime, saying:

"'Thot's arl Oi have, an' Oi wish it wur a hoondred dollars, so Oi do! Me ould marn sint me out fer a can av beer, but it's warther he'll have ter drink to-noight, an' it's jist as much good it'll be afther doin' av him. God bliss th' dear girul's swate hearrut! an' it's bloind she

is! An' she can't see th' skoy an' th' birruds an' th' flowers? An' it's me own litthle b'y as is dead now pwhat wur borrun thot way, an' he uster be afther axin' me pwhat things looked loike, an' now he's gone foriver where he can see. It's ounly tin cints, a dhrop in th' bucket, but it will do th' dear swate girrul more good thot way than it'll do me ould marn roonin' down his throat, bad cess to th' lazy dog!"

Then she turned and hobbled away in a hurry.

Her example led many of the others to give with the greatest liberality, and when the money was counted and passed over to little Nell, Frank announced that six dollars and eighteen cents had been received.

The blind girl held out her hands to the crowd, laughing even as the tears streamed down her face, and brokenly said:

"Oh, I thank you all so much—so much! You have been too kind to me! It will be such a help!"

"And I thank you, too!" said the boy, his voice trembling. "Why, it's a small fortune! Sometimes we have worked a whole week and not received so much; but I believe luck has turned now, and Nellie will be able to see very soon."

Frank was deeply touched. Then he regretted the loss of his fortune for the first time, as it made it impossible for him to take charge of the blind girl and see that she had the best medical attention, which he would have done in other days.

"Can't we do something?" asked the boy, eagerly. "We will sing something more for you."

He hastily adjusted the guitar and strummed the strings a moment.

"What shall we sing, Nellie?" he asked.

"Oh, something lively—some happy song," she answered, still laughing through her tears.

So they sang one of the late popular songs, but the voices of both were uncertain, and it was pathetic to witness the affection and happiness in the boy's eyes when he looked at his sister.

In the very middle of the song the girl broke down completely and stopped.

"Oh!" she exclaimed; "I can't sing! Somehow my heart is so full that the words will not come out. But I want to thank you again and again! I want to thank Mr. Merriwell. Where is he?"

But Frank Merriwell was gone. Stirred to the very depths of his soul, he had hurried away while they were singing; and he walked along the city's streets, unmindful of his surroundings, uplifted, exalted, strengthened for the battle of life.

CHAPTER VII.

AN ANGRY ENGINEER.

That night as Frank was reading in his room by the light of a kerosene lamp, he heard voices from a room adjoining. There seemed something familiar in the sound, and he laid down the book on engineering which he had been studying.

The voices ceased, but there was a sound of clattering dishes.

The wall was thin, and up near the ceiling a crack showed a ray of light.

Frank began to study again, and again the voices interrupted him. This time he was sure there was a familiar sound about them.

"Is it possible?" he muttered, starting to his feet. "Can they have a room so near?"

His curiosity was aroused, and, with a desire to satisfy himself, he drew a chair

to the partition and stood upon it. This enabled him to peer through the crack.

He found himself looking into a room much like his own. In the middle of the floor, directly in the range of his vision, was a table, on which stood a lighted lamp. The table was spread for a meal, and at that table sat the street musicians, the blind girl and her brother. It was evident that they had just sat down, for, as Frank looked the girl bowed her head to ask a blessing.

Hushing his breathing, Frank tried to hear her words. He could not understand them all, but he heard her mention his name, and he knew he was included in that blessing.

Frank could study no more that night. He walked the floor for a time, feeling that a new interest had come into his life, for somehow it seemed there was a bond between himself and the young street musicians.

His dreams that night were pleasant.

Frank's second day in the roundhouse was almost a repetition of the first, save that he learned to assist in turning the engines upon the table, and he listened to a discussion among the wipers about the mysterious properties of the slide valve, which led him to read up on the subject as far as possible.

A week passed. By the end of that time Frank was able to clean certain parts of the engine in a manner thoroughly satisfactory, and he could see that he was making progress in knowledge.

He had also found an opportunity to make know to the young musicians that his room was next to theirs, and there was visiting back and forth.

It really seemed to the brother and sister that their fortune had turned with the meeting with Frank, for they were doing far better than they had done before.

YOU SHOULD GET A WAR BADGE AT ONCE.

"You must be a mascot, Mr. Merriwell," laughed the lame boy, as they all sat together one evening.

"Please don't call me Mr. Merriwell any more," requested Merry. "You know my first name. Call me by that."

"Oh, it doesn't seem right!"

"It will please me far better."

"Then we will try, eh, sister?"

The girl smiled.

"Yes," she said. "Frank is a beautiful name, and it seems so well suited to him. Yes, we will call him that if he really wishes us to."

"I do, and I will call you Nellie and Jack. I hope it is true that I am your mascot, and there may be something in it, for my friends who have stuck to me have all had good luck."

"Fortune has been against us a long time," said the boy. "Ever since mother died."

"Tell me something of yourselves," urged Frank. "How long have you been alone in the world?"

"Almost two years now. Father was an invalid the last of his life, and so all the money he had saved was used in caring for him. Mother did not live long after he went away. She loved him so! Her heart was broken, and if it had not been for leaving us, I think she would have been glad to go."

"But have you no relatives?"

"No near relatives who care anything for us. Mother had a brother, but we do not know where he is now."

"But we feel that we have found some one in you who is almost as near and dear as a relative," said the girl.

The absolute loneliness of the brother and sister affected Frank, and he resolved to do everything in his power to brighten their lives. Thus it came about that he was so often with them. He took satisfaction in playing upon the guitar, and

he regretted to discover that his work was beginning to stiffen his fingers. Having made this discovery, he bought a preparation to use on his hands to keep them from growing stiff.

Among the engineers was one by the name of Joe Hicks, a man with a coal-black mustache and a sullen face. Hicks drank a great deal, but he was one of the best engineers on the road, and he managed to keep his job. He was surly when he was not well filled with liquor, and brutal when he had been drinking.

The wipers, with the exception of Old Slugs, who was back at work, was afraid of Hicks. Not one of them liked the job of cleaning his engine, for a speck of dirt left anywhere brought a growl.

And it happened before a week was out that Frank was put onto Hick's engine.

The engineer had not left the round-house when Merry began work. On his way out he paused and stared at Frank.

"Here!" he growled; "what are you doing?"

"Cleaning this engine, sir."

"Who told ye to?"

"Mr. Ganzell."

That was the name of the foreman.

"Ganzell's a fool! Get away from there!"

Frank kept at work.

"Get away from there, I tell ye!" snarled Hicks. "Don't you hear what I say?"

"Yes."

"Well, why don't ye mind?"

"Because you are not the foreman."

"The foreman be—blowed. That's my engine; I run her. I'm not going to have a greenhorn plugging round her. Get away, now! If you don't, I'll——"

"What?"

Frank turned and looked the man

straight in the eyes, and he was perfectly cool when he said:

"What will you do?"

"Why, blame your head! I'll break your neck!"

"I wouldn't advise you to try it."

The coolness of the youth staggered Hicks, who was accustomed to seeing the wipers start and cringe before him. He felt like collaring Frank, but something caused him to stay his hand.

Larry Logan, the young Irishman, came up and stood looking on, an expression of satisfaction on his face.

"Oi think ye'd betther foind out th' b'y ye're tacklin', Mr. Hicks," chuckled Larry.

"What in thunder do I care who he is! If he's one of Ganzell's favorites, it won't make any difference. If he don't get away from that engine, I'll mop him all over the ground."

"It's a roight swate job ye'd be afther takin', sur," grinned the young Irishman. "This is th' chap phwat knocked out Ould Sloogs widout gettin' a marruk on himself."

"Hey?"

The engineer looked astonished. He had heard of the encounter between the bully of the roundhouse and an applicant for work, but it did not seem possible that this boy had whipped the ruffian.

"Thot's dead straight, sur," asserted Larry.

"Well, I don't care who he is, I won't have a slob clean old 33."

"Phwat are yez goin' to do?"

"See Ganzell about it."

"Thot'll be aisier fer yez than av ye troied to take th' b'y off th' job yersilf."

"Shut up! Don't you get sassy, fer I'll thump ye if ye do!"

Then Hicks hurried away in search of the foreman.

"It's a roight foine toime ye'll have wid him," said Larry to Frank. "He's worse thin Ould Sloogs, fer he'll be afther hittin' yez in th' back."

"I am not afraid of him," declared Frank, quietly.

In a short time Hicks came round with the foreman. Stopping near the engine, the angry man pointed to Frank, growling:

"Look here, Mr. Ganzell, you know I take special pride in the way I keep my engine. Now, what d'yer mean by puttin' a greenhorn on her to clean her?"

"It was necessary, Hicks," said the foreman, with an expression of anger. "I will have an old wiper go over her after Merriwell finishes, so she will be all right."

"But I don't want a greenie plugging at her. They're sure to be tryin' to find out how things work, and they get things out of order."

"I don't think there will be any trouble in that line."

"Then you don't mean to take him off?"

"No."

Hicks was boiling.

"All right!" he snarled. "If anything happens, don't blame me. You know how particular I am with old 33, an' I don't think you are givin' me a square deal."

With that, he left the roundhouse, muttering and growling as he went.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOME POINTS ABOUT HICKS.

Ganzell, the foreman, was not in the most pleasant frame of mind, for he did not fancy being talked to in such a manner.

"See what you can do on her, young man," he said, scowling at Frank. "Hicks will raise a howl if he finds the least little thing wrong."

"I'll do my best, sir," declared Frank, as he continued about his work.

"Here, Logan," called the foreman, "look 33 over after Merriwell finishes."

"All roight, sur," said the young Irishman, who was at work near by. "Oi'll do thot."

Then the foreman went away.

After a little Larry Logan came over and watched Frank, making suggestions now and then.

"It's a bad marn ye have ag'in yez, Mr. Merriwell," said Larry.

"Who, Hicks?"

"Yis, sur."

"I have done nothing to get him against me!"

"Oi know thot, but he'll hate yez jist th' soame, an it's th' divvil he is at toimes."

"Well, I can't help it if he does hate me. I was set to work on this engine, and I propose to do the job."

Larry nodded approvingly.

"Oi don't belave yer afraid av th' divvil hissself, but it's well enough to kape yer oie open."

"That's right. How about Old Slugs?"

"He's been quiet as a lamb ivver since ye did him oop. Thot wur a foine job, Mr. Merriwell, but it won't be thot way wid Hicks?"

"No?"

"Nivver. He'll not attimpt to foight yez on th' square."

"Will he fight?"

"He may be afther stroiking yez whin ye're not lookin'."

"Such foes are the most dangerous."

"Thot they are, me b'y. An, av all suspicions are thru, ye'd not be th' firrust wan Joe Hicks has hit in th' back."

"How is that?"

"'Sh! It's divvil a bit anybody loikes to say it around here, an' ye must kape shtill thot Oi said a wurrud."

"I'm dumb."

"Av old Joe wur not a foine ingineer, he'd not hold his job a day, fer there do be times whin he st'ames op wid phwhisky, an' they have to put a marn in his place. Anybody ilse would lose his job. Old Joe is docked or laid off, at th' wurrust. An' whin he has pwhisky in, he's th' ould imp an' all."

Larry looked about, as if making sure there was no one near enough to hear, and then taking a seat on the pilot, and biting off a huge chew of tobacco from a black plug, he went on:

"It wur a year ago old Joe got in his wurrest schrape. It wur thirty days thot cost him, besides th' toime he wur in jail."

"So he got into jail?"

"Yis."

"What for?"

"Th' firrust charge wur fer bein' droonk an' disorderly, but thot came near not bein' th' wurrust av it. It wur

thought he did something wurruse thin thot."

Again the young Irishman looked all around, and his manner showed that he was fearful that other ears than those of Frank Merriwell should hear his words.

"There wur a murther in th' case!" whispered Larry.

"A murder?" repeated Frank, growing interested.

"'Sh! Nivver a man spakes av it here in th' place. Hicks were sane wid a marn in a tought parrut av th' city. Th' nixt marnin' th' marn wur found dead. He had been hit on th' head wid a shtone, an' his skull wur not hard enough to shtand th' crack at all, at all."

"And they suspected that Hicks did it?"

"Be aisy, be aisy! Th' charge wur made against him."

"But not proven?"

"Nivver a bit. He got out av it wid th' aid av an alibi, av yez know what thot is, divvil a bit do Oi."

"Why, he must have proved that he was in another locality at the time the murder was committed."

"Thot's it! that's it! Thot's th' way he escaped."

"Well, if he proved that, he was all right."

"Av he proved it! Well, he samed to prove it. Anyhow, it wur enough to get him off."

"Of course it is pretty tough to be charged with murder, but many an innocent man has been accused of the crime."

Larry nodded and turned the quid in his mouth.

"An' minny a marn thot wur not innocent as got off widout bein' poonished. It have been talked since thin thot old Joe's alibi would not hold warther."

"If that is true, why wasn't it discovered in the first place?"

"It wur fixed fer him thin, an' th' weak point not discovered till aftherward. Even thin it wur not found by anybody thot cared to get mixed in it at all, at all; but thim thot know say it's more thin aven old Joe tapped th' unlucky devvil on th' head. Oi warneted to tell yez, so ye'd know th' koind av a coostomer ye wur d'aling wid."

"Thank you, Mr. Logan."

"Now, don't be afther callin' me Mither Logan. Call me Larry. That is good enough fer me."

"All right, Larry."

"Take me advice, an' kape yer oies open fer Joe Hicks. He has been known to stroike more thin one marn behoid his back. He'll hate yez now."

"I can't help that."

"Nivver a bit. It's particular he is wid his engine. Ye know some av th' engineers lave th' woipers to look out fer breaks on th' old girruls."

"Yes, I find a great many of them do that."

"Joe Hicks is not wan av thim."

"He inspects his own engine."

"Yis. No woiper iver found a broken spring leave ur hanger on his engine. He discovers all th' cracked aquilizers an' iccintric shtraps. It's really an aisy job clanin' his engine, av ye take care to clane it."

"Well, I am not liable to have the job again."

"Ye may. Ganzell is square, an' he don' loike to have any marn kick at him. Av ye do it well this toime, he may kape ye roight here on this engine ivery toime she comes in. Oi thought av thot, an' it's phwoy Oi warnted to tell yez about Joe Hicks."

"I appreciate your kindness, Larry."

"Don't mintion it. Now Oi'll get to wurruk, an' Oi'll look 33 over whin ye have finished."

Then the friendly young Irishman left Frank to his labor and his thoughts.

Merry worked slowly and carefully. He was determined to take plenty of time on the job and make sure that everything was done as it should be. When he thought he had finished, he went over everything again. Then he called Larry.

"It's all roight me b'y," declared the young Irishman. "It's loike the wurruk av an ould hand, but it's tin to wan thot Hicks will be afther kickin' about it."

"All right," said Frank. "Let him kick. If you say the job is done all right, I am satisfied."

The foreman came round, but he did not give either engine or Merriwell a glance. He had set Larry to look after

the matter, and he knew it would be all right.

CHAPTER IX.

FRANK DISCOVERS A BREAK.

Engine wipers are severe critics of engineers. They know whose engine is always in first-class order, wedges never down, nuts and bolts in place and tight, and other things as they should be.

Frank rapidly became familiar with all the outward and visible parts of a locomotive, for he had plenty of opportunities to see them taken to pieces by the mechanics, with whom he soon became a favorite, because of his pleasing manners and readiness to do anything.

Manners have much to do with the success of a young man in the world. The one who is polite, courteous and willing to make an effort to please is certain to stand far better show of success than he who is indifferent, thoughtless and rude.

Many young men are taught self-reliance and aggressiveness, and they pay too little attention to the forms and conventionalities of life. On this account they are apt to value too lightly the little courtesies which mark the man of real politeness.

It is said that but for Washington's courteous bearing and conciliatory manners the war of the Revolution might not have been brought to a successful close. A person entirely familiar with the history of this country at that period must appreciate the remarkable tact Washington used in allaying sectional jealousies. But for his unselfishness and polished manners he could not have succeeded in reconciling so many conflicting interests and unharmonious elements.

Napoleon well knew the value of courtesy. No great military commander was ever more beloved by the officers and men who served under him, and, while he felt it necessary to observe a certain degree of dignity in his bearing, he often, however, put himself on a footing of perfect equality with the common soldiers. He was known to share his rations with a soldier and to drink from the canteen of a sentinel.

Chesterfield declared that the art of

pleasing is, in truth, the art of rising and distinguishing one's self, and of making a fortune and figure in the world.

Frank Merriwell lost no opportunity to please those with whom he was dealing, and, although he had been regarded as something of a dude when he entered the roundhouse, his associates soon found he was ready and willing to attempt any and all kinds of work. He never grumbled, and he was always volunteering to do things.

Thus it was not strange that some of the wipers quickly grew jealous of him, thinking he was shown too many favors.

Frank's habitual association with well-bred people had done much for him. The very air about him was different from that of the other wipers, no matter if his clothes were as greasy and his hands as dirty. At the same time he never made it apparent that he felt himself too good for his work, and associates.

The foreman observed this, although he made no sign. He was watching Frank with astonishment, but scarcely a word of approval did he speak. He was not ready to express himself.

Although he had familiarized himself with the mysterious properties of the slide valve, Merry did not attempt to take part in the deeply erudite discussions which frequently took place among wipers and firemen. He listened and kept still. All the time he was learning, feeling sure the time would come when he would be given an opportunity to display his knowledge to advantage.

To the surprise of everybody, and the disgust of Joe Hicks, Frank was given time after time No. 33 to clean. Hicks growled and glared at the youth, but Frank remained polite in his bearing toward the surly engineer.

To Merry's surprise, Old Slugs came to him one day, and said:

"I don't know that I want to see you done up, even if you did give me a thumping. I don't hold a grudge, for you done it fair and square. But I want to tell ye to look out—keep your eyes open all the time."

"I thank you for the warning, Mr. Hall; but I am afraid I do not understand what you mean."

"You've got a bad man down on you."

"Do you mean Mr. Hicks?"

"Just him. Now, I don't want it known I made any talk, for I'm not hankering to have Joe Hicks get after me when he is on a rampage, but I say look out."

"I shall try to do so, but I see no real reason why Mr. Hicks should wish to injure me."

"Mebbe he ain't got no real reason. When old Joe gets down on a man, he don't have to have a reason. All he wants is a good chance to do him, and he'll do you, if you ain't careful."

"What makes you so sure?"

"Well, I heard him say last night that there was a young upstart here who wouldn't remain here another week."

"And you think he meant me?"

"I am sure of it."

"And he means to do me bodily harm?"

"That's the way he fixes them he don't like."

"All right, Mr. Hall. Thank you again. I shall watch out."

As Larry Logan had said, old Joe was one who always looked his own engine over for breaks, never trusting the wipers to discover them.

One day, however, Frank noticed that the male centre casting on No. 33 was broken in such a way that but one bolt held it at all, and that very slightly.

He supposed, of course, that the engineer had reported it, and he expected every minute to see the men come along with the jacks and jack her up to put in a new one.

Though there was a king pin down through both castings, it would be suicidal for a man to trust that alone. In rounding a curve the engine would be apt to shear off and shoot off the track at a tangent.

Frank was surprised as the time approached for old 33 to leave the house and no attempt had been made to repair her. Then he hunted up Mr. Ganzell and reported what he had discovered.

Ganzell seemed doubtful.

"Come with me," he said, and together they went round the house to the hook on which the machinists hung the engine-

eer's work reports after jobs were finished.

He looked the report over and found 33's.

"It's O. K. 'd," he said. "Not a word about the centre casting. You must be mistaken, Mr. Merriwell."

"I am sure I am not, sir," declared Frank.

"Well, I will investigate. Come."

Away they went to inspect the engine. On the way they came face to face with Joe Hicks.

"Mr. Hicks" said the foreman, "Merriwell reports that your truck centre casting is broken."

Old Joe's face turned black, and he gave Frank an awful glare.

"It's a lie!" he growled. "What's that kid know about an engine! He makes me sick!"

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Hicks," said Frank, quietly; "I really thought it better to report my discovery than to let you take the chance of being killed and wrecking the train by going out with her in such a condition."

"Bah! You are trying to play smart, but you've made a fool of yourself."

"Let's see about it," said Ganzell.

"My report is O. K."

"I know it is, for I just looked it up."

"That's enough."

"No! I shall look at your engine."

"All right. But, if it ain't so, I want you to take this boy off my engine and give me a man that knows something. I've stood it just as long as I can!"

Down to the engine they went, and the foreman soon satisfied himself that Frank had told the truth. Then he was angry.

"What do you mean, Hicks," he demanded, "by reporting O. K. when your engine is in such condition?"

Old Joe tried to answer, but he could not do much of anything but swear.

"Such carelessness is astonishing!" exclaimed Ganzell. "You do not deserve an engine. You are incompetent!"

That made the old man furious, and the look he gave Merriwell was evidence of the deadly hatred seething in his heart.

"You shall pay for this?" he muttered, in a deadly way.

"No threats, sir!" exclaimed Ganzell.

"Merriwell simply did his duty. We shall not need you for the next week. You may go home."

So the engineer was laid off because of Frank's discovery, and it made him hate Merry more than ever.

"He shall pay for it!" he vowed over and over.

CHAPTER X.

THE INTERRUPTED SUPPER.

One evening the street musicians came home in a greatly disturbed state of mind and hurried into Frank's room, where they found Merry.

"Oh, Mr. Merriwell!" cried Jack; "there is a man who has been following us about everywhere!"

"And—and he spoke to us!" fluttered the blind girl.

"He's such a bad-looking man!" said the boy.

"He asked us where we lived," said little Nell.

"I refused to tell him, and then he got angry."

"And said we should be arrested as vagrants. Oh, I am so afraid of him!"

"There, there," said Frank; "don't get so excited. Was the man intoxicated?"

"No, no, no!" answered the boy. "I am sure he was not, and still—and still he might have been drinking."

"Well, you escaped from him all right, and it's not likely you will see him again."

"I'm afraid we shall, for I am sure the same man followed us last evening, though I said nothing to Nellie about it, not wishing to frighten her."

"I don't see why he should follow you."

"All I know is that he did."

"Did he follow you here?"

"Part way, but I guess we gave him the skip by coming through an alley."

"Well, I wouldn't worry about it any more. If he makes any more trouble for you, I'll see him."

"Oh, you are good!" said the girl, getting an arm about Frank's neck. "I feel safe when we are with you."

He kissed her tenderly and soothed her

fears. Then they invited him in to have supper with them.

It happened that Frank had not eaten, having started in to study upon a certain part of an engine immediately after reaching his room and taking a sponge bath and changing his clothes, so he finally agreed to take supper with the little musicians.

"You know what a good cook I am," laughed the lame boy.

"I should be the one to cook," said the girl; "but I can't see to do that. I can help get supper ready, though."

They went into the room occupied by the brother and sister. There were two small beds in opposite corners of the room, which was rather large, one of them being curtained off with cheap cloth.

At one side of the room was a cupboard and a bench. There was a small cook stove in the room.

"Now," cried the boy, as he hopped about with his crutch, "I'll show you what coffee and what biscuits I can make."

"And I will set the table," declared little Nell.

"I have a plan," said Frank. "We will take the table into my room, for it will be hot in here after Jack gets his cooking done. We'll eat in there."

This was agreed upon, and Frank managed to move the table, with very little aid from the lame boy.

Joe built the fire and prepared for work. He took off his jacket, rolled up his sleeves, washed face and hands, and then got out the cake board. In a short time he was working in the flour, and the way he went at it proclaimed his skill.

"If you will bring the dishes, Frank, I'll set the table," said little Nell.

So Merry carried the dishes, what few there were, out through the short passage and into his room, where the blind girl, after the cloth was spread, stood by the table and arranged them. She seemed to do this work by instinct, for she could not have done it better had she been able to see.

"Oh, we will have such a lovely supper!" she laughed, her sweet face glowing with pleasure. "It seems to me that

we have much better times since we knew you, Frank. I am certain we are far happier. I am so glad we found you!"

"And I am glad, Nellie!" Merry declared. "It would have been lonely living here, and you have brightened my life like sunshine bursting through a cloud."

She came near him, her hands clasped, her sightless eyes turned upon his face, as if she could see.

"I love to hear you talk," she murmured. "You have such a pleasant voice, and you say such beautiful things. Any one would know there was nothing bad in your heart just to hear you speak."

"I hope there is nothing bad in my heart, Nellie," he said, with deep earnestness. "It is our duty to keep our hearts free from all evil, but sometimes I find it necessary to fight to do so."

"But you fight so bravely I am sure you'll never be conquered."

"Thank you, dear little Nell," he said, taking both her hands and looking down at her face. "Your confidence in me will help me in the battle of life. I am at the foot of the ladder now, but some day I may mount to the top. If I do, I shall not forget my little companions of my days of misfortune."

"How good you are!" she murmured. "Oh, how I long to see your face!"

"Some day, as true as it is possible, you shall!" he cried. "I cannot believe you are fated to be blind forever. The money is coming in slowly, but it is coming. Pretty soon you will have enough to travel to New York, and have the great specialist treat you."

"Yes, yes!" she fluttered. "The money never came in so fast as it has since we met you. Jack says each night that the time is growing shorter and shorter. I can remember something about the way things look. I remember the flowers, and I love them so much! They are like fairies, decked out in all their fancy dresses. Sometimes Jack, who knows how dearly I love them—sometimes he brings me home a few. Then I put them in water, and I sit by them, and smell them, and touch them, and whisper to them. It seems that they must hear and understand me."

GET A COLLECTION OF WAR BADGES AND BUTTONS.

Her face was bright as she was speaking, but, of a sudden, it became shadowed and saddened.

"But, for all I can do," she went on, mournfully, "they wither and die at last. And that hurts me so! I cry over them, and it makes brother feel bad, and he says he will not bring me any more flowers. It doesn't seem right that beautiful things should fade and die. Oh, why is it so?"

"It is the law of nature," said Frank, gently. "All things must have an end, but nothing perishes. The flower turns to dust, and from the dust another flower springs perhaps. Something comes from it. There is a constant and continual change, but nothing really perishes."

"Yes, yes; Jack and I have talked of that. Sometimes we speak of the loss of our dear mother, for she seemed to fade like a flower, and he says we shall find her again—some time."

"It is a beautiful belief," said Frank. "But you are getting sad, little Nell; and we are to be happy to-night, you know."

Then he cheered her up till soon she was laughing.

Jack came to the door and cried:

"Ready for the feast! The coffee is cooked, and the biscuits will be done in four minutes."

"Wait," said Frank, "I want to slip out to the street for something. I will be back directly."

He seized his hat and went out. At the corner he passed a man who was standing back in the deep shadow. He did not pay any attention to the man.

At a fruit store Frank purchased some oranges and bananas. With them he hurried back.

The man near the corner slunk deep into a doorway as he passed, and then stepped out and followed him lightly.

"Here we are!" cried Frank, gayly, as he deposited the fruit on the table. "To-night we will have a treat."

Everything was ready, and they sat down. Little Nell folded her hands and asked a blessing, while Frank and Jack bowed their heads. Jack started to pour the tea. All at once he stopped and stared at his sister.

"Gracious, Nellie!" he cried. "You never looked so much like mother before! Why, somehow you look just like her as you sit there at that end of the table. You should have seen her, Frank. She was a beautiful woman."

"Get her picture," said the girl—"get it and show it to him."

Jack sat down the coffee pot and hopped away into the other room. He quickly returned with a photograph, which he gave to Frank.

Merry looked at the picture, and, indeed, the blind girl showed a strong resemblance to the sad faced, beautiful woman.

Rap! rap! rap!—a heavy knock on the door.

Little Nell uttered a startled exclamation, and then the door was flung open.

Outside stood a dark-faced man, whom Frank recognized instantly.

It was old Joe Hicks!

"It's the man who followed us!" cried the lame boy, in a flutter of excitement.

CHAPTER XI.

UNWELCOME RELATION.

Frank had risen to his feet and he took a step toward the door.

From the lips of the blind girl came another cry, one of fear.

Frank turned to her.

"Don't be afraid," he said, reassuringly. "He shall not harm any one here."

Then he demanded to know what the man wanted.

Hicks showed his teeth.

"So this is where you stop?" he said.

"Well, I'm glad I found that out, but it was them others I came to see."

"What do you want of them?"

The engineer stepped into the room, but Merry halted him with a sharp word.

"Stand where you are! You are an intruder here!"

"Oh, don't put on airs!" snarled Old Joe, and Frank saw the man had been drinking. "I know my business."

"State it."

"Well, a man gets queer notions in his head sometimes, and when I saw the face of that gal I was hit by a queer one. I

tried to talk with her, but she got skeered. I want to know what her name is. Won't you tell me your name, little gal?"

Nell hesitated, trembling slightly. Her brother had his arm about her now, and was speaking reassuring words to her.

"Why should she tell you her name?" demanded Frank, a strange feeling of apprehension assailing him.

"I'm not doin' my business with you!" grated the man. "I'll look after you some other time."

"You may have to do some business with me now, for I am the friend and protector of this boy and girl."

"Oh, you are? Well, who made ye so? You're not old enough to be their guardian."

"I am old enough to look out for them, and I shall see that they come to no harm."

"You're a pretty swift young chap for a common engine wiper. Soon as you get out from work at night you swell round in good clothes, as if you was the son of a millionaire. Where do ye get all your money to do that?"

"That is none of your business!" returned Merry, warmly.

"Ain't, eh? Well, I reckon I can tell ye. You sponge it out of this boy and gal you are protectin'. They must pick up lots of money on the street, and you get it."

"It's not true!" cried the lame boy, his eyes flashing. "Mr. Merriwell does not get one cent of it!"

"No! no! no!" exclaimed the girl. "He helps us! He is so good to us!"

"He's playin' his game pretty slick," declared old Joe, "but he ain't your friend for nothin'."

Then the man obtained a fair view of the picture in Frank's hand. With remarkable swiftness, he snatched it, and then, holding it in both hands, he stood staring at it, his face working strangely.

Merriwell had started to take the picture from the man, but he stopped, astonished by the expression on the face of Hicks.

The engineer looked from the picture to the face of the girl. He seemed com-

paring the two. At last he hoarsely asked:

"Is this the picture of your mother, gal?"

"Yes, sir," Nell faintly answered.

"Then you are my niece, for it is the picture of my own sister!"

Frank Merriwell started, as if he had been struck a blow. Both the boy and girl uttered cries of astonishment.

"It can't be that you are our uncle!" said little Jack.

"I am Joseph Hicks," said the engineer, "and Mary Hicks, your mother, was my sister."

"That was mother's name before she married father," confessed the boy. "But it does not seem possible that you—~~are—her—brother.~~ You are not a bit like her."

"Well, I'm her brother. That's why I follered ye. I saw in your sister's face the resemblance to Mary. It was so remarkable that I could not help following you about. She is dead?"

"Yes, sir."

"And Dave Norton?"

"He is dead, too."

"Good thing! Never liked him. He was too stuck up. He wouldn't take a drink, or do anything like other people. I'm glad he's dead."

"Sir," cried the boy, "he was my father!"

"That's no credit to you. But you're orphans now—all alone in the world."

"Not all alone."

"No? How's that?"

"We have Mr. Merriwell."

"Rot! I'm your uncle. It's my duty to look after ye. I'll take care of ye, and of the money ye make, too. Ha! ha! ha!"

The lame boy looked appealingly at Frank.

"You may be their uncle," said Merry, "but you are not yet their guardian. There is the door."

"What of it?" snarled old Joe. "You can't drive me out! I won't go! I'm goin' to take charge of these orphans."

"Not yet."

"I will!"

"Not till the law gives you the right. Go!"

Then the man appealed to the children.

"I'm your uncle. You must mind me. You can't refuse."

"Oh, I am so afraid of him!" half sobbed little Nell, clinging to her brother.

"What do you say, Jack?" asked Frank. "Shall he go?"

"Yes!" cried the boy, straightening up. "He looks like a bad man, and he talks like one. Sister is afraid of him. He must go!"

"You hear," said Merry to Hicks.

"Yes, I hear," he snarled; "but I will not go! I stand on my rights. You're not going to have the money they make to blow for clothes! I'll take care of it."

"And squander it for liquor. You shall not do that. If you do not go at once, I shall throw you out."

"Don't you dare put a hand on me!"

Old Joe looked dangerous then, but Frank advanced on him. The man flung down the picture and reached toward a pocket. With a leap, Merry was on him and had him by the neck.

"You dog!" said Frank. "You deserve to be jailed! You are thoroughly evil! Out you go!"

There was a struggle, during which the man drew something bright from his pocket. Little Jack uttered a shrill cry and leaped forward, swinging his crutch. With that weapon, the boy knocked the knife from the man's hand, and it fell clattering to the floor.

"Aha!" grated the engineer. "He saved ye that time!"

When Frank realized that the man had attempted his life, he was furious. With wonderful strength, he lifted old Joe, ran him out into the passage, reached the head of the stairs, and threw him down.

Bump! thump! bang!

The man bounced down the stairs, and struck in the darkness at the bottom.

"Get out!" cried Frank. "I am coming down, and I'll throw you out if you are there when I reach the bottom!"

The man gathered himself and made haste to get away before Frank could reach him, but he retreated swearing vengeance.

Frank turned and ascended the stairs. In the room, little Nell was sobbing in the arms of her brother.

CHAPTER XII.

FRANK EXACTS A PROMISE.

The very next day old Joe appeared at the roundhouse, although his week was not up. He took care to keep out of Ganzell's sight, but he hung around.

"Phwat th' divvil is he up to?" asked Larry Logan. "He's apt to git another wake off av th' ould marn sees him."

Some of the men spoke to old Joe, but he snarled at them in reply, so they quickly decided to let him alone.

Hicks was seen in the vicinity of 33, and Logan got a fancy that he contemplated some trick with the engine.

Frank Merriwell was busy at work, and he paid no attention to his enemy.

Hicks showed he was still drinking, for he was in his shirt sleeves, not even having worn a coat to the roundhouse.

Frank's work often took him outside the building, sometimes to turn the table, sometimes to do other things.

No. 33 was being run by a spare man, who appeared as the time approached for her to go out. The fireman was on hand in advance, and had steam up.

It happened that Frank Merriwell was on his way to the roundhouse from another building when the time came for old Joe's engine to come out. He was walking near the track just as 33 glided out of the door.

There were several persons about, and Merry was paying very little attention to any of them. He was attending strictly to his business, as was his habit.

As old 33 came along, Frank received a heavy jolt that threw him on the track directly in front of her pilot!

Had the engine been running a trifle faster, or had Frank been less nimble, the life of the young wiper would have been crushed out beneath the wheels then and there. As it was, the pilot brushed Merry as he scrambled from the track.

Frank leaped to his feet, quivering all over with anger. Whoever the man was, he was on the other side of the engine at that moment, but Merry would know quickly.

The fireman of 33 had been running her out. He saw Merriwell knocked down before her nose, and threw back the lever, although he realized it was too late to save the youth by his efforts to stop the engine. A moment later, he saw Frank was safe from harm, and he sent her ahead again.

Then, as the engine passed on, Frank leaped across the track and sprang after a man who was walking swiftly away.

"Here!" he cried, and his hand fell on old Joe Hicks' shoulder.

The engineer turned, uttering a snarl. His face was white and his eyes staring. It was plain enough that he was completely unstrung at that moment.

"So it was you who tried to kill me in that cowardly manner!" cried Frank, his eyes blazing. "Well, that is even worse than I expected of you!"

"What d'yer mean?" hoarsely demanded the man.

"I mean that you knocked me onto the track in front of 33, which was a deliberate and criminal attempt to kill me!"

"You lie!"

"It is true!"

"I say you lie!"

"And I say you lie, Hicks!" growled a hoarse voice, and Old Slugs came up.

"I saw the whole thing, an' I'll swear you done it on purpose."

"You?" Hicks hissed. "Why, you're a fool! You ain't got no reason to love this youngster! You'd oughter be glad ter see him knocked out."

"Mebbe I had, but I'm no murderer, an' I don't care ter 'sociate with murderers. Merriwell gave me a hammerin', but he done it fair, an' I ain't doin' him dirt in return."

"You're a fool!" Hicks agan hissed.

"All ther same, I reckon my word will stand if I have ter tell what I jest saw you do. You'll last mighty quick round this shop when the old man hears of that."

"You hear!" came from Frank. "I have the proof!"

"All right!" panted the desperate engineer. "I can live. I'll take care of my nevvv and niece. If I'm out of work, I can look arter them all the better."

Frank started. So that was what Hicks would do. He would force himself on the lame boy and the blind girl by right of relationship. He would take the money they made on the street, and he would spend it for drink.

A sudden idea came to Merry.

"Look here, Mr. Hicks," he said, "on one condition I will agree not to make a charge against you."

"What's that?"

"You are to let little Jack and his sister quite alone. You are not even to claim them as relation, or try to see them."

"Think I'll do that?"

"If you don't, I'll swear you tried to kill me to-day, and I have the proof. You were seen by Mr. Hall and by the fireman on 33. You will lose your job on this road. You will be discharged in disgrace, and it will not be easy for you to get a job anywhere else. When they ask you why you left the last place, you'll have to lie. Perhaps they will know why you left. You may be blacklisted."

Old Joe's face turned almost green, while his lips seemed dry and parched. He stood before Frank Merriwell, half cowering, half defiant, like a tiger driven at bay.

"Choose!" commanded Frank.

"I don't like the idea of letting you have your way with the kids."

"Choose!"

"Oh, well, you could fix me if you went and told that stuff to the old man. It was all an accident, but——"

"Choose!"

"I don't care a rap about the kids any way. You needn't worry about me botherin' them."

"You give your word not to trouble them?"

"Yes."

"You will not even try to see them? Promise that."

"I promise."

"All right. I will not make a complaint against you."

"But I may," growled Old Slugs, who did not seem at all satisfied.

"No!" exclaimed Frank, quickly. "You must not!"

"I ain't makin' any promises."

"Why, blow ye!" grated Hicks.
"You don't dare!"

"Yes I do," returned Old Slugs, sullenly. "I don't like you none too well, and I'd as lives see you get out of here as not. It's my duty to report what I saw, an' I'm goin' to do my duty."

"Ah—a—ah! You're thunderin.' particular about your duty all to once! I won't fergit it! I'll have a score to settle with you!"

"I'll keep watch for ye better than Merriwell did. You won't get the chance on me."

"But you shall not report this affair, Mr. Hall," came firmly from Frank's lips.

"Who says so?"

"I do."

"But you ain't got any right to say so."

"All the same, I do. If you report it, I'll——"

Frank hesitated, and Old Slugs quickly asked:

"What'll you do?"

"I'll give you another thrashing, and it will be worse than the first!" flared Frank, looking as if he were ready to start in on job at that moment. "I'll fix you so you will not work for more than one day!"

It was plain enough that Frank meant exactly what he said. Old Slugs could not doubt it.

"Why," said Hall, "I'm your friend now. I came here and stood by you in this matter against Hicks."

"You are not my friend if you say a

word about it to the old man. You will be my enemy."

"You must be foolish! If Hicks stays here, he'll get at you agin, and he may do me, too. The only safe thing for us now is to report him, and then he'll be fired."

"I will take my chances. As for you, you can't be afraid of him, for you can handle him. Give him another show. Perhaps he will appreciate it."

"All right, if you say so but it seems like a fool trick."

"You'll keep mum?"

"If you say so."

"I do. I have your promise. Do not break it."

Old Slugs went away grumbling and growling, and Frank turned to the engineer.

"I have saved you from being discharged," he said. "Of that there can be no doubt. All I ask of you in return is that you let Jack and Nellie entirely alone."

Hicks nodded.

"If you do not," cried Frank, his fine eyes flashing, "by the eternal skies, I'll make you regret the day you ever saw them! That is all."

Then he turned and walked into the roundhouse to go about his work.

[THE END.]

The next number (119) of the Tip Top Weekly will contain "Frank Merriwell Fireman; or, The First Step Upward," by the author of "Frank Merriwell."



TIP TOP WEEKLY

"AN IDEAL PUBLICATION FOR THE AMERICAN YOUTH"

NEW YORK, JULY 16, 1898.

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WITHOUT FEAR.

"A man absolutely without fear" was the description applied to one of the boldest pioneers of West Virginia. The manner of his death was worthy of that eulogy.

In the pursuit of his occupation (that of hunter and surveyor) he often undertook long journeys alone—a reckless proceeding when time and place are considered—and was never accompanied by more than one or two friends.

One day, while returning in a canoe with a companion from an excursion, he was hailed by a large party of Indians, and ordered to put ashore. Without making any reply, he headed the boat for the middle of the stream, and made every effort to escape.

The Indians instantly fired, and one of the bullets struck the pioneer in the body. Seeing at once that the wound was mortal, he ordered the other man to lie down in the canoe, and then, with renewed vigor, though his life was ebbing fast, he pulled for the opposite shore.

The Indians fired another volley, but without effect, and before they could reload, the boat was out of range. The wounded hero expired after reaching the bank and was buried by his companion.

Mother—Jonnie, where have you been?

Jonnie—Swimmin'.

Mother—Didn't I tell you I'd whip you if you went in the water?

Jonnie (frankly)—Yes, mother.

Mother—Then why did you do it?"

Jonnie—The lickin' won't hurt more'n a few minutes, and the swimmin'll feel good for a week.

Correspondence.

H. F., Sterling, Ill.—Yes, quarterly No. 7 of the Tip Top has been issued.

J. J. J., Tipton, Me.—You will find an article on West Point in No. 24 of the Half-Holiday.

A. B., Peru, Ind.—Four feet eleven inches, and weight 85 pounds, is a good average for a boy sixteen years of age.

E. O. T. B., Braddock, Pa.—Many other incidents are founded on fact and several of the characters are drawn from real life.

R. S. S., Rockland, Me.—1. You do not have to be a subscriber to take part in the contests. Any one can do so. 2. Thank you for your words of praise for Mr. Standish, whom we consider one of the very best authors now writing for boys.

S. P. L., Stoneham, Mass.—Professional long-distance swimmers use fish oil for anointing their bodies prior to entering the water for a race. It renders the skin impervious to the water, and thus prevents the enervating effects produced by remaining in that element for a long time.

F. J., Mobile, Ala.—As you are seventeen years of age, you are a minor, and therefore under the authority of your parents or guardians, and not permitted by law to make contracts and manage your own property. By the laws of the United States and Great Britain, persons are minors until they are twenty-one years of age.

R. C. D., Cincinnati, Ohio.—1. No stated salary for an actor. It depends on his ability. Some receive as much as \$500 a week, while others are satisfied with \$20. "Supes" receive sometimes as much as one dollar a performance, but many are glad to get fifty cents. It is not a desirable situation, and very few actors are enlisted from their ranks. 2. You cannot dramatize a novel without the consent of the owner or author.

P. A. G., Cleveland, Ohio.—Do you mean the preparation of the skeletons of leaves? If so, the leaves should be macerated in water until putrefactive fermentation takes place, when the soft parts are easily separated from the fibrous by washing in fresh water, blowing on them with a pair of bellows, or by letting a small stream of water fall on them. Care must be taken to remove every particle of the soft parts with a fine needle or a camel hair pencil, after which the skeletons are to be washed in fresh water, then with a solution of chloride of soda or lime, and exposed to the air to bleach. When white enough, they must be washed with diluted hydrochloric acid (one part of acid to 60 of water), dried, and mounted. They may be prepared by boiling and by burying them in sand or common garden earth.

Customer: Do you suppose that you can take a good picture of me?

Photographer: I'm afraid that I shall have to answer you in the negative, sir.

REMEMBER THE MAINE AND PAGE 32.

Some Acknowledgments of Prizes.

Gentlemen: As one of the "lucky" one-hundredth-issue competitors, I thank you for my watch, and wishing you continued success and prosperity, I am,
Yours fraternally,
Harry Kendall, Chelsea, Mass.

I am pleased to acknowledge receipt of one of the Tip Top Weekly prize watches. It is proving itself a good timekeeper, and I am very well satisfied with it. Wishing Frank Merriwell every success in the future, I am sincerely yours,
Osborne Monnett, Norwalk, Ohio.

I received the watch, which was rewarded at the contest, and I am greatly pleased with it. It is in perfect order, and keeps accurate time. I hope the Tip Top Weekly will meet with every success,
Robert Bowen, Buffalo, N. Y.

I thank you very much for the beautiful watch I received yesterday as my prize in the late contest.

The watch I won last year as a prize in the Summer Sport contest is still in running order, though it met with an accident in the form of a collision with a butcher cart, and escaped with a broken crystal and dented case. It is a good timekeeper. I have read the Tip Top Weekly from No. 1, and am beginning to look upon Merriwell as an old friend. With hundreds of your readers of the entertaining weekly I wish it a long life.

Lawrence C. Bemenderfer,
Angels' Camp, California.

I received my watch, awarded to me in the "Hundredth Issue Contest." It arrived a few days ago and I have been waiting to ascertain whether it kept good time. I have the pleasure to say it does not lose anything in a day and is an all-round good watch. I think the "Tip Top Weekly" is a fine boys' paper, and I hope its subscription list will grow in proportion to its worth. I hope there will soon be more athletics, as base ball or something like that.

O. M. Kinnison, Lake City, Fla.

WHENCE THEY ORIGINATED.

The single word "Excelsior" happened to catch Longfellow's eye one evening in 1845, on a torn piece of newspaper, and straightway his imagination took fire at it.

Taking up a piece of paper, which happened to be the back of a letter received that day, he crowded it with verses.

As first written down, "Excelsior" differs from the perfected and published version, but it shows a rush, a glow, worthy of its author.

The story of "Evangeline" was first suggested to Hawthorne, the novelist, by a friend, who wished him to found a romance on it. Hawthorne did not quite coincide with the idea, and eventually he handed it over to Longfellow, who saw in it all the elements of a deep and tender idyll.

WHAT ABOUT THE PASSENGERS?

It happened in the Far West not very long ago. The Santa Clara express was steaming at full speed, when the engineer saw a black bear coming round a sharp curve. The cut is so narrow that there is hardly room for a man to stand aside and allow an engine to pass without striking him.

Bruin was more amazed than the engineer. Instead of stepping aside, he reared on his haunches and awaited events.

Upon seeing the bear, the engineer shut off steam and applied the brakes, but the distance was too short to escape an accident. The cowcatcher slid under the hind legs of the brute and lifted him off the ground.

Thinking all trouble was over, the engineer put on steam once more, while the fireman climbed out of the cab window and stole along the engine to find out what had become of the bear.

He was there, clasping the cowcatcher, the lower part of his body just grazing the ground. He seemed to understand that the only thing he could do was to hold fast, and he did so during the run to the next station, ten miles distant.

The stationmaster was standing on the platform as the train approached. The sight of a full-grown bear on the cowcatcher fairly took away his breath.

As soon as the train came to a standstill Master Bruin made a break for freedom. This took him straight toward the station master, who dashed through the door, slammed it behind him, leaped through the back door, and went up the street at a furious rate, calling out:

"Bear! bear! Somebody get a gun."

Soon the sleepy place was in a turmoil, a yelling crowd following in hot pursuit of the animal, some of the boys pelting him with stones. Suddenly a big shepherd dog bounced out of a yard and dashed after the bear. Bruin paused but a minute or two, but when he passed on the rash dog had no future interest in the proceedings.

At one street corner a man carrying a double-barreled gun came face to face with the bear, but the latter turned down the nearest alley. The crowd increased and encircled the frightened animal, making escape impossible.

Finding himself at bay, Bruin backed up against a barn, rearing on his haunches. He was fired at twice, whereupon the wounded animal charged the crowd. One urchin fell, was trampled upon, and had a leg broken. Next moment the fight was terminated with a clean shot through bruin's head.

Then the engineer and fireman recalled the fact that a trainload of passengers were waiting at the station, and hurried back and resumed their duties after a bear hunt of fully thirty minutes.

WANTED IT READ.

Advertiser—I wish this advertisement placed in some part of the paper where people will be sure to see it.

Editor—Yes, sir; yes, sir. I can put it right alongside of an editorial if you wish.

Advertiser—Hem! Please put it alongside of the baseball news.

BY ALL MEANS GET A FREE BUTTON OR PIN—SEE LAST PAGE.

LABORIOUS AND EXPENSIVE.

Many people know, and a good many do not, that in the offices of Transatlantic and many other steamship companies, are to be found expensive models of various ocean greyhounds. They are expensive, because it takes years of labor at times to put them together, and, in addition to the cost of material, which has to be of the finest possible kind, the most expert workmen at the command of the ship builders have to be employed.

A model of the Campania, perhaps the fastest steamer in the world, occupied a dozen of the best mechanics and riggers rather more than seven months to properly complete.

To give an idea of its size and weight, it is only necessary to state that it took a big furniture van and the united efforts of nine men to transport it into the building where it was to be placed. With its immense glass case thrown in, it weighs nearly half a ton. This model cost a little under \$5,000.

A model of the American steamer New York is worth considerably over this sum.

A well-known company has in its New York offices a model that has received a great deal of praise from landsmen as well as from sailors. It represents the Teutonic and the Majestic. This miniature is an exact representation, on reduced scales, of the two liners, and is fitted with machinery "that is guaranteed to operate."

The workmen engaged in building these models are paid enormous salaries, which, with the cost of fine material, is mainly responsible for the large sums that are asked for their construction.

But there is another reason why these miniature crafts will never become very numerous. Because of the many intricate parts that have to be put together aloft and below, it is necessary to select the finest kind of skilled labor to perform the task, and invariably, out of a shipyard of several thousand hands, it is impossible to get more than a few men who are really competent to undertake the work.

"How could you think of calling auntie stupid? Go to her immediately and tell her you are sorry," suggested the big brother.

Freddy went to auntie, and said:

"Auntie, I am sorry you are so stupid."

And now, of course, there is enmity between the auntie and big brother.

SAY "YES" AND PROVE IT.

While still a youngster (says a well-known mathematician) my professor's cold, calm voice fell upon me in the midst of an algebraic demonstration, "No!"

I hesitated, and then went back to the beginning, and on reaching the same point again "No!" uttered in a tone of conviction barred my progress.

"The next!" the professor went on, and I sat down in confusion.

The following lad, too, was stopped with "No!"

But went right on, finished, and as he sat down was rewarded with "Very good."

"Why," said I, "I recited it just as he did, and you said 'No!'"

"Why didn't you say 'Yes' and stick to it? It is not enough to know your lesson; you must know that you know it. You have learned nothing till you are sure. If all the world says 'No,' your business is to say 'Yes,' and prove it."

Rockland, June 18, 1898.

Gentlemen: I write this letter to express my opinion of the leading and purest five-cent book or novel, the "Frank Merriwell" stories. I think they are as good a standard as any mother wants for her boy to follow. The characters pictured in them are perfect to their native country. I like Hans the best of them (outside of Frank), because he furnishes any amount of fun. I think the next series will be "great," and Frank will surely work his way to the top of the ladder. I have read every one of them, and have not found one that falls in rank below any of the others.

Wishing success to the Tip Top,

I remain, yours truly, R. S. Sherman.

Knoxville, Tenn., June 18, 1898.

Gentlemen: We have read all of your "Frank Merriwell" stories from No. 1 up to the present number, and we wish to congratulate you on one of the finest libraries published. We would like for Frank to get struck on Inza Burrage and let Elsie Bellwood go. Hoping to hear from "Rattle-ton" and "Griswold" soon, we remain,

Your constant readers.

J. C. H., W. S. E., A. R. S., J. T. L., E. E. E.,
W. F. E., W. S. H., F. L. N., J. D. T.

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