

TOM
DICK
AND
HARRIET



BARBOUR



TOM DICK
AND
HARRIET

RALPH HENRY BARBOUR

THE
CENTURY
CO.

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Title: Tom, Dick, and Harriet

Date of first publication: 1907

Author: Ralph Henry Barbour (1870-1944)

Date first posted: July 28, 2019

Date last updated: July 28, 2019

Faded Page eBook #20190761

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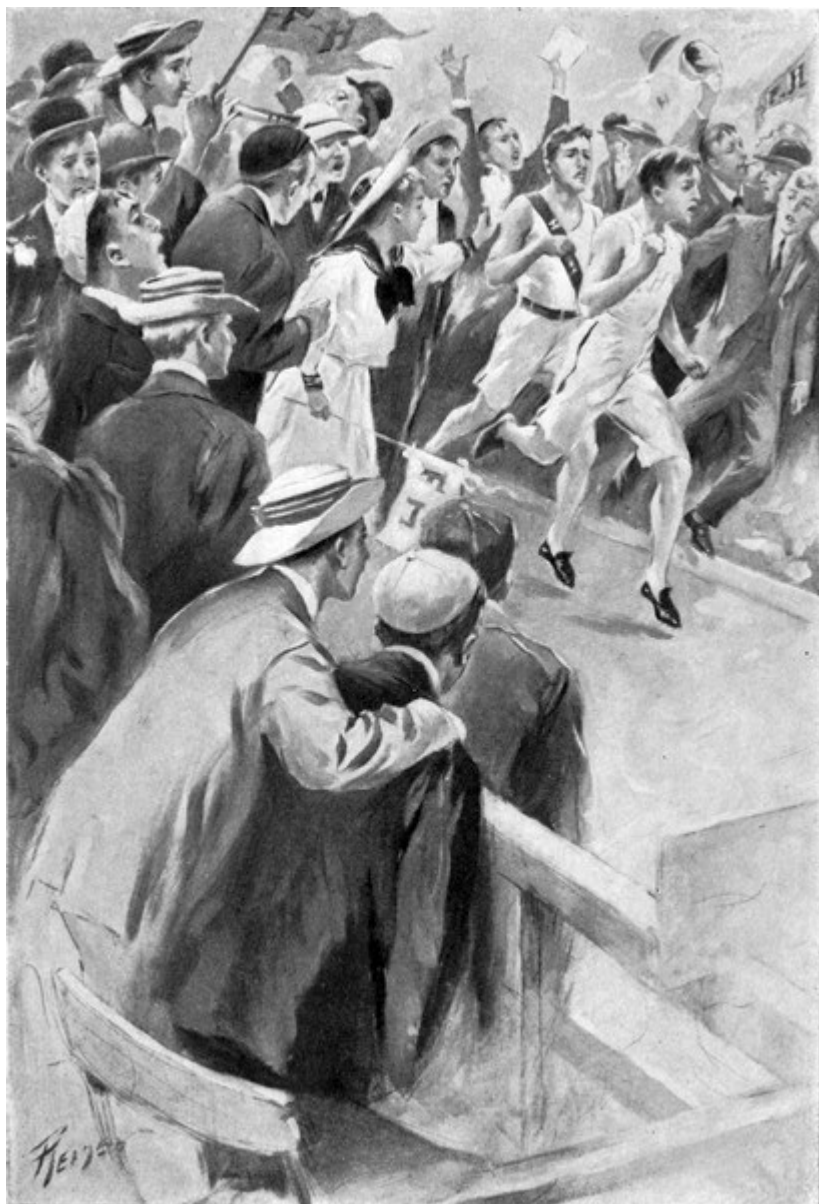


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Tom, Dick, and Harriet



[At the finish](#)



Tom, Dick, and Harriet

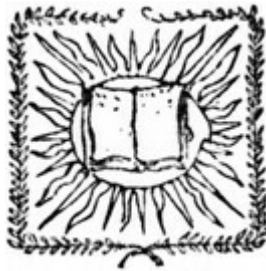
By

Ralph Henry Barbour

Author of "The Crimson Sweater," "The Half-Back,"
"For the Honor of the School," etc.

With Illustrations

By C. M. Relyea



New York
The Century Co.
1907

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TOM, DICK, AND HARRIET

CHAPTER I

A MEETING ON THE ICE

There had been almost a week of zero weather and the Hudson River in the neighborhood of Coleville and Ferry Hill was frozen hard and fast from shore to shore. They were cutting ice below Coleville, and Dick Some had watched them for some time before crossing the river in the teeth of a bitter east wind and reaching the shelter of the opposite shore. There, with the trees protecting him from the icy blast, he turned upstream once more and skated more leisurely along the margin.

It was the middle of an afternoon in early January, to be exact, the third day of the new year; and overhead sunlight and clouds held alternate sway. But the sun, already nearing the summit of the distant hills, held little warmth even when it managed to escape for a moment from the flying banks of cloud, and Dick, accustomed though he was to the intense cold of the western mountains and prairies, was glad to escape for a while from that biting wind which apparently entertained not the slightest respect for his clothing and which numbed him through and through.

The river was nearly deserted. Directly across from him, nearly a half-mile away, a few skaters were to be seen keeping to the smooth ice near shore. A mile below black specks moved about in front of the big ice-houses. But for the rest, Dick had the river to himself. Or, at least, so he thought until, rounding a slight curve, he caught sight of a figure seated on the edge of the bank. Perhaps the wind whipping the tops of

the trees drowned the ring of Dick's skates, or perhaps the girl with the brown sweater, gray skirt and white tam-o'-shanter was too much absorbed with the broken skate strap in her hand to heed anything else. At least, she was unaware of Dick's approach, and so that youth had ample opportunity to observe his discovery as he skated slowly along.

Under the white tam-o'-shanter was a good deal of very red hair, and under the red hair was a pretty, healthy face with rosy cheeks, an impertinent little up-tilted nose, a pair of clear blue eyes and a small mouth which, just at this moment, was pursed in a pout of annoyance to match the frown on her forehead. The hanging skate and the broken strap told their tale and Dick, on his way past, wheeled and slid up to the distressed maiden.

["Hello," he said. "Break your strap?"](#)

The girl looked up with a start and studied him a moment in silence. Then she tossed the longer piece of the offending leather to him and he caught it deftly.

"Yes," she said, "just look at the old thing! And I haven't another and I'm half a mile from home. Roy told me I ought to have the other kind of skates and you can just wager I'm going to after this!"

"Well, you could have one of my straps," answered Dick, "only I don't wear them."

"Yes, and I could pick one off the trees only they don't grow there," she answered sharply. Dick laughed and in a moment the girl joined him.

"I dare say it's a joke," she said, "but when you come out to skate you don't just like to have to sit on a rock and hold your

foot in your hand.”

“Oh, I can fix you up,” said Dick carelessly. “Here, wait a minute.” He drew off his gloves, tossed them with the broken strap on to the bank and drew the neck of his sweater down. “Out our way we generally mend things with barbed wire, but there doesn’t seem to be any handy, so I guess this’ll do until you get home.” With a final tug he brought forth a blue four-in-hand necktie and held it forth.



“‘Hello,’ he said. ‘Break your strap?’”

“But—but that’s your tie!” protested the girl.

“Yes, but I don’t need it. Besides, it’s old.”

“It looks brand-new,” answered the girl.

“It doesn’t matter,” he said. “Put your foot out, please.”

“But it’ll spoil it, won’t it?” she asked.

“Don’t care if it does. I’ve got lots more, and I never liked this one anyhow.”

“Well—” She put out the foot with the disabled skate and Dick substituted the blue necktie for the broken strap. When the skate was once more firmly in place and a nice blue bow-knot adorned the instep of her shoe the girl broke into laughter.

“Isn’t it lovely?” she cried, wriggling her foot around and viewing it at all angles. “Think of wearing neckties on your feet! I do wish I had one for the other foot too!”

“Sorry I haven’t any more,” laughed Dick. “How would a handkerchief do?”

She shook her head.

“No, I tried using my handkerchief, but it wasn’t big enough. Cold, isn’t it?”

“Awfully.” She got to her feet and tried the skate. It held well and she turned a grateful countenance to Dick. “I’m very much obliged,” she said sweetly; “and I’ll send the tie to you—or another one like it—when I get home. Do you live around here? I’ve never seen you before, I guess.”

“Oh, never mind,” he answered. “I don’t want it. You’ll have to go kind of easy with it, though, I guess, or it’ll get loose.” He rescued his gloves and drew them on his chilled fingers. “I’ll go along with you, if you like, in case it comes undone.”

“I asked you a question,” she replied imperiously. He looked

at her amusedly.

“Oh, so you did,” he said. “You asked if I lived around here, didn’t you?” The girl’s head went into the air and the corners of her mouth came down.

“If you don’t care to answer, I’m sure you needn’t,” she said haughtily. Dick laughed.

“Oh, I don’t mind. I live over there.” He nodded across the river. “I’m at Hammond Academy.”

“Oh,” said the girl. “You talk as though you weren’t ashamed of it!”

“Ashamed of it?” he repeated in a puzzled way. “Why should I be? Isn’t Hammond all right?”

“For those who like it,” she replied.

“Then you don’t like it,” he laughed. “Why not?”

“Because—because—” She stopped and drew the collar of her brown sweater higher about her neck. “I’m going now,” she announced. “I don’t think you need come. I’m very much obliged. And I’ll send the necktie to you at Hammond.”

“Who are you going to send it to?” he asked.

“Oh! That’s so, who is it? I don’t want to know your name, but if you like to tell me—”

He shook his head.

“I saw you first,” he said. “You tell me your name and then I’ll tell you mine.”

The girl in the brown sweater had started off and Dick had taken his place beside her. For a moment they skated in

silence. Then:

“I’m Harry Emery,” she announced.

“Oh,” he answered indifferently. “And do you live around here?” She turned upon him in surprise.

“You’re just pretending!” she said after a moment’s examination of his countenance.

“Pretending what?”

“That you don’t know who I am. Why, every Hammond boy knows the girl that beat their best skater last winter!”

“Did you do that?” he asked in admiration. “I’ll bet you couldn’t do it this winter.”

“Why not?” she demanded.

“Because I don’t believe you could beat me.”

“Want to try it?” she challenged. He shook his head.

“Not while you’ve got one skate strapped on with a necktie,” he answered. “But if you think you’d like a race some time you let me know.”

She looked him over speculatively and what she saw must have impressed her a little, for there was a note of uncertainty in her voice when she said:

“I guess I could beat you, Mr. Conceit. I beat Schonberg last winter. Can you skate faster than he can?”

“I don’t know. I never saw him.”

“Never saw him!” she cried. “How long have you been at Hammond?”

“Since about this time yesterday,” he replied smilingly.

“Oh!” she said. “You’ve just come? You weren’t there in the fall?”

He shook his head.

“Just got here yesterday afternoon and wish I was back where I came from,” he answered cheerfully. “There’s only about a dozen fellows over there and they’re the no-accountest lot I ever did see. I didn’t know when the new term began and so I just moseyed up here to find out. It doesn’t start until the day after to-morrow. Maybe by that time I’ll get sick of it and pull my freight for home.”

“Run away, do you mean?” asked Harry Emery breathlessly.

“Oh, no, just change my mind. I haven’t paid my tuition yet, and I guess I could light out if I wanted to, any time before school begins. And I’ve got a good mind to do it.”

“Serves you right for not going to a—well, another school!” said the girl.

“I suppose so. But I didn’t know. Dad’s lawyer in New York knew about Hammond and said it was all right. So I came up. Maybe I’ll like it better when the rest of the fellows get back.”

“No, you won’t,” answered Harry decidedly. “Why didn’t you come to our school?”

Dick looked amused.

“Is it a girl’s school?” he asked.

“Of course not, silly! It’s Ferry Hill, and everybody who knows anything says it’s the best school around here; the best school anywhere!”

“Oh, boys and girls both, eh? I don’t think I’d like that.”

“But it isn’t!”

“Isn’t it? But if you go there—?”

“I don’t go to school there; I just live there. My father is the Principal.”

“Oh, now I savvy,” said Dick. “Where is it? Is it nice? I’d like to take a look at it.”

“It’s just up here a bit further,” answered Harry. “You can see it from Hammond. Haven’t you noticed?” Dick shook his head.

“It’s on a hill,” continued Harry, “and you would have seen it if you weren’t blind. It’s the nicest school there is, and the boys are dandy. And we can beat Hammond at anything—foot-ball, base-ball, tennis, hock—well, not hockey, maybe, but we’ve only played one year; but we’ll beat them this year, at that, too!”

“Sounds like the real thing,” laughed Dick. “How big is it!”

“Well, it’s smaller than Hammond,” Harry acknowledged grudgingly, “but it—it’s more select! There are forty-two boys this year; there were forty-three last season when Otto Ferris was here.”

“What happened to him?” asked Dick.

“He got sick and went home. I’m glad of it; I hate him.”

“I tell you what you do,” said Dick after a moment. “You show me what your school is like. Maybe if I get any more soured on Hammond I’ll skate over with my trunk and try Ferry Hill.”

“Do you mean it?” cried Harry.

“Why not?”

“But—but you couldn’t!”

“Oh, yes I could. I can do as I like, I guess.”

“But they wouldn’t let you!”

“Who wouldn’t let me?”

“They—they—over at Hammond!”

“I’d like to see them try and stop me,” answered Dick with a laugh. “I haven’t entered their school yet, you know, and I don’t owe them anything but a day’s board and lodging. You produce your school, Miss Emery, and I’ll look it over.”

“And if you like it you’ll come?” cried Harry, her blue eyes dancing. Dick hesitated, then:

“Yes, I’ll come if I like it!” he answered.

“Promise?”

“Promise.”

“Come on, then!” cried Harry. “I’ll race you to the boat-house!”



CHAPTER II

DICK SOMES IS PERSONALLY CONDUCTED

I don't think Dick tried very hard to win that race; at least, he exhibited no superhuman efforts; and the result was that Harry Emery won by several yards, finishing on one skate and trailing a blue streamer from the other foot like a banner of victory. She subsided on the edge of the boat-house porch, smiling and triumphant.

"I won!" she cried.

"Easily," answered Dick placidly.

"I told you I could," continued Harry.

"I said so too, didn't I?"

"No, you said I couldn't; you know you did."

"Guess I was wrong then." There was a moment's silence during which they each busied themselves with their skates. Presently Harry laid hers beside her and looked up with a frown.

"No, you were right," she sighed. "I guess you can beat me. You weren't trying just now. You're like everybody else; you think because I'm a girl I'm not worth bothering with."

"Nonsense! You skate finely," answered Dick earnestly. "Better than any girl I ever saw."

“Any girl!” echoed Harry scathingly. “That’s it! Girls can’t skate! Why, there isn’t one at Madame Lambert’s who can keep up with me for a minute. I can skate faster than any boy here, too!”

“Well, that’s doing pretty well, isn’t it?” asked Dick with a smile as he tossed his skates down beside hers.

“I don’t like to be beaten—by any one,” grieved Harry.

“Then you mustn’t race with me.”

“Pshaw! You’d be polite and let me beat you—as you did just now. I—I hate polite people!”

“No, I wouldn’t,” said Dick grimly. “When you race with me you’ve got to go as hard as you know how, for I’ll beat you if I can. And if you can’t stand being beaten you want to keep out of it, Miss Emery.”

Harry studied him a moment in silence.

“I guess nobody likes to be beaten,” she said finally; “but I can stand it as well as the next fellow. What’s your name?”

“Somes, Dick Somes; Richard for long.”

“My name’s Harriet ‘for long,’” she laughed. “But nobody calls me Harriet; it isn’t a very pretty name, is it?”

“Harriet? I don’t believe I ever heard it before. I was wondering how you came to be named Harry. Harry suits you better, I guess.”

“How old are you, Dick?”

“Sixteen last August.”

“I’m fifteen. Wouldn’t you think I was older?” she asked

anxiously.

“Heaps,” he laughed. “I thought you were about twenty.”

“I don’t like to be made fun of,” replied Harry.

“There’s a good deal you don’t like, isn’t there?” he asked with a grin.

“I sha’n’t like you if you talk like that,” she answered severely.

“Then I sha’n’t come to your old school.”

“It isn’t an ‘old school!’” flashed Harry. “And I don’t care whether you come or not!”

“Oh, yes, you do,” he answered soothingly. “If I don’t come we won’t have that race.”

“I don’t want to race you!”

“Oh, all right. Then it’s me for Hammond again. I guess it’s the better school of the two, anyway.”

“I’m sure it’ll suit you better,” she answered angrily. Then she caught sight of the merriment in his eyes, hesitated and laughed softly. “You—you almost made me angry,” she declared.

“Almost, eh? Then you must be a terror, Miss Emery, when you go the limit. Aren’t you going to show me around? It’s getting late and I’m freezing to death.”

“Come on,” answered Harry. “You can leave your skates here; they’ll be all right. And here’s your tie. I’m afraid, though, it’s kind of frazzled and—oh, it’s torn! Look!”

“Don’t you care,” he said. “Here, I’ll carry your skates.”

“No,” she answered decisively, “I’ll carry them myself. I don’t like to be waited on.”

“I guess if I came here to school,” laughed Dick, “it would take most of my time finding out what you didn’t like. I wouldn’t have any time for lessons.”

“Do you like to study?” Harry asked.

“Pretty well; everything but languages. Which way do we go? Up this path?”

“Yes. Oh, I forgot. That’s the boat-house there. We have a crew and we race Hammond every spring. Last year we were beaten.”

“I never saw a boat race,” said Dick. “It must be good sport.”

“It’s perfectly great,” said Harry, “and awfully exciting! This is the Grove and the buildings are up the hill, only you can’t see them yet. I’ll go ahead and show you the way.”

The path wound through a thick growth of trees, maples and oaks and others, climbing steadily upward. Presently the trees thinned and ceased and Dick followed his guide through a gap in a breast-high hedge which, as Harry informed him, marked “inner bounds.” I have no intention of recording the fund of information which Harry showered upon Dick’s defenseless head. Needless to say that she colored her remarks with the rose-tint of enthusiasm and drew a most alluring picture of life at Ferry Hill. She rattled on breathlessly and continuously after she had once become warmed up to her task and Dick’s brain began to reel under the torrent of information.

He was shown Burgess Hall, with the dormitories and the

dining-room, School Hall, with its twilighted class rooms, the Cottage, where Harry lived—Harry pointed out her room and described the furnishings minutely, even to the pink paper on the walls—and the Gymnasium, which was locked, and consequently remained a mystery for the present. Back of the gym a gate in the hedge gave access to the Athletic Field, with its snow-filled stands and gibbet-like goal-posts rising forlornly out of the white waste. Harry said there was a running track there, but Dick had to take her word for it. Then they retraced their steps and Harry pointed out, at a distance, the stables and barns and the orchard beyond.

“I’ll show you my menagerie some time,” she said. “It lives in the barn. I’ve got a parrot, three lovely Angora kittens, a squirrel, four guinea-pigs, six rabbits, lots and lots of white mice, heaps of pigeons, and a dog.”

“Phew!” said Dick. “Is that all?”

“The dog’s name is Snip,” Harry continued. “He’s a fox terrier. Last year I had two black rabbits and I called them Pete and Repeat, and then there was a third and I had to call it Threepete. Isn’t that silly?”

“I think it’s a pretty good name,” laughed Dick.

“Really? The parrot’s name is Methuselah; he’s awfully old, I guess, but he’s a perfect dear. You’ll love Methuselah, Dick!”

“Maybe, but I don’t believe so. I don’t like parrots.”

“But he isn’t just—just an ordinary parrot,” said Harry earnestly. “He’s awfully clever and wise; he knows heaps of things, really!”

“I like dogs and horses better,” answered Dick. “Have you

got a horse?”

“No, there are two in the stable, but they don’t belong to me. Next year, though, papa is going to get me a pony and a cart. Then I shall drive to school every day.”

“Where’s your school?” Dick asked.

“Over there at Silver Cove. It’s a very nice school.”

They had reached the dormitory again and Dick stopped and looked about him. It was getting dark rapidly and the campus, deep with snow, looked bleak and forlorn. Even Harry had to acknowledge that fact to herself and her hopes of inducing Dick to cast his lot with Ferry Hill began to dwindle. Westward, above the tops of the trees which crowded the slope, lay the frozen river, and beyond, on the farther bank, a few yellow points of light marked the location of Coleville and Hammond Academy.

“Of course,” ventured Harry, “things don’t look very nice now, but you ought to see them when the trees are out and—and all.”

But her voice didn’t hold much conviction and Dick merely nodded his head as he turned toward the path down the slope.

“Well, I’m much obliged for showing me around,” he said. “I’d better be getting back.”

“Yes,” sighed Harry. “I—I’ll walk down to the river with you. You might lose your way.” She didn’t have the courage to ask him whether he liked Ferry Hill well enough to come there. She didn’t believe he did. She wished he might have seen it in the morning when the sun was shining warmly on the red brick walls and the sky was blue overhead. She was disappointed.

Dick seemed a rather nice sort, if somewhat too—too self-assured, and it would have pleased Harry hugely to have wrested a prospective student away from the rival school. Besides, the sum of money which the advent of another student meant was not to be sneered at; Ferry Hill's expenses so nearly matched her income that a half-year's tuition and board might mean quite a little when the accounts were balanced. Doctor Emery, as Harry well knew, had been rather discouraged for the last two or three years. There was only the one dormitory hall and forty-six boys filled it to overflowing, and for that many students the expense was as great as it would be for twice the number. The Doctor wanted a new dormitory, but didn't know how he was going to get it. With room for say twenty more students the school would pay very well. As it was, it sometimes didn't pay at all; there were years when the books balanced the wrong way and the Doctor and his family stayed at Ferry Hill all through the hot weather. Harry thought of all this as she led the way down the hill through the dim grove, and as a result what conversation ensued was somewhat spasmodic. At the boat-house Dick busied himself with his skates and Harry looked on silently; but finally:

“I don't believe you had any idea of leaving Hammond, anyway,” she exclaimed aggrievedly.

“Why not?” asked Dick.

“Because—because how could you, if your folks wanted you to go there—”

“My folks didn't have much to do with it,” answered Dick, pulling his gloves on. “There's only my dad, anyway. He didn't know anything about the schools here and left it to his lawyer in New York. I said I didn't much care, and Mr.

Warwick said he'd heard that Hammond was a very good place, so after Dad sailed I came up here."

"Is your father a sailor?" asked Harry.

"Oh, no," laughed Dick, "he's a mining man. He owns mines and buys and sells them. My mother died a couple of years ago and we broke up housekeeping and went moseying around, Dad and I. Then when he found he'd have to go to London and Paris for two or three months he didn't know what to do with me. So I said I'd go to school somewhere in the East; I'd never been very much, anyway. So that's how it happened; savvy?"

"Yes, but what's 'savvy'?" asked Harry.

"Oh, it means 'Do you understand?'"

"Then if—if you did want to leave Hammond you could?" she asked. Dick nodded.

"Sure as shooting! Why not? I told Dad I wouldn't stay if I didn't like it, and he said in that case I could go back to Helena or join him in London."

"My!" exclaimed Harry. "Why don't you go to London?"

"I've been there twice," Dick answered.

"Then—then you—you'll stay at Hammond?" asked Harry wistfully.

"Oh, I don't know," said Dick. "Maybe."

"And you didn't like Ferry Hill?"

"Oh, yes, I did," he answered stoutly. "It seems a mighty nice school."

“But you won’t come?”

Dick hesitated, skating about backward and forward along the edge of the ice and swinging his arms to keep warm.

“I don’t know,” he answered finally. “I’ll think it over. When does school begin?”

“Day after to-morrow, but you’d have to get here to-morrow before six in the evening.”

“Well, if I come—I’ll think about it anyway. And thanks for showing me around. I’ve had a real jolly time. Good-night, Miss Emery.”

“Good-night,” answered Harry sadly. “I—I wish you’d decide to come.”

“Well, maybe I will,” he shouted back as he skated off. “But if I’m not here by six to-morrow tell your father not to wait supper for me. Good-night!” And laughing at his joke Dick Some sped off into the darkness across the frozen river.

Harry stood there shivering until she could no longer hear the ring of his skates. Then she turned and went disappointedly back up the hill.



CHAPTER III

THE BRAND FROM THE BURNING

“Well, you old duffer! I thought you were going to meet me at the station for the eleven o’clock.”

“I really meant to, Roy,” answered Chub Eaton, “but my train was nearly an hour late and I got in just four minutes after you’d gone. How are you? Did you have a good time Christmas?”

“Bully,” answered Roy Porter. “Did you?”

“Oh, swell! I wish you’d been out with me.”

“I wanted to go,” answered Roy gravely, “but my folks were afraid I’d get lost in the smoke. I told them that was hard on Pittsburg, but—”

Roy rolled over backward on Sidney Welch’s bed just in time to avoid the slipper which Chub hurled.

“But they said they knew the place, Chub,” he ended.

“You run away and play,” grunted Chub as he returned to the task of unpacking his trunk.

They were in the Junior Dormitory and up and down the two sides of the long room was bustle and excitement and noise. The last train arriving before six o’clock was in and had brought its load of students. Trunks and bags were being unpacked, greetings exchanged and adventures related, and every one was doing his best to get settled before dinner-time. Roy, who had arrived on an earlier train and whose belongings

were already stowed away in his locker in the Senior Dormitory on the floor above, had met Chub on the arrival of the coach and had carried one end of the battered steamer trunk up-stairs. Now he was reclining comfortably on Sidney's bed in direct violation of the dormitory rules, and bothering his chum as much as possible. Sid, by the way, a short, chunky boy of fifteen, was down at the far end of the hall swapping marvelous tales of vacation experiences with Chase; his voice, which was at the changing period, alternately dying away in gruff whispers and soaring shrilly to a squeaky falsetto.

“Just listen to Sid,” chuckled Chub as he rolled a brown sweater up and stuffed it into the locker. “Sounds as though he were knocking up flies with his voice, doesn't it?”

“Yes,” answered Roy. “Say, Chub, did I ever tell you about the man who went to Pittsburg?”

“Oh, you dry up,” answered Chub good-naturedly.

“But it's a true story, honestly, Chub! Of course the man didn't go there just for fun; he had to; it was a matter of life or death, I guess. Well, when he got back some one asked him if he'd seen Pittsburg. ‘No,’ says he, ‘but I've been there!’”

“Go on,” answered Chub. “Have a good time. I don't mind. I'd rather live in Pittsburg where you can't see than in New York where you don't want to.”

“I guess maybe that's humor,” said Roy thoughtfully; “but it's—er—subtle, Chub, awfully subtle. Could you give me a hint? Just tell me what letter the answer begins with!”

“I'll tell you what letter your name begins with,” laughed Chub. “And it comes between E and G.”

“What am I? A musical note?”

“No, a flat!”

“I suppose you think you’re sharp!”

Chub Eaton groaned loudly as he slammed the lid of his trunk down. He was seventeen years of age, and looked older; was a trifle thick-set, had brown hair that was almost brick-red, alert brown eyes, a good-looking, expressive, good-humored face, and an ease of manner and a self-assurance which his enemies called conceit and which his friends loved him for. He was in his last year at Ferry Hill and consequently in the First Senior Class. The preceding spring he had succeeded himself as captain of the base-ball team. While well-liked by almost every fellow in school, he had not attained to the popularity which his companion commanded.

Roy Porter lacked his chum’s air of self-sufficiency and in looks and manner unconsciously invited friendship. He was the school leader, and reigned supreme with none to dispute his title. Besides that, until the election following Ferry Hill’s defeat of Hammond on the latter’s gridiron, a few weeks ago, he had been captain of the foot-ball team, an honor alone sufficient to turn his head had that appendage not been very stiffly attached. Unlike his predecessor in the office of school leader, one Horace Burlen, who had left school the previous spring and was now playing the precarious rôle of freshman in a near-by college, Roy ruled with a gentle hand and maintained his sway by honest, manly service in behalf of the school and his fellows. The younger boys worshiped him, secretly resolved to be Roy Porters when they grew up, and meanwhile copied his ties and stockings and cocked their hats as he wore his.

Roy also was a First Senior and would graduate in June; and like Chub—whose real name, by the way, was Thomas—was seventeen years old. He was tall, well-built, athletic, with wavy light-brown hair, a frank good-looking face and a pair of attractive gray-blue eyes.

“Say, Chub,” he exclaimed suddenly; “I almost forgot to tell you. What do you suppose Harry’s been up to now?”

“Ask me something easier,” begged Chub.

“Swiping students from Hammond!”

“What!”

“Fact! She was down at the station and told me about it. It’s the funniest thing you ever heard, Chub!” And Roy laid himself back on the bed and laughed consumedly.

“Funny’s no word for it,” said Chub soberly. “I shall die of laughing in a moment.”

“W-wait till I tell you!” gasped Roy.

“I am waiting, you gump! Stop that fuss and tell me! Don’t keep a fellow waiting all day.”

“Well, listen.” And Roy recounted Harry’s meeting with Dick Some, embellishing the tale as fancy dictated, until Chub too was struggling with his laughter.

“But—but she didn’t land him after all?” asked Chub.

“She doesn’t know yet. She told him he’d have to be here by six o’clock to-night. She pretends she’s sure he’ll be here, but I guess he was just fooling her.”

“Too bad,” said Chub. “Wouldn’t it have been great if he

had left Hammond and come here, eh? Wouldn't we have had a peachy joke on them?"

"And wouldn't they have hated Mr. Dick Summers, or whatever his name is? But isn't Harry the limit?"

"She's plucky, all right," answered Chub with a grin. "Fancy having the cheek to try and—"

"Pluck a brand from the burning," suggested Roy.

"Exactly! Suppose we run over to the Cottage and see if he's shown up?"

"Oh, he hasn't come," answered Roy, glancing at his watch. "It's two minutes of six now."

"What of it? He might have come half an hour ago and—" Chub, who was facing the dormitory door, stopped and stared over Roy's shoulder. "Hello!" he ejaculated. Roy turned and followed his gaze.

Just inside the doorway stood a big, broad-shouldered, blond-haired youth of apparently sixteen years of age. He wore a fur cap, a gray sweater and dark knickerbockers, while in one hand was a suit case and in the other a pair of skates. In spite of the fact that the entire hall was observing him silently and curiously he appeared not the least bit embarrassed; in fact his self-possession was then and afterward something to wonder at. After a slow glance about the hall he had turned his gray eyes on Chub and Roy. There was a careless, good-humored smile on his singularly homely and at the same time perplexingly attractive face.

"Where do I live, do you suppose?" he asked.

"I don't know," answered Roy, rising to go to him. "But I

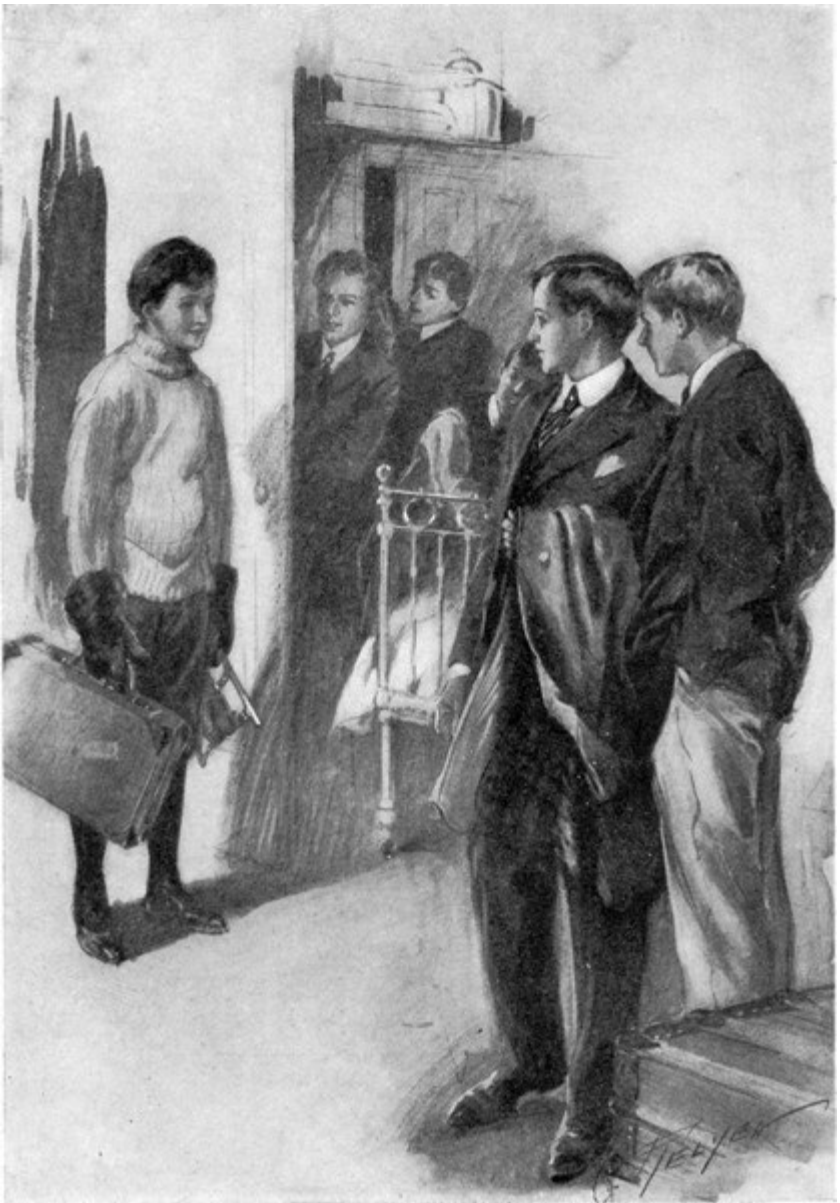
guess you belong on the next floor. Did the Doctor tell you which dormitory you were to go to?”

“Haven’t seen the Doctor,” was the calm reply. “I just got here. What time is it, anyway?”

“Just six,” answered Roy.

“That’s all right then.” The newcomer set his bag down and placed his skates on top of it. Then he threw his fur cap and gloves on to the nearest bed and started to get out of his sweater.

But Chub, who had said no word so far, but upon whose countenance a beatific grin had been growing and spreading with each instant, broke the silence explosively.



[“Where do I live, do you suppose?’ he asked”](#)

“Where’d you come from?” he shouted.

“Across the river,” answered the other.

“From Hammond?”

“Yep. From Hammond.”

Chub gave a whoop and hurdled the two intervening beds, landing on top of the suit case, sending the skates clanging across the floor and violently grasping the hand of the astounded youth.

“It’s he, Roy!” he yelled delightedly. “It’s the Brand from the Burning!”

“That’s me,” laughed Dick Some. “Did she tell you I was coming?”

“She said she expected you,” answered Roy; “but—well—”

“We didn’t think you’d have the cheek to do it,” ended Chub admiringly. “Were they mad? How did you get away from them?”

“Oh, easy enough. I hadn’t entered, you see. So I paid them for two days’ board and lodging, sent my trunk across by sleigh and pulled my suit case after me. It was quick work,—had to be—but the only way I could manage it. It scratched the suit-case up a bit, but that doesn’t matter. I guess I’d better go and see the boss now and get my ticket punched.”

“What ticket?” asked Roy.

“Oh, I mean see the Doctor, take out my papers, register, put my name down, get enrolled, whatever you call it,” explained Dick. “Miss Emery said I’d have to be here by six and I thought I wasn’t going to make it. I lost my bearings skating across and headed away down-stream. That made me late. When do we feed?”

“Right away,” answered Roy. “But you’d better go over to the Cottage first. Chub and I’ll show you the way. This is Chub

here; his full name's Mr. Thomas Eaton. By the way, your name's Summers, isn't it?"

"Somes," was the reply. He shook hands warmly with Chub. "Glad to meet you," he said. Then he turned to Roy. "You're Roy; I've forgotten your last name, but Miss Emery spoke about you. Hope we'll be friends." Then he faced the rest of the fellows who had edged as close as politeness would allow and who had been watching the proceedings with unconcealed interest. "My name's Dick Somes," he announced smilingly, "and I'm glad to meet all you chaps. We'll get acquainted later. Now if you'll lead the way," he suggested to Roy, "I'll get my name down on the pay-roll."

"Say, Somes," said Chub, as they clattered down-stairs and across the hall, "I don't usually welcome strangers in quite such a demonstrative way, you know, but Roy had just been telling me about Harry and you, and it seemed such a blamed good joke that I just had to let out."

"That's all right," Dick laughed. "I'm tickled to death to find some one with what they call human emotions. Why, say, you chaps, I've been hibernating over at Hammond for two whole days with a dozen wooden Indians who wouldn't even say 'Good Morning' to me until I shouted it! Talk about your frozen faces! Phew! But you fellows act as though you had blood in your veins! I thought maybe I could stand it over there, but when the push began to drift in this afternoon I saw that I'd either have to get out or do murder. They looked me over as though I was some sort of a dime museum freak until I thought I'd have to eat glass to please 'em. The first bunch feased me; I didn't wait to see what the rest looked like, but grabbed my pack and hit the trail, and here I am. All I ask is

kind treatment and a comfortable home.”

“Well, here we are,” laughed Roy. “I hope the Doctor will let you stay.”

“Oh, he will. I’ve got the money right here and a bunch of letters that thick. And if he wants any more references I’ll refer him to Hammond.”

Roy rang the bell and in a moment the door was thrown open by Harry.



[The imaginary letter](#)

“Hello, Chub!” she cried. But then her eyes wandered past him to Dick Some and her face lighted up. “Oh, it’s you!” she cried. “Father! He’s here! It’s Dick Some!”

“The Brand from the Burning,” murmured Dick as he

followed the others into the little parlor. Then Harry came dancing back and beckoned him to the Doctor's study. The door closed and Harry returned alone.

"I told you he would come!" she whispered excitedly to Roy. Roy nodded. Then they sat, the three of them, like a trio of conspirators and waited. Once in a while they exchanged smiles, and Harry and Roy applauded Chub as he read from a blank sheet of paper, with widely fantastic gestures, [an imaginary letter](#) recounting Dick's virtues. Then the door opened and the Doctor and Dick appeared together in the hall.

"Ah, boys," said the Doctor, "I'm glad to see you again. You spent a pleasant vacation, I hope. Now will you kindly take Somes over to Mr. Cobb and ask him to assign him a bed in the Senior Dormitory? Thank you. Good evening. I will see you here in the morning, Somes."

They left Harry, jubilant, on the porch and returned through the darkness to Burgess.

"How did it go?" asked Chub.

"All right," answered Dick soberly. "Say, the Doctor's fine, isn't he?" The others concurred and Dick went on:

"He wasn't going to take me at first; said it wouldn't be quite fair to the Hammond folks. But I told him it was all off between them and me and that if he wouldn't take me here I'd go somewhere else. Then I showed my credentials and he said finally that if I was in earnest about it and really wanted to come here to learn and would abide by the rules and all that he'd take me; and I said I would and we shook hands. Then he laughed and said he guessed I'd get on."

"Good enough," said Roy. "We'll find Cobb and then go

down to supper. Are you hungry?”

“Hungry! Man, I’m starved! I’ve been living on apple-sauce for forty-eight hours! Why, I only have to close my eyes to imagine myself a Golden Russet!”

“Golden Russet be blowed!” laughed Chub. “You’re a peach!”



CHAPTER IV

THE BEGINNING OF A GREAT SCHEME

Dick Some, or “The Brand,” as Chub insisted on calling him, was a success from the start. The circumstances attending his arrival at Ferry Hill enveloped him in a mantle of romance, while to have thrown over Hammond in favor of the rival school at once endeared him to his new friends. Besides this, however, it was hard to resist his personality. As Chub said one day in awed tones: “He’s just about as homely as a mud fence, only somehow you forget all about it.” And you did. You remembered only that his look was frank and kindly, his voice wonderfully pleasant, and his laughter infectious. Before he had been at Ferry Hill a week he knew every one of his forty-two companions to speak to, and could call each one by his name without a mistake. The younger boys tagged after him whenever they might, and the older ones were frankly eager to be with him. He could talk interestingly on a hundred subjects, and could be as breezy as a Kansas cyclone or as staid and proper as young Cullum, of the Second Middle, who, on his arrival from Boston the year before, had been promptly dubbed “Culture” Cullum.

Born in Ohio, Dick had moved west with his parents at the age of six years. Then had followed sojourns in a sod house in Nebraska, in a log cabin in Montana, in an adobe shack in Colorado, and in a real carpenter-built house in a Nevada mining town. After that the fortunes of the Someses had

mended rapidly until, when Dick was twelve, the family was living comfortably in one of the finest residences of Helena. For two years Dick attended school uninterruptedly, something he had not done before. Then came his mother's death and two years of hotel life at home and abroad for him and his father. So, of course, Dick had seen a good deal of the world for a boy of his age, had a keen sense of humor, plenty of imagination, and could rattle off stories that made his audience sit with wide eyes and open mouths. Dick never spoke of wealth, but the impression prevailed generally that his father was remarkably well off, and the fact that Dick had his own check-book and could draw money from a New York trust company whenever he wanted to naturally did much to strengthen that impression.

Harry took much credit to herself for Dick's capture, and displayed at all times a strong proprietary interest in him. For his part Dick liked Harry immensely and endured her tyranny with unfailing good humor. At Madame Lambert's School, in Silver Cove, Harry became quite a heroine, and the story of how she had induced a Hammond boy to come to Ferry Hill was in constant demand for a fortnight after school began again.

Naturally enough, Dick's closest friends were Chub and Roy—and, of course, Harry; and I might include Sid Welch. Sid was fifteen and a confirmed hero-worshiper. Last year he had transferred his allegiance from Horace Burlen to Roy, and now appearances indicated that he was about to transfer it again to Dick. Dick was very kind to him, as he was to every one, but Sid's youthfulness prevented him from any save occasional companionship with the three older boys. To be sure, Dick was only sixteen himself, but he seemed older than either Chub or Roy. He had barely managed to convince Doctor Emery of his

right to enter the Second Senior class, and was working very hard to stay there.

One morning, a week or so after the beginning of the new term, Dick, Roy, Chub, and Harry were seated, the two former on the grain chest and the two latter on an empty box, in the barn. The big doors were wide open and the morning sunlight fell across the dusty floor in a long path of gold. The cold had moderated and that day the water was dripping from the eaves, and the snow was sliding with sudden excited rustlings from the roofs of the barn and sheds. Beyond the sunlight the floor faded into the twilight of the building wherein the forms of farm wagons and machinery were dimly discerned. From close at hand, to be exact, from tiers of boxes and home-made cages ranged along one side of the barn, came strange sounds; squeaks, soft murmurs, little rustling noises, excited chatters, and now and then a plaintive me-ow. The sounds came from the inhabitants of Harry's menagerie, as Roy had nicknamed the collection of pets. Overhead was the soft cooing of pigeons, and outside in the warm sunlight many of them were wheeling through the air and strutting about the yard. Dick had just been formally introduced to the inhabitants of the boxes; to Lady Grey and her two furry, purry kittens, to Angel and others of his family—white, pink-eyed rabbits these—, to Teety, the squirrel, to Pete and Repeat and Threepete, black rabbits all, to Snip, the fox terrier, to numerous excitable white mice, and, last but not least, to Methuselah.

Methuselah was the parrot, a preternaturally solemn and dignified bird as long as he refrained from conversation. When he spoke he betrayed himself as the jeering old fraud that he was. Just at present he was seated on Harry's arm, his head on one side, and one glittering eye closed. Closing one eye gave

him a very wise look, and I fancy he knew it. At Harry's feet lay Snip, stretched out in the sunshine, and at a little distance Spot, an Angora cat and the black sheep of the family, sat hunched into a round ball of furriness and watched proceedings with pessimistic gaze.

"When does the first hockey game come, Roy?" asked Chub.

"A week from Saturday, with Cedar Grove. By the way, Dick, can you play hockey?"

"No, what's it like?"

"Haven't you ever seen a game?"

"Don't think so. It's a sort of shinny on the ice, isn't it?"

"Something like that," answered Roy. "You ought to learn. Harry says you're a dandy skater, and that's half the battle."

"Oh, I never could play games," said Dick. "I've tried to catch a base-ball, but I never could do it."

"You come out for practice in a month or so," said Chub, "and I'll bet you can learn how. Will you?"

"If you like. Do both you fellows play?"

"Yes, Roy plays first base and I play second."

"Chub is captain," added Harry.

"And where do you play?" asked Dick, turning to her.

"They won't let me play," answered Harry disgustedly. "I can play just as well as Sid Welch, though!"

"Oh, come now, Harry," laughed Chub, "Sid played a pretty good game last year."

“So could I if you’d let me. I can catch any ball you can throw, Chub Eaton, and you know it!”

“Of course you can,” said Chub soothingly. “I’ll put you behind the bat this year, Harry.”

“How far behind?” asked Roy. “Back of the fence?” Harry made a face at him.

“I wouldn’t think of playing if you bar Harry out,” said Dick gravely. “Harry rescued me from a life of idleness at Hammond, and brought me over here where I’m buzzing my brain out trying to keep up with my class, and I’m naturally awfully grateful to her. If you don’t let her play you can’t have my invaluable services, Chub.”

“Look here, how about foot-ball?” demanded Roy.

“Me?” asked Dick. “I don’t know the first thing about it. The only game I can play is chess.”

“But you ought to do something with those muscles of yours,” insisted Roy. “Did you ever do any rowing?”

“Never even saw a race,” was the cheerful reply. “Oh, I’m no athlete, me. The only thing I can do is ride and fish and shoot and throw a rope and—and run a little.”

“Run?”

“Yes, on my feet, you know. Don’t you ever run hereabout?”

“Yes,” laughed Chub, “we run bases.”

“I couldn’t do that, I guess; a mile’s about my measure. Don’t you have foot races here?”

“No, we don’t do anything in that line. Hammond has a track team, but we haven’t. You should have stayed where you were put, if you want to be a runner.”

“What’s the matter with getting up one of those things here?” asked Dick. “One of those track teams? You’ve got a track, haven’t you?”

“Yes, but it’s not much good. We only use it for exercise,” said Roy.

“Couldn’t it be fixed up?”

“I don’t believe the Doctor would do it,” answered Roy. “You see, it would cost a lot, and I know there isn’t much money to spend.”

“Why? Doesn’t the school make money?” asked Dick.

“Oh, yes, but not very much; does it, Harry?”

“Sometimes it doesn’t make anything; it loses,” replied Harry cheerfully. “Then I wear my old dresses in the summer, and we stay here at Ferry Hill; only sometimes I have to go and visit Aunt Harriet Beverly, which is much worse than staying at home.”

“Must be a leak somewhere,” said Dick. “Why, with forty-three boys at four hundred dollars a year, I don’t see why the Doctor doesn’t make slathers of coin.”

“He used to,” said Harry; “but everything costs so much more nowadays, you see. Papa says that if we had accommodations for twenty more boys the school would make money.”

“What kind of accommodations?” asked Dick.

“Why, places to sleep and eat,” answered Harry.

“But if he’s losing money now with forty boys I should think he’d lose half as much again with sixty,” said Chub.

“Didn’t you ever hear the saying that it costs as much to feed three persons as it does two?” laughed Dick.

“Papa means,” explained Harry, “that the expenses wouldn’t be much larger than they are now. It would take more food, of course, and—and things like that, but there wouldn’t have to be any more teachers, because papa and Mr. Cobb and Mr. Buckman could teach sixty boys just as well as forty.”

“I see,” said Chub. “But—could he get twenty more boys? The school isn’t quite full now, you know.”

“He could if he advertised in the magazines and papers,” said Harry. “He never has advertised because he says it wouldn’t pay to do it unless he could take lots more boys.”

“Well, I like the school as it is,” said Chub. “I think there is just enough of a crowd here now. If it was much bigger we wouldn’t hang together the way we do and we wouldn’t have half so good a time.”

“Yes, but I’d like the Doctor to make something,” said Roy. “I’d like Harry to have new dresses in the summer and not have to visit her Aunt Harriet,” he continued with a laugh. “Besides, if the school was making plenty of money we could have a new boat-house, and an addition to the grand stand and things like that, probably.”

“And a new running track,” added Dick. “I’m in favor of enlarging the school!”

“Objection withdrawn,” said Chub. “Go ahead and do it.”

“Then, too,” said Roy, who had apparently been considering the matter quite seriously, “we’d have a larger number of fellows to pick our teams from. If we’ve been able to win from Hammond in most everything in the long run with only half as many fellows as she has, what could we do to her if we had three fourths as many?”

“Third class in algebra!” murmured Chub. “Mr. Somes may answer.”

“Not prepared,” said Dick promptly.

“But it’s so,” cried Harry. “Why, we could—we could simply lambaste them!”

“Good for you, Harry!” laughed Chub.

“Yes, it is so,” pursued Roy earnestly.

“That’s why Hammond can have a track team and we can’t. She has nearly ninety fellows this year to our forty-three. That means that she’s got two chances to our one.”

“Oh, piffle!” scoffed Chub. “Why doesn’t she lick us then? We’ve beaten her three times out of four at foot-ball, and we’re away ahead in base-ball victories, and in rowing. No, sir, the reason we’ve been able to lick her is just because we have so few fellows that we all stick together and work for the school, and when we get a lot more here it will be different and there’ll be cliques and things like that, and half the school won’t speak to the other half.”

“That isn’t so at Hammond, I guess,” objected Dick. “From what little I learned of the place the fellows stick together pretty well.”

“Besides, twenty more wouldn’t make much difference,”

added Roy. "What you say might be so if we had two or three hundred, like some of the big schools; but not with sixty. I cast my vote with Dick; let's enlarge."

"Yes, indeed," cried Harry, "let's! How'll we do it?"

"Well, don't let me interfere," said Chub good-naturedly. "I'll just sit here and keep still while you do it. But don't be long, because I've got a lesson in just ten minutes."

"Why, there's only one way to do it," said Dick promptly. "We must have a new dormitory."

"Oh, is that it?" asked Chub. "I'll see if I can find one for you." He began to peer around on the floor. "I suppose one slightly used wouldn't do?"

"You dry up and blow away," said Roy. "We're talking business."

"And if you want to come in on the ground floor," said Dick, "now's your chance. If you wait you'll have to pay a big price to join the Society."

"What's it called? The Society of Hopeless Idiots?"

"No, sir; it's called the Ferry Hill Improvement Society," replied Dick. "And its objects are to obtain a new dormitory, increased attendance, a new running track and a track team."

"Is that all?" jeered Chub. "It sounds so easy I guess I'll have to come in. You may put me down for president."

"We'll put you down for janitor, that's what we'll put you down for," said Roy scathingly. "Dick shall be president."

"I decline," said Dick. "I nominate Miss Harry Emery, Esquire."

“No, Roy must be president,” answered Harry, “and I’ll be secretary and treasurer, because I have more time than you fellows. And Dick must be vice-president, and Chub—”

“I’ll be referee.”

“No, you’ll be second vice-president.”

“All right,” answered Chub cheerfully. “That’s me. I’m the one who attends banquets and does the jollying. You folks do the work.”

“Look here,” said Roy soberly. “Are you fellows in fun or do you—do you really intend to go into this?”

Chub grinned and Harry looked doubtful. Dick, however, answered promptly.

“No, sir, there’s no fun about it!” he declared. “We’re going to do it. Work on the new dormitory begins as soon as school closes in June. Why not? What’s a dormitory, anyhow? Thirty thousand will build it, I guess; and if we can’t scrape up that much before June we don’t deserve it!”

“I’ll bet you anything he believes it!” said Chub in awed tones.

“Of course I believe it,” said Dick stoutly. “We’ll send letters to the graduates asking for subscriptions, and we’ll get the fellows in school interested and make them contribute. I’ll start the ball rolling myself with fifty dollars.”

“Gee!” said Chub. “I can’t give much more than fifty cents, I guess.”

“You’ll give five dollars, anyhow,” declared Dick. “No subscriptions received for less than five.”

“I’ll give five!” cried Harry eagerly. “I’ve got almost that much in my bank.”

“Good! Fifty and fifteen are—”

“Is,” corrected Chub.

“*Am*—sixty-five,” said Dick. “That’s a good starter.”

“Sure!” laughed Roy. “We only need twenty-nine thousand nine hundred and thirty-five more!”

“Oh, maybe it won’t take thirty thousand,” said Dick cheerfully. “I only guessed at it. We’ll find out about that the first thing.”

“Well, there’s no harm in trying,” said Roy. “And it’ll be good fun whether anything comes of it or not. But I vote that Chub be made president because I’m going to be too busy during the next two months to attend properly to the duties of the office. You see, hockey doesn’t leave much time for other things.”

“Not me, though,” Chub protested. “I never was president of anything, and don’t know what you do. Besides, I’m going to be pretty busy myself in another six weeks. Base-ball candidates are coming out early this year. Dick’s the man for president; he started the trouble and the subscriptions. All in favor—”

“I’d just as lief serve as president,” said Dick, “only I may be busy myself pretty soon.”

“What at?” asked Chub.

“Forming that track team. I’m going to be captain of it, you know. Roy’s captain of the hockey team and you’re captain of

the nine, and I've got to be captain of something, myself."

"Do you really mean that you're going to try and get up a team?" asked Roy.

"Yes, and I want you fellows to help me. Will you?"

"Sure," cried Chub. "It's a good scheme, Dick. I'll wager there are lots of fellows here who will be pleased purple to join."

"Will *you*?"

"Me? Why, I can't do anything."

"How do you know? I dare say you can run bases, and if you can do that maybe you can sprint. And Roy ought to make a good distance runner. You say he was in the Cross Country last fall."

"I'll join," said Roy. "I don't suppose I can do anything, but I'm willing to try."

"Same here," said Chub. "And while we're about it, let's start a few other things. We haven't got a croquet club, nor a sewing circle, you know."



[A meeting of the Ferry Hill School Improvement Society](#)

“And if we started those, Harry could join,” laughed Dick.

“I should think you might let me join the track team,” said Harry. “I can run as fast as anything, Dick!”

“As secretary of the F. H. I. S.,” replied Dick, “you will

have no time for trivial affairs, Harry. You've let yourself in for a lot of hard work, if you only knew it. Now, I propose—”

“I propose,” exclaimed Chub, jumping up, “that I go to my recitation. When's the next meeting?”

“The secretary will issue a call for it,” answered Dick.

“Seems to me,” suggested Roy, “that the name ought to be the *Ferry Hill School Improvement Society*; people might think we were trying to improve the Hill.”

“Settle it to suit yourselves,” cried Chub, making a dash for the door. “I'm off.”

Methuselah, who had been dozing for some time, awoke startled, and broke into angry remonstrances. “Well, I never did!” he screeched hoarsely. “Can't you be quiet? Stop your swearing! Stop your swearing! Stop your swearing!”

And the first [meeting of the](#) small but very select [Ferry Hill School Improvement Society](#) broke up in confusion.



CHAPTER V

THE F. H. S. I. S. HOLDS A MEETING

A few days later Harry sat at the little desk in her room, her feet twined around the legs of her chair, her head very much on one side and a pen in her hand. Before her, on the pink blotting-pad, were four postal cards. Two were already written on, and a third was under way:

FERRY HILL, N. Y., January 14.

There will be a meeting of the F. H. S. I. S. at the rooms of the Society (this means the barn), at 4 o'clock on the afternoon of January 16th. As the object of the meeting is to perfect a permanent organization, a full attendance is desired.

Respectfully,

H. EMERY,

Sec'y and Treas.

Harry laid down her pen with a sigh of relief, and wiped some of the ink from her fingers by rubbing them on the edge of the blotter. Then, getting a new grip on the chair legs with her feet, she took up the last postal. At that moment Mrs. Emery passed the open door, smiled and entered.

“What are you doing, pet?” she asked, laying a hand on Harry’s shoulder, and glancing at the postals.

“Oh!” Harry gave a start and looked up in surprise. “Mama, you mustn’t see!” she cried. “It’s a secret!”

“A secret? Well, my dear, I wouldn’t write it on postals then,” laughed her mother. “Don’t you know that any one can read it that way?”

“Well, it isn’t a secret—exactly,” explained Harry. “But it’s something you and papa mustn’t know about, yet. Are you reading it?”

“No, I’ve stopped, dear. But what is the F. H. S. I. S?”

“That’s it! That’s the secret. It’s a society.”



“Mama, you mustn’t see!’ she cried. ‘It’s a secret!’”

“Don’t you think, pet, that you are a little too young to belong to secret societies?” asked Mrs. Emery smilingly.

“Not this kind, mama; this is—is a benevolent society.”

“Oh!”

“Yes, it’s for a worthy purpose.”

“Indeed? And what is the purpose, Harry?”

“Why, it’s to—now, there, mama, you almost made me tell you!” Harry turned and pushed her mother away. “I’m not going to answer any more questions!” She set her lips tightly and determinedly together.

“But, Harry,” said her mother teasingly, “you know you never can keep a secret! You needn’t even try. You might as well tell me now as later.”

Harry shook her head violently, but refused to speak.

“Very well, then,” said Mrs. Emery sadly, “if you can’t trust me, Harry, I suppose—”

Harry was not proof against this. She jumped up and threw her arms about Mrs. Emery’s comfortable waist, and hugged tight.

“It isn’t fair!” she cried. “You’re trying to work on my feelings, mama, and make me feel naughty; and then I’ll have to tell you! And it isn’t my secret, dearest, not mine alone, and it wouldn’t be fair to Roy and Chub and Dick if I told you. And after a while you’ll know all about it, if you’ll only wait, and you and papa are to pick out the site for the dormitory and —”

“Dormitory? What are you talking about, child?”

But Harry had clasped both hands to her mouth and was looking so distressed that her mother took pity on her. “Very well, my dear, I won’t ask you any more questions. But don’t get into mischief.” She kissed Harry and retired smiling. Harry returned to the desk with a loud sigh of relief and seated

herself for the completion of her task.

“It was the nearest thing!” she thought. “I almost told it right out! But just the same I think it was unkind of mama to say I couldn’t keep a secret!”

When the last card was written she addressed them; one to Roy, one to Chub, one to Dick, and one to herself.

“It’s more businesslike,” she declared silently. “Secretaries of societies are such busy folks that I guess they are very likely to forget engagements unless they have notices around where they can see them.”

She was forced to own, however, that it wasn’t necessary to post her notice with the others the following morning at Silver Cove. But then, for that matter, it wasn’t absolutely necessary to post any of them! She could just as well have handed them to the addressees; but sending them through the mail made them seem far more important, and the whole thing more real.

The second formal meeting of the Society therefore came off on the following Wednesday afternoon, but without the desired full attendance. For Roy was very busy on the rink where the hockey team was getting ready for the game with Cedar Grove School three day later. It was decidedly chilly in the “rooms of the Society” this afternoon, and the members did not remove their wraps. A portion of the menagerie made the mistake of supposing that feeding-time had arrived, and it was some minutes before order was restored. Methuselah had such a lot to say that Harry was forced to drop the canvas in front of his cage, whereupon, after much disgusted muttering, he concluded that it was really bed-time and that he would go to sleep.

“I suppose,” said Harry apologetically, “that I ought to read the minutes of the last meeting; only there aren’t any.”

“In which case,” said Chub, “I move you, Mr. President, and fellow-members, that the reading of the minutes be dispensed with.”

“I move so, too,” said Harry excitedly.

“You mean you second the motion,” Chub corrected. “Question, Mr. President!”

“I guess we’ll worry along without parliamentary procedure,” laughed Dick. “And I don’t believe it will be necessary yet awhile to keep the minutes. Here’s the subscription list. I’ve put my name down for fifty dollars. You two sign, and get Roy to. Then you had better keep it, Harry. Now, are we going to take in more members or keep this thing to ourselves? I’m in favor of having just us four, because if we have a lot it will be hard to get anything done; the fellows will always be wanting to speak and ask questions and all that. What do you say?”

“Four’s enough,” said Chub. And Harry nodded concurrence.

“All right. Now I’ve been asking questions, and I’ve found that Burgess Hall cost twenty-seven thousand dollars. But it was built twelve years ago, and Mr. Cobb says labor and materials have almost doubled in cost since then. If that’s so Burgess would cost about forty-five thousand to-day; but the new dormitory wouldn’t have to be more than half as large because it would have to accommodate only twenty fellows, and wouldn’t have to have a dining-room. But I think it ought to be built in such a way that it could be added to later. I’ve

been figuring for a while on the thing, and I think we'll need just about what I said the other day, thirty thousand."

"Well, let's have enough while we're about it," said Chub dryly. "Maybe we'd better say forty thousand."

"So now the thing to do," continued Dick, "is to write a letter saying what we're trying to do, and asking for subscriptions. We'll have it printed and send it around to the grads. I guess we can get hold of their names all right, for the Doctor must have a list of them somewhere."

"Yes, he has," said Harry. "There's a big book of names and addresses in the office."

"But it'll cost something for printing and postage, won't it?" asked Chub.

"Yes, and so we've got to have some ready money. I guess twenty-five dollars will be enough for the present."

"Well, but where is it coming from?"

"From the subscriptions. The treasurer must collect from us. I'll pay ten dollars now, and you fellows can give something, too. Then I'll give Harry a check for the rest of what I owe."

"Oh, I'll have something to treasure, won't I?" cried Harry. "That's what a treasurer's for, you know."

"Yes." Dick brought out his purse and selected two five-dollar bills from the little roll of money it contained, and handed them to Harry, who accepted them with shining eyes. "You must send me a receipt for it, you know," said Dick. Chub fished ruefully around in his trousers pocket and finally produced a dollar and twenty cents.

“I guess I’ll keep the change,” he said, “but you can have the dollar. Gee! I can just see that dormitory, Dick!”

“All right,” answered Dick good-humoredly, “you go ahead and have your fun. How many fellows do you suppose have gone to school here?”

“Fury, I don’t know!” said Chub. “A whole bunch of ’em.”

“Well, how many usually enter in the fall?”

“This year there were fourteen new boys—counting you,” answered Harry.

“We’ll call it twelve,—just a dozen,” said Dick. “How long has the school been running?”

“About thirty years, I think. Papa has had it twelve years, and I think it was almost twenty years old then.”

“All right,” said Dick; “thirty times twelve is three hundred and sixty. Some of them are either dead or have moved, nobody knows where, I dare say, so we’ll call it three hundred. If each one gave five dollars it would be—let me see—”

“Fifteen hundred,” said Harry, proudly.

“What! Nonsense! It must be more than that!”

“Yep. Fifteen hundred,” said Chub.

“But that can’t be right!” exclaimed Dick.

“It is, though,” Chub said with a smile. Dick looked thunder-struck.

“Fifteen hundred! Why, that won’t do any good! How much would each grad have to give to make thirty thousand?”

“One hundred dollars,” answered Harry promptly.

“Well, that’s a lot,” said Dick thoughtfully; “because some of them probably can’t afford that much.”

“Maybe some of them will give more,” suggested Chub.

“That’s so; some might give a thousand. If only ten of them would do that then the others would have to give only seventy-five, or—well, something like that.”

“I guess if we get ten dollars apiece out of them on the average we’ll be doing well,” said Chub pessimistically.

“We’ve got to put it to them so that they’ll want to give a lot,” said Dick. “We’ve got to get together and work up a letter that’ll make ’em weep! Roy ought to help with that, and so I suggest we put that over until the next meeting. Meanwhile let’s each get up what he thinks would be about right and we’ll compare the—the appeals and work them together next time. Then we’ll have it printed.”

“Before that, though,” said Chub, “we ought to talk it over with the Doctor.”

“Yes, we’ll do that when we have the appeal written out,” answered Dick. “And we’ll get him to let us have the names and addresses of the grads. And after we’ve posted the letters we’ll get up a subscription list and circulate it through the school. I’ve figured that we ought to get two hundred and seventy dollars that way, without anything from the Doctor, and I dare say he’d like to give something.”

“Of course he would,” said Harry. “Maybe he’d give—a hundred! You see, we wouldn’t want to go away this summer, anyhow, if the dormitory was being built.”

“I guess you won’t have to stay at home on that account,”

murmured Chub.

“I think you’re horrid,” said Harry. “You’re making fun of it all the time. If you don’t think it can be done, I don’t see why you don’t leave the Society.”

“Because,” laughed Chub, “I never belonged to a society before, and I like it immensely. I don’t say we won’t succeed, but I don’t believe we’ll ever get the money by writing some letters to the graduates; that is, not by just that alone.”

“What’s your idea?” asked Dick eagerly.

“I think we ought to get some one to give a big sum, say five or ten thousand, as a starter. Then we could find out which of the old boys are well off, and put it up to them; tell them So-and-So had given ten thousand dollars and ask them to go and do likewise. Of course, every grad ought to be allowed the privilege of contributing to the worthy cause, but there’s no use expecting to get much that way. And when the letters or circulars are sent out, a subscription blank ought to go along.”

“That’s a good scheme,” said Dick thoughtfully. “How can we find out who the wealthy grads are?”

“I dare say the Doctor knows,” said Chub. “Anyhow, we can ask him.”

“Yes, and don’t you think his name ought to go on the letter? Wouldn’t it look more—more official?”

“I guess it would,” answered Chub. “I believe we ought to elect him honorary something; isn’t that what’s usually done?”

“Honorary President,” suggested Dick.

“That’s lovely!” cried Harry. “He’ll be so pleased!”

“He’s elected then,” said Dick, and Chub nodded.

“Then I say we adjourn the meeting and get together again as soon as we can when Roy can attend. The trouble is that he has hockey every afternoon.”

“Except Monday.”

“All right then; Monday it is. That’s five days from now, and we’ll have time to think up the letter to the grads. It’s settled then,” added Dick, as he slid off the grain chest. “Now let’s go and watch Roy practice hockey awhile.”

“Please don’t forget, Chub,” said Harry, “that you owe four dollars to the treasury. And I must collect from Roy, mustn’t I? Do you think I’d better open an account at the Silver Cove bank, Dick?”

“No, I guess you won’t have it long enough,” he laughed.

“But it’ll be a good deal of money to keep in the house,” Harry objected. “Suppose some one stole it?”

“Then you’d have to make good,” said Chub. “By the way, Dick, isn’t it customary to put the treasurer under bond?”

“I believe so. Can you give bond, Harry?”

“I don’t know what that is,” answered Harry; “but I know I’m going to keep this money where no one can find it! You know a thief broke into the house three summers ago when we were away, and stole papa’s winter overcoat and a lot of silverware, and they never got him!”

“That’s right,” laughed Dick. “Don’t you take any risks with that immense sum you have there, Harry.”

“I’ll have a good deal when Chub and Roy pay,” said Harry

gravely, as they left the barn and started along the road toward the dormitory.

“Well, I’ll settle with you Saturday,” said Chub. “I’m dead-broke now; there’s only twenty cents between me and the cold world.”

“And it *is* a cold world, too,” muttered Dick, pulling his sweater up around his chin. “I don’t believe I want to stand in the snow and watch those hockey players very long.”

“Just a little while,” pleaded Chub. “It’s lots of fun to see Harris fall down; he can fall farther and harder than any fellow I ever saw.”

“Aren’t you going to play this year, Chub?” asked Harry.

“No, Glidden’s a heap better than I am, and, besides, I’ll be busy at base-ball before the hockey schedule’s finished; so I thought I might as well drop out of it.”

“Wait for me a minute,” said Harry when they reached the Cottage. “I’ll put this money away in the house.”

They waited for her and then the three went down the hill to the river, and along the bank to the rink where Roy and Kirby and Warren and Harris and a dozen others were charging madly about the ice in the teeth of a freezing gale.



CHAPTER VI

ON THE ICE AND THROUGH

When the thermometer on the north side of School Hall registers four degrees below zero at noon it means cold weather; and that is just what the thermometer did on Saturday. In sheltered angles where the sun shone it was not so bad, but on the way across the campus, where the wind blew unobstructed, fellows in knickerbockers moved rapidly, Jack Frost in pursuit and pinching their calves sharply. By half past three, what time the hockey game with Cedar Grove School was scheduled to commence, the mercury had dropped another point and the audience about the rink consisted of exactly six boys, among them Dick and Sid Welch, and one girl. Of course the girl was Harry. I doubt if there was another girl for miles up or down the river who would have braved the cold that afternoon for the sake of sport and patriotism.

The rink is some three hundred yards down the shore from the boat-house. Years before a ferry plied between this point and the opposite town of Coleville, but with the completion of the new bridge below Silver Cove the enterprise, like many similar ones in the vicinity, had ceased to be profitable. Ultimately the boat had disappeared and only the ferry house and landing remained. But that was last year; now even those were gone, the lumber—such of it as was fit for the purpose—having been used in the construction of the barrier around the rink. Many of the old joists and planks, however, were too rotten to hold nails and these had been left piled up on the beach. Sid, struck by a brilliant idea, had looted the pile, and

by the time the game had begun a big bonfire was blazing merrily. The handful of spectators divided their attention between the fire and the contest until the first half was over, with the score three goals for Ferry Hill and one for Cedar Grove. Then every one, players, spectators, substitutes, and referee—who was Chub—gathered as near the flames as safety permitted and alternately turned faces and backs to the warmth.

“You’re a wonder, Sid,” declared Roy. “If I had half your brain—!” He shook his head eloquently, at a loss for words.

“Oh, Sid’s a great fellow for scheming how to be comfortable,” said Billy Warren, who played right center for Ferry Hill. “Did you ever hear about the contrivance he rigged up on his bed the first year he was here?”

Every one replied that he had, except Harry; and Harry demanded to be told.

“Well,” said Warren, “Sid used to go to sleep with two blankets over him and the comforter over the foot of the bed, you know. Then along toward morning it would get cold and Sid would want the comforter, but he was too sleepy to reach down and get it.”

“That’s right,” interrupted Chub, whose bed was next to Sid’s in the Junior Dormitory. “I used to find him all curled up in a ball in the morning with his teeth chattering like—like—”

“I didn’t!” declared Sid.

“Shut up, Sid, you know you did,” said Warren. “Well, so what does Sid do but get a piece of clothes-line and tie an end to each corner of the comforter. Then when he woke up and found he was freezing to death all he had to do was to take hold of the rope and pull the comforter up. Oh, he’s a wonder,

Sid is!”

“Just the same, it worked all right,” said Sid with a grin, as the laugh went around. “And I wish I had that comforter now.”

“I don’t see how you could get much more on,” said Dick, as he viewed Sid’s rotund appearance. “You look like a bale of sweaters now.”

“I’ve only got two on,” was the reply. “I was going to borrow Chub’s, but he went and wore it himself.”

“How dare you, Chub?” laughed Roy. “You ought to have more consideration for others.”

“Thunder!” replied Chub good-naturedly, “Sid would borrow everything I have if I’d let him. As it is he wears more of my things than his own. Last week I tried to find a pair of stockings and couldn’t; Sid had the whole lot in his locker.”

“They had holes in them,” answered Sid gravely.

“They certainly had when you got through with them,” laughed Chub. “Come on, fellows; time’s up.”

The two teams went back to the ice, peeling off sweaters and gloves, and presently the game was on again. It was the first contest of the year and the play was pretty ragged. But there were exciting moments, as when Harris, who played point on the home team, got away with the puck for a long race down the rink, passed to Fernald in front of the Cedar Grove goal, captured the disk again on the quick return and smashed it past goal-tender’s knees for a score. Toward the latter part of the period the visitors weakened and Ferry Hill’s tally grew rapidly, until at the final call of time the score stood 12-4 in favor of the home players. Cheers were exchanged and the

Cedar Grove fellows hurried away toward the station. The others went back to the replenished fire and leisurely donned their sweaters. Dick, who had a moment before wandered away toward the edge of the river, called to Roy.

“What’s that thing over there?” he asked.

“What thing? Where?”

“Across the river. It looks like a boat, but I don’t see how any one can sail a boat when there isn’t any water.”

“Oh,” answered Roy, joining him, “that’s an ice-boat, you silly galoot. Haven’t you ever seen one before?”

“No, but I’ve seen pictures of them. I didn’t recognize it, though. Say, that’s pretty slick, isn’t it? Look at the way it scoots around over there! How the dickens is it made?”

“Oh, you make a frame-work of timbers kind of three-cornered like and stick a skate or a runner at each corner, and put a mast in with a sail or two, and have another runner at the back with a tiller for steering, and there you are.”

“You don’t say? Well, that’s the most—er—enlightening explanation I ever heard, Roy; lucid’s no name for it!”

“Well, it’s the best I can do,” Roy laughed. “If you want further particulars I advise you to run over and take a look. I’m no boat-builder.”

“That’s what I’ll do,” answered Dick, tightening the straps of his skates. “Come along!”

“Are you crazy? Want me to freeze myself?”

“Freeze nothing! It’ll warm you up. Come on; it won’t take but a minute or two.” Roy hesitated. Then:

“All right,” he consented, “I’ll go you. Only it isn’t likely that the boat’s going to stay there and wait for us.”

“Bet you I can catch her if she doesn’t have too big a start,” said Dick.

“Oh, sure!” scoffed Roy. “She only makes about thirty miles an hour!”

“Get out!”

“That’s right, though,” answered Roy. “They say some of them can do pretty near a mile a minute in a good wind. I don’t know about that one there, though; don’t think I ever saw her before; she’s got a red hull, hasn’t she?”

“Yes, if you call that thing a hull,” replied Dick. “Are there any more around here?”

“Two or three, I think.”

“Well, then, maybe I’ll let this one go if it tries to get away,” Dick said. “Are you ready?”

Roy said that he was, but at that moment Chub hailed them.

“Where you fellows going?” he shouted.

“Across the river,” answered Roy. “Dick wants to study ice-boats. Want to come?”

Chub and Harry and Sid joined them, the latter begging them to wait until he could get his skates on.

“All right, slow poke,” answered Roy. “How about you, Harry? It’ll be beastly cold out in the middle there.”

“Oh, I’m nice and warm,” answered Harry. “What did you say about an ice-boat?”

“Dick never saw one before and he wants to go over and make the acquaintance of that one over there. Whose is it, Harry? Do you know?”

“Yes, it belongs to Joe Thurston, Grace Thurston’s brother. He goes to Hammond. She’s in my class at Madame Lambert’s.”

“Who, the ice-boat?” asked Chub.

“No, Mister Smarty, Grace Thurston. Anyhow, I said ‘it.’”

“You said ‘she!’”

“I said ‘it!’”

“Ladies! Ladies!” remonstrated Roy. “No disturbance, I beg of you! Remember there’s a gentleman present.”

“Where?” asked Chub, looking carefully around.

“Here,” grunted Sid, tugging at a strap.

“For that lie, Sid,” answered Chub severely, “we will go and leave you. Come on, fellows.”

“Wait, wait please!” begged Sid. “I can’t get the buckle in the right hole. My fingers are frozen stiff. You might help a chap, Chub.”

“All right, I will if you’ll tell the truth. Are you a gentleman, Sid?”

“No,” answered Sid diplomatically. “It’s that fourth hole, Chub. That’s it. Thanks.” He got up, hobbled to the edge of the ice and skated away. “Neither are you, Chub!” he shouted tauntingly. Chub instantly gave chase, leaving the other three to follow more leisurely. Across the frozen river and a little

further down-stream the ice-boat was skimming up and down near shore, luffing, filling and turning in the brisk wind as though trying her sails.

“That’s just about what she’s doing, I guess,” said Roy as they skated, three abreast, a hundred yards or so behind the flying forms of Sid and Chub. “Those sails are brand-new, I think. She’s coming around again. If we were nearer now you could get a good view of her, Dick.”

“I’m going to try, anyhow,” answered Dick, as he dug his blades in the black ice and sped away from them.

“Shall we try it, too?” asked Roy. Harry nodded her head.

“I’ll race you,” she cried, and, suiting action to word, darted off after Dick. She had obtained a good lead before Roy had gathered his wits together, and he realized that to attempt to overtake that flying form was quite useless for him. He was a good skater, but Harry had held the school supremacy for several years and had, as she had stated to Dick, even beaten Hammond’s best talent the winter before. But Harry had found more than her match at last, for, try as she could and did, she could not gain an inch on Dick, who was putting in his best licks in an endeavor to head off the ice-boat as it passed up-stream close to the farther shore. In a trice Roy was left to himself. He saw that he could not hope to intercept the boat even if the others did, and so kept on diagonally across the river toward the ice-houses below Coleville. Sid and Chub were still busy with their own affairs, the former leading the latter a difficult chase, turning and doubling and thus far avoiding capture. The wind swept across the ice with stinging buffets against legs and face, and Roy rubbed his ears vigorously to keep them from freezing. Presently he drew near

where they had been cutting ice and found that to continue on toward the shore and the path of the returning boat he would either have to cross the cuttings or skate for some distance up or down the river to get around them. New ice had formed in the lanes and it looked fairly thick. Roy slowed down and examined it. Then he struck at it with the heel of one skate, found that it didn't break, and skated quickly across. It was a narrow lane down which the cakes of ice had been floated to the house and he was soon over it. Then came thick ice again. He looked up the river. The boat was still before the wind and had passed Dick while that youth was some distance away. Now he had paused, apparently undecided whether to remain there or to join the others down-stream. Harry had already given up the chase and headed toward the ice-houses. Sid and Chub were still chasing madly about in mid-stream. Roy shouted and the wind carried his voice so well that both Harry and Dick heard and waved to him. Then a wide expanse of new ice confronted him and as he skated unhesitatingly on to it he noted the different sound which it gave forth under his blades. And then, without the least warning, the surface gave beneath him like paper and he was fighting for breath with the green water ringing in his ears and clutching at his heart with icy fingers.

CHAPTER VII

HARRY EVENS OLD SCORES

It seemed to Roy many long minutes before he ceased to sink and was able to struggle upward again to the surface and daylight. Luckily the current was sluggish at that point and when he came up he found himself in the pool of broken ice. Afterward, remembering how thin that ice proved to be, he wondered that it had held him for as long as it had. But now, gasping for breath, choking and numbed with the cold, his only thought was to find something to support him until help came. He gave no outcry, it never occurred to him to do so, nor, for that matter, had he breath for it. Weighted with skates and heavy clothing, including the thick crimson sweater which he usually wore, he was seriously handicapped from the start. And to make matters worse, the thin ice broke under the slightest weight he put upon it. If he could keep himself afloat long enough to break his way to the side of the cutting and reach the thick ice he might hold on until some one reached him. But the chill in his body threatened cramp every instant and made him feel as weak as a kitten. Gasping and choking, he fought hard, smashing the ice with one mittened hand and using the other to keep himself afloat. Now and then, in spite of his efforts, the water with its scum of floating ice fragments rose across his face, and each time a dreadful fear gripped him. But he thrashed and fought his way back again and again, each struggle leaving him weaker than before. There was no time to look for succor; he saw only the horrid brittle surface against which he battled. He could not tell whether he was working

toward thick ice or not.

By degrees hopelessness seized him and he began to feel indifferent; the lower part of his body seemed to have left him; he believed that he was working his legs in an effort to tread water, but there was no sensation there. Once he stopped struggling, and only when the water had closed over his eyes did he realize that he was sinking. Then, terror mastering him, he fought blindly and impotently for an instant. But the effort did not last; he was too weak now to even break the imprisoning ice; a pleasant lassitude crept over him. It was no use, he told himself; he was going to give up. And having reached that decision he experienced a delicious sensation of relief. He had no thought of drowning; he was merely going to rest, to sleep; and he was glad, because he could not remember ever having been so dead tired! And then two things happened simultaneously; he heard his name called and found his fingers tightening about something that was not ice, something that did not break and dissolve in his grasp. With a sudden return to his senses he opened his eyes, said "Hello, Harry," quite calmly and closed them again. He did not remember much about it after that.

When Roy had shouted Harry had heard and waved to him. She was already skating toward him, although a long distance away, and when, an instant later, she had looked again to find only empty ice where he had been she realized instantly what had happened. With a shrill cry of warning to Dick, some distance behind, she flew onward, skating harder than she had ever skated before. But the wind was almost dead ahead of her and seemed to be striving to beat her back with its savage blasts. She repeated a little prayer to herself over and over as she sped along, in time to the ringing of her skates: "Please,

God, let me be in time! Please, God, let me be in time!” And presently, as she drew near, she saw Roy’s head above the surface and was sure that her prayer would be answered. Off came the brown sweater with the white F. H. upon it and away blew Harry’s tam-o’-shanter across the ice. And then she was down on her knees, crawling anxiously across the edge of the treacherous surface.



“Harry caught her sweater by the end of one sleeve and tossed it toward him.”

Roy, with white face and closed eyes, his light brown hair plastered down upon his forehead, was beating the air feebly with his hands. With a silent prayer for success Harry caught her sweater by the end of one sleeve and tossed it toward him.

It fell beside his hand but the wind whipped it past. Again she tried, calling his name as she did so, and a corner of the sweater fell under his grasping fingers and with relief she felt the garment strain and tighten. Roy opened his eyes and looked at her; even smiled a little, she thought; and said her name. Then she was putting all her strength into keeping her place, for he had closed his eyes again and seemed bent upon pulling her after him into the water. But help was close at hand. With a shout of encouragement Sid came racing up, followed breathlessly by Chub and Dick.

“Hold on a minute more,” cried Dick. “Get hold of my legs, Chub, and I’ll work out to him.”

But even after Dick had seized Roy firmly by the hands and was himself lying half in the water it was no easy task for the others. Chub had Dick by the ankles and Sid held onto Chub, but it was slow work getting back to solid ice. Yet in the end they succeeded, and Roy, dripping and unconscious, lay safe.

“Is he dead?” whispered Sid brokenly.

“Not a bit of it,” Dick panted. “But we’ve got to get him home mighty quick or he will catch cold and have pneumonia and all sorts of things.” As he spoke he peeled off his sweater and wrapped it around Roy’s shoulders. “Let me have yours, you fellows,” he commanded.

“Look!” cried Harry. “There’s the ice-boat!”

Chub’s signaling was unnecessary, however, for the two occupants of the boat had already seen the catastrophe and were headed toward the group. Harry’s sweater, as well as Chub’s and the two worn by Sid, were thrown over Roy, and Dick and Chub were rubbing and slapping him when the ice-

boat rounded to and came up into the wind with flapping sail.

“Want any help?” asked one of the occupants.

“Yes, we want to get him home right away,” answered Dick. “Can you take him aboard and get him to the Ferry Hill landing?”

“Sure! You pile out, Bob. Lift him in here, will you? There isn’t much room, but I guess you can get him on somehow. That’s the ticket. Shove her nose around, Bob. All right! I’ll meet you over there!”

The sail filled and the boat, with Roy lying like a log in the tiny cockpit and Joe Thurston crouched beside him, leaped away. The others, shouting their thanks to the marooned Bob, who, having no skates, decided to stay where he was until his chum returned to pick him up, hurried after the boat. At any other time they would have felt the cold terribly, deprived as they were of their sweaters, but just now they were far too excited. All talked at once as they raced along and Harry was forced to listen to much enthusiastic praise of her pluck and readiness. When they reached the landing the boat was up on the beach and Joe Thurston had lugged Roy into the boat-house, where, warmed by the piled-up sweaters, he was beginning to take an interest in life once more. He waved a hand at them as they entered, but he still looked pretty white and weak.

“Well, you’re a fine one, aren’t you?” asked Chub in simulated disgust. “What were you trying to do? Commit suicide?”

“You mustn’t scold him!” cried Harry. “He almost drowned!”

“I guess I would have if it hadn’t been for you,” said Roy soberly. “Thanks, Harry; you’re a trump.”

“Oh, don’t mention it,” answered Harry flippantly, to hide the fact that her lip was trembling. “Besides, I just evened things up. You know,” she explained, turning to Dick, “I might have burned up to a cinder last winter if it hadn’t been for Roy. My dress caught on fire at an entertainment we gave and I came pretty near frizzling, I guess.”

“That’s so,” said Chub. “You two are even now.”

“Besides,” added Harry, “I didn’t do anything much, after all. It was Dick and the others who got you out.”

“If it hadn’t been for you,” said Dick, “he wouldn’t have been there when we reached the place. I didn’t know anything about it until I heard Harry scream. Then I saw her hitting the high places down the river and guessed what was up. Say, Harry, you sure did skate some!”

“I guess I’d better be getting back,” said Joe Thurston, edging toward the door. “Bob will be frozen if I don’t. I hope you’ll be all right,” he added to Roy.

“Thanks; and I’m awfully much obliged to you for bringing me across,” answered Roy.

“That’s so,” said Dick. “It was mighty nice of you. Want any help with the boat?” Joe protested that he didn’t. At the door he hesitated and finally asked, looking at Dick:

“Say, are you the fellow that came to our school and left?” Dick nodded.

“I’m the chap,” he said. “Why?”

“Oh, nothing,” was the reply. “Only—” and this was said over his shoulder as he went out—“only I’m sorry you didn’t stay!”

“Cheeky cuss!” muttered Sid.

“I think he meant it for a compliment,” laughed Chub.

“Of course he did!” exclaimed Harry. “And I think he’s a real nice boy, and I’m going to tell his sister so. It’s too bad he goes to Hammond, isn’t it?”

“Why don’t you kidnap him too?” asked Chub mischievously.

“Now what are we going to do with you, Roy?” interrupted Dick. “Want a carriage or an automobile? Or do you think you can walk if we give you a boost now and then?”

“Of course I can walk! And look here, you fellows, I don’t see that it’s necessary for people to know about this, is it?”

“I guess the fellows’ll find out pretty quick,” said Chub.

“Well, don’t you go and tell them. How about you, Harry?”

“I won’t say anything unless some one asks me,” said Harry.

“That’s all right, then,” said Roy. “Here, take some of these sweaters; you folks must be freezing to death. I’m as warm as toast now.”

“Doesn’t make any difference,” Dick declared. “You keep as many of those around you as you can. And when you get up the hill you sneak up to the dormitory and lie down and keep warm until supper time.”

“You ought to have some peppermint tea,” said Harry. “I’ll

make some and give it to Chub to take over to you. It'll warm you up inside beautifully!"

The program was carried out as arranged, and, save that for the rest of the evening Roy felt rather played out, he experienced no unpleasant results from his adventure. Of course the meeting of the F. H. S. I. S. called for that evening did not take place, for although Roy professed his readiness to attend, the others would not hear of it.

"You've had a shock," declared Harry firmly, "and must be very careful of yourself for several days. I'll make some more peppermint tea for you to-morrow, and, and—what are you making such a face about?"

"Oh, nothing, only couldn't you manage to get a little sugar into it the next time?"

"Didn't I put any—" began Harry. "Oh, I didn't, did I? I'm awfully sorry, Roy! Was it terribly nasty?"

"Well, there are some things I haven't tasted," answered Roy judicially, "but it was pretty bad, Harry."

"I forgot all about the sugar," Harry mourned, "but I'll put in enough the next time to make up!"

As Chub had predicted, the story of Roy's accident and rescue was all over school on Monday, while on Wednesday a graphic and highly-colored account of it appeared in the Silver Cove paper. One result was that Harry found herself once more in the glare of publicity at Madame Lambert's School and another was that Doctor Emery promulgated a rule restricting skating on the river to the immediate vicinity of the boat-house.

On Monday forenoon at eleven [there was a full attendance of the Improvement Society](#) in the barn. It was such a busy meeting that it is quite impossible to give an account of it in detail. Strange to say, every one had tried his or her hand at composing an appeal to the graduates, just as they had agreed to do, and each one read his production aloud and listened good-naturedly to the criticisms from the others which followed.

“What we’ve got to do now,” said Dick, “is take these four and work them over into one. But I suppose there isn’t much hurry about that, because we decided that the best way to begin is to make an appeal to some chap with a lot of money and get him to give a lump as a starter. To do that we’ve got to find out who the rich ones are. That means taking the Doctor into the scheme the next thing. So I move that Roy and Chub be appointed a committee of two to wait on him this afternoon, or as soon as possible, and tell him about it. And Harry and I will get to work on this circular.”

“Well,” said Chub, “if I must I must, but it seems to me that Dick ought to take my place because he can talk a lot better and explain the thing.”



“There was a full attendance of the Improvement Society”

“Let Roy do most of the talking,” advised Dick. “I have no objection to taking your place, only you’re an old boy here and I’ve just come; he’d pay more attention to what you said.”

“All right,” sighed Chub. “I’m the goat.”

“And Roy’s the goatee,” added Dick.

“Well, let’s do it this afternoon,” said Roy, “and get it over with.”

“Yes,” said Dick, “and we’ll meet again here this evening and hear the committee’s report.”

“Hooray!” cried Chub. “That’s me! I’m a Committee!”

“You’re only half a one,” Roy objected. “I appoint myself chairman of the committee.”

“Seconded,” said Chub. “The chairman does the talking, doesn’t he?”

“Don’t forget to tell papa that we’ve elected him honorary president,” reminded Harry. “That will please him, I know.”

“Bet you he’ll kick us out!” murmured Chub.

“Don’t you worry,” laughed Dick. “Roy, as chairman, will receive all the honors. You can dodge.”

Methuselah, who up to this point had been huddled silently in a corner of his box, with only one beady eye showing, began to chuckle softly.

“Hello,” said Dick, “old ’Thuselah’s awake. I thought he was frozen up. Hello, you old rascal!”

The parrot put his head on one side and walked slowly to the front of the box.

“Howdy do?” he muttered.

“Pretty well, thanks,” answered Chub. “How are you?”

“Stop your swearing,” replied Methuselah severely. “Can’t you be quiet?”

“Well, that’s a nice way to answer a polite inquiry,” said Chub. “You ought to teach him better manners, Harry.”

“I can’t teach him anything,” mourned Harry. “He knew all he knows now when I got him. Roy and I tried one day to—”

“Roy,” observed Methuselah slowly, experimentally. Then, as though to hide his embarrassment, “Well, I never did!” he shrieked. The four stared at each other in astonishment. Harry found her voice first.

“That’s the first new thing he’s ever said!” she whispered in awe.

“See if he will say it again,” Dick suggested. But in spite of all their coaxing Methuselah was obdurate. You would have thought he had never heard the word in his life, much less pronounced it.

“Well, it shows who’s the favorite, anyhow,” laughed Chub. Harry blushed a little and answered quickly:

“That’s because Roy has been nice to him, and doesn’t make fun of him.”

“Maybe,” teased Chub, “but I notice he doesn’t break out with my name or Dick’s. And Dick just loves him; don’t you, Dick?”

“Of course I do,” answered Dick, walking over and rubbing Methuselah’s head through the slats. “We’re pretty good friends considering that we haven’t known each other very—*Ouch! Great guns!*”

“What’s the matter?” laughed Roy.

“Why, he pretty near bit my finger off! ’Thuselah, you’re a

hypocrite. After this when you want your old top-knot scratched you ask Roy; I'm through with you."

"Did he hurt you much?" asked Harry anxiously.

"No," said Dick, "he just nipped me."

"Oh, that was just a love-nip," said Chub. "That's the way he shows his affection. He's so fond of me that I have to keep away from him; I was getting all black-and-blue spots!"

"You're a naughty 'Thuselah," said Harry sternly. "For that you shall go to bed. Good-night."

She let the piece of canvas fall over the front of the box. For a moment there was silence. Then came a subdued rustling followed by insulted mutterings:

"Well, I never did!" croaked Methuselah.

"Is the meeting over?" asked Chub. "Because I've got about two minutes to find my books and get to class."

"Yes," answered Dick. "It's adjourned until to-night at eight o'clock."

"Then I'm off! This half of the committee has duties!"



CHAPTER VIII

THE IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY HAS A SETBACK

“**Y**ou tell him,” said Roy, subsiding on to an inverted bucket with a sigh.

“No, sir,” answered Chub; “you’re chairman and you’ve got to make the report to the—er—meeting.”

“Well, you don’t have to tell me anything,” said Harry, who had just entered and was unbuttoning the cape which she had worn across from the Cottage. “Papa told mama about it at supper. He—he thinks it’s a joke!”

“That’s right,” said Roy ruefully, “that’s just what he does think.”

“But you told him it wasn’t, didn’t you?” Dick demanded impatiently.

“Yes, several times, but he only smiled and said he guessed it wasn’t quite practical—”

“Practicable,” corrected Chub.

“Practical!”

“Practicable; I noticed especially and thought what a nice word it was.”

“Look here, I’m chairman, and if I say practical—”

“Practical it is,” said Chub. “I’ll lick the first fellow that says

anything else. I remember perfectly—”

“Cut it out, you two, and talk sense!” said Dick. “Do you mean that he has forbidden us to go ahead with it?”

Roy looked at Chub and Chub looked at Roy, and presently each shook his head.

“No, he didn’t forbid anything,” answered Roy finally. “He just laughed and—and—”

“Acted as though he was humoring a couple of mild lunatics,” added Chub resentfully.

“But what objections did he make?” Dick asked.

“Objections? Oh, he wasn’t very—what do you call it?—specific. He thought at first we were fooling and then when we both told him we weren’t, that we’d started the scheme and that we’d made him honorary president, he—”

“Laughed as though he had a fit,” finished Chub, smiling broadly himself in recollection.

“But what did he say?”

“Oh, he said he guessed we wanted a dormitory, but that we’d better not force events—or something like that; said thirty thousand was a big sum to raise and that maybe we’d better wait awhile and see—see how things shaped themselves.”

“Whatever that means,” added Chub.

“Did he accept the honorary presidency?” Dick asked.

“I don’t know; he said something polite, but I don’t believe he was much impressed.”

“But he didn’t decline it?”

“No; did he, Chub?”

“Nary a decline,” Chub chuckled. “He said something about you, Dick.”

“What was it?”

“Said he liked your enterprise, but maybe you’d better apply some of it to your studies.”

“I’m disappointed in papa,” said Harry sorrowfully.

“Oh, well, don’t you care,” Chub replied cheerfully. “We’ve had a lot of fun out of the scheme. I guess none of us really expected to make a go of it, anyhow, so there’s no sense in being disappointed. I move that the treasurer be instructed to return the subscriptions and that the Ferry Hill School Improvement Society be declared disbanded.”

There was silence. Harry and Roy looked questioningly at Dick, who, in turn, was gazing thoughtfully at the lantern.

“Any one second that?” continued Chub.

Again silence fell. Finally Dick looked up.

“There’s no use in you folks trying to bust up the society,” he said; “because if you do I’ll organize it again.”

“What?” exclaimed Chub. “But what’s the use, Dick? We can’t do anything without the Doctor’s help, and he’s as good as told us to forget it!”

“He hasn’t forbidden us to raise the money for a new dormitory,” said Dick doggedly, “and I, for one, am going to go ahead. If any of the rest of you want to stay in and help, all

right; if not, you can withdraw and I'll go it alone.”

“I want to stay!” cried Harry promptly.

“Well—” began Roy.

“Oh, you can't scare me,” said Chub. “If you want to go ahead, I'm right with you. I don't see what we can do, but I'll stick as long as any one. We'll nail the flag to the mast, by jingo! ‘Shoot, if you will, this old grey head, but spare your country's flag! she said!’”

And Chub danced a jig on the barn-floor, his shadow leaping about huge and grotesque against the wall.

“I don't want to drop out,” declared Roy. “I'm as much in earnest about this as any of you. But what's your scheme, Dick?”

“Haven't any,” answered Dick promptly. “But I'll find one pretty quick. Ferry Hill's going to have that dormitory! You wait and see! It may take longer than I thought, but it's coming. I'll think up a way, all right; just you give me time.”

“Good for you!” said Chub soberly. “I believe you will, Dickums. And I'm with you. I never believed much in that dormitory before, but hanged if I can't pretty near see it to-night!”

“You could make a fellow believe in any old thing, Dick,” laughed Roy. “You ought to be a general or something in the army and lead forlorn hopes.”

“What's a forlorn hope?” demanded Chub. But no one paid any attention to him.

“Then I'm still secretary and treasurer!” cried Harry. “I was

so afraid you were going to break up the Society!”

“No, we’re not going to do anything of the sort,” said Dick stoutly. “We’re going right ahead, only we’re going to keep it quiet until we get things started. We can’t look for help from the honorary president, and so—”

“From who?” asked Roy.

“The honorary president, Doctor Emery. He hasn’t declined the office, so he’s still it, whether he knows anything about it or not.”

“That’s lovely!” cried Harry, clapping her hands and beating her heels against the grain chest on which she was seated. “It’s such a dandy joke on papa!”

“Well, he won’t help us,” Dick went on, “and so we’ll have to make a new start in a new direction. And I’ll have to find what that new direction is. But you folks want to think about it, too; four heads are better than one. And now, as it seems to be about a thousand degrees below zero in here, I move we adjourn.”

“When’s the next meeting?” asked Harry.

“I don’t know. We won’t have another until somebody has thought up something. We’ll adjourn subject to the call of the president.”

“That’s great!” said Chub. “I never did that before. It makes me feel real chesty. The secretary and treasurer will kindly carry the lantern so she won’t break her neck. I hope the next time we hold a meeting the janitor will manage to have the rooms of the society a little more comfortable as regards heat. I think I have chilblains.”

“Let’s discharge that janitor,” laughed Roy as they went out.

“All right,” agreed Dick. “Who is he?”

“Methuselah,” answered Chub promptly.



Two days later Chub and Roy encountered each other in the campus. As though at a prearranged signal each exclaimed:

“Where’s Dick?”

Then again, speaking together like members of a chorus:

“That’s what I was going to ask,” they added.

“What’s become of him?” added Roy. “I haven’t seen him more than twice since Monday night.”

“Nor I, I guess. I thought maybe he was at the Cottage, but Harry says she hasn’t seen him.”

“Was he at dinner?”

“Oh, yes.”

“Well, I wonder where—I tell you! Maybe he’s in the library. Did you look there?” Roy shook his head.

“No, that seemed an unlikely place to find him. What would he be doing there?”

“Search me,” said Chub. “Maybe he’s grinding. He’s been having a hard old time lately, I guess, with Cobb; Cobb asked him in class the other day if he had ‘an inherent antipathy’ for French.”

“What did Dick say?” asked Roy with a smile.

“Said no, he guessed it was ‘a constitutional repugnance!’”

“Lovely!” laughed Roy. “Was Cobb peeved?”

“No, he just sort of grinned and told Dick he’d better amend his constitution. Let’s go over and see if he’s there.”

So they got into sweaters and gloves again and battled their way across to School Hall. At first glance their search looked to be fruitless, for none of the half-dozen boys about the big table in the library proved to be Dick. But Roy stepped inside the door and spied their quarry down in a corner of the room by the magazine shelves. He was seated on the top of the little step-ladder with a magazine spread open on his knees and his head bent closely above it. Roy and Chub tiptoed softly toward him, but he heard them coming, and smiled placidly as they drew near. Roy thought he turned the pages of the magazine, but was not sure; at all events when Roy snatched it out of his hands it was opened at an article entitled “The Art of Fly-Casting.”

“What are you reading that silly rot for?” he whispered. “Come on over to the study-room and talk to us.”

But Dick shook his head calmly.

“I’m very comfortable here,” he answered. “I’m improving my mind.”

“Well, I don’t say that isn’t possible,” whispered Chub scathingly; “but you’d better be studying other things than fly-casting. Come on, Dick.”

But Dick was obdurate and as the rules forbade noise or scuffling in the library they were forced to let him have his

way. But they had the satisfaction of telling him softly but earnestly what they thought of him, and Chub even managed dexterously to get a grip on his neck and force him to rub his nose against the magazine before leaving him. When they reached the door and looked back Dick was once more intently reading.

“Silly chump!” growled Chub as they reached the hall. “What’s he want to study fly-casting for, especially at this time of year?”

“I don’t believe he was reading that at all,” answered Roy. “I think he turned the pages before we got to him.”

“He did? Let’s go over after supper and look through that magazine. Did you notice what it was?”

“Yes, but not what number; and as there’s a whole row of them I guess we’d have a long hunt. We’ll make him tell us the truth when we get hold of him.”

“All right. I’ll bet he’s up to something, though.”

But when supper was over and they looked around for Dick that person had again disappeared. They searched the two dormitories and then traveled across to the library again. There sat the missing one, perched once more on the top of the step-ladder with a magazine before him. This time they didn’t enter, for Mr. Buckman was on the other side of the room and they knew he would not allow any conversation. For a while they huddled about the radiator in the corridor and waited for Dick to appear. But he didn’t come, and as each had studying to do, presently they were forced to depart without him. But Dick couldn’t hope to elude vengeance forever, and when bedtime came he found himself in the hands of his enemies.

“How’s your mind coming on?” asked Chub very sweetly, as he pulled Dick over backward on his bed and sat on him. “Improving, is it?”

“Know all about fly-casting by this time, I suppose,” remarked Roy, as he rubbed the captive’s nose the wrong way. “It’s a fine thing to know about, fly-casting, Dick.”

“Oh, great!” Chub agreed, jumping himself up and down to an accompaniment of groans from Dick. “When I consider, Roy, how little I know about fly-casting I’m utterly appalled at my ignorance. And think of the time we’re wasting, too! Why, we might be out on the river all day long, Roy, casting the merry little fly across the ice. Think of that, will you?”

“Let me up!” groaned Dick.

“What? Let you up? Why, Chub, I think you’re sitting on the gentleman! How careless of you! Kindly remove yourself from the Champion Fly-Caster of Ferry Hill School. Let him up, Chub, and he will cast a few flies for us. Kindly look around, Chub, and catch a fly or two.”

“Don’t tell me,” begged Chub almost tearfully, “that this gentleman here is Mr. Somes, the World-Famed Fly-Caster! Don’t tell me that I have offered such an indignity to one so—so honored! I beg of you not to tell me, Roy!”

“You get—off of me—or I’ll tell—you something—you won’t want to—hear!” gasped Dick, kicking wildly.

“The gentleman seems uneasy, Roy,” said Chub. “Supposing you place your thumb on his nose and bear down gently but firmly. There, that’s it! I beg your pardon, sir? You will do what? You will kick— Roy, did you ever hear such language in all your life? Isn’t it disgraceful? Why, he

absolutely threatens us with bodily harm! My dear Mr. Fly-Caster, let me beg of you to calm yourself! There, I feared you would hurt yourself! That iron is quite hard, isn't it! Broken your shin? Oh, I trust not, Mr. Fly-Caster."

"Let him up," laughed Roy. "We'll be late for bed, the whole bunch of us."

"Then let us *fly*," said Chub. With a bound he cleared the bed just ahead of the blow Dick aimed and went racing downstairs to the Junior Dormitory. Roy made for the washroom and as Dick was encumbered with some of the bedclothes which had wrapped themselves about his legs during the struggle, he reached it in safety and was able to stand off the enemy with a tooth-mug filled with water until terms of peace were agreed upon.

Strange to say, on the following day Dick was again mysteriously missing, and this time he was not to be discovered anywhere. The corner of the library was deserted, he was not in the dormitory or the gymnasium, Harry had not seen him and, in short, he seemed to have taken wings and flown. Roy and Chub were on their mettle and were resolved to find him and bring him to book. But at four o'clock in the afternoon, after a whole hour's search, they were forced to own defeat.

"I don't see where he *can* be," said Chub. "We've looked everywhere. Look here! I'll just bet that Harry knows where he is! Let's go over and make her own up."

But Harry vowed that she knew nothing of Dick's whereabouts and the others were again stumped.

"It's mighty funny," growled Chub. "And he's up to

something too; you mark my words! He's up to mischief!"

"And we're not in it," grieved Roy.

"Oh!" cried Harry suddenly. "Have you tried the barn?"

"No!" answered the others in a breath. "Come on!"

They raced together along the curving drive and reached the barn quite out of breath. Chub held up a warning finger.

"He must be in here," he whispered. "We've looked everywhere else. So let's surprise him. Go easy and I'll try the door."

They tiptoed up and Chub lifted the wooden latch. The door yielded. With a frightful yell Chub threw the door open and they darted in. There was no one in sight.



CHAPTER IX

ON THE TRAIL

Roy and Chub stared at each other blankly.

“Well!” said Roy.

“Foiled again!” muttered Chub darkly.

The barn was dim save about the open door and where, high up, the late sunlight found its way through the dusty window in the loft. They peered about in the shadows, but saw nothing but Methuselah’s eyes gleaming uncannily.

“Maybe he’s in the loft,” said Roy softly.

“Pshaw, there’s nothing up there but bats and spiders and dust,” answered Chub. “What would he be doing here in the dark, anyhow? Come on; I’m freezing.”

“Well, let’s yell out and see if he answers,” Roy suggested.

They called “Dick!” several times, but the only reply was from the parrot, who chuckled wickedly in the darkness.

“Come on,” said Roy.

They left the barn, closing the door behind them, and walked briskly back to the dormitory.

“The only way to do,” said Chub, “is to watch him and not let him know it. After supper we’ll keep him in sight and when he sneaks off we’ll follow him.”

“That’s it! We’ll be detectives,” agreed Roy with

enthusiasm. [“I’m Sherlock Holmes.”](#)

“I’m Vidocq.”

“Who’s he?”

“A French detective,” answered Chub. “He had Sherlock Holmes fried to a frizzle. Besides, he was real.”

“I’ll bet you Holmes could have given him ten yards and beaten him,” answered Roy stoutly.



[“I’m Sherlock Holmes”](#)

“Get out! And Sherlock Holmes is only a fellow in a book, anyway!”

“That doesn’t make any difference. He was the best ever. And I’m he.”

“All right. We’ll see who discovers the secret and nabs the criminal,” said Chub. “That’s the real test. You ought to

engage Sid as Doctor Watson; you know Holmes always had to have Watson around to run his errands and all that.”

“That’s all right; Doctor Watson didn’t do any of the real detecting; he was just a sort of a substitute, and sat on the bench. What we ought to do, Chub, is to disguise ourselves; every detective uses a disguise.”

“That’s so, but we haven’t got any,” laughed Chub. “Supposing, though, we turn our sweaters inside out?”

During supper Dick was watched every moment. Every time he put his fork to his mouth Chub scowled knowingly; every time he took a drink of milk Roy looked meaningly at Chub; and when Dick called for a second helping of cold meat the two detectives smiled triumphantly. When Dick came out of the dining-hall Roy and Chub were standing near-by, apparently deeply engrossed in conversation. Chub saw him coming.

“Don’t let him suspect,” he whispered hoarsely.

With amazing effrontery Dick joined them.

“What are you fellows up to?” he asked.

“Nothing,” answered Chub with great unconcern. “Just talking.”

“Yes,” agreed Roy, “just talking.”

“You don’t say!” responded Dick with a grin. “What are you going to do to-night?”

“Study,” answered Chub promptly. “I’ve got a lot to do. And so has Roy. We’re going to be busy.”

“That’s all right; so am I,” said Dick. “Don’t let me disturb

you. See you later.”

He put his cap on and walked unhurriedly toward the door.

“Watch him!” hissed Chub.

The door closed behind him. Silently they waited a moment. Then both sprang toward the portal and as Roy put his hand on the knob it was opened quickly from without and Dick confronted them.

“Hello!” he said quizzically. “Going to study outdoors?”

“N—no,” stammered Roy. “We were—”

“Just going to get a breath of air,” said Chub, coming to his assistance.

“Oh,” said Dick, “well, you’ll find plenty of it out there.”

He held the door open and the other two sauntered out, trying to seem at ease. The door closed behind them. They looked at each other and smiled sheepishly.

“Where’s he going?” whispered Chub.

“Study-room, maybe. We’ll wait a bit and then go in. You go up-stairs and I’ll look around down here. He’s on to us, isn’t he?” Chub nodded.

“Sure,” he answered. “But it won’t help him. Vidocq is on his tail—trail, I mean.”

“And so is Sherlock Holmes,” muttered Roy. “Come on; we’ve been out long enough to get the air.”

“I’ve got all I want,” replied Chub with a shiver as they entered the corridor again. “You look in the study-room and I’ll go up-stairs.”

Roy nodded and they separated. Chub found both dormitories seemingly empty, but to make certain that Dick was not in hiding he looked under all the beds. This took some time and when he got down-stairs again and sought Roy he was not to be found. There were several boys in the study-room and as Chub entered unconcernedly Whitcomb looked up from his book with a frown.

“It’s the middle window on the end,” he said. “And please shut it after you; I’m getting tired.”

“What are you gibbering about?” asked Chub.

“Oh,” said Whitcomb, “I thought you were in it too.”

“In what?”

“The game—or whatever it is. First Dick Comes comes in and jumps out of the window. Then Roy comes along and I tell him about it and he jumps out. And neither of them closes the window after him, and I’m tired of jumping up, and— Hi! Where are you going? Well, say, *shut it after you, will you?*” But Chub was outside, up to his knees in a snowbank. Whitcomb sighed, pushed back his chair and slammed down the window for the third time. “Isn’t it great to be crazy?” he muttered disgustedly.

Of course Chub might just as well have gone out through the front door, but he felt that that would have been far from professional. He struggled out of the snowbank and peered about him. It was very dark and very cold. Lights shone from the windows of School Hall and from the Cottage, but there was no sound to be heard and there was no one in sight. Chub realized that the correct thing to do was to examine the snow for footprints, find the criminal’s and follow his track. But he

had no lantern, not even so much as a match, and so that course was out of the question. He wondered where Roy had gone. Perhaps he had discovered Dick and was on his trail. Well, it was bitterly cold and there was no sense in standing there at the edge of the drive and freezing to death. He'd go over to the library and see if either Dick or Roy were there. He crossed to School Hall and as he turned the corner to reach the doorway a figure detached itself from the shadows in the angle of the wall and slunk across the path into a thicket of leafless shrubbery. Chub paused and drew back into the darkness, his heart thumping with excitement. The other chap was discernible, but Chub could not distinguish his features. For several minutes the two stood motionless, watching each other. Chub's toes and fingers began to ache with the cold. He wished Dick would go on so that he could move after him and get warmed up a bit. Finally, just when Chub decided that he would have to stamp his feet to keep them from freezing, the other chap called across sternly.

“You might as well come out,” he said. “I see you and I know who you are.”

Chub gave a snort of disgust and walked into the light.

“Is that you, Roy?” he called.

“Yes, is that— Say, I thought you were Dick!” responded Roy disappointedly, as he scrambled out of the thicket.

“That's who I thought you were,” Chub answered. “Did you see him?”

“No, he jumped out of the window in the study-room. I went after him, but when I got out he was gone. Then I came over to the library and he wasn't there. I was wondering where to look

for him when you came sneaking around the corner there. Where do you suppose he got to?"

"How do I know?" answered Chub shortly. "You're a nice Sherlock Holmes, you are!"

"And you're a fine Vidocq," replied Roy just as scathingly. Then they laughed.

"Well, we mustn't stand here in the light," said Chub. "Because if he is around here he will see us." They drew back into the shadow and the protection of the building. "What shall we do now?"

"I guess the best thing to do is to go back and get to work," replied Roy. "I've got some studying to do to-night."

"So have I. I say, let's let him go to thunder. Who cares where he is, anyway? If he doesn't want us to know what he's up to I guess we can worry along without knowing, eh? Besides—"

"*Hist!*" cautioned Roy. "*What's that?*"

A figure emerged from the darkness and paused some thirty feet away.

"It's Dick!" whispered Chub, gripping Roy's arm tightly.

"He sees us," Roy whispered back. "He's watching us."

There was a moment of suspense. Then:

"What are you boys doing there?" asked Mr. Buckman's voice.

"Foiled again!" sighed Chub. "We're just playing a—a sort of game, sir," he answered.

“Who are you?”

“Porter and Eaton, sir.”

“Well, have you got your lessons yet?”

“No, sir.”

“Then you take my advice and go indoors and get them.”

“Yes, sir; we were just going,” answered Roy meekly. The instructor swung past them toward the entrance of School Hall and the boys went silently back to the dormitory. As they entered the study-room Whitcomb looked up wearily.

“I don’t want to be fussy,” he said, “but would you mind using one of the other windows for a while? That one blows right on my back, and I’ve got the sniffles now.”



CHAPTER X

FOILED!

The next day was Friday and as the hockey team was to play a hard game on the morrow there was an hour of steady practice on the rink. That kept Roy busy from the time he had finished with his last recitation until it was time to get ready for supper. Chub too spent a busy afternoon engaged in matters pertaining to the base-ball team, and so when they met at supper neither he nor Roy was able to say whether Dick had disappeared that afternoon. At all events he was in plain sight now. Roy turned to Chub.

“See how queer he’s acting,” he whispered. “And he isn’t eating much of anything; I’ve been watching him. Look, he doesn’t even know that his fork is empty!”

It would have been very evident to a much less careful observer than a detective that Dick was absent-minded and preoccupied that evening. Once he laid down his fork and began tracing patterns on the table-cloth with his thumb nail and several times he paused with his glass of milk in mid-air to gaze frowningly into space.

“I’ll bet he’s thinking up some scheme to get that money,” said Chub, after a few moments of amused observation. But Roy shook his head.

“I don’t think it’s that,” he answered. “He wouldn’t have to run away out of sight every day to just think. He’s *doing* something; you see if he isn’t.”

“Well, he can just go ahead and do it for all I care,” said Chub. “I’m not going to stand around in the snow to-night, I’ll tell you that.”

“Nor I,” replied Roy. “Besides, to-morrow will be the time to play detective. We won’t have anything to do in the morning, Chub, so let’s track him. Even if we don’t find out anything it will make him peeved.”

“I didn’t notice that he got much peeved last night,” observed Chub dryly.

“Never mind; he won’t get away from us in daylight as easily as he did then,” responded Roy. “And whatever he’s up to he will be sure to try and sneak off in the morning. So let’s watch him, eh?”

“All right; Vidocq again takes up the relentless pursuit.”

“What we need,” said Roy, “is a clue. Every detective ought to have a clue.”

“That’s so; supposing we ask him for one? We might tell him that if he doesn’t give us a clue we’ll refuse to pay any more attention to him.”

“I guess he’d feel pretty bad,” laughed Roy.

After supper they went into the study-room and sat where they could watch the front door. Presently Dick came downstairs and passed out. Roy and Chub looked at each other inquiringly, and Chub got half out of his chair. But Roy shook his head.

“Let him go,” he hissed melodramatically. “Our time will come!”

After breakfast the next morning, which was Saturday and a holiday, Chub and Roy went up to the Junior Dormitory and stationed themselves at the windows overlooking the campus. Chub from his post of observation had a clear view of School Hall and the path to the river, while Roy could see the gymnasium, the Cottage and the path to the village. They had left Dick at the breakfast table, but it was after eight o'clock and he would have to leave the dining-room shortly. If he came up-stairs they would hear him, while if he went out of the building they could not fail to see him. But the minutes passed and nothing happened to vary the monotony.

“Bet you he’s gone into the study-room and is reading,” said Chub disgustedly. “He’s just mean enough to do that!”

“Well, he won’t read very long, I guess,” answered Roy cheerfully. “Dick doesn’t care much for reading.”

Ten minutes passed.

“Anything doing, Sister Ann?” asked Chub boredly.

“Not much. Billy Warren and Pryor are going over to the gym and Sid and Chase are throwing snowballs down here.”

“Oh, well, let’s call it off. It’s a dandy day and I’m not going to waste it up here. Let’s go skating. We’ll get Harry and—”

“S-sh! There he goes!” whispered Roy hoarsely. Chub ran to the other window.

“Don’t let him see us,” he said. “He’s going to the village, I’ll bet. We’ll wait until he gets past the gym and then we’ll scoot down.”

Dick was swinging off along the path with long strides. In a moment he had passed the gymnasium and was making for the

gate in the hedge.

“Come on!” cried Chub.

Side by side they raced down-stairs, seized their caps from the rack in the hall and then cautiously opened the door. Dick was out of sight. They hurried after him. At the gate they paused and reconnoitered.

“It’s all right,” said Chub. “He’s just turning into the road toward the Cove. Come on, but keep low.”

So they skulked across the athletic field and reached the road just in time to see Dick pass around the first turn, some three hundred yards away. It is a mile to Silver Cove and for that distance Chub and Roy stalked Dick tirelessly. They had to keep at the side of the road lest he should turn around and see them, and frequently, when the road ran straight for some distance, they were forced to hide in the bushes or behind walls. Luckily, however, there are many twists and turns between Ferry Hill and Silver Cove, and so the detectives’ task was not so difficult. Never once, as far as they could tell, did Dick look back.

“He doesn’t suspect,” said Roy triumphantly.

“No,” chuckled Chub, “little does he reckon that the human bloodhounds are hot upon his trail.”

“What’s reckon?” asked Roy.

“Don’t you study English?” scoffed Chub.

“Yes, but I never heard of reckon. I don’t believe there is such a word.”

“That’s all right, my boy. When we get back I’ll show it to

you in a book I was reading the other day. Look out!”

They scuttled hurriedly to the side of the road and subsided in the bushes. Dick had stopped and was standing in the middle of the road looking intently at what appeared to be a roll of paper which he had taken from his pocket.

“Must be a map,” said Roy. “Perhaps he’s lost his way.”

Chub laughed. “Whatever it is, I wish he’d put it away again and go on. There’s a peck of snow down the back of my neck.”

“Oh, little you reckon,” said Roy cheerfully.

“You dry up,” growled Chub. “There he goes; come on.”



[“They scuttled hurriedly to the side of the road and subsided in the bushes”](#)

Dick had thrust the roll of paper back into an inner pocket of his coat and was once more on his way.

Ferry Hill is only a small town and the business portion of it

occupies but a few blocks along the main street, which runs to the river and the bridge. Dick turned to the left there, and Roy and Chub hurried after. When they reached the corner they peeked cautiously around just in time to see their quarry enter one of the stores.

“We mustn’t get too near,” said Roy, “or he will see us when he comes out.”

“Let’s go over to the drug store, buy some hot chocolate and watch through the window,” suggested Chub. That seemed a good plan and they followed it. The drug store was almost opposite the shop which Dick had entered and for several minutes the detectives sipped their hot chocolate and watched for him to reappear.

“It’s a stationery store,” said Chub. “Wonder what he wants there.”

“When he comes out,” said Roy, “one of us might go over and find out what he bought. That might give us a clue.”

“Yes, but we’d get separated. He is a dangerous man and we must stick together for mutual protection. I wish he’d hurry up.”

They finished their chocolates and Chub bought ten cents’ worth of lemon drops. They munched those for a while, their eyes fixed on the door of the stationery store. Ten minutes passed. Then Chub grew uneasy.

“He must have come out,” he said.

“He couldn’t have. I’ve been watching every instant.”

“Then there’s a back door and he’s gone out that way!”

“Pshaw! Why would he do that? He didn’t know we were following him.”

“N-no; at least, I didn’t think he knew it. But it looks now as though he did. If he doesn’t come out in five minutes we’ll go over. We can make believe we want some pencils or something.”

“All right,” Roy agreed. They cast anxious glances at the store clock from time to time. Never had five minutes taken so long to pass! But finally:

“Come on,” said Roy. “Time’s up.”

“We’ll ask for some pencils if he’s there,” whispered Chub as they crossed the street. The stationery store was small and as soon as they had closed the door behind them they saw that Dick had vanished. The only occupant was a middle-aged man who was arranging some boxes on one of the shelves back of a counter.

“We’re looking for a fellow who came in here a while ago,” said Roy. “Has he gone?”

“A young fellow about your age?” asked the shopkeeper. “Yes, he’s been gone about twenty minutes. But he said you’d be along asking for him and he left a note. Let me see; where did I put it?”

“A note?” faltered Chub.

“Here it is,” said the man. “I guess that’s for you, isn’t it?”

Roy took it and read the address: “Mr. Thomas Eaton, or Mr. Roy Porter.”

“Y-yes, that’s ours,” he muttered, looking sheepishly at

Chub. That youth had thrust his hands in his pockets and was whistling softly. Roy unfolded the sheet of paper, read the message and handed it silently across to Chub. Chub read it, refolded it carelessly and turned toward the door.

“Well, there’s no use waiting,” he said. “By the way, I suppose he went out the back way, didn’t he?”

“Yes,” replied the shopkeeper. “He wanted to know if he could get the Ferry Hill road that way and I told him to keep to the left through the alley, cross the field back of the saw-mill and—”

“I see. Did he get what he wanted here?”

The man chuckled. “Yes, but he said I wasn’t to tell you what it was because it was a sort of a surprise to you boys.”

“Oh, he did, eh?” muttered Chub wrathfully as they went out. “He thinks he’s mighty smart, doesn’t he? Let’s see that note again.”

“You put it in your pocket,” said Roy.

“Oh, yes, here it is:

Dear Friends: A red sweater shows up great against the snow. Sorry I can’t wait for you. Dick.

“It’s all your fault. You might have known that he could see that sweater a mile off.”

“I didn’t think he looked around once,” answered Roy meekly.

“Nor did I. But he did. He knew all the time we were following him. He makes me tired. Let’s go home.”

“What’s the use? Now we’re here let’s bum around a while. It’s only half-past nine.”

Roy’s advice prevailed. After a while their good-humor returned and they found the laughable side of the adventure.

“Dick’s a cute one, all right,” said Chub admiringly.

“He surely is,” said Roy. “It isn’t many fellows could fool Sherlock Holmes and Vidocq at the same time!”

“We’re a nice pair of detectives,” laughed Chub. “But we’ve got to get even with him somehow, Roy, and we’re going to do it.”

“I say, let’s tell Harry about it. She’s got bully ideas—for a girl. Maybe she can suggest something. What do you say?”

“All right. We’ll do it as soon as we get back.”

They had a pretty good time of it until after eleven; went through the stamping works and saw them make tin cans and boxes, walked out on the bridge a way, Roy standing treat for the tolls, and ended up at the saw-mill. And it was at the latter place that they found their first clue.

They were sitting on a pile of new boards, basking lazily in the sunlight and watching the big band-saw eating its way through the logs, when one of the men came by and saw them.

“Hello,” he said, “want to buy anything?”

“No, sir,” answered Roy. “We are just looking. Are we in the way?”

“Not a bit, not a bit. Glad to have you. Only there was a fellow here the other day buying some stuff. He was about your style and I thought maybe you wanted something too.”

“Was he a big fellow with yellow hair?” asked Chub eagerly. “With a gray sweater on?”

“Yes, I think so. Friend of yours?”

“Yes, sir. What was he buying?”

“I don’t remember; some kind of lumber; two or three sticks, I guess.”

The man went on and Roy and Chub fell to speculating eagerly on the meaning of Dick’s purchase.

“What’s he want with lumber?” asked Chub. “He couldn’t lug it back to school with him!”

“Anyway, it’s a clue,” said Roy. “Even if it doesn’t tell us anything. Let’s get home. We’ll find him and make him tell us.”

“He won’t, though,” said Chub.

They trudged back in the noonday sunlight over the snowy road and had almost reached the school when one of the rattle-trap carriages which hover about the Silver Cove station overtook them. They paid no particular attention to it, save to draw to the side of the road out of its way, until the occupant of the rear seat addressed them. Then they looked up to see Dick lolling there at ease and smiling down at them as he rattled by.

“You’d better hurry up,” he called. “It’s almost dinner time.”

“*What do you think of that!*” gasped Chub as the carriage left them behind.

“He must have plenty of money,” said Roy. “They charge

fifty cents to bring you over from the Cove.”

“But he’s been over there all the morning when we thought he was back at school! He—he’s just fooled us right and left! I wish I’d shied a snowball at his silly head!”

“Wait till we get hold of him!” muttered Roy.



CHAPTER XI

THE ADVENTURES OF ESTRELLA

They were not able to take Harry into their confidence right away, however, as by the time they reached school it lacked but a few minutes of dinner time. And after that meal, when they called at the Cottage, they found that Harry had not returned from Silver Cove but had remained to take dinner with one of her girl friends in the village. In the dining-room Roy and Chub had treated Dick with contemptuous indifference and afterward had observed him pass out of the building and across to the library with supreme unconcern. He smiled tauntingly as he passed them in the corridor, but both Roy and Chub looked impassively by him.

“Who’s your friend?” asked Chub audibly.

“Never met him,” responded Roy loftily. “Some low person.”

At two Roy had to go and get ready for the hockey game, and as Chub had nothing better to do he went with him. During the half-hour of practice preceding the game and during the contest itself he watched from the side of the rink and, with Sid, Whitcomb, Pryor, Post and others cheered the home team on to a well-deserved victory. Harry didn’t turn up at the game—an unusual thing for her—and so it was not until after supper next day that Roy and Chub found Harry. They called again at the Cottage and were ushered by Mrs. Emery into the little parlor. Harry joined them soon afterward and in a few moments was made acquainted with the situation relating to

Dick.

“It’s a mystery!” she declared excitedly.

“It surely is,” Roy answered. “And we want you to help us find out what the silly chap is up to. Will you?”

“Yes, and I’ll be a detective too!”

“All right,” answered Chub, “but I don’t think I ever heard of a female detective; did you, Roy?”

Roy shook his head, but Harry protested vigorously.

“There are female detectives,” she asserted stoutly. “I read of one once in some book. She was awfully smart and found the stolen diamonds after every one else had failed!”

“All right,” said Chub. “What was her name?”

“Why, it was—was—oh, dear, I’ve forgotten it!”

“Then I don’t see how you can be her,” teased Roy.

“I shall recall it,” answered Harry with dignity. “Besides, detectives have aliases, don’t they?”

“Oh, the cheap ones do,” replied Roy. “Sherlock Holmes didn’t change his name.”

“Did Vi—Vi—Vidocq?” asked Harry anxiously.

“Yes, often,” answered Chub. “He was the real thing, too. He caught more desperate criminals than Sherlock Holmes ever thought of! And he was great for disguising himself, too.”

“Oh, that’s it!” cried Harry. “I must have a disguise!”

“Wear your hair on top of your head,” suggested Roy laughingly.

“Put your shoes on the wrong feet,” added Chub.

“Never you mind,” said Harry with sparkling eyes. “I know what I shall do. You wait and see. But if you recognize me—if you penetrate my disguise, I mean, you mustn’t let on. You won’t, will you? Because it might spoil everything.”

“You may depend upon us,” replied Roy gravely.

“We ought to have a password,” Harry continued. “So when we meet each other we can communicate.”

“*R-r-r-revenge!*” muttered Chub with a ferocious scowl. Harry clapped her hands.

“That’s it! That’s the password! ‘Revenge!’ Don’t forget it.”

“Trust us,” said Roy. “We think of nothing else. ‘Revenge!’”

“‘Revenge!’” echoed Harry.

“‘Revenge!’” growled Chub.

Then they looked at each other and laughed enjoyably. And suddenly Harry gave an exclamation of triumph.

“I remember!” she cried. “It was Estrella!”

“What was?”

“The name of that lady detective. Estrella—Estrella—oh, I can’t remember her last name, but I guess Estrella will do, won’t it?”

“Yes, I should think so,” Chub said. “It’s a fine-sounding name, all right. Roy, allow me to present you to Miss Estrella, the Lady Sleuth.”

“What’s a sleuth?” asked Harry anxiously.

“Oh, that’s just a slang name for detective.”

“Well, I don’t believe lady detectives would use slang,” she said. “So I guess I won’t be a sleuth, if you don’t mind, Chub.”

“Have your own way about it. It doesn’t make much difference what you call yourself, Harry, if you’ll only find out what Dick is up to. He’s got to be punished for the way he has treated us all. It—it’s a low-down trick, that’s what it is!”

“Yes, we owe him something,” Roy agreed. “And we’ll pay him back, too. But we must try and make him think that we aren’t watching him any more.”

“Yes, lull his suspicions,” said Chub.

“Then maybe he will get careless and we’ll catch him red-handed.”

“Red-handed!” echoed Harry with gusto. “Isn’t it lovely? I do wish I could start to-morrow, but I suppose you can’t detect on Sunday!”

“Hardly,” Roy agreed. “But on Monday we’ll begin in earnest. We mustn’t let him out of our sight a moment.”

“I don’t see how we can help letting him out of our sight,” Chub objected. “We have our recitations to attend and Harry has to go to Silver Cove.”

“Well, after school, then,” answered Roy. “In the afternoon we’ll—we’ll—”

“Dog his very footsteps,” aided Chub. “I read that somewhere; good, isn’t it?”

“Fine,” laughed Roy. “Little he recks—!”

“You dry up,” growled Chub good-naturedly, “and come on home.”

Harry went to the porch with them and there, at her suggestion, they clasped hands and cried “*Revenge!*” together in a thrilling chorus.

“We meet anon,” said Chub. “Farewell!”

And thereupon Vidocq and Sherlock Holmes slunk away into the enveloping darkness, and Estrella, muttering “*Revenge!*” under her breath, closed the front door and stole stealthily into the library to ransack the shelves for the detective story which recounted the adventures and triumphs of her namesake.

The next day Dick was inclined to be chummy, but Roy and Chub repulsed his overtures coldly. And in the afternoon he once more disappeared and didn’t show up again until supper-time. He spent most of the evening in the study-room, and although Roy and Chub watched him surreptitiously they were unable to gather any incriminating evidence, since he did nothing more enlightening than apply himself to his algebra lesson.

There was no hockey practice on Monday, and so when Roy had finished his last recitation in School Hall he hurried across toward the dormitory to dispose of his books, with the idea of then finding Dick before that mysterious youth had whisked himself out of sight. But before he had covered half of the distance between the two buildings he had forgotten all about Dick. For on the steps of Burgess stood a most remarkable figure. Roy stared and marveled. At first he thought he was looking at an elderly woman, but the next moment he changed his mind, for the small, slight form was youthful in spite of the

attire. There was a vividly blue cloth skirt which swept the ground, a black fur cape, rather the worse for service, which reached almost to the waist, a large hat with brown feathers and a heavy black veil which completely hid the face. One hand clutched a silver-handled umbrella and the other was lost in the folds of the voluminous skirt.

“Well, that’s a funny-looking scarecrow!” muttered Roy as he approached. The lady, whoever she was, seemed to be viewing him from behind the thick veil, and Roy ceased staring. But as he mounted the steps he could not resist another look. Through the close meshes of the veil he caught sight of two bright eyes and a rather impertinent nose, and—

“*Revenge!*” said a smothered voice.

Roy stopped and stared with wide-open mouth.

“I—I beg your pardon, ma-am!” he faltered, uncertain whether he had imagined it. “Did you speak?”

“*Revenge!*” said the voice again. Roy gasped.

“Harry!” he exclaimed incredulously.

“S-sh! Would you betray all?”

“Oh, but you’re a sight!” said Roy, standing off to obtain a better view of her. “Where’d you get the clothes, Harry?” Then he leaned up against the opposite railing of the porch and gave way to mirth. Harry stamped her foot and thumped the silver-handled umbrella.

“Roy Porter, you’re just as mean as you can be!” she declared aggrievedly. “And you can do your own detecting!”

“But, Harry,” Roy gasped, “if you could only see the way

you look!”

“I don’t care; I fooled you all right enough, Mister Smarty!”

“That’s so; I thought you were an old woman at first! It’s a dandy disguise, Harry.”

“Do you really think so?” Harry asked, somewhat mollified. “I had a terrible time getting the things, because of course I couldn’t ask for them; if I had, my disguise would have been no longer a secret, would it?”

Roy shook his head.

“And so I had to swipe—borrow them, I mean, without saying anything to mama. And if I should meet her wouldn’t she be surprised?” And Harry giggled behind the veil.

“I’ll just bet she would,” laughed Roy. “Have you seen anything of—”

“S-sh! Some one approaches!” cried Harry. “Follow me, but take no notice!”

Several boys had come out on to the steps of School Hall and were looking curiously across. Harry seized the folds of the ridiculous blue skirt and lifted it so that she could walk without tripping over it. Then, raising the silver-handled umbrella in a gesture of caution she turned and stole stealthily into the building. Roy, vastly amused, followed. Harry crossed to the dining-room, opened the door and beckoned. To enter the dining-room outside of meal-hours was strictly against the rules, but Harry was a law unto herself, and Roy ventured after her. Then she closed the door, turned the key in the lock and raised the black veil.

“Now,” she said, “we are safe for the moment.”

“Yes, that’s all very well, but supposing Dick takes it into his silly head to disappear while we are in here talking?”

“Then we must find him.”

“But we said we were going to watch for him and follow him. What’s the good of letting him get away? I left him in School Hall and he will be out in a few minutes.”

“We-ll, maybe we’d better go,” said Harry. “But I did want to talk to you a minute.”

“All right, go ahead. What do you want to talk about?”

“Do you think Dick would recognize—would penetrate my disguise if he met me?” she asked anxiously.

“I don’t believe he’d let you get near enough,” answered Roy with a laugh. “I’ll bet if he saw you coming he’d run a mile!”

“Now you’re being mean again,” said Harry reproachfully.

“Well, honest then, Harry, I don’t believe your own mother would know you!”

“But she’d know her clothes,” Harry said laughingly. “Supposing, then, that I go over toward School Hall and wait for him to come out. Then I can follow him and he won’t suspect anything.”

“All right, but I wouldn’t let him think you are after him,” Roy advised.

“Of course I sha’n’t,” answered Harry indignantly. “Don’t you suppose I know more about—about detecting than that? I’ll just make believe that I’m a visitor looking around the school. And maybe I’ll meet him and ask him some questions.

Wouldn't that be funny?"

"He'd know your voice in a minute," said Roy.

"I'd disguise it, like this," Harry replied, sinking her voice until it sounded like the croak of a raven. "You couldn't tell it was me, could you?"

"I should say not!" Roy declared with emphasis. "You sound the way Methuselah did the time he had a sore throat!"

"You're not very complimentary," said Harry with a pout. "But I suppose detectives mustn't mind that. Now I think we'd better go, don't you?"

Roy agreed and Harry carefully lowered her veil. At the door she turned.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you," she said. "I found that book last night after you went, and my name is Estrella De Vere. Isn't it lovely?"

"Fine and dandy!" answered Roy. "It sounds almost real."

He remained inside until Harry had passed down the steps and was sauntering with elaborate unconcern toward School Hall. Then he went out on to the porch and watched. Harry, her blue skirt trailing regally behind her, stopped in front of the entrance, leaned on her umbrella and studied the architecture of the building. A group of boys on the porch stopped talking and viewed her curiously. Presently, with a nod of approval, Harry turned and walked slowly up the path toward the Cottage, pausing at length to take in the details of that modest structure quite as thoroughly. The boys on the porch, Roy observed, were laughing and making fun of the queer figure. At that moment the door of School Hall opened again and Dick

hurried out and along the path toward Harry, who had now turned and was sauntering back toward the hall. As he went he cast a quick and cautious glance about him and Roy, although he tried to draw back out of sight, knew that Dick had seen him. Dick's gaze now was on the person in the black veil. When he reached the place where the path to the Cottage branched off from the road to the barn he seemed to hesitate an instant. Then he turned to the right toward the Cottage and Estrella De Vere.

By this time Harry had made up her mind to a desperate venture. As Dick reached her she sank her voice to sepulchral tones.

“Pardon me, young man,” she said, “but can you tell me what building that is?” She pointed the umbrella toward School Hall.

Dick stopped and touched his cap, looking very intently at the black veil. But Harry kept her head averted as much as she could and flattered herself that Dick was far from suspecting her identity. But she did wish he wouldn't look so hard!

“Yes, ma'am,” answered Dick. “That is the Biological Laboratory.” Harry gave a gasp. “And further along,” pointing out the dormitory, “you see the Astronomical Observatory.” Harry gasped again. Dick swung around and indicated the gymnasium. “And that building, ma'am, is called Somes Hall in honor of Mr. Richard Somes, who gave the money for it. It cost two million dollars and contains the Phrenological and Optimistic departments.”



[“That’s the Insane Asylum”](#)

Harry had a wild desire to giggle, but conquered it. She wondered for an instant whether Dick knew her, after all, and was trying to tease her. The expression of his face, which was one of the utmost seriousness, told her nothing. She almost

forgot to disguise her voice as she answered him.

“Thank you so much,” she said. “And—and the small house here?”

“Oh, [that’s the Insane Asylum](#),” answered Dick readily. “I have but one case confined there at present, a young girl. It’s really very sad, ma’am. I don’t think she will ever be any better. She imagines”—he dropped his voice to a confidential whisper—“she imagines that she’s a detective! Very sad, really!”

He touched his cap again, gravely and politely, and went on toward the Cottage, leaving Harry a prey to conflicting emotions, the strongest of which was exasperation.

“Now how did he know me?” she wondered. “I think he’s just as mean as he can be!”

She stood motionless and watched Dick ring the bell. In a moment the door was opened and he passed into the Cottage.

“And what do you suppose he’s gone there for?” she asked herself. “Perhaps he’s going to tell mama that I’m out here with her old blue skirt and fur cape on! Let him! I think he’s the meanest—!”

But at that moment the mystery was explained. She had put up one hand to make certain of the arrangement of her veil, which since she had first donned it had been giving her not a little trouble, and discovered that it had become undone at the back, leaving exposed a small expanse of red hair.

“That’s how he knew!” she exclaimed. “If it hadn’t been for that he’d have been fooled just as Roy was! Beastly old veil! And I just know he’s told mama and they’re having a lovely

joke about it! I'm going in!"

She hurried to the Cottage and attempted the front door, only to find that it was locked. Wrathfully she rang the bell. Steps sounded in the hall, the door was opened a little and Mrs. Emery's face appeared for a brief moment. Then,

"Nothing to-day, thank you," said her mother, and the door closed again sharply before Harry had recovered from her surprise. Then she beat upon the portal with the umbrella and stabbed at the button until the bell fairly outdid itself. A window opened up-stairs and Mrs. Emery put her head out.

"If you don't go away at once," she said, "I'll call the man to put you off the grounds. We don't allow peddlers here."

"I'm not a peddler!" cried Harry. "I want to get in! I'm Harry!"

"*What! Harry?*" exclaimed her mother. "Well, I am surprised!"

But Harry noticed that she was smiling broadly as she closed the window and disappeared. In a moment the door was opened and Harry passed inside, a little bit sulky.

"You knew it was me," she declared. "You just did it to tease me!"

"What, knew you in those clothes?" asked her mother. "Why, how could I, my dear? And with that veil over your face? And tied so neatly, too!"

"Yes, you did know; Dick told you! And he's as mean as mean can be!"

"Dick? No, Dick didn't tell me, my dear. But I saw you

leaving the house half an hour ago and found my blue skirt missing.”

“Where’s Dick?” demanded Harry.

“Oh, he’s been gone a long time, I guess. He came and asked if he might pass through the house and go out by the back door; he said you and he were playing a game called— Detective, wasn’t it? So I told him he might and the last I saw of him from my window he was climbing over the hedge into the ball field.”

Harry sank into a chair, the black veil trailing from one hand and the silver-handled umbrella in the other.

“Foiled again!” she cried despairingly.



CHAPTER XII

THE MYSTERY IS SOLVED

Harry told her story later to Roy and Chub, who laughed immoderately and, as Harry thought at first, somewhat unkindly. But after a while she joined her laughter with theirs.

“Oh, he’s a peach!” declared Chub. “He’s too much for us!”

“Nothing of the sort!” said Harry. “He got the better of me to-day, but—”

“A time will come!” suggested Chub.

“And I’ll catch him yet; you see if I don’t! He’s not so awfully smart.”

“Well, he seems to be a heap smarter than any of us,” said Roy. “I vote we leave him alone. When he gets good and ready he will probably tell us what he’s up to.”

“Leave him alone nothing!” said Chub. “Even if we can’t find out what he’s doing, we can make his life a burden to him. And I, for one, propose to do it. Look at the way he treated us in Silver Cove the other day! Let him alone? I guess not!”

“No, indeed,” agreed Harry. “It’s war to the death!”

“Revenge!” suggested Roy laughingly.

“You bet,” answered Chub.

The next day Dick, for some reason, refused to disappear or even attempt to. And that was a great disappointment to Harry, who had made all preparations to follow him and discover his

secret—although without the aid of a disguise. When they met, as they did several times in the course of the day, Harry passed him with her small nose held at a disdainful angle. Dick only grinned.

There was hockey practice that afternoon and Dick went down to the rink to look on. Of course Harry and Chub followed at a discreet distance, doing their best to appear unaware of his presence in the world. During practice Dick stood across the rink and smiled amusedly at them whenever they glanced across, a proceeding which drove Harry to heights of exasperation. Once in a lull of practice Roy skated up to them.

“Do you see him over there?” he asked softly.

“Of course we do,” answered Harry disgustedly. “Do you think we’re blind? He’s been grinning and grinning at us for half an hour.”

Roy shook his head gravely.

“Ah,” he muttered, “little he recks—”

Then he dashed away out of Chub’s reach.

But the next day brought triumph to Sherlock Holmes, Vidocq and Estrella De Vere, proving the truth of the old adage which declares that he laughs best who laughs last. For at noon Roy and Chub, tumbling out of School Hall after a recitation, found Harry awaiting them. Her eyes were dancing and she was all excitement.

“Revenge!” she whispered dramatically.

“Good! What’s up?” asked Chub.

“I have tracked him to his lair!” whispered Harry. “All is discovered! The miscreant is in our power! Estrella De Vere has—”

“What do you mean, Harry? Have you found out about Dick?”

“I have discovered all! Listen!”

And Estrella De Vere, the Female Detective, with Sherlock Holmes on one side and Vidocq on the other, passed down the path.

Ten minutes later Dick came out of School Hall and stood for a minute on the porch, looking idly about him. The snow which had covered the campus a foot deep a fortnight before was almost gone, and in places the sere brown turf showed through the worn and tattered coverlid of white. It was quite warm to-day, with a muggy atmosphere and a leaden sky, almost too warm for snow, and yet feeling very much like it. There was a steady *drip, drip* from the eaves and ledges, and the walks were showing borders of trickling water. Dick frowned and looked anxiously into the sky. What he saw there seemed to please him but little, for the frown deepened.

“Two or three days of this sort of weather,” he muttered half aloud, “and the ice won’t be worth a cent.”

Then, looking carefully about him again, he went down the steps and turned to the right toward Burgess. There were several boys in sight, but, and this was suspicious, neither Chub, Roy, nor Harry was to be seen. He took his books into the study room and deposited them on the big table. Then, the room being deserted, he crossed to one of the end windows and looked stealthily out. Apparently the coast was clear. But he

was taking no chances, and so he stole around to a front window and viewed the prospect carefully from there. He seemed puzzled, for he thrust his hands into his pockets, stared steadily for a whole minute at the engraving of "Washington Crossing the Delaware," which adorned the wall above the fireplace, and whistled softly to himself. Then, having apparently decided upon a course of action, he left the study room, crossed the corridor and opened a door which gave on to a descending stairway leading to the cellar. Down this he went very quietly, reached the furnace room and from there gained the outer air by way of a flight of stone steps. He was in a small stone-paved court behind the building, with the hedge marking inner bounds but a few paces away. There was a gate here, and making his way between a double row of ash barrels he passed through it and plunged into the Grove. Then he turned to the right and wound between the trees, crossing the path to the boat-house and river at right angles, and keeping well out of sight of the windows of the halls. Five minutes of this brought him to the corner of the hedge. Here the trees ceased abruptly and gave way to snow-covered fields. Crouching behind the hedge so that his head was below the top of it, he followed it at right angles to his first course until opposite the barn and stables. Here he raised his head and reconnoitered. There was no one in sight and presently he was wriggling his way through a hole in the hedge. From there he passed around the back of the small stable and fetched up before a small door leading to the basement of the barn. That door required careful handling, for it hung only by one leather hinge. But Dick managed to get through it, displaying a certain degree of familiarity with its idiosyncrasies, and closed it behind him.

He found himself in total darkness, but without hesitation he crossed the earthen floor and climbed a narrow flight of steps. As he went upward the darkness gave way to gray twilight and when he reached the main floor of the barn behind the cow stalls it was light enough to allow him to see distinctly about him. So far he had made scarcely a sound since entering the building, and now he crept very quietly along until he could see the closed door. The barn was deserted save for the inmates of the boxes across the bare floor, and even they were so quiet that no one would have suspected their presence. Dick gave a sigh of relief and walked less stealthily to the back of the barn where a ladder led straight upward to the edge of the loft. He sprang nimbly onto it and ascended until he could crawl over the edge of the upper flooring.

In front of him was a space some thirty feet broad by twenty deep. On one side it was used as a storage place for a couple of old sleighs, the remnants of a windmill and similar discarded truck. On the other side the remains of last summer's hay was stowed in a mow which ran along over the cow stalls. In the center of the loft, under the small window, was a large packing-box and beside it was a small one. On the larger one were spread several sheets of brown paper, pencils, a square, a rule, a pair of dividers and other tools of the draftsman. There was a good light from the window, in spite of the fact that its four small panes were obscured with dust and spider webs.

Dick went to his improvised table, took up a piece of kneaded rubber which lay there, and played with it while he studied the top sheet of paper. It was pretty well covered with lines and figures, but only the designer knew what they stood for. After a moment he drew the small box up and sat down on it, discarded the eraser for pencil and rule and set to work.

It was very quiet in the barn. Now and then Methuselah moved in his cage and muttered unintelligibly or a bat squeaked somewhere overhead in the darkness. Soon Dick was quite oblivious to everything save the work before him. He drew lines with his pencil, used ruler and dividers, set down figures on a smaller sheet of paper and multiplied or added or subtracted, erased lines already drawn, and through it all wore a deep frown which told how wholly absorbed he was in the task. And so he didn't hear the soft rustlings which came from the top of the haymow a few feet away when three heads were thrust into view. Heard nothing, in fact, until the silence was suddenly shattered by a sudden ["AH, THERE!"](#)



[“Ah, there!”](#)

He heard then; oh, yes, quite plainly!

Down dropped his pencil, over went the smaller box with a slam and Dick was staggering away in an effort to find his feet, his face very white and his mouth wide open for the

exclamation of alarm which he was too frightened to give. There followed a brief moment of silence during which Dick stared at the three laughing, triumphant faces topping the haymow. Then the color crept back into his cheeks and he slowly closed his mouth.

“Humph!” he said at last.

“Move hand or foot,” cried Chub dramatically, “and you are a dead man!”

“We have you in our power at last!” added Harry. And—

“Little you recked,” said Roy.

Dick picked up the box and began to grin.

“Well, you caught me at last, didn’t you?” he asked. “But I don’t see why Harry left off that lovely disguise of hers.”

“If you hadn’t seen my hair—” began Harry vehemently.

“Be careful what you say,” interrupted Chub, sliding down from the top of the mow, “for it will be used against you.”

The others followed and Roy playfully dug Dick in the ribs.

“Old Smarty was caught at last, wasn’t he?” he cried.

“Took you long enough, though,” said Dick. “And gave you some good exercise, too, eh?”

“We don’t deny, my boy, that you fooled us very nicely several times,” answered Chub, “but the expression on your handsome countenance a moment ago made up for everything.”

“I dare say,” laughed Dick. “I was scared stiff. How did you find out about this drawing-room of mine?”

“That was Harry,” said Roy. “She came in here this morning before school and let ’Thuselah out of his cage and he climbed up here and wouldn’t come down. And as she had to hurry to school she came up and got him and saw the things here. Then she told us about it and after school we hurried over here and hid in the hay.”

“Well,” said Dick regretfully, “I wish I’d stuck to my first plan and gone to the Cove instead of coming up here. Then you’d all have had a nice quiet afternoon in the hay.”

“But you didn’t!” said Harry triumphantly. “And it was the female detective that discovered you. Sherlock Holmes and Vidocq were out-detected by Estrella De Vere!”

“Eh?” asked Dick.

Then they told him all about their impersonations and he thought it was a huge joke, and mollified Harry completely by congratulating her on her triumph over the others. Then they compared notes for the past week.

“Where did you go the day we followed you to the stationery store?” asked Roy.

“I went out the back door and came around to the street and watched from the next corner until you crossed and went into the store. Then I went—about my business.”

“And that reminds me,” said Roy, “that we don’t know yet what you’re up to. Are you going to ’fess up now?”

“Sure. I’d have told you all about it long ago if you hadn’t begun this detective work. When I found what you were up to I thought I’d just give you a run for your money.”

“Is it anything about the F. H. S. I. S.?” asked Harry. Dick

shook his head.

“No,” he replied. “The fact is that’s at a standstill, I guess. I’ve had it in mind right along, but I can’t think of any way to go ahead. How about you?”

“I haven’t thought of anything,” Harry confessed. And Roy and Chub answered the same way.

“Well, it’ll come in time,” said Dick. “How about the funds, Harry? Got them safe?”

“Yes, they’re—but maybe I oughtn’t to tell where I keep them.”

“Just as well not to, I guess,” Dick laughed. “Chub might get hard up and borrow them.”

“Look here, Dick, what’s all this mean?” asked Roy, who was staring perplexedly at the drawing on top of the packing-case. “Are you inventing something?”

“Pshaw,” said Chub, “that’s just a problem in trig., isn’t it, Dick?”

“Well, you know all about it, so what’s the use of asking me?”

“No, go ahead and tell us, like a good fellow,” said Roy.

“Well, then, it’s the plan of an ice-boat.”

“Ice-boat!” exclaimed the others in chorus.

“Yes, why not?”

“But—but what’s it for?” asked Chub.

“To sail.”

“You mean you are going to make one?”

“Yes, it’s being made now.”

“Well, I’ll be jiggered!” Chub exclaimed. “Whatever put that into your crazy head?”

“Oh, I’ve wanted it ever since I saw that one of Thurston’s the day that Roy took a cold bath. So I found out all I could about the things; read everything I could find, you know. That was what I was doing that night in the library when you thought I was reading about fly-casting or something.”

“Didn’t think anything of the kind,” Roy disclaimed. “I saw you turn the pages as we came up.”

“Did you? All right. Well, I finally got some idea about the things and had a talk with a fellow at the Cove. He builds boats, but has never tried his hand at ice-boats before. He didn’t want to have anything to do with it at first, but I finally got him interested. He said I’d better go to some fellow at Poughkeepsie or somewhere who knew all about them, but I told him I wanted it made where I could have a finger in the pie. So he got busy. I made the drawings and he’s building accordingly.”

“Is this it?” asked Roy interestedly, pointing to the plan before him.

“No, that’s only the sail-plan. The other’s at the Cove; Johnson has it.”

“That’s what you bought the lumber for!” exclaimed Chub. Dick nodded.

“Yes. And I’ve bought a lot more since then. It’s costing like anything, but it’s lots of fun. I want you all to go over with

me Saturday and have a look at it.”

“How big is it, Dick?” asked Roy.

“It’s just a smallish one,” was the answer. “Twenty-nine feet long by eighteen wide.”

“Phew!” cried Roy. “It doesn’t sound small! When will it be done?”

“I don’t know; about a week, I guess. The worst thing is figuring about the sails. You see, I don’t know very much about sailing; never sailed anything in my life but a kite. So it’s puzzling, and I’m more than half guessing. Maybe the fool thing won’t go when it is done.”

“Course it’ll go,” said Chub. “A sail’s a sail.”

“I think it’s perfectly grand!” said Harry with awe. “Will you take me out in it, Dick, when it’s finished?”

“Of course; and if it does manage to go I’m going to send a challenge to that Thurston chap.”

“Say, that’ll be bully!” cried Chub. “And I’m just dying to see the thing. Can’t we go over before Saturday?”

“Maybe, but it won’t be very far along before that time. A lot of the bolts and braces had to be made, and that takes time, you know. Besides, that’s only three days from now.”

“What color are you going to paint it?” asked Harry.

“Well, I’d like to have her red,” answered Dick, “but I suppose it wouldn’t do, for that’s Hammond’s color, and, besides, Thurston’s is red.”

“Paint her blue,” suggested Roy.

“Pink,” said Chub.

“I guess I’ll have her green,” Dick said. “That shows up pretty well at a distance.”

“And call her the *Shamrock* or the *Erin Go Bragh*,” laughed Roy. “What *are* you going to call her, by the way?”

“Haven’t thought much about that yet. Usually they call ’em *Icicles* or *Jack Frosts* or *Blizzards*, but I’d rather have something a little newer.”

“Well, you can name her after me if you want to,” observed Chub modestly.

“Yes, call her the *Chump*,” said Roy.

“Let’s all think of names for it,” cried Harry. “We’ll write them down so as not to forget them and then we’ll give them to Dick and he can select one.”

“And the one whose name is selected,” suggested Chub, “gets a prize, like—like not having to ride on the boat.”

“You’ll be glad enough to ride on her when you see her,” said Dick.

“Who? Me?” queried Chub. “Well, maybe so; I’m naturally of a brave and reckless disposition. In fact, as far as I’m personally concerned I’d like it, but there is the community to think of. Of course, I owe it to the community to be careful of myself and not—”

“You’re talking a great deal of nonsense, Thomas H. Eaton,” said Harry. “If Dick asks me to go with him I’ll go mighty quick!”

“If it’s any sort of a boat that’s just the way you will go,”

observed Roy dryly. “So quick you won’t know what’s happening to you.”

“It must be lovely!” cried Harry, clasping her hands and looking enraptured.

“Has any one seen Thurston’s boat lately?” asked Chub.

“Yes,” Roy answered, “I see it pretty nearly every afternoon. It’s a hummer, too. I think he goes over to school on it in the mornings and back to the Cove in the afternoon, because I’ve seen him heading that way several times about the time we get through hockey practice.”

“The only thing I’m afraid of,” said Dick, with an uneasy glance through the grimy window, “is that we’ll have a thaw before I get her ready.”

“That’s so,” Chub agreed, “it looks like that now. But you can’t tell; it may be frozen tight again by morning. Where are you going to get your sails, Dick?”

“At the Cove. There’s a fellow there makes them. And, say, you fellows, I’ve got to finish this plan this afternoon so as to take it over to-morrow. I don’t want to seem inhospitable, but if you’ll just let me alone for about an hour I can do it.”

“Of course we will,” Harry declared. “We’ll go right away. Come on, Vidocq, and Sherlock Holmes!”

“You’re sure you don’t want me to stay and help you?” asked Chub. “I’m a terror at planning; once I planned a dog-house.”

“I’ll bet it was a peach!” jeered Roy.

“It was. I put a door at each end so Caesar could get in and

out easily, but the fool dog thought it was a tunnel and used to run through it full-tilt like an express train.”

“Get out!” said Dick.

“Fact, really! He’d get a good start and go through like sixty; and he used to whistle as he went in.”

“Chub Eaton!” cried Harry. “You come on home after that!”

“All right,” laughed Chub. “This is no place for genius, anyway. After you, Miss Estrella De Vere.”



CHAPTER XIII

THE *BOREAS* TAKES THE ICE

When Saturday came the four walked over to the Cove through a blinding snow-storm to view the ice-boat. Dick piloted them down to the edge of the river, where, in a little shed in Johnson's Shipyard, were two timbers bolted and braced together in the shape of a cross which Dick declared was the ice-boat. The mast was ready but not yet stepped and the narrow oval at one end which Dick called a cockpit was still unfinished. Harry was distinctly disappointed.

"I'd be afraid to sail on that, Dick," she confided earnestly. "I might tumble off."

Roy and Chub, however, were enthusiastic over the craft. The tapering backbone of shining whitewood and the runner-plank of the same material looked very business-like. Stays of steel wire led from the runner-plank forward and back to the ends of the backbone, with turn-buckles to tighten them. The rigging also, Dick explained, was to be of wire. The sails were promised for the middle of the next week, and on the following Saturday the boat was to be launched. On the way back to school there was little opportunity for conversation, since it was necessary to fight against the wind and sleet at every step. But afterward, before a roaring fire in the study room, they discussed the matter of a name. Harry had written down eleven names and Roy and Chub had one or two to suggest besides. Harry's suggestions, much to her disappointment, didn't find favor. Such names as *Ice Queen*, *Reindeer* and *Fleetwing* were,

Dick thought, rather too ladylike, as he expressed it.

“I’d thought of *Storm King*,” said Roy tentatively.

“Not bad, but it doesn’t suggest speed,” Dick said. “How would *Tempest* do?”

“*Tempest* sounds like rain,” Chub objected, “with thunder and lightning on the side.”

“That’s so. What’s your name for it, Chub?”

“Oh, I’ve got just the thing,” answered Chub modestly. “What do you say to *Polar Bear*?”

“Might as well call it *Teddy Bear*,” scoffed Roy. “Polar bears aren’t fast.”

“Aren’t they, though? Did you ever have one chase you?”

“No, did you?”

“Lots,” answered Chub. “They can run like sixty!”

“Besides,” said Harry, “polar bears aren’t green, and the boat’s going to be green.”

“Polar bears are green before they’re boiled,” said Chub flippantly. “And anyway the boat isn’t painted yet. It could just as well be white as green.”

“Why don’t you name it *Dick*?” asked Roy. “You’re about the fastest thing on the ice I know of.”

“*Glacier*?” queried Chub.

“Icy, but slow,” said Dick.

“I know!” cried Harry. “*North Wind*!”

“That’s not bad, is it?” asked Dick. “Only I suppose it’s

been used dozens of times. I'll put that down, anyway. Try again, Harry."

Harry settled her chin in the palm of one hand and frowned intensely at the leaping flames.

"*Blast!*" exclaimed Chub. "You speak of an icy blast, don't you know?"

"Yes, but you'd think right away of dynamite," laughed Dick.

"I suppose you would if you had no more poetry or romance in your soul than you have, you wild Westerner!"

"Isn't there a bird that lives on ice?" asked Harry suddenly.

"Never heard of one," Roy laughed. "He'd get cramps."

"I mean that lives where there's nothing but ice, Smarty," said Harry indignantly.

"Then he'd have to eat it, wouldn't he?"

"Quit your fooling," said Chub. "Estrella De Vere is in earnest. You are quite right, Harry. The little bird you are thinking of is the ice-pick. It makes its nest in refrigerators and lives on lemon ice-cream and pineapple sherbet."

"I think you're all horrid," said Harry. "There is a bird, Dick, isn't there?"

"There's the eider-duck," answered Dick.

"Which plucks the feathers from its own breast and makes them into eiderdown quilts," added Chub. "We will call the boat the *Eiderdown Quilt*."

"Oh, cut it out, Chub," said Roy. "Talk sense, can't you?"

“You ask the impossible,” murmured Chub.

“Well, so far we’ve got only one worth considering,” said Dick. “That’s *North Wind*. What do you think of it?”

“Sounds good to me,” said Chub.

“All right, I think,” Roy replied.

“Can’t think of anything better, any of you?”

Roy and Chub shook their heads.

“Well, we don’t have to decide on it yet,” said Dick. “And maybe we’ll think of something else before Saturday. I’m going up-stairs; any one coming?”

“Wait!” cried Harry. “I know!”

“Estrella De Vere has got an idea,” chanted Chub.

“I know the very thing,” went on Harry with sparkling eyes.

“Out with it,” said Roy.

“*Boreas!*”

The three boys looked at each other inquiringly.

“Boreas,” muttered Dick.

“Boreas,” echoed Roy.

“Boreas,” pondered Chub.

“That’s not half bad, is it?” asked Dick. “Boreas was—was—who was he?”

“He was the north wind,” said Chub. “He’s in mythology, you know.”

“I like it,” Roy declared. “It sounds sort of blustery and cold

and—and—”

“*Boreas* it is!” said Dick with decision. Chub leaped up and seized Harry’s hand and shook it enthusiastically.

“I congratulate you,” he said earnestly. “You have won the prize and won’t have to risk your life on the boat!”

“But it’s a good name, isn’t it, Dick?” Harry asked eagerly.

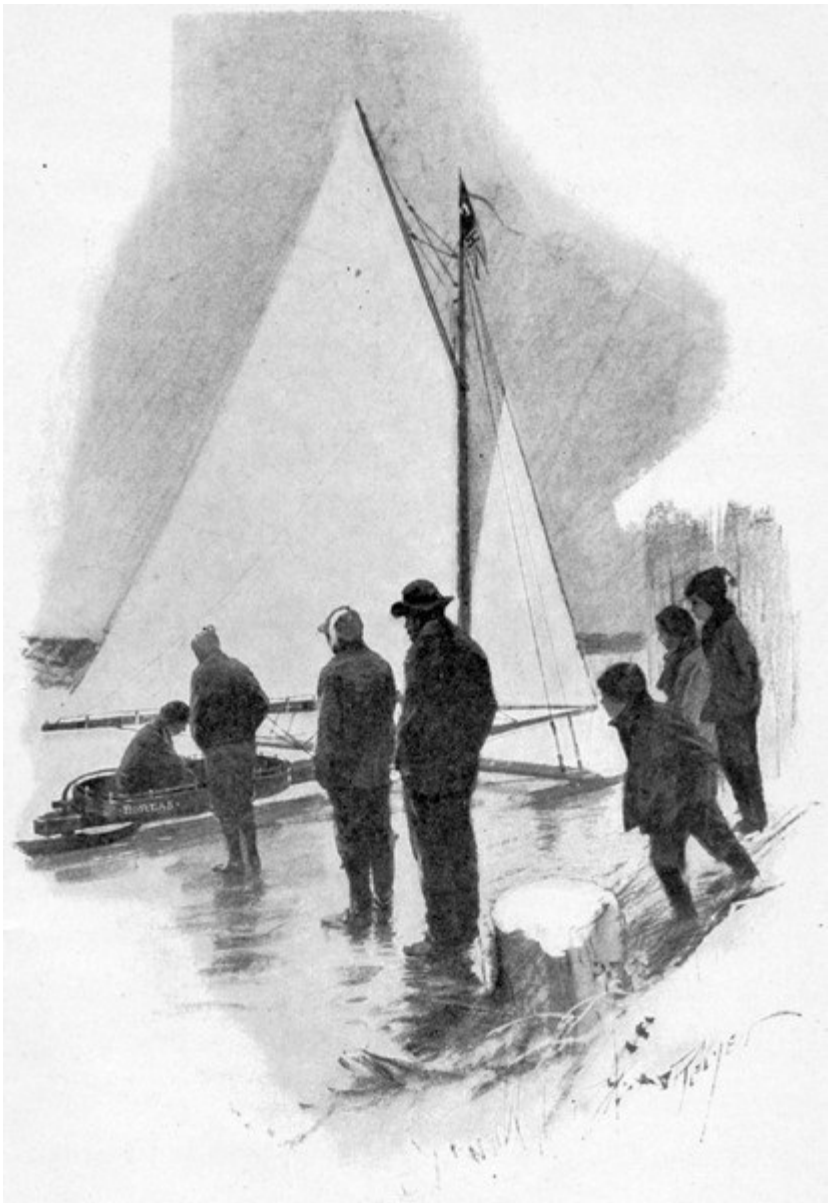
“Fine,” Dick replied. “I had a feeling all along that you would be the one to find a name for us.”

“Well, what do you think of that?” asked Chub indignantly. “I could have suggested *Boreas* long ago, only I wanted to give Harry a chance to save her life.”

“Now we’ve got a name,” said Roy, “all that remains is to get the boat. I wish it was next Saturday now, Dick.”

“So do I,” Chub chimed in. “Three cheers for the *Boreas*!”

Just a week later the *Boreas* took the water—I should say ice. [The launching](#) was not a ceremonious affair, nor was it largely attended. There were present that Saturday morning Dick, Chub, the builder, four small boys and the builder’s assistant. I mention them in the order of their apparent importance. The *Boreas*, resplendent in new dark green paint, was awaiting the ceremony on the edge of the ice, varnished spars shining in the sunlight, creamy sails furled on the booms and the wire rigging gleaming like silver strands.



[The launching](#)

There may be some of my readers who have never met with a real live ice-boat, and for their benefit a few words about the craft in general may not be out of place. The plan of an ice-boat is practically a triangle, the stern being the apex and each

angle terminating in a steel runner. The runner at the apex or stern is movable and does duty as a rudder. But what might be called the deck plan of an ice-boat shows an elongated lozenge enclosing a cross. The cross is formed by the fore-and-aft timber, called the backbone, and the transverse timber called the runner-plank. At the ends of the latter are attached the fixed runners, and from a point near-by wire braces run forward to the bow end of the backbone and aft to the stern, forming the outline of the lozenge. At the extreme end of the backbone is the steering-box, which corresponds to the cockpit of a water craft. This is usually shaped like a flattened oval, cushioned or carpeted and is large enough to hold two persons, one on each side of the backbone. The mast is set forward of the intersection of the two timbers.

There are two popular styles of rig: the jib and mainsail—like a sloop—and the lateen, a single sail triangular in shape. But whatever rig is used, the effort is made to have the center of weight as low as possible, and to this end the sails are made broad and low as compared with the sails on water boats. By lowering the center of weight the danger of capsizing is lessened.

The *Boreas* was rigged with jib and mainsail. Doubtless experienced ice-yachtsmen would have found much to criticize. Even Dick acknowledged that the mast was far too short and the sail area much less than it should have been. Also there were awkward points of construction resulting from lack of knowledge. But Dick was very well satisfied for all that, and Mr. Johnson viewed the result of his labor with pride. The ceremonies attending the launching—which was really no launching at all, since the boat was on the ice when the boys arrived at the scene—were short and simple. Dick handed a

check to the builder—a rather good-sized check it was, too—and Chub, striking an attitude, cried: “I christen you *Boreas!*” As Chub said, there wasn’t any bow in sight and so it would have been idle to have brought even a bottle of root beer along with them.

Dick unlashd the sails and hoisted them one after the other. They looked very fine in the sunlight and he ran his eye over their expanse of creamy whiteness with admiration. Then he and the builder turned their attention to the mooring line, and Chub, curled up in the steering-box with his hand on the tiller, sang “Mister Johnson, turn me loose!” And a moment later they were gliding gently away from the shore with the runners singing softly as they slid over the hard ice. Dick took the tiller and the boat’s head turned up-stream. They waved a good-by to the figures on the shore, and none too soon, for the gleaming sails caught the wind fairly and the *Boreas* began to gain speed every moment.

“Say, can’t she go?” asked Chub, watching the shore go by with amazement.

“She seems all right, doesn’t she?” replied Dick. “But she isn’t really going now. The wind’s dead astern.”

“Well, it’s pretty good for a starter,” answered Chub. “A fellow feels a little bit uneasy just at first, eh?”

“Well, it’s sort of funny, and that’s a fact,” owned Dick. “And until I’ve learned a little more about the thing I’m not taking any chances. There are several tricks I want to try.”

“How fast do you suppose we’re going?” asked Chub. Dick shook his head.

“Blest if I know. I was never on one before. We’ll call it

fifteen miles an hour.”

“Bet you it’s nearer thirty!” said Chub.

“When you go that fast you’ll know it,” Dick answered grimly. “Hold fast now; I’m going to tack her a bit.”

“Don’t you think we’re going fast enough as—” began Chub.

But the inquiry ended in an exclamation of alarm as one runner lifted itself off the ice and the boat heeled over.

“Is that safe?” asked Chub anxiously.

“Sure; two runners are enough any day,” Dick shouted back.

But he eased up on the helm and the boat settled back again, and Chub gave vent to a sigh of relief. Dick looked over and smiled.

“You see,” said Chub apologetically, “I kind of like to keep in touch with things.”

“Watch out for Thurston’s boat,” said Dick. “If we come across her we’ll sort of get a line on our sailing ability maybe.”

“Don’t see anything of her,” answered Chub, “but my eyes are watering so I can’t see much of anything. What’s that over there across the river?” Dick turned to look.

“Coleville,” he answered.

“What!” cried Chub. “Already? Why, we haven’t been going a minute! Talk about your automobiles!”

News of the ice-boat had got out days before, and when the *Boreas* drew near to the landing at Ferry Hill most of the school was on hand to welcome it. For a first attempt Dick’s

handling of the craft as he swung it around and ran it nose into the wind beside the landing was very creditable. Dozens of eager hands aided to hold the boat and numerous voices were raised in petition.

“Let me go with you, Somes?”

“You promised me, Dick! Don’t forget!”

“I’m going, ain’t I, Dick? Just for a minute, eh?”

“Don’t bother him! He can’t take every one, can you, Dick? He’s going to take me this time and then the rest of you fellows will have your chance.”

“I’m not going to take any one this time,” answered Dick. “I’m going to get the hang of her and maybe I’ll turn her over. And I don’t want any fellow to get hurt. I’ll give every one a ride when I get around to it. Shove her bow off a bit, will you, Chub?”

Chub, who had disembarked not altogether unwillingly, obeyed and the *Boreas* darted away from the shore with Dick lying low in the steering-box. For the next half-hour he put the boat through her paces, while the group on shore watched. He had read everything he could find on the subject of ice-yachting and there were many things he wanted to settle to his own satisfaction. One of them was the fact that an ice-boat will go faster across the wind than with it. Dick was no sailor and at first the proposition had struck him as a bit startling. “Many persons,” said his authority, “fancy that a yacht goes faster before the wind than in any other direction, but this is not necessarily so. If the wind is blowing at a velocity of ten miles an hour, the yacht cannot possibly make more than that amount of speed. In other words, the boat can travel no faster than the

wind itself. If it did the sails would be aback instead of drawing. It is on what yachtsmen call a ‘reach’—that is, with the wind on the quarter or the beam—that a yacht may sail faster than the wind is blowing.”

Dick proved this very speedily, for the *Boreas*, while she slid along very well with the wind behind, instantly increased her speed when she was sent on a tack. He also discovered among other things that it was extremely unwise to move the tiller abruptly when the boat was going fast. He tried it once and only saved himself from taking a flying leap across the ice by the veriest miracle. But it was vastly exhilarating, even in the little eight-mile breeze which was blowing up the river, and when the boat was on a leeward reach with the windward runner high off the ice and the runner-plank slanting up at a good angle, the sensation he received was as near like that of flying as anything could be, he thought.

He made up his mind that the next time he ventured out he would be more warmly dressed, for the wind drove right through his sweater, and his hands under his woolen gloves felt like pieces of ice. When, at last, he headed back down the river on a broad tack for the landing he was quite ready to exchange the steering-box of the *Boreas* for a place in front of the fireplace in the study-room. Willing hands helped him pull the boat up on the bank and furl the sails. Then, with Harry and Roy and Chub as immediate body-guard, he set off up the hill toward the dormitory and dinner. To the latter he brought a most appreciative appetite.

In the afternoon Roy had his first trip, and later, when he had been safely returned to the rink for the hockey game, Chub took his place. The *Boreas* spun up the river for some fifteen

miles and by the time the cruise was over Chub had got over his nervousness and was as enthusiastic an ice-yachtsman as ever wept in the teeth of a gale.



CHAPTER XIV

THE DOCTOR INTERVENES

I am sorry to say that for something like a fortnight past Dick's lessons had been suffering. He didn't really intend that they should, but when one is studying the science of ice-yachting and at the same time superintending the building of a boat, one is likely to be pretty busy; and that was the case with Dick. There wasn't time for ice-boat and lessons, too, and so he made the mistake of sacrificing the lessons. And very soon he wished he hadn't.

The weather held clear and bitterly cold, and on Monday the *Boreas* was once more flying up and down the river. There was a light breeze, but enough to make the boat show plenty of speed to leeward. Harry had her first sail that afternoon and enjoyed it immensely. Dick was careful to run no risk of capsizing and kept a safe distance from rough ice. They ran down to Silver Cove in a series of long reaches and then came back up the river before the wind. Off Coleville they sighted Joe Thurston's boat, but its skipper refused to come out and try conclusions, although the *Boreas* hovered tantalizingly about for some time. The red boat hugged the shore closely and finally snuggled up against the Hammond landing and dropped her sails. Although Dick was anxious to race he was not altogether sorry to have the opportunity deferred, for with Harry aboard he would not have wanted to let the *Boreas* out to full speed. But he made up his mind that to-morrow afternoon he would run over to Coleville and make Thurston race with him. But there's never any knowing what twenty-

four hours will bring forth.

At breakfast the next morning Dick's name was among those mentioned by the Doctor and Dick was one of a half dozen boys required to pay visits to the Doctor's office at noon. Dick went out of the dining hall feeling rather uneasy and wishing that he had given more attention to his studies of late. Roy and Chub captured him outside and decoyed him into the study room. They were both looking preternaturally solemn, and Chub insisted on wringing his hand silently.

"Of course you can come back next year," said Roy. "It isn't likely he will fire you for good."

"That's so," said Chub. "Might as well look on the bright side of it. And if you try you can study at home enough to keep up with your class. Of course there's the disgrace of it, but—well, you can live that down in time."

"Of course you can," Roy assured him, evidently striving to be cheerful in the face of adversity. "But we'll miss you, Dick, like anything."

"You bet we will," Chub said. "And—er—you won't want to take the ice-boat home with you, I suppose. So I'll take charge of it for you, old man."

"We both will," added Roy. "Anything to oblige a friend."

Dick listened with a sheepish smile on his face.

"Go ahead," he said, "and have a good time. I don't mind. Children must be amused."

"Ah, don't let it harden you," pleaded Chub. "Face it like a man and live it down. After all, there are worse things in life ___"

But Dick's patience was at an end and Chub's philosophizing was cut short by the sudden necessity of defending himself against Dick's onslaught. A minute later Mr. Cobb, passing through the corridor, put his head in at the door long enough to remark:

“Boys! No fooling in the study room, remember!”

The three disentangled themselves, panting and puffing, and proceeded to repair their attire. Chub, with one end of his collar pointing toward his ear, observed the torn button-hole out of the corner of his eye and turned severely to Dick.

“I just hope he does fire you, you big Western brute! Look what you've done to my collar.”

“Go and borrow one of Sid's,” suggested Roy with a laugh.

“Well, we're even,” Dick answered unruffledly. “My suspenders are busted.”

After the final morning recitation Dick turned his steps toward the office. Of course there was no question of being expelled, but nevertheless he was anxious to know what awaited him. There were two boys ahead of him and he had to wait in the library for almost half an hour, and, naturally enough, that wasn't pleasant. But finally the suspense ended and he found himself facing the Doctor.

“Somes, I hear from Mr. Buckman and Mr. Cobb that you have been doing very poorly in your studies of late, and my own observations bear out their report. What's the trouble?”

Dick was silent, searching for a reply that would be at once truthful and not too self-incriminating.

“Maybe we made a mistake in putting you in the Second

Senior Class. I was in doubt about the advisability of it at the time, you will remember. Perhaps you had better drop back a class. Does that appeal to you?"

"No, sir," Dick answered with emphasis.

"But if the lessons are too hard for you?"

"They're not, sir."

"They're not? Well, that's a refreshing thing to hear, Some. I've just been talking to several other boys and had begun to think that we were driving the students too hard here. Then you don't find the lessons too difficult?"

"No, sir."

"Then may I ask again what the trouble is? If they are not too difficult why can't you learn them?"

"I can, sir," answered Dick after a moment's pause. "I—haven't been studying very hard lately. I'm sorry, sir."

"So am I. Because you are wasting your time, and you are wasting our time. When you came here you told me that you would abide by the rules and be diligent. Didn't you, Some?"

"Yes, sir."

"Exactly. And you haven't been doing it. For some two weeks or so you have been coming into class with your lessons half prepared. You haven't kept your part of the agreement, my boy. Supposing I were to tell you that an agreement broken by one of the parties becomes void? You realize what that would mean?"

"Yes, sir," replied Dick troubledly.

There followed a moment of silence during which the Doctor, leaning back in his chair and rolling his pen between his fingers, studied Dick attentively. Then:

“I believe you have lately bought some sort of an ice-boat, Some. Is that correct?”

“Yes, sir. I got it Saturday.”

“Hum! Rather an expensive luxury for a boy of your age, it seems to me. Do you think that your father would approve of your buying it if he knew?”

“Yes, sir. He lets me buy what I like.”

“I see. How long have you been negotiating for this boat?”

“I—I ordered it about two weeks ago.”

“Rather a coincidence that, don’t you think, Some? It looks to me as though that ice-boat explained matters. What do you think?”

“Yes, sir.”

“What do you mean by ‘Yes, sir’?”

“I guess it does explain. I was so—so busy thinking about it, sir, that I didn’t have time to study much,” answered Dick honestly.

“Have you sailed it yet?”

“I was out Saturday and yesterday, sir.”

“Like it, do you?”

“Yes, sir, very much.”

The Doctor was silent a moment. Then, smiling slightly, he

asked:

“Do you know what I am considering, Somes?”

“I think so, sir. You’re going to take the boat away, I guess.”

“Not exactly. I couldn’t absolutely take it away from you, for it is, of course, your property. But I could forbid you to use it while at my school. You understand that?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Well, what I am going to do is to forbid you to use it again until you have caught up with your lessons. How long that will be depends on you. Does that sound unjust to you?”

Dick studied his hands attentively.

“Recollect, please, that you came here first of all to study, to work. A certain amount of play is very necessary, but when play interferes with work it is time to call a halt. That appears to be what has happened in your case, Somes. You have allowed yourself to get far behind in your lessons. It can’t go on, you know. You’ve got to turn over a new leaf if you want to stay here at Ferry Hill. You acknowledged yourself that you can learn your lessons, and so I must insist that you do so. This ice-boat seems to have proved a disturbing element. So I propose to eliminate it for a while, until, in fact, you have shown that you mean to keep your part of our agreement. Do you think I am unjust?”

Dick gave over examining his hands and looked at the Doctor.

“No, sir,” he answered. “I guess you’re—pretty white.”

The Doctor bent his head to conceal the smile that trembled

about his mouth. Then:

“Well, that’s the way it stands then. Catch up with your studies and you can go back to the ice-boat. But until then—leave it strictly alone and try to forget about it. That’s all, I think. Good morning, Somes.”

“Thank you, sir. Good morning.”

Dick found Chub after dinner and pulled him into a corner of the corridor.

“Easy now,” Chub protested. “This is the last clean collar I’ve got!”

“Never mind your collar,” said Dick. “What I want you to do is to sail the *Boreas* down to Johnson’s this afternoon and tell him to look after her for me until I call. Do you think you can do it?”

“Sail it? Of course I can,” said Chub. “But what—what’s the matter? Has the Doctor been acting up?”

Dick told what had passed in the office, and at four o’clock Chub and the *Boreas* passed down the river. Dick, from the study room window, watched them go and then turned with a sigh to his books.



For the next week or so Dick studied desperately; even Roy and Chub, who knew what he was capable of in the way of concentration, were surprised at the zeal he displayed. All their efforts to entice him out of the library or the study room in the afternoons went for naught and in the end they were invariably

forced to take their departure without him, leaving him alone in his glory and often to the undisputed possession of the room. Day after day of bright, cold weather came and passed, days with crisp winds which would have brought joy to the heart of the ice-yachtsman. Harry was very indignant at her father's action and confided to Roy and Chub that she had scolded him severely.

“I guess he felt pretty much ashamed of himself,” laughed Roy. “Is he going to apologize to Dick?”

“N—no, he was very unreasonable,” answered Harry. “He said he guessed things would have to stand the way they were.”

“You'll have to manage him better than that,” Roy said with a shake of his head. “Your authority is in danger, Harry.”

Saturday evening Dick took a brief vacation from study and there was a meeting of the F. H. S. I. S. in the barn. But nothing was accomplished, although ways and means were discussed for some time and all sorts of schemes for raising the money were advanced.

“If only Ferry Hill had turned out a few dozen millionaires,” mourned Chub. “Every school ought to graduate a millionaire a year.”

“Maybe some of the Ferry Hill grads are millionaires,” said Dick thoughtfully. “If we only had a list of them we might be able to find out.”

“I thought millionaires didn't go to school,” said Harry. “They're self-made, aren't they?”

“They always used to be,” Roy replied, “but I guess the new

crop is different.”

“Yes, they’re degenerating,” Chub added. “It’s the same way with Presidents. It used to be that you couldn’t be President unless you had been a poor boy and had worked on a farm. But look at the Presidents nowadays! Just ordinary rich men! Why, most anybody can be President now!”

“There’s a chance for you, Chub,” suggested Roy. “You never split a rail in your life.”

“And I’m sure he never studied by the light of a log-fire,” laughed Dick.

“I think it’s beautiful about Abraham Lincoln,” said Harry wistfully. “I wish I had been born a poor boy so I could have done the way he did and been President of the United States, and had a birthday after I was dead, with flags and speeches and—and things!”

“I suppose if you were President,” said Chub, “you’d make Methuselah Secretary of State, wouldn’t you?”

“Yes, and you could be Secretary of the Navy, and Dick, Secretary of War, and Roy—”

“Secretary of Agriculture,” Dick suggested.

“No, I’d make him my private secretary.”

“Roy always does have all the luck,” grieved Chub. “I’m mad; I resign from the cabinet!”

And with Chub’s resignation the meeting broke up.



On Wednesday Dick had made up his lost studies and the embargo on the *Boreas* was removed. And on the same day Harry sought him with tidings of a challenge from Joe Thurston.

“He told Grace—that’s his sister, you know—to tell me to tell you that he wanted to race you with his ice-boat. Its name is the *Snowbird*. Isn’t that a pretty name, Dick? And he wants to race to-morrow after school, and says he will meet you at the landing here at half-past three.”

“But I can’t get the *Boreas* up here by that time,” said Dick, “unless—” he paused and thought a moment. Then, “All right,” he said. “You tell his sister that I’ll be there, Harry.”

“But how can you get the boat?” she asked anxiously.

“I’ll go down in the morning before breakfast,” he answered. “Mr. Cobb will give me permission all right. Did he say how far he wanted to race?”

“No,” said Harry. “And, Dick, I suppose I couldn’t go with you, could I? I’d like to awfully.” But Dick shook his head.

“I’d be afraid to have you,” he answered. “I guess I’d better go alone; unless Thurston takes some one with him; if he does I’ll get Chub to go with me. You couldn’t kill Chub if you tried.”

“Do you think you can beat the *Snowbird*?”

“Well, I guess the north wind is faster than any old bird ever made,” laughed Dick. “But Thurston knows a heap more about sailing than I do, I suppose, and that ought to help him a lot. But I’ll do my best.”

“And, Dick, you must have a Ferry Hill flag on the mast!”

“That’s so, but I’ll have to borrow one somewhere. I don’t own one.”

“You shall have mine,” cried Harry. “It’s a lucky flag, Dick, and if you have it you just can’t help winning the race!”



CHAPTER XV

THE RACE OF THE ICE-BOATS

A bitterly cold, lowering day with a northeasterly gale blowing almost straight down the river, nipping fingers and ears and noses. Now and then a fitful flurry of snow, driving past like a miniature blizzard.

In front of the Ferry Hill landing two ice-boats, heads to the wind, sails snapping and wire rigging singing in the blasts; one with red hull and a cherry-and-black flag whipping from the masthead, the other glistening in new green and bearing the brown-and-white banner of Ferry Hill on high. About them some sixty boys from the rival schools, turning and twisting in and out on their skates in an effort to keep warm in the face of the biting gale. And over all a leaden, cheerless sky.

The race was to be windward and return, a distance of about fourteen miles. The starting-line was opposite the northern end of the boat-house, the turning-point some seven miles up the river at a place called Indian Head, where a small islet rose from the river near the west bank to serve as a mark. The boats were to finish opposite the boat-house. On the *Snowbird* were Joe Thurston and his friend Bob Cutler, while the *Boreas* held Dick and Chub. Whitcomb, with a small starting pistol in his gloved hand, was trying to push the crowd back so that the boats might swing into the wind at the signal.

The warning was given, the rival skippers declared themselves ready and the pistol barked, its sharp report being instantly whisked away on the wind. The slender noses of the

two boats were turned, the sails filled slowly, and after a moment of seeming hesitation the *Snowbird* and the *Boreas* started slowly across the ice on the first tack to starboard, while behind them the rival groups shouted encouragement to the yachtsmen and defiance to each other. With every instant the boats gathered headway, gliding across the glassy surface like gaily hued dragon-flies above the surface of a pool. The white wings became taut under the steady wind and the windward runners left the ice as the boats heeled further and further. It was nip and tuck on that first tack, the boats keeping their relative positions until the farther shore was reached and the helms were put over. Around swung the crafts and pointed their noses toward the right bank of the river.

On the *Boreas* Dick and Chub lay on opposite sides of the backbone which divided the steering-box into halves. Dick held the tiller. They were wrapped in the warmest clothing they had been able to find, but it was far from warm enough. The wind came slanting against them and bored its way down necks and up sleeves. Fingers were already tingling and foreheads aching.

“Cold!” shouted Dick above the singing of the runners and the whistle of the wind. Chub nodded and made a grimace without taking his gaze from the *Snowbird*, which, some fifty feet away, was bowling along finely.

“She’s gaining,” said Chub presently. Dick turned and looked, glanced at his sails and eased the helm a little. Then it was time to go about again, since the shore was becoming dangerously near. The *Snowbird* was already turning, slowing for a moment as she pointed dead to windward and then springing away again as the gale slanted across the sails. The

Boreas had lost and on this tack she was sixty or seventy yards behind her rival. The latter's larger sail area was telling. Chub looked anxiously at Dick, but that youth was gazing across at the *Snowbird*, a hand held in front of his face to break the wind. When he turned there was a little frown on his face and he pointed the nose of the *Boreas* closer into the wind. For a while she seemed to be holding her own. Then the *Snowbird* went about again, this time on a mile-long reach made possible by a bend in the river. The *Boreas* was almost half a minute behind now and Dick was growling things to himself that Chub couldn't catch. The wind seemed to be growing stronger, though perhaps it was merely that it had a broader sweep here where the stream turned toward the east.

“How fast?” asked Chub, his hand to his mouth.

“Twenty-five, I guess,” Dick shouted back.

Chub tried to whistle, but couldn't. Beside them the ice was only a blurred surface that rushed by without form or substance, a grayish-green nothing, as it seemed, above which they were speeding with a rapidity that almost took the breath away. The wind shrieked and roared and strove to blow them from the box to which they were clinging. A sudden flurry of snow rushed down upon them, hiding the shore and the other boat from their sight, and blinding them so that for a moment they had to close their eyes.

“Look out for the shore!” cried Chub, with a gasp. There was an unintelligible word from Dick in reply as a gray shape suddenly sprang out of the snow-mist. “Hold hard!” he shouted. Chub had just time to obey when over went the tiller, there was a loud *slur—r—r* as the runners ground sideways against the ice and the *Boreas* threw herself about so suddenly

that it was all the boys could do to keep their places. Then a quick leap forward and the boat was on the other tack and the snow-squall had passed. They looked eagerly for the *Snowbird*. She had gained some, but not much. The *Boreas* with a rush and a roar swept after her. It was a short tack this time, since Hopple Rock lay dead ahead off the west shore, and soon they were once more on the port tack, the windward end of the runner-plank standing high above the ice.

“There’s the Head!” said Dick.

Perhaps two miles up the frozen river a somber rock, tree crowned, arose from the gray ice like a rugged sugar-loaf. There was no mistaking it, although neither Dick nor Chub had ever journeyed so far up-stream. The boats must pass around it before they turned homeward. Dick, as best he could, shading his eyes with one mittened hand, studied the river. Then he moved the tiller slowly and cautiously until the boat was heeled so far over that Chub was forced to cling frantically to the backbone to keep from rolling off onto the ice. But the boat responded with increased speed. Chub, with the tears streaming from his eyes, held on, at once fearful and fascinated. Surely they were flying through air and that grayness flowing swiftly beneath them was cloud! It was hard to believe that they were on solid ice!

“Hold tight!” cried Dick.

Chub wondered how he could hold any tighter with his numbed and aching fingers. Then the windward runner dropped quickly to the ice, the *Boreas* swung about on her heel and Chub found himself rolling over against the backbone as the new tack began. Half a mile ahead the *Snowbird*, a low streak of red topped with a snowy spread of sail, was crossing

in the opposite direction, the cherry-and-black flag at the masthead standing out as stiff as though starched.

“She’s got us beaten!” said Chub.

But Dick made no answer. He was calculating his chances. It was evident that the *Snowbird* was going to round the rock on the starboard tack. That meant, as Dick figured it out, that she would make two more reaches first. But to Dick it seemed that perhaps something was to be gained by hauling closer to the wind at the next turn and making a long tack to port until a point was reached near the east shore and slightly below the rock. From there he could round the mark with a short tack to starboard and start home on a long course with the wind abeam. It meant allowing the *Snowbird* to gain now in the hope of cutting down her lead later. So when the *Boreas* again came about Chub found that it was not necessary to hold on for dear life. The boat was headed closer into the wind and the steering-box was no longer canted at an alarming angle. The speed was less, but the boat demonstrated the fact that she could do fast work when close-hauled. The *Snowbird* crossed twice ahead of them during the next few minutes and finally, just as the *Boreas* was nearing the end of her final reach to port, she shot from around the island and turned homeward. Chub looked anxious and perplexed. Then over went the helm once more, there was a sharp swirl as the *Boreas* swung about and the black rock rushed toward them. As they skirted it the starboard runner was scarcely more than six yards from the gray boulders that lay about it. Then the wind was behind them and with a rush and a bound the *Boreas* started toward home. The *Snowbird* was, as Dick estimated, three quarters of a mile ahead, running fleetly on the opposite tack.

A stern chase is a long chase, they say, and the crew of the *Boreas* found it so. And yet, before half the distance to the finish had been reeled off, they knew that they were gaining slowly but consistently on their opponent. Joe Thurston was making the mistake of sailing too closely before the wind. Dick, on the other hand, strove to keep the wind well on his beam, and while, in order to do this, it was necessary to put the *Boreas* on shorter tacks, the result was warranting it. Little by little the green boat cut down the distance that separated her from the red. But with three miles still to run it seemed that the handicap was too large. The *Snowbird* looked then very much like a winner to Chub and he wondered how Harry would reconcile the defeat of the *Boreas* with the fact that her lucky Ferry Hill banner was flying from the masthead. If the boats had made speed going up the river they were simply flying now, although as the wind was behind them the difference was not very appreciable to the boys. Thirty miles an hour when you are scarcely a foot above the surface seems a terrific pace.

Two miles above Ferry Hill the *Snowbird* was scarcely a quarter of a mile ahead. She was starting on a long reach which, if all went well with her, would be the last but one to bring her to the line. The *Boreas* was on the opposite side of the river and as she swung across on a new tack it was evident that Dick was ready for any hazard. Chub found himself in danger of rolling off onto the ice, while Dick seemed every moment about to topple down upon him. The *Boreas* was like a boy standing on one leg and kicking the other into the air. Then another change of course and it was Chub's turn to go up. There were moments when he vowed that if he reached home safely he would never trust himself again on an ice-boat with Dick Somes. But they were gaining every moment now

and the quarter-mile lead was down to an eighth. Suddenly Chub, who was peering ahead at the *Snowbird*, gave an exclamation of surprise. The *Snowbird*, then in mid-stream, had suddenly left her tack and had headed again toward the east shore.

“Ice-crack!” shouted Dick in explanation. “I saw it when we came up.”

“Better change your course then,” said Chub anxiously. But Dick only shook his head. That the *Snowbird* had decided to go around it and so give him a good chance of winning was no reason why he should follow suit. The *Boreas* held her course. Chub glanced in alarm at the calm, set face beside him and something he saw there quieted his fears. He looked forward. Ahead, rushing toward them, was a black fissure, an ice-crack which extended for over a hundred yards almost directly across the ice. How wide it was Chub had no idea. Nor did he have time for much speculation, for:

“*Hold for all you’re worth, Chub!*” cried Dick.



[“A half-mile away was the finish line”](#)

Then a twelve-foot expanse of water and broken ice swept up to them, Dick eased the helm until the boat was at right angles to the crack and the fore runners struck the slightly raised edge of the fissure at the same instant. Chub closed his

eyes and held on convulsively. The *Boreas* rose bodily in the air, there was a momentary sensation of being swept through space, and then the runners clanged down upon the ice with a soft jar and the *Boreas* was tearing along toward the finish, having taken the gap with a twenty-foot leap as a hunter takes a fence!

Chub opened his eyes. The crack was just a dark thread behind them. Near at hand the *Snowbird* was charging along with them neck and neck. [A half-mile away was the finish line](#) and the groups of dark figures.

“Hold on!” cried Dick again. And this time there was exultation in his voice. The *Boreas* heeled to the blast and drew away from the red boat, foot by foot, yard by yard. Twenty seconds—and there was a gap between them! Thirty seconds—and there stretched the length of a boat between! Forty seconds—and the *Boreas* was charging past the waving figures at the finish, the brown-and-white flag at the masthead flapping in triumph. Dick had won by a scant ten yards!



CHAPTER XVI

FORMING THE TRACK TEAM

As though resolved that the *Boreas* should rest for a while on her laurels, the weather changed that night within the hour and when morning dawned there was a warm southwest wind blowing up the river. That afternoon Dick took Harry for a sail, but the wind by that time had died down to a thin, warm breeze that scarcely filled the sails, and in consequence the trip was not an exhilarating one. But exhilarating or otherwise, it proved to be practically the last of the season, for the warm weather held until the ice-cracks, air-holes and expanses of rotten ice which quickly developed made ice-boating at once dangerous and unpleasant. To be sure, there were occasional trips, but the river never returned to a state making possible another race between the *Boreas* and the *Snowbird*, a race which Joe Thurston was eager for and which Dick was not at all averse to. Finally the *Boreas* was drawn up beside the landing and dismantled, the sails and rigging being stored in the boat-house. As Chub poetically phrased it, "The career of the good ship *Boreas* has been brief, but ah, how glorious!"

February was a fortnight old when the school was thrown into a fever of mild excitement by a notice posted on the bulletin board in School Hall. The notice read as follows:

It is proposed to form a Track Team, and a meeting for that purpose will be held to-morrow (Friday) afternoon in the Gym at 4:15. All fellows are earnestly requested to be present.

ROY PORTER,
T. H. EATON.

I think you could have formed most anything at Ferry Hill just then, from a Croquet Club to a Sewing Society. February is a dull time of year, and the fellows were eager for anything which promised to supply a new interest. For two weeks the rink had been unfit to play on, and the river in scarcely better condition. Ferry Hill had won the first six games of its hockey schedule, including the first contest with Hammond. The second game with the rival school had been twice postponed, and Roy was beginning to lose hope of ever being able to play it, a thing which disgusted him not a little since the team had shown itself to be an unusually good one and able, in his and the school's estimation, to cope successfully with any hockey team in the vicinity. With skating and hockey at a standstill, base-ball practice confined only to light work in the cage, and the golf links still half a foot deep in snow, the forty-three students at Ferry Hill were ripe for any excitement. And as a result the meeting on Friday afternoon was about as well attended as it could possibly have been. Things went with a rush from the start. Roy outlined the project and introduced Dick Some, who had hitherto remained in the background. It didn't take Dick more than two minutes of talking to have every fellow on the edge of his chair with roseate visions of a track and field victory over Hammond floating before his eyes.

"Say, Roy," whispered Chub, "Dick's father is some sort of a promoter, isn't he?"

"Yes, I think so; sells mines, doesn't he? Why?"

"Nothing much, only I know now where Dick gets it!"

Before the meeting was over thirty-seven out of thirty-nine fellows in attendance had put their names down for the track team and had agreed to contribute two dollars apiece. And there wasn't one of them who wasn't firmly convinced that he had the making of a sprinter, distance runner, hurdler, jumper, pole-vaulter or weight-thrower!

“I've talked with Mr. Cobb,” said Dick, “and he's right with us in this; says there's no reason why we shouldn't be able to turn out a dandy team. Of course, we mustn't set our hearts on too much this spring; we're new at it yet, and it takes a couple of years to get the stride. But I can't see why we haven't as good a chance to lick Hammond as she has to lick us. (*Enthusiastic applause.*) As soon as we've elected officers we'll get a challenge off to her, and I guess there's no doubt but what she'll be glad to meet us. We haven't got a very good outdoor track just now, but we're going to fix that in time. Meanwhile we can do a whole lot of work indoors, and Mr. Cobb will arrange it so that he will be on hand here three afternoons a week to give instruction. But there mustn't be any backing down, fellows. If you go in to this you must keep it up. It may seem like hard work at first, but after we get out of doors you'll like it immensely. I'm not afraid of your backing out then; only that you may get discouraged before that. But if you'll just remember all the time that we're going to show Hammond that we're just as good on the cinder track as we are on the gridiron and the diamond and the river, why, I guess you'll stick it out.”

Dick sat down amid hearty cheers and Roy proposed the election of officers.

“I suppose,” he said, “that we'd better leave the selection of

a captain until a little later, until we've been together a while and have seen who's capable of heading the team. So that leaves us the duty of selecting a manager and assistant manager. Nominations are in order."

Warren proposed Roy for manager, but Roy declined, pleading a press of other duties. Then Chub, who had his instructions, arose and nominated Dick. Dick was unanimously chosen. The position of assistant manager was not so quickly filled, but finally Sid Welch was put up and the meeting accepted him hilariously, demanding a speech. But Sid refused to make any remarks except to bob his head and mutter something about being much obliged.

On Saturday afternoon the candidates got to work in the gymnasium. A less optimistic person than Dick Somes would, I think, have been rather discouraged by the prospect. Few of the candidates for the team had ever seriously tried the work which they had selected. A good many of them, in fact, had very hazy ideas of what they had let themselves in for, and there was a deal of grumbling over chest-weights and dumb-bells. But the grumbling always ceased when Dick drew near, and his enthusiasm was contagious. Mr. Cobb shook his head afterward and said he was afraid there wasn't enough material there to make a team that could hope to make a showing against Hammond. But Dick wouldn't listen to that.

"We may be weak in some events," he said, "but we'll have some good sprinters, you mark my words, sir, and if we can get a lot of second and third places we'll make a good showing for a new team. I wish every other fellow wouldn't insist on being either a hurdler or a hammer-thrower, though," he laughed. "I can't find but one chap who is willing to go in for

the pole-vault, and he's only doing it as a favor to me and will probably back out when he's once tried it and has found that he can't do twelve feet the first time."

Dick had purchased every book on the subject of track and field athletics that he could hear of and was studying them diligently. He knew, perhaps, as little at the start as any fellow in school in regard to track and field work and training methods. But he talked with every one who could help him, especially Mr. Cobb, and, as I have said, studied all the literature to be found. The result was that by the time outdoor work was reached he knew a good deal on the subject, although much of his knowledge was as yet theoretical, and would have impressed the wiliest veteran athlete as being an old hand. A portion of Dick's philosophy, if ever formulated in words, would have run something like this: "Know how if you can; if you can't, keep your mouth shut and look wise."

When, three weeks after the formation of the team, an election for captain was held, the members suddenly realized that there was only one among them who possessed the requisite knowledge to fill the office successfully, only one whom they placed faith in. Six fellows got on to their feet at the same moment and nominated Dick Some and about a dozen more seconded the nomination. Further nominations not following, Dick was unanimously elected, accepting the honor with becoming modesty. Sid was promoted to manager and Fernald became assistant.

"Well," said Roy after the meeting was over, "that went all right."

"According to program," agreed Chub cheerfully.

"You fellows may think it was cheeky of me to get up the

team and then have myself elected captain,” said Dick, “but I know that I’m the only fellow here who can see the thing through. And I suppose that sounds conceited.”

“Well, it might from some one else,” said Roy, “but it doesn’t from you, Dick. Anyhow, it’s just about so. If any fellow can make a track team go here it’s you. And I hope you’ll succeed.”

“Oh, I’ll succeed all right,” answered Dick calmly. “Of course I don’t look for many victories this year, but if we get the team started it’ll keep a-going, and next year or the year after that we’ll show a few of those conceited Hammondites what we can do.”

“I wish I had some of your confidence,” sighed Chub. “If I had I’d feel better about base-ball.”

“Chub’s an optimist when it comes to other people’s affairs,” laughed Roy, “and a confirmed growler about his own. Last year he was certain we were going to get licked by Hammond; went around for two weeks before the game looking as though he’d swallowed a barrel of pickles.”

“Were you?” Dick asked.

“Not a bit of it! We won, eight to seven.”

“It was a close call, though,” said Chub. “If you hadn’t—”

“Oh, Dick’s heard all about that,” interrupted Roy. “When are you going to issue that challenge to Hammond, Dick?”

“Right away now. I told Sid to meet me this evening after supper and we’d write it out. They’re probably still smarting over losing the second hockey game to us and that will make them eager to lick us at something else. I want them to propose

their own grounds. In the first place, ours won't be fit for much this spring, and in the next place if we're beaten, as we're pretty sure to be, we'll be able to point to the fact that Hammond had the advantage of being on her home field; as a matter of fact, it won't make much difference to us where we are. Then next year, when we may have a chance of beating them, they'll have to come over here."

"Well, if you aren't the foxy one!" said Chub.

"Well, I don't want the fellows to be discouraged when they're beaten," responded Dick. "And the more excuses they have the less they'll mind a defeat. I guess I'll leave you fellows here. I want to go to the Cottage a minute to see Harry."

"We'll come along," said Chub.

Dick smiled and shook his head.

"It's a private matter," he said. "You fellows run along."

"What do you think of that?" exclaimed Roy. "He and Harry have been mighty chummy for the last week or two, Chub. Wonder what's up, eh?"

"You'll find out presently," said Dick.

They had been sauntering slowly along the path from the gymnasium and now Dick turned to the right and walked across the wet turf.

"Where are you going?" demanded Roy.

"Just here," answered Dick, stopping and looking off down the slope toward the river. "You get a great view from here, don't you?"

“Yes,” answered Roy as they joined him. “What of it?”

“Nothing, only I’ve been thinking that this would be a fine site for the new dormitory.”

“Gee!” exclaimed Chub. “I’d forgotten all about it. Anything doing yet?”

“N-no, not to speak of,” answered Dick as he turned back toward the path. “Still, I rather think there’ll be a meeting before very long.”

“Isn’t he the mysterious chump?” asked Chub. “Bet you he’s thought out a scheme. Have you, Dick?”

“I’ll tell you after a while,” was the answer. “So long.”

“Oh, well, of course we don’t want to know,” replied Chub. “Farewell, O Man of Mystery!”



CHAPTER XVII

THE TREASURY IS LOOTED

Hammond accepted Ferry Hill's challenge to a dual track meet with alacrity, and, as Dick had hoped they would, suggested that it be held on the Hammond oval. The only thing that Dick didn't like was the choice of dates offered, May 12 and June 16. The Hammond manager explained that on other Saturday afternoons either the track team had meets or the oval would be in use by the base-ball team. Dick would have preferred a date about the last of May could he have had his choice. Five of the more promising members of the team were members of the base-ball nine as well, and Dick had that fact to bear in mind. It would be impossible for them to take part in a meet after the first of June, for then the important contests on the diamond began, notably the three games with Hammond.

Dick and Sid and the manager of the rival team had a conference in Silver Cove one afternoon, and the former were forced to agree on the twelfth of May as the date of the meeting, since the June date was out of the question for Ferry Hill and Hammond had no other dates to offer. I fancy the Hammond representative wondered why Ferry Hill had sent her manager along to the conference, because he took practically no part in the proceedings save to agree instantly and enthusiastically with whatever Dick said. All details were arranged, and Dick returned to Ferry Hill very well satisfied with everything save the time agreed upon.



[Work out of doors](#)

“The trouble is, Sid,” he explained, “that it will take tall hustling to get the team in any kind of shape by that time. It’s too early. However, there’s no help for it and we’ll just have to do the best we can. We’ll get up some sort of a class meet for the middle of April and handicap games for some day about a week ahead of the Hammond meet. The fellows have got to have some experience in real competitions. You and I, Sid, are going to be two busy little boys from now on.”

And Sid looked grave and held himself half an inch taller.

A couple of days later the track team was picked. They had been at [work out of doors](#) for over a fortnight and Dick and

Mr. Cobb had had opportunities to judge of the fellows' performances. There had been a few defections during the period of indoor drudgery, but on the whole the candidates had stood by the cause very well. After the cut fifteen fellows were left and they represented what Mr. Cobb and Dick Some considered the pick of athletic ability. The team, then, as finally chosen, consisted of Chase, Cole, Cullum, Eaton, Fernald, Glidden, Harris, Kirby, Porter, Post, Pryor, Some, Townsend, Walker, and Warren; and Manager Sidney Welch, of course. Sid had struggled gamely for a place on the team, first trying to run the mile, then having a fling at hurdles and finally striving to distinguish himself at the broad jump. But his weight was against him and Dick was forced to limit Sid's participation in affairs to his managerial duties, and as Dick attended to most of those himself Sid wasn't overworked at any time that spring.

On the whole the team promised to be fairly good; Mr. Cobb acknowledged in April that his first judgment had been hasty. In the distances there were four runners: Some, Chase, Warren, and Townsend, all of whom were doing very creditable work. Perhaps there was some disappointment over Dick himself, for the story had spread throughout the school that he was a wonder at the mile and his present performances were not vindicating that reputation. But probably the fact that he had so many affairs to attend to told against his track prowess. He didn't seem to do any troubling about it, anyhow, and it was very generally agreed that if he continued to make as good a captain as he did at present he would be doing his full duty. There was one real find, however, to delight Dick's heart. And that was Mr. Thomas H. Eaton, familiarly known as Chub. Chub was doing great work in the 100-yards dash and

very creditable in the two-twenty. Running him close in the former event was Walker, while at the longer distance Post was showing up well and promised to become a fine sprinter in time. For the middle distances there were Roy, Pryor and Kirby, none of them above the average. Kirby was also hurdling and he and Glidden were showing up fairly well. The pole vault had but one performer, Cullum of the Second Middle. Walker and Cole were making hard work of the jumps, and in the weight events Post, Harris and Fernald were struggling for supremacy.

The class meet was held the middle of April and, although no remarkable records were established, it accomplished what it was intended to and familiarized the participants with the work. The First Senior Class had no trouble in winning the contest.

The purchase of such necessary things as jumping and vaulting standards, poles, hurdles, shots and hammers had left very little of the original sum subscribed, and so each member of the team was obliged either to buy his own costume or be content with whatever he happened to have that would answer. Most of them, however, were too eager to appear in the white trunks with brown stripes down the legs and white shirts crossed by a brown ribbon bearing the letters F. H. T. T. to begrudge the cost, and long before the handicap games came off more than a dozen such costumes could be counted on the athletic field of an afternoon. It almost broke Sid's heart not to be able to sport the track regalia, but he found balm for his sorrow in a nice little brown cloth cap bearing the "F. H. T. T." in front.

Meanwhile the base-ball season had begun and Ferry Hill

was reaping a harvest of unimportant victories over early-season antagonists. Things promised well this spring for the nine, and Chub was in fine feather. And so, by the way, was Sid, for he was holding his place in left field against all comers and learning to bat with the best of them. Green Academy and Pottsville High and Prentice Military came and saw and acknowledged defeat, falling victim to the elusive curves of Post or Kirby. And April was half gone and the affairs of the F. H. S. I. S. claimed scant attention from its members. Or so, at least, Roy and Chub thought until one morning they received formal notices in Harry's writing to the effect that there would be a meeting of the society the following evening at eight o'clock—"a full attendance desired." A full attendance was obtained. There wasn't a member absent when Dick began proceedings by producing some sheets of foolscap from his pocket.

"The president and secretary-treasurer of the society," began Dick with a smile, "have been getting busy on their own hooks lately, without authority from the majority. When I've got through telling you what we've been up to you can move a vote of censure if you like—"

"I move it right now," interrupted Chub.

"—And as presiding officer I'll rule it out of order."

"Isn't he haughty?" asked Chub admiringly.

"Go ahead and 'fess up," said Roy. "I thought you two were up to something last month, but since then I've kind of forgotten all about it."

"Then I suppose you haven't thought out a scheme to get that thirty thousand?" asked Dick. Roy shook his head. "And

how about you, Chub?”

“Me? Bless you, I’ve been too busy thinking up schemes how to hit Post’s in-shoots.”

“Well,” said Dick, “Harry and I have done the best we could. It didn’t seem advisable to ask the Doctor for the names of the graduates. To tell the truth, I was afraid he’d forbid us to go ahead with the scheme. So Harry and I have been prospecting around ourselves and we’ve managed to get hold of the names and addresses of fourteen men who have graduated from here. We’re not sure about all the addresses, but I guess we can reach them in time. Now what I propose to do is to send personal letters to each of them and tell them just what we want to do and ask them how much they’ll be willing to subscribe to set the ball rolling. We’ve fixed up a letter here and I’ll read it to you in a minute. Of course, we may not get a cent this way; it’s one of those forlorn hopes that Roy was talking about.”

“Why didn’t you tell me that time that a ‘forlorn hope’ was a ‘touch’?” asked Chub aggrievedly.

“To have the thing look right,” Dick continued, “we ought to have some stationery printed, I think; just ‘Ferry Hill School Improvement Society, Silver Cove, N. Y., Office of the Secretary and Treasurer’; something like that. What do you think?”

“Sounds like the real thing,” answered Roy.

“Sure,” added Chub. “If you wrote me a letter on that sort of paper I’d be so pleased I’d want to mortgage the house and send the money to you.”

“I think it would be perfectly dandy!” said Harry. “Let’s do

it.”

“Moved and carried,” announced Chub. “Let’s hear the letter, Dick. I’ll bet if you wrote it it’s a corker!”

“We wrote it between us,” answered Dick. Harry tried her best not to look vain, but couldn’t smother the gratified smile that insisted on showing itself. “Here it is.” Dick opened the folded sheets of foolscap and began to read.

“Dear Sir: The Ferry Hill School Improvement Society has been recently formed for the purpose of advancing the interests of that institution of learning, and securing much-needed improvements, of which the most important is a new dormitory. The School has outgrown its present equipment, and increased accommodation for more students is imperative if the usefulness of the School is to be continued. As an alumnus— (“That’s great!” Chub commented softly.)—you will, we are sure, desire to aid your *alma mater*. (“Perfectly swell!” breathed Chub admiringly.) It is desired to raise the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars for the construction of a dormitory building capable of holding twenty boys. What portion, if not the whole, of the necessary amount will you subscribe? Letters similar to this have been sent to fourteen of the School’s more prominent graduates and a liberal response is confidently looked for. You will confer a great favor by corresponding at your earliest convenient opportunity with Miss Harriet Emery, Secretary-Treasurer, Ferry Hill School, Silver Cove, N. Y.

Trusting that you will be able to aid this most worthy cause, I remain respectfully and fraternally yours, RICHARD SOMES, *President.*”

Dick folded the letter and looked inquiringly about him. For a moment there was no comment. Chub sat with his mouth wide open and a countenance expressing awed and speechless admiration. Even Roy was apparently too much impressed to speak. Harry waited self-consciously. Finally,

“Well,” asked Dick, “any suggestions?”

“Not a one,” said Roy.

“Suggestions!” cried Chub, suddenly finding his voice. “Why, that’s the swellest thing I ever heard! If that doesn’t fetch ’em—why—why we don’t want their dirty old money! Talk about your language! There’s more language there than I ever saw before in one pile!”

“This isn’t a silly joke,” protested Dick shortly. “If you think that letter can be improved on, why, say so, but don’t get funny.”

“It can’t,” said Roy with conviction.

“No, sir,” agreed Chub.

“Well, I’m glad to hear it,” said Dick with a sigh of relief. “If we’ve been over that thing once we’ve been over it twenty times. Haven’t we, Harry?”

“Yes,” answered Harry. “I know it by heart, every word of it!” She closed her eyes. ““The Ferry Hill School Improvement Society has been recently formed for the purpose of advancing the int—””

“We’ll take your word for it,” laughed Roy. “Who’s going to write out fourteen letters, Dick?”

“You, because you write better than any one else.”

“Pshaw,” said Chub, “they ought to be typewritten.”

“That’s so,” Dick agreed. “I didn’t think of that. It won’t cost much.”

“Seems to me,” said Roy, “we’re going to spend a lot of money and maybe we won’t get any in return. We’ll have to pay for printing, paper, and envelopes, typewriting the letters, and for stamps. How much have we got, anyhow?”

“Printing and typewriting won’t cost much,” said Dick. “Not over four dollars; and we’ll only need twenty-eight cents’ worth of stamps. And we’ve got—how much have we got in the treasury, Harry?”

“Sixty-four dollars and ten cents,” answered Harry very promptly. “Twenty-four dollars and ten cents in money and a check for forty dollars. Chub still owes ninety cents.”

“So I do,” murmured Chub embarrassedly. “I’d forgotten.”

“Well, that’s plenty,” said Dick. “We’ll get the printing and typewriting done right away so we can mail the letters by Saturday. You’d better let me have about five dollars, Harry, and I’ll give you an account of what I spend.”

“You must give me a receipt then,” answered Harry, doubtfully, as she slid off the grain chest.



[“It’s gone,’ wailed Harry”](#)

“All right,” Dick laughed. “There’s nothing like doing things in a business-like way. You and I’ll go over to Silver Cove to-morrow noon, Chub, and—”

But Dick’s further remarks were lost for there was a sudden

exclamation of tragic dismay from Harry where, unnoticed by the boys, she had climbed to a box under one of the old rafters.

“What’s the matter?” cried Roy.

“It’s gone!” wailed Harry.

“Gone? What? Where?”

“The money! I put it up here for safe keeping and now it’s gone! It’s been stolen! And—and I’ve betrayed my trust!”



CHAPTER XVIII

THE SOCIETY AWAITS RESULTS

The three boys stared at Harry's dismayed countenance in bewilderment. Dick was the first to find his voice.

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed. "Our money? The—the funds of the society?"

Harry, still perched precariously on top of the empty box, nodded silently, looking down anxiously from face to face.

"But what—how did it come here?" demanded Roy.

"I put it up here on top of this rafter for safe keeping," wailed Harry. "I didn't think it was safe to have so much money in the house; one summer there was a thief broke in and stole a lot of things, you know! So I put it in a little chamois bag and tied it up tight and put it up here on this joist, right in the corner here. And now—now it's gone as anything!" And Harry's voice hinted of tears.

"Don't you care," said Chub cheerfully. "We'll find it all right, Harry. It couldn't have walked off by itself. We'll have a good hunt for it. Where is there a ladder?"

"I know," answered Roy, disappearing into the shadows at the farther end of the barn. Harry jumped down from the box and when the ladder arrived it was placed against the rafter and Dick climbed up to where he could look along the dusty ledge.

"Nothing here," he said promptly. "It must have fallen down. Look around underneath, fellows. Bring the lantern."

“Stop your swearing,” exclaimed Methuselah mildly, his head stuck interestedly out of his box. Dick, climbing down the ladder, absent-mindedly stretched out his hand and was rewarded with a playful nip which almost caused him to lose his footing. Roy had brought the lantern and for some minutes the four searched carefully about the barn floor. Methuselah, apparently elated at having nipped Dick’s finger and much excited by the commotion, strutted and climbed about his cage and chattered incessantly. In the end they had to acknowledge defeat. They sat down and eyed each other questioningly.

“The only thing I can think of,” said Dick finally, “is that rats or mice must have found it and carried it away.”

“I don’t believe there are any rats or mice here,” said Harry, “except those in the cages. Spot caught them all ages ago.”

“Besides,” said Roy, “it was too big and heavy for a rat to lug away.”

“They might have chewed it to pieces, though,” Chub suggested.

“Then we’d have found the pieces,” said Dick.

“It was stolen,” said Harry solemnly.

“Who stole it?” Roy asked. Harry shook her head.

“I don’t know,” she said. “Maybe, though, there was a tramp or some one in the barn when I put it up there, and he saw me do it and went and got it afterward.”

“Well, that’s possible,” agreed Dick. “But I don’t think any tramp would get so far from the road as this, even for a place to sleep. Besides, there’s Snip.”

“Snip sleeps at the Cottage,” said Harry.

“Well, if it was stolen, whoever stole it must have seen you put it there, because no one would ever think of looking on top of a rafter in a barn for money.” Dick hesitated. Then, “How about John, the gardener?” he asked.

“Oh, he wouldn’t steal anything,” declared Harry emphatically. “Besides, he wasn’t in here when I put the money there. Because when I got back to the Cottage he was shoveling the snow from the steps.”

“How long ago did you put it there?” Chub asked. Harry thought a moment.

“About a month ago,” she answered.

“Then if it’s stolen,” Chub said, “I guess the fellow who got it has spent it by this time. I’m glad I didn’t pay that ninety cents, anyhow.”

Roy laughed.

“There’s just one of us here,” he said, “who probably knows who took it, and he can’t tell.”

“Who do you mean?” asked Chub.

“Methuselah, of course.”

“Oh!” exclaimed Harry. “That’s so, isn’t it? And to think that he can’t tell us!”

“You might ask him,” Dick suggested. The others smiled; all save Harry. She jumped up and walked gravely across to the cage. Methuselah ceased his chatter as she drew near, put his head on one side and studied her inquiringly with his beady eyes.

“Thuselah,” said Harry, “won’t you please tell us who stole our money?”

The parrot blinked, ruffled his feathers and put one foot through the bars until his yellow claws were clasped tightly about Harry’s finger. Then he chuckled hoarsely.

“He does know,” said Harry sadly, “and he wants very much to tell me. Don’t you, you old dear?”

“Roy!” said Methuselah suddenly and sharply. Harry started back in alarm and the others broke into laughter.

“Give it back, Roy,” said Chub. “You might as well, you know; you’re discovered.”

“Aren’t you ashamed of yourself?” said Harry severely. “You mustn’t tell lies, ’Thuselah.”

“He saw you all right,” laughed Chub. “Better ’fess up, Roy!”

“He’s a traitor,” said Roy, smiling. “I gave him a nickel to keep still about it.”

“Well, the money’s gone,” said Dick, “and there’s no use in crying over spilled milk. After all, we’re only out about twenty-four dollars. I’ll write to the bank and tell them not to pay that check, if they haven’t done it already. Meanwhile we’ve got to have money to get that printing done and to pay for the typewriting and stamps. So I’ll advance it. If we find the money again you can pay it back to me, Harry.”

“I shall make it up myself,” said Harry resolutely. “It may take me a long time, but I’ll pay it all back.”

“Nonsense!” cried Roy.

“You’ll do nothing of the sort,” said Dick. “It wasn’t your fault.”

“Yes, it was. I shouldn’t have put it there. It was a very silly thing to do. I ought to have put it in the bank.”

“That’s all right,” said Chub. “I guess every fellow is willing to stand his share of the loss. And I tell you what I’ll do: I’ll pay that ninety cents I owed next Saturday, as soon as I get my next allowance.”

“You mustn’t give it to me,” said Harry sadly. “I’m not going to be treasurer any more.”

“Oh, yes, you are,” said Dick cheerfully. “As soon as we get some more funds you’re to look after them. Isn’t she, fellows?”

“Of course,” answered Roy and Chub heartily.

“Besides,” said Roy, “I wouldn’t be surprised if we found that money yet.”

“Going to give it back, are you?” asked Chub with a laugh.

“Cut it out,” answered Roy. “I’ll think I did swipe it if you keep on talking about it.”

“Thunder!” exclaimed Dick suddenly. “It’s almost ten o’clock! We’ll get the dickens if we don’t run for it. Grab the lantern and come on. The meeting’s adjourned!”

Three days later the fourteen letters, neatly typewritten on paper bearing the inscription “Ferry Hill School Improvement Society” printed across the top in impressively large and black type, and signed “Richard Somes, President,” were mailed to their destinations, and there was nothing for the members of the society to do but await results. The barn had been

thoroughly searched by daylight, but the missing chamois bag with the society's funds had not been found. The bank in New York had replied that Dick's check had not been presented and that if it was it would not be honored. For the rest, the members accepted their losses philosophically, while Chub, to prove his faith in the treasurer, paid over to her on Saturday the sum of ninety cents. This, representing the entire assets of the society, Harry wore pinned inside of her dress, in an envelop. And for the first day she felt anxiously for it every few minutes.

April hurried along with uncertain skies and warm days, and Spring Vacation came and went. By the first of May the cinder track was in good hard condition and every afternoon the track team worked like Trojans, every fellow animated by the resolve to do his full share toward winning success in the meet with Hammond, now only a little more than a week distant. Dick grew more hopeful as the days passed, and after the handicap meeting on the Saturday before the Hammond games, he even dared think of the possibility of a victory over the rival school.

"I can figure it out on paper," he told Roy, "so that we win by three points. But of course that means that every fellow must do a little bit better than he did to-day."

Roy had won the quarter-mile from Pryor and Kirby with a small handicap and was consequently feeling pretty optimistic himself.

"I don't believe Hammond's team is so awfully good this year, anyhow," he declared. "They lost four of their best men last spring, you know. If we were only a little better in the field events we might stand a pretty good show of winning, Dick."

“I know, but you can look for Cole to do some good work next Saturday at the broad jump, and as for the hammer and shot, why, we’ve got just as good men as they have, I guess. It’s the hurdles and pole-vault that I’m worrying about. A chap can’t learn how to hurdle in two months. Both Kirby and Glidden were as slow as cold molasses to-day, and Kirby knocked down every bar except one in the two-twenty.”

“I thought you had Chase there in the mile for a while,” said Roy. “It looked to me as though you were going to pass him at the beginning of that last lap.”

“I thought so too,” answered Dick, “but he had more wind left than I had. I don’t know why it is, but I haven’t been able to do anything like my best this spring. I’ll have to get a move on next Saturday if I’m going to win a point. I’d feel like the dickens if I didn’t, you know.”

“Don’t you worry,” answered Roy. “You’ll do all right.”



CHAPTER XIX

METHUSELAH SUBSCRIBES TO THE FUND

Two days later, on Monday, there was a meeting of the F. H. S. I. S., the call having been hurriedly issued by the secretary-treasurer in person. And when the members of the society were assembled in the barn Harry produced triumphantly three letters.

“They came this morning,” she said excitedly, “and I haven’t opened them yet. I thought you’d all like to be here when I did, you know. Here’s two from New York and one from Cleveland, Ohio, and—and they all feel as though they had something in them!”

“Bully!” cried Chub. “Open ’em up!”

“You do it,” said Harry, handing the letters to Dick. There was a moment of silent suspense while Dick carefully slit the first envelop with his knife. Out came a letter and—a check!

“How much?” cried the others in chorus. Dick looked at it, scowled and glanced at the few lines in the letter. Then:

“Five dollars,” he said blankly.

There was a moment of disappointment, broken by Chub.

“Mail it back to him,” he said disgustedly.

“Try the next one,” murmured Harry. Dick did so. Again a check came into sight.

“Fifty,” said Dick encouragedly.

“That’s better,” said Roy. “Try the next. Let’s know the worst.”

Dick opened the third letter, unfolded the sheet of paper within and looked on all sides of it. There was no check.

“Rotten!” growled Chub. “What’s the beast say?”

“It’s all right!” cried Dick who had been reading the letter. “He promises five hundred whenever we get ready to use the money!”

“That’s the stuff!” said Roy. “He’s all right, he is! What’s his beautiful name?”

“Lemuel Fish,” answered Dick.

“Well,” said Roy, when the laughter had subsided, “he may not be much on name, but he’s all right on promises.”

“He’s a promising man,” murmured Chub.

“You don’t think the promise is—is fishy?” asked Harry, and for a moment didn’t know why the others laughed. “But I didn’t mean to make a pun,” she declared earnestly.

“Oh, Harry,” teased Roy, “I saw you thinking that up whole minutes ago! And such a weak pun, too!”

“I didn’t! I didn’t!” cried Harry, stamping her foot, between smiling and frowning. Methuselah, who had so far been perched comfortably on her shoulder and behaving himself thoroughly, resented being jarred and so climbed down to the lid of the grain chest and from there to the barn floor, sidling off into the semi-darkness behind the harness-room with many cunning chuckles.

“Oh, he will pay all right,” said Dick. “He’s a railroad man according to his letter-head, and railroad men are all rich, you know.”

“Are they?” asked Chub. “Let’s start a railroad instead of a dormitory, then. What do you say?”

“Let’s see how much we’ve got subscribed,” suggested Roy. “Five hundred and fifty and five and forty—”

“Wait,” cried Harry. “I’m secretary! I’ll make a list of the subscriptions.” She started to work on the pad she carried, and the others waited patiently while she frowned and labored. Presently, “There!” she said. “Now listen:

Dick	\$50.00
Roy	5.00
Chub	5.00
Harry	5.00
Lemuel Fish	500.00
Charles A. Bliss	50.00
J. L. Hughes	5.00

Total	\$620.00
Printing, etc.	4.30

Amount on hand	\$615.70”

“Well,” said Chub, “that’s something, even if it is a long way from thirty thousand.”

“And there are eleven people still to hear from,” said Harry hopefully.

“The one I wanted most to get a reply from,” said Dick, “hasn’t written yet. I hope he will.”

“Who is that?” Roy asked.

“David Kearney.”

“What? The banker? Why, he’s worth millions!”

“That’s why I hope he’ll answer us,” said Dick dryly.

“Do you mean that he went to school here?” asked Chub incredulously. Dick nodded.

“He was here for two years just after the school started, about twenty-three years ago. I don’t think he graduated, though. But that wouldn’t make any difference if he wanted to give us some money. He gives lots, you know. Only last fall he gave a small fortune to some little old college in Pennsylvania that no one ever heard of before.”

“I wish you’d registered that letter,” said Chub thoughtfully. “I wouldn’t want it to miss him.”

“Seems to me it’s time he wrote, if he’s going to,” said Roy.

“Oh, men like Kearney are pretty busy, I guess,” said Dick. “There’s plenty of time yet. I was rather hoping that he’d give a good big sum, say ten or twenty thousand. If we could get some one to give that much I’ll bet we wouldn’t have much trouble raising the rest.”

“I love the way Dick talks about ten or twenty thousand as though it was fifty cents,” sighed Chub. “Why, if I saw twenty thousand dollars coming along on the other side of the street, I’d be so scared I’d run up an alley! But Dick—why, Dickums would just smile and walk across and slap it on the back!”

“I think,” said Harry seriously, “that we’ve done awfully well. Why, just think, when we began we didn’t have a cent! And now we’ve got over six hundred dollars!”

“By the way, where are you keeping it, Harry?” asked Roy.

“Hold on! Don’t tell!” Chub cried. “He wants to swipe this, too!”

“Say, shut up about that, will you?” growled Roy. “I don’t mind a joke, but you’re wearing it out, you know.”

“In the bank,” answered Harry. “I’ve opened an account; ‘Harriet Emery, Treasurer’; and I’ve got a real bank-book! And if we let the money stay in the bank for three months we’ll get three per cent. interest on it!”

“Then I guess that’s the best way to get the thirty thousand,” laughed Chub. “Just let it lie in the bank until the accumulated interest—”

“Steady!” cautioned Roy.

“—amounts to the other twenty-nine thousand four hundred.”

“You’re a chump,” said Dick. “And you won’t get three per cent. for three months, Harry; it’s three per cent. a year.”

“Oh, is that it?” asked Harry disappointedly. “But I’d get something, wouldn’t I?”

“Yes, one fourth of three per cent.” Harry began to figure earnestly.

“What I want to know,” said Chub, “is why you’ve got the money we lost down on the subscription list.”

“Because,” answered Dick, “Harry insists that she’s going to pay it back.”

“She’s going to do nothing of the sort!” exclaimed Roy indignantly. “She may pay her five dollars back and we’ll all do the same, but there’s no reason why she should pay it all!”

“That’s what I tell her,” Dick replied, “but you know Harry’s a little bit—well, a little bit stubborn, Roy.”

“I’m not,” declared Harry, without raising her head from the tablet upon which she was figuring. “And I am going to pay it back. It was in my—my custody, and I am responsible. I’d like to know what folks would do if treasurers could lose money entrusted to them and not have to pay it back!”

“But you’re not a real treasurer—” began Chub.

“Why, Chub Eaton!” exclaimed Harry indignantly. “I am, too!”

“I mean,” exclaimed Chub lamely, “that you aren’t under bonds, you know, and—”

“I don’t care. I’m going to make res—restitution!”

“I don’t believe,” said Roy just then in an odd voice, “that it’s going to be necessary to make restitution.”

“What do you mean?” demanded Harry.

Roy pointed past her into the twilight of the barn.

“Ask Methuselah,” he said.

The others turned, following his outstretched finger with their eyes. Out from under the shapeless form of a mowing machine walked Methuselah, his beady eyes glittering in the

gloom, his head cocked on one side and his yellow beak closed over an object which at first glance looked like a piece of brown paper folded into a tiny parcel. In an instant Harry had swooped down upon the astounded bird and was dancing back with a small chamois bag in her hand.

“It’s the money!” she cried. The boys crowded around her while she untied the little pink string with trembling fingers and while Methuselah, quite forgotten, smoothed his feathers and scolded angrily. Out came the bills and coins and Dick’s check, all intact.

“Methuselah was the thief, I’ll bet a hat!” cried Chub.

“Sure,” agreed Dick. “But I don’t see how he ever got up on that rafter.”

“Oh, he climbs around everywhere when I let him out,” said Harry excitedly. “And he’s a terrible thief. Don’t you remember the time he stole the turnip seeds and ate them?”

“Well, I’m glad he didn’t eat this,” said Roy. “I wonder where he found it now.”

“Oh, he probably lugged it off somewhere and forgot all about it,” said Dick. “And just now when he went roaming around he came across it and—”

“And he knew we wanted it,” completed Harry, “and brought it to us! Isn’t he a darling?”

“Well, that’s all in the way you look at it,” Roy laughed. “Considering that he stole it in the first place—and tried to put the blame on me—!”

“I tell you what!” exclaimed Chub. “Thuselah was mad because we didn’t elect him to office and so he thought he’d

make himself assistant treasurer! Bet you that's the way of it."

Harry left the recovered treasure in Dick's care and picked up the disgruntled parrot, stroking his head and murmuring soothingly:

"He was des a booful 'Thuselah," she cooed. "An' he found the money, so he did, and bringed it straight back, didn't um?"

"Um did," laughed Roy. "Um's an old rascal." But he scratched Methuselah's head with his finger, and the parrot closed his eyes and looked forgiving.

"Look here," said Chub. "We'd all got fixed to pay back that money, so let's do it. Then we'll put this down as 'Thuselah's subscription to the cause. What do you say to that?"

"Beautiful!" cried Harry. She thrust the parrot into Roy's arms and flew to the grain chest. She was busy an instant with pencil and pad, and then, "Here it is!" she cried:

"Methuselah ... \$24.10."



CHAPTER XX

GOSSIP AND A MEETING

Harry and Dick were sitting on the lower step of the little flight leading to the Cottage porch. It was between ten and eleven of a perfect May morning. The crumbling red bricks paving the short path which led to the curving drive glowed warmly in the sun, and the little blades of grass springing up between them were very green and pert. The campus looked vastly different to-day from what it had that January afternoon when Harry had introduced Dick to Ferry Hill. To-day there was the bluest of blue skies overhead, and instead of the waste of snow the grass stretched away on every side fresh and verdant. The Grove was fast clothing itself in new, tender green, and beyond, at the foot of the long hill, the river dimpled and shone in the sunshine. Something of this occurred to Harry, I think, for she stopped pulling Snip's ear—an operation which that member of the group, half-asleep in the sunlight, thoroughly approved of—and asked:

“Dick, do you remember the day I brought you up here to show you the school? And how cold it was? And how nasty and dismal everything looked? After you'd gone I never thought for a minute that you'd come back.”

“Neither did I,” answered Dick with a little laugh. “I guess I'd have stayed at Hammond and liked it all right if I hadn't got there before school opened. It seemed so beastly lonesome over there, and the fellows who stayed during vacation were such a ghastly bunch, that I just had to get out. It was a toss-up

whether I'd come over here and try this or hit the trail for home."

"Are you sorry you came?" asked Harry anxiously.

"Not a bit," replied Dick with convincing heartiness. "I like it, and I like you and Chub and Roy. You've all been so decent to me, you know. You're all three mighty good fellows, Harry."

Harry flushed and looked pleased.

"I—I guess we liked you," she said. "I'm glad you like Roy and Chub," she continued. "I just love them! They're—they're the nicest boys I ever knew, I guess; and you too, Dick."

Dick shook his head sorrowfully.

"I'm jealous," he said. "You put Roy and Chub first."

"Well, you see, I've known them longer, Dick," answered Harry earnestly. "You don't mind, do you?"

"Not a bit," he laughed. "Besides, next year they won't be here, and you'll have to like me best."

Harry looked grave.

"That's the trouble," she sighed. "When you get to like a boy he goes and graduates and then you never see him again. I don't know what I'll do when Roy and Chub go."

"Don't know what I'll do, for that matter," growled Dick. "It'll be beastly lonely at first. Maybe I won't come back myself."

"Oh, Dick, you must!" cried Harry. "Why, then there wouldn't be any one! You've got to come back! You will,

won't you, Dick?"

"Maybe."

"No, promise!"

"All right, I'll come, Harry. You and I'll have to comfort each other, eh? Say, isn't this a dandy day? Hope it'll be like this Saturday, eh?"

"It's going to be," said Harry decisively. "John says we're in for a spell of settled weather, and he knows all about it; he never misses."

"Well, I hope he's right. I want a good hard track on Saturday."

"Do you think we can beat them?" asked Harry.

Dick hesitated, then shook his head slowly.

"Honestly, I don't. But I'm not telling the fellows that. It doesn't help any, that sort of talk. I tell them we can win if we do our level best; and we can; the trouble is that every fellow can't do his level best when the time comes. Lots of them will be nervous, you know; can't help it. I may be myself. By the way, Sid got a note from their manager yesterday asking if we would mind changing the order of events so that the mile run will come last; he says two of their men who are going to run the mile are in the low hurdles and they wouldn't have time to get their wind. I told Sid to write and say it would be all right. It doesn't matter to us, although I suppose if we insisted on having the things run off the way we first agreed to we'd have a better chance to win the meet."

"But it wouldn't seem quite fair, would it, to make those boys run in the mile just after they'd been hurdling?"

“Well, it would be fair enough, I guess; that’s their lookout, you know; only—well, I don’t want to win that way. I say let every fellow have an even chance, and then the one that wins is the best man.”

“Are you going to practise this afternoon?” Harry asked.

“No, on account of the ball game with Whittier. But tomorrow we’ll have a good stiff afternoon of it. Then Friday we’ll rest up. That reminds me: Sid’s trying to get up a meet with Prentice Military Academy for some time the last of June. I hope he fixes it, for if he doesn’t the fellows won’t keep in training; and if they don’t it will be all the harder to get in form again next year. I wish we were sure of having a decent track here next spring. If only the dormitory business had turned out better I guess the Doctor would have been willing to spend some money on the field and track.”

“Do you think we’ll ever get the money for the dormitory, Dick?” asked Harry wistfully.

“Sure to, sooner or later,” he answered stoutly. “But it’s slow going, isn’t it? Haven’t had any more letters, have you?”

Harry shook her head.

“Not one. I think some people are too mean for anything!”

“Well,” Dick laughed, “I dare say they’ve got plenty of uses for their money. We’ll get it yet. This summer I’ll strike dad for a thousand. If he’s had good luck he will give it in a minute. And when we’ve got two thousand pledged I guess your father will be willing to help us. He will see then that we’re in earnest.”

“I’m sure he will,” said Harry. “And isn’t it too funny for

anything about his being honorary president and not knowing it? Oh, Dick! What time is it?"

"Twenty of eleven," answered Dick, looking at his watch.

"I'll be late if I don't go this minute! And I'll have to run half the way anyhow!"

"I thought you didn't have to go until two on Wednesdays," said Dick.

"Eleven; it's that awful music. 'Do, re, mi, fa, sol—' Good-by."

"Good-by," answered Dick, getting up and looking around for his books. "I'll see you at the game this afternoon."

"Yes," called Harry from the door. "And I hope we win."

"Oh, we can't help it," laughed Dick. "It's a way we have at Ferry Hill!"

But they didn't win; not unless the score lied. Seven to five it was when the last inning was over. Whittier Collegiate Institute had some good batters on her team and they had little trouble in finding Post and Kirby for twelve hits. Chub was inclined to be doleful after the game.

"Rotten!" he repeated over and over.

"Not a bit," said Dick. "The trouble was only that you fellows haven't been practising enough the last week. It's my fault entirely. I've been after you for track work, and you can't do two things at once and do them well. I'm sorry, Chub, but after Saturday I'll let you alone."

"Think that's it?" asked Chub, more cheerfully. "Well, if it is, I don't mind so much. Whittier isn't Hammond, after all.

And if we make a good showing Saturday I shan't mind losing to-day's game. What do you say, Roy?"

"Me?" asked Roy, trotting away to the shower-bath. "Oh, I'm not worrying about anything."

Events proved John the gardener to be a real weather prophet, for Saturday dawned clear and warm. The track and field meeting with Hammond was to begin at half past two, and at half past twelve Harry, music-roll in hand, was hurrying back along the dusty road from her music-lesson, fearful that she wouldn't get through luncheon in time to cross to Coleville on the first launch. Silver Cove was half a mile behind her and the tower of School Hall was already in sight above the tree-tops when the sound of wheels reached her from the road behind. A station carriage drawn by a dejected white horse and driven by a freckle-faced youth of seventeen or eighteen years was approaching unhurriedly from the direction of the Cove. In the rear seat, as Harry saw when the carriage overtook her, sat a gentleman in a neat gray suit, derby hat and brown gloves. The gloves were especially noticeable since they looked very new and were clasped tightly about the handle of a slenderly rolled umbrella which stood between his knees. He was about forty years old, had a round, smiling face, shrewd brown eyes and a short, bristly mustache which terminated at each side in a sharp, waxed point. As the carriage jolted past in its little cloud of dust the occupant of the back seat, who had been observing the pedestrian for several minutes, laid a hand on the driver's shoulder.

"Stop," he said.

"Whoa!" commanded the boy. "Whoa, I tell yer! Can't yer stop nohow, yer pesky brute?"

The horse showed as little inclination to stop as before it had shown to go, and when the vehicle finally drew up motionless, with the driver still scolding fretfully at the steed, it was some little distance beyond Harry. But it was quite evident that the occupants were awaiting her, and so she hurried up to it under the smiling scrutiny of the passenger. She had been walking fast, the forenoon was quite warm and her face was flushed as a result. Also the dust had settled upon her shoes and half way up her ankles, and Harry was sensible of not appearing at her best, a fact which annoyed her since the immaculate appearance of the stranger seemed to set a standard of neatness. Then she was looking up into a pair of smiling brown eyes, and—

“How do you do?” said the man. “May I offer you a seat?”



CHAPTER XXI

MR. KEARNEY MAKES AN OFFER

Well, it really was warm, and she was in a hurry, and the man in the carriage smiled so nicely, and—and the next thing Harry knew she was sitting beside him, smoothing her skirts and trying to hide her dusty shoes, and the horse was once more jogging along the road. She wasn't sure whether she had thanked him, so she determined to be on the safe side.

“Thank you,” she said in her most polite and ladylike tones.

“Not at all,” he replied. “I'm under obligations to you, young lady. I am delighted to have some one to talk to. So far my journey has been a trifle dull. My friend on the front seat is not communicative and all my efforts to find a subject of mutual interest have failed. I fancy he is a very wise youth, he says so little. Did you happen to observe him as we passed you?”

Harry nodded a trifle embarrassedly, for the subject under discussion could hear every word.

“Yes? And did he strike you as having a most intelligent appearance?”

“He will hear you,” whispered Harry.

“That's true,” replied the man. “So we mustn't flatter him any more. Many noble natures, I dare say, have been spoiled by flattery.”

The boy growled irritably at the horse, and the man turned

to Harry with raised brows and an expression which said: “There! Have I over-praised him? Isn’t he wonderful?” Harry felt a strong inclination to giggle, but refrained out of consideration for the boy’s feelings and smiled instead. The man smiled back at her and after that they suddenly seemed to have become very good friends.

“You live around here?” he asked.

“Yes, sir, at Ferry Hill,” answered Harry.

“Really? Now that’s where I’m bound. Then you must know the principal there, Doctor Emery, I think his name is.”

“He’s my father,” answered Harry. “I’m Harry—that is, Harriet Emery.”

“O—oh!” said the man, and Harry thought he viewed her with a new interest. “So you’re Miss Harriet, are you? Well, my name is—but there, it isn’t polite to force one’s acquaintance on a lady.” Harry didn’t see the logic of this, and would have intimated the fact had he not gone on. “I used to go to school here myself a good many years ago,” he said. “I suppose things have changed lots since then. New buildings, of course, and everything thoroughly up-to-date?”

“There’s only one new building, I guess,” said Harry, “and that’s the gymnasium. Was the Cottage there when you went to school?”

“Cottage? No, I think not. The Cottage is—”

“It’s where we live,” Harry answered. “There are only four buildings, you know: School Hall, the dormitory, the gymnasium and the cottage. But we’re trying to get a new—” Harry stopped suddenly. Then, “Oh!” she cried, turning with

eager eyes, “are you rich?”

“Well, that’s a difficult question to answer,” replied the man with a laugh. “I would probably be called rich around here, but where I live I’m only—well, let us say comfortably off. May I inquire your reason for asking?”

“I suppose you think me very impolite,” said Harry earnestly, “but I didn’t mean to be. I asked, because if you are rich we would like very much to have you subscribe to the dormitory fund. Do you think you could?”

“Possibly. Supposing you tell me something about it. For instance, how much is it going to cost, and how much is already subscribed? But perhaps you aren’t acquainted with the details?”

“Oh, yes, I am. I’m the secretary and treasurer of the society, the Ferry Hill School Improvement Society, you know.” The man bowed gravely, but his brown eyes held a disconcerting twinkle. “It—it’s going to cost thirty thousand dollars,” Harry went on; “and we have got six hundred and thirty-nine dollars and eighty cents.”

“I see; you’ve just started, then.”

“We’ve been at it four months,” answered Harry a trifle disconsolately.

“Really? Then you haven’t progressed very well, have you? What seems to be the trouble?”

And Harry told him. She found a very attentive and sympathetic listener, and she traced the progress of the undertaking from the moment of its inception to the present time, becoming now and then very eloquent and very

incoherent. But her audience seemed to approve of her enthusiasm and toward the end even seemed to catch it.

“I hope you’ll succeed,” he said when she had finished breathlessly. “I really do. It was a big undertaking for four young folks like you, but you’ve shown pluck. I’d like to meet this Dick Somebody; he seems to be the kind of boy that grows up to big things. But you’ve all been mighty plucky, I think. We’ll talk about it again, Miss Harriet. I suppose this is where we turn in, isn’t it?”

“Yes, sir. If you tell him to drive to the Cottage you’ll find papa there, I think, because it’s almost time for luncheon. We’re having it a little earlier than usual on account of the track meet with Hammond this afternoon.”

“Hammond!” exclaimed the man. “That sounds natural. When I went to school here we used to have great fights with Hammond, regular rough-and-tumble battles out on the island down there; and we played base-ball with them, too; I used to pitch; thought pretty well of myself, too; had an in-curve that used to puzzle them all! But we usually got licked, though. How about it now?”

“We beat them more times than they beat us,” said Harry proudly. “We have a dandy base-ball team this spring, and this afternoon we’re going to meet them at running and jumping and hurdling—track athletics, you know.”

“Really? This afternoon? My, I’ll have to see that! Going to beat them, are you?”

“I don’t know,” said Harry. “I’m afraid not. You see, it’s our first year at it; we never had a track team until Dick started it two months ago; and so we aren’t very good yet. But next year

—!”

“That’s what we used to say,” laughed the man. “And then when next year came—why, we said it again! Do you know, I’d give a whole lot to see Ferry Hill beat Hammond? I really would, Miss Harriet! I feel the old antagonism rising up inside of me at the mention of the name of Hammond. The fellows there now aren’t the ones I used to know, of course; ‘Tricky’ Peters and Jerry Gould and—and what was that big red-headed fellow’s name, I wonder! Prout! That was it; Prout! Dear me, how I used to hate that fellow Prout! I wonder what became of him. Jerry Gould has an office in my building and we’ve often talked over old times. He declares he made a home-run off of me once, but I don’t believe it, by Jingo! What time does this athletic contest take place?”

“At half past two, sir.”

“Just the thing! I’ll go and see it. Will you take me, Miss Harriet? Good! And—and didn’t you say that this Dick Somebody got up the team?”

“Dick Somes; yes, sir.”

“And he’s the same one that’s president of the Improvement Society?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Very well, then. You see him and tell him that if he will lick Hammond this afternoon I’ll subscribe to the dormitory fund, handsomely too! What do you say?”

“I’ll tell him,” answered Harry breathlessly. “But—but I don’t believe it will make any difference, because he’ll do the best he can anyhow; and so will the other boys. But I’ll tell

him, sir. How much shall I say you'll subscribe?"

"Well, now you're getting right down to brass tacks, aren't you?" laughed the man. "I must think about that. Is this the Cottage? I'll have to beg some lunch, I guess. Do you suppose your mother will let me have some?"

"Of course," answered Harry eagerly. "I'll invite you myself."

"Thank you very much," he answered with a smile. "And I'll accept before you change your mind. And after lunch we'll have another talk about this matter. You want a new dormitory and I want to see Ferry Hill lick Hammond, and maybe we'll be able to get together, eh? Stop here, my boy."

"Whoa thar! Whoa, I tell yer!" chided the freckle-faced driver. "Don't yer hear me, yer old galoot? Whoa, I say!"

Harry's new friend jumped nimbly out and gallantly assisted her. Then he paid the boy, adding a dollar for good measure.

"What are you going to do with it?" he asked.

"I dunno," growled the boy. "Gedap!"

The carriage trundled away and the man looked admiringly after.

"I leave it to you, Miss Harriet," he said in awed tones. "Did I overestimate his intelligence one mite? Did I not rather err on the side of moderation? And now shall we go in?"

As they entered Doctor Emery was crossing the hall, and Harry ran to him.

"Papa," she said, "here's a gentleman who's come to lunch with us. I invited him and it's all right. He used to go to school

here and he's going to—to—”

“I'm very glad to see you, sir,” said the Doctor, shaking hands. “Very glad to welcome one of our old boys back again, although I fancy you were here before my day. May I ask your name, sir?”

“Kearney, David Kearney, Doctor. Yes, I left here before you took hold; over twenty years ago it was. I met your daughter on the road, begged the pleasure of her company and was rewarded with an invitation to lunch. But if it is going to put Mrs. Emery to any trouble—”

“Why, not a bit, Mr. Kearney. We shall consider it an honor to entertain a man who has—er—fashioned so successful a career, sir.”

“Thank you,” said Mr. Kearney gravely. “And I shall feel more honored to lunch with the honorary president.”

“Eh?” asked the Doctor blankly.

“Why, I am not mistaken, am I?” asked the other with a twinkle in his eye. “You occupy the position of honorary president of the Ferry Hill School Improvement Society, do you not?” The Doctor's gaze wandered to Harry's mischievous face and he smiled.

“I fear,” he said, “there is more here than I understand.”



The launch was to make its first trip across to Coleville at half past one, carrying the members of the team and a few privileged friends, returning later for a second load of

passengers. At a quarter past one Dick, Roy, Chub and their team-mates were hurriedly changing their clothes in the gymnasium, since it had been decided to dress before crossing to Hammond. Dick was just knotting the cords of his bath-robe about his waist when Sid put his head in at the dressing-room door and called to him.

“Say, Dick! Harry’s outside and wants to see you right off; she says it’s very important.”

“All right, tell her I’ll be there in a second, Sid. Get a move on, fellows; it’s twenty minutes past.”

He followed Sid through the swinging doors and Roy and Chub, struggling into their white and brown running costumes, viewed each other inquiringly. Then Dick thrust the doors open.

“Roy and Chub!” he called. “Get something on and come out here quick!”

“Must be something doing,” said Chub excitedly as he laced his spiked shoes. Then they too disappeared and it was the turn of the others to wonder and speculate. Five minutes later Sid once more appeared.

“Dick says for every fellow to come out right away,” he announced. “He’s got important news.”

A minute later they were all out on the porch, crowding around Dick. Roy and Chub were beside him, and Harry was standing with sparkling eyes and flushed cheeks on the stone railing behind them.

“What’s up, Dick?” asked Ed Whitcomb anxiously. “Hammond hasn’t forfeited the meet, has she?”

“No,” answered Dick. “Shut up a minute, fellows; I’ve got something to tell you.” When quiet was restored he went on. “It’s a long story, but I’ve got to make it as short as I can, so if you have any questions to ask wait until later on. You fellows know—or maybe you don’t know, but it’s a fact—that we need another dormitory here at Ferry Hill. The Doctor hasn’t much more than paid expenses the last few years. He needs more boys, and that means more dormitory room. So a while back, along in January, four of us—Harry and Roy and Chub and myself—got up a sort of a club that we called the Ferry Hill School Improvement Society. The purpose was to get money for a new dormitory. We talked with the Doctor about it, but he thought we were just sort of fooling, you know, and wouldn’t have anything to do with it. So we went ahead alone. We sent letters to some of the graduates and we got about six hundred dollars. There was one chap we wrote to who didn’t pay any attention to our letter. You have all heard of him, I guess: Mr. David Kearney.”

There was a chorus of assent.

“Well, he turned up here a couple of hours ago. Instead of answering our letter he waited until he had a chance and came up here to see us.”

There was an incipient cheer which Dick waved down.

“He wants us to lick Hammond. He says that when he was here at school, about twenty years ago, Hammond used to beat Ferry Hill almost all the time. Mr. Kearney played on the ball team; used to pitch; and when Harry told him we were going to meet Hammond on the track this afternoon he said he was going to see it, said it would do him a lot of good to see Ferry Hill beat Hammond just once at something.”

This time the cheer would not be denied, and Dick had to wait until it had died down before he went on.

“So he has sent a message to us by Harry. ‘If,’ he says, ‘you beat Hammond this afternoon, I’ll give the balance of the money needed for the dormitory,’ which is—how much, Harry?”

“Twenty-nine thousand three hundred and sixty dollars and twenty cents,” answered Harry promptly.

“*Ph—e—ew!*” whistled somebody, and for a moment bedlam broke loose.

“Now,” continued Dick as soon as he could make himself heard, “I know you fellows don’t need this—this incentive to do your very best. You’d have done that anyhow, merely for the sake of beating our rival over there, for the sake of Ferry Hill! But you’re not going to do any less now that you know that so much more depends on victory; you’re going to do a little better than your best, fellows; you’re going over there with a determination to lick Hammond and bring back the championship and secure that new dormitory! Now let’s have a cheer for Mr. Kearney.”

And when it had been given,

“A cheer for Ferry Hill, fellows!” cried Dick.

And then, still shouting and cheering, they tumbled down the steps and raced for the landing.



CHAPTER XXII

FERRY HILL VS. HAMMOND

The Oval at Hammond Academy lies on a broad plateau just beyond the campus. Back of it the hill sweeps abruptly away, covered with a dense growth of timber. From the top of the grand stand one can almost see the river over the roof of the nearest dormitory. Nature has supplied an ideal spot for an athletic ground and human hands have made the most of it. There is an excellent quarter-mile cinder track twelve feet wide, supplemented by a straight-away for the 220 yards' dash and the low hurdles. Inside the track is a perfectly level expanse of well-kept turf which made the Ferry Hill visitors sigh with envy. The grand stand is small but well-built and well-maintained, and at one end of it there is a tiny building which serves as a dressing-room and store-house. From its roof a short flag-pole to-day bore the cherry-and-black banner of Hammond, while from an improvised staff at the top of the grand stand floated a bedraggled Ferry Hill flag.

The day was warm and, since there had been no rain for some time, the little breezes made miniature whirlwinds of dust along the track. By half past two the stand was well filled. Ferry Hill had preëmpted the south end, and her small band of supporters were cheering vigorously. Below, about the starting-line for the 100 yards' dash, a dozen officials, instructors and students of the two schools, were awaiting the contestants.

Near the curve of the field to the right the entries for the shot

put and broad jump had gathered, the white costumes with their dashes of cherry-and-black or of brown gleaming brightly against the vivid green of the level turf. The breezes fluttered the handkerchiefs laid along the runway to indicate the points at which the jumpers were to find their strides, and whipped the loose trunks tightly against straining leg muscles as the white-clad bodies raced over the brown path.

The clerk of the course, a Hammond youth, bawled importantly for the contestants in the trial heats of the 100 yards and presently eight youths gathered at the head of the stretch. Three were Ferry Hill entries and five wore the Hammond colors. Four at a time they sped down the alleys and Ferry Hill found cause for rejoicing, for three of her sprinters had qualified for the finals—Post, Eaton and Walker—while only one Hammond man had made good.

Up on the grand stand Harry signified her delight by waving the brown-and-white banner she carried. Beside her was Mr. Kearney, and beyond him Mrs. Emery and the Doctor. The visitor had pleaded ignorance and Harry was explaining volubly.

“There are twelve events, you see,” she said. “And in each one the first four fellows count. The winner makes five points, the one coming in second makes three, third place counts two and fourth place one. That makes eleven points for each event, or 132 points for the meet. And of course the team that wins a majority of the 132 points wins the meet. Do you see what I mean?”

“I think so. But wouldn’t it be possible for each side to make half of 132 points? Then nobody would win, eh?”

“It would be a tie. But it doesn’t very often happen that way,

Mr. Kearney. I hope it won't to-day, don't you?"

"Yes, it's better to have it decided one way or the other, I guess. What are they going to do now?"

"I think this is the 120 yards' hurdles; the high hurdles, they call it. We won't do much in this because we have only two fellows entered and neither of them is much good. That's Kirby, the tall one. He's one of the pitchers on the base-ball team."

"I see. He's a fine looking boy, Miss Harriet. Here they come! Hello, some one's taken a tumble!"

"It's Glidden," said Harry disappointedly. "We won't get a single point out of this, I'll— Oh, yes we will! Go it, Kirb! Go it! There! He was second, wasn't he?"

But when the megaphone was pointed in their direction, Baxter, official announcer, gave Hammond first, second and fourth places and Ferry Hill third.

"That makes Hammond 9 and Ferry Hill 2," said Harry. "Well, we didn't expect anything in the high hurdles, so we're really two points ahead, aren't we?"

"Half-milers this way!" called the clerk.

Ferry Hill had three candidates for this event, Porter, Pryor and Kirby, to Hammond's six. But both Roy and Pryor were expected to win places, and Ferry Hill's supporters cheered confidently. Then the nine runners were poised on the mark, the pistol barked, and there was a little struggle for the pole. As they swept by the stand Holmes of Hammond was making the pace, with Pryor close behind him and Roy well back in the bunch. At the first turn they strung out along the inner rim of

the track, the pace-maker taking it very easy indeed. Into the back-stretch they went, nine white-clad bodies agleam in the sunlight, and a cheer arose from where the brown-and-white flags fluttered as Pryor stepped around Holmes and took the lead, setting a pace that opened up several yards between them. After the next turn the runners were well stretched out along the track, and as they swept into the home-stretch and finished the first lap and the first half of the distance it was evident that only five of the nine would dispute the points. These were Porter and Pryor of Ferry Hill and Holmes, James and Garrison of Hammond. Kirby apparently had not recovered from the high hurdles and was running next to last, quite out of the race.

As the runners passed the stand the flags waved and the cheers urged them on. It was Pryor, Holmes, James, Porter and Garrison now, and this order was maintained until they were once more in the back-stretch. Then Roy passed James and Holmes took the lead from Pryor. An eighth of a mile from the finish the pace increased. Garrison dropped farther and farther behind and Roy crept past Pryor. At the turn the latter, run out, dropped behind James and finally was overhauled by Garrison. Into the home-stretch sped the first three runners with scarce two yards dividing first man from last. The stand was on its feet, flags waving and voices straining. Then, twenty yards from the tape, James of Hammond spurted magnificently and had passed the two ahead of him before they knew it. Roy with a final effort worked loose from Holmes and crossed the line a bare two yards back of James. Hammond 8, Ferry Hill 3.

“Oh,” said Harry disappointedly, “that’s too bad. Dick was counting on six points in the eight-eighty. Let me see, that makes the score 17 to 5 in Hammond’s favor. Isn’t that just too mean for anything?”

Mr. Kearney agreed smilingly that it was. "But it's early yet," he said. "They're putting up the strings again. What does that mean?"

"Final of the hundred yards' dash," answered Harry. "Oh, I do hope Chub will win this!"

"Chub? Let me see now, he's one of the four conspirators—I mean one of the society, isn't he?"

"Yes. His real name is Tom, you know. That's he; the boy with the white sweater over his shoulders; see?"

"Yes. So that's Tom? And your name is Harriet; and then there's a Dick, too, isn't there?"

"Why, yes, Dick Somes."

"To be sure. And the fourth one?"

"Roy, the boy that just came in second in the half-mile."

"Thank you," said Mr. Kearney. "I think I have you straightened out now. Shall we stand up so we can see this better?"

Ferry Hill was certain of three places in the 100 yards since she had three of the four entries, but it was going to make some difference which those places were. Chub and Post and Walker were crouching side by side, each at the head of his alley, and with them was the lone Hammond entry, a fellow named Ranck. Mr. Kearney ventured a mild pun on the name, but Harry was too intent to heed it. Then the pistol broke the stillness and the four leaped away from the mark and came charging down the track. It was all over in an instant—to be exact, ten and two fifths seconds—with Chub first by a yard and Ranck in second place. Harry mourned the loss of second

place but looked cheerful as she scrawled a very big, black 8 to Ferry Hill's credit. The score so far stood Ferry Hill 13, Hammond 20; and that looked lots better than 5 to 17.

There was quite a field for the 220 yards' dash, and three trial heats were run before the participants in the finals were decided on. In the end Ferry Hill won two places and Hammond two, Post and Chub Eaton qualifying for the brown-and-white.

The quarter-mile run was a tame affair, Holmes of Hammond taking the lead at the start and never being once headed to the tape. Roy won second place again, followed by Pryor and Kirby, and Ferry Hill's stock went up several points. The score now stood 19 for the visitors and 25 for the home team. Things began to look more cheerful, and Dick, looking over Sid's shoulder as the manager reckoned up the points, felt encouraged and even hopeful. But ten minutes later the prospect was very black indeed. The result of the pole vault was made known, giving Hammond $9\frac{1}{2}$ points and Ferry Hill $1\frac{1}{2}$, Cullum having tied a Hammondite for third place. Then the best Glidden was able to do in the low hurdles was to come in a bad fourth.

"The dickens!" wailed Sid. "That gives them $45\frac{1}{2}$ to our $21\frac{1}{2}$! I guess it's all over but the shouting, Dick."

"And I guess we won't have to do any of that," was the answer. "Isn't the broad jump finished? I'm going over to see. By the way, what comes next? Two-twenty dash? Where's Chub? Find him and send him over to me, Sid."

But the announcer was already busy with his crimson megaphone, and Dick stopped to listen. Ferry Hill had secured first and third places in the broad jump and second, third and

fourth in the shot put. Sid's pencil worked busily as the cheers swept across from the south end of the stand.

"That's better," breathed Dick as he watched the totals appear. "Ferry Hill $34\frac{1}{2}$, Hammond $54\frac{1}{2}$."

"We've only gained four points," objected Sid.

"Yes, but I didn't look for anything much in either of those events, and we got the big end of each. Give us six points in the high jump, six in the hammer throw and five in the two-twenty, Sid, and see what it foots up."

"Only $51\frac{1}{2}$," said Sid.

"Is that all?" Dick frowned perplexedly. "We'll have to find some more somewhere, then. Oh, Chub! Chub Eaton! Where's Post? Hurry him up; I want to see you both."

Affairs began to look up for Ferry Hill after the 220 yards' dash, for Post won handily and Chub found the tape a bare six inches ahead of Ranck of Hammond. Another Hammondite, Custis, took fourth. And when the time was announced it was found that Post had simply knocked the top off of Hammond's record for that event. The latter was $24\frac{2}{5}$ seconds, and Post had finished in 24 flat. Then came the results of the high jump and the hammer throw, and Ferry Hill's supporters went crazy with delight. In each event the wearers of the brown-and-white had done better than any one had dared expect. In the jump they had secured all but two points and in the hammer throw Fernald had sent the weight 129 feet 6 inches, securing first place by over four feet from his nearest competitor, Harris. Post had got third place, leaving only one point for the cherry-and-black. And the score showed Ferry Hill ahead, $61\frac{1}{2}$ to $59\frac{1}{2}$!

Up on the stand Harry was dancing with glee, deaf to the smiling remonstrances of her mother. Mr. Kearney, too, made no effort to disguise his pleasure and excitement.

“Well, I fancy that means a victory for us, eh, Miss Harriet?” he asked. “There’s only one more event, isn’t there?”

“Yes, the mile run,” answered Harry breathlessly. “And—oh, where’s my pencil? Quick! Thank you. Oh, dear! We’ve got to get at least five points or Hammond will win yet! We must get first place or second and third! Oh, I don’t believe we can ever do it! There’s only Dick and Chase; the others aren’t any good at all! Dick! Dick! You’ve got to win!”

“Well, from what I’ve heard of him, I think he’s quite likely to,” said Mr. Kearney smilingly.

“He hasn’t been doing very well, though,” grieved Harry. “You see, he’s had so much to think about and attend to! I don’t see how it could be a tie, but if it should—would—do we get the money?”

“I’d have to think about that,” answered Mr. Kearney gravely. “You recollect that the terms called for a victory.”

“Oh, I know! But wouldn’t it be awful if we lost the dormitory by half a point?”

“I suppose it would,” said he, looking smilingly at her pale face. “Well, I won’t promise, Miss Harriet, but maybe in that case I might give something, say a thousand or two. How would that do?”

“It—it would be better than nothing,” answered Harry without enthusiasm. “Oh, I do wish they’d hurry!”

“It is a bit uncomfortable, this suspense. We ought to call

this race the Dormitory Stakes, eh?”

“It isn’t too late to cancel that wager, Mr. Kearney,” laughed the Doctor, leaning across. But the other shook his head.

“I don’t want to, Doctor. That check will be cheap for a victory over our old rival.”

“There!” cried Harry. “They’re on their marks! Why, Warren isn’t there! That gives us only three men! Isn’t it dreadful?”

“Which is Dick Somes?” asked the visitor. Harry pointed him out with a finger that trembled.

“The big boy with the yellowish hair,” she whispered. “And the little one is Chase. And Townsend’s next to him on the left. The boy with black hair, the one with the cherry-and-black ribbon across his shirt is Connor! He’s Hammond’s crack distance runner. I—I hope he won’t win!”

“So do I,” answered Mr. Kearney. “They’re off!”

The pistol broke sharply on the air and the field of eight runners leaped forward.

“*Oh!*” breathed Harry. “It’s four times around, and I’m just sure I’ll die before they finish!”

There’s nothing very spectacular about a mile race. It is rather a test of endurance than of speed when compared to the middle distances and sprints, and as the time for the distance is likely to be somewhere around five minutes the pace is not fast enough to be inspiring to the spectators. As the runners took the first corner they seemed rather to be out for a gentle exercise jog than taking part in a race which, no matter how it was won, would decide the fortunes of the day.

Ferry Hill had entered Dick Somes, Chase and Townsend. Warren had intended to run, but at the last moment had fuked it. For Hammond there were Connor, Parish, White, Temple and Frothingham. Connor held the Hammond record of 5 minutes 7³/₅ seconds and Parish was credited with something very close to that. The other wearers of the cherry-and-black were unknown quantities. Dick had done the mile the year before in about 5 minutes and 6 seconds, but so far this spring had not been able to come within ten seconds of that time. Chase was still slower and Townsend had absolutely no hope of being able to finish inside the half-minute. But he was going to be useful.

At the beginning of the second lap he pushed to the front and took the lead, none disputing it with him. For the next lap he set a hard pace. Connor was running fifth, with Dick dogging him closely, stride for stride. At half the distance Townsend drew aside, badly tuckered, and the lead went to Temple of Hammond. By this time the eight runners were strung out for fifty yards, with Temple, Parish, Chase, Connor and Dick well together in the van. As they went by the stand on the beginning of the third lap the cheering became frantic. As though in response, Connor suddenly drew out and passed Chase. But Dick was close after him, and at the turn they had settled down again. Temple gave the lead to Parish and gradually dropped back. Then Chase began to lose and the hearts of Ferry Hill's supporters sank. It was Parish, Connor and Dick now, with Temple and Chase fighting together yards behind. Then they were crossing the line and the last lap had begun.

The voices of the judges announcing the fact were drowned in the shouts of entreaty and encouragement that broke from

the spectators.

“There’s only Dick left!” wailed Harry. “Chase is out of it entirely! If Dick doesn’t win we’ll lose! Dick! Dick! Run! You’ve got to win, Dick!”

But Harry’s frantic entreaty was lost in the babel of sound and the runners took the turn, clinging closer to the inner rim of the cinder track. Around the curve they went, Parish, Connor, Dick, one close behind the other, heads up, elbows in, strides matched.

So far Dick had stood the strain well, but now the work was beginning to tell on him. Breathing was getting difficult, his knees began to feel a little bit uncertain and his head displayed a tendency to drop back. He realized that to win better than second place was almost out of the question. Both Connor and Parish were experienced runners, were conducting the race according to some plan settled upon between them and were not going to let their adversary pass if it was possible to prevent it. And yet if Ferry Hill was to win the meet it was absolutely necessary for him to reach the tape ahead of the others. If he came in second and Chase, by good luck, came in fourth it would give them four points, just enough to lose by one! So it was first place or nothing—and Dick began to think it would be nothing.

He believed that somewhere on the back-stretch Parish would let Connor by and at the same time try to block the enemy. Connor would then hit up the pace, Parish would follow if he could and if not would lag and make it necessary for Dick to run outside of him; and in the last two hundred yards of the mile every effort, no matter how slight, counts. The idea of risking all on a spurt, passing both opponents and

then trying to keep the lead to the tape occurred to him, but was relinquished. He believed that he had enough strength left for a sprint [at the finish](#), but he doubted his ability to make the pace for the rest of the distance.

The one encouraging thought that can come to one during a hard race is that your opponent is probably just as tired and just as worried as you are. And as Dick followed the others around the turn into the back-stretch he made the most of that thought. If his own breath came in scorching gasps from tired lungs so must that of Connor and Parish; if his own legs ached, so must theirs; if he was at his wits' end how to get by them, they were at their wits' end how to prevent him.

From across the field came the cheers of the watchers, but he was scarcely aware of them. His whole mind was on the race, and he watched Connor as a cat watches a mouse. For him the only sounds were the hard breathing of the runners and the crunch of the cinders under foot. A hundred yards behind, although he didn't know it, Temple and Chase had finished their battle and the former had won; Chase, with head thrown back, was following gamely but hopelessly, already out of the race.

Yard by yard the back-stretch was conquered. The curve was already at hand and still Dick's opponents made no move. The three ran steadily on, stride for stride. Perhaps they were waiting for him to try and pass, hoping he would kill himself in a useless attempt to take the lead. Well, he'd fool them! Then the wooden rim at his left began to curve, and suddenly Connor had slipped from his place with a gasping warning to Parish and had taken the lead. Dick went after him, but as soon as he had drawn alongside of Parish that youth, watching for

him, quickly closed up behind Connor. Dick must either drop back to third place again or run on the outside, covering more ground on the turn than the enemy. Well, he was probably beaten anyway, and so he'd stay where he was. Perhaps he could cheat Parish out of second place. So around the turn they went, Connor hugging the pole in the lead, Parish right behind him and Dick at his elbow. And now they were on the home-stretch with the tape and the little knot of judges and timers scarcely sixty yards away.

But what a distance sixty yards is when seventeen hundred have gone before it! And what a deal may happen in that little stretch of cinder path! The stand was almost deserted and the spectators were lined along the track almost from the corner to a point beyond the finish, so that the runners came on through a lane of gesticulating arms, waving flags and caps and frantic noise.

Suddenly Connor's head tipped back a little. Dick, watching, saw and realized that the last struggle had begun. With a gasp for breath to carry him on, he began his sprint at the same moment that Connor strove to draw away. A dozen strides and Parish was no longer beside him. A dozen more and he was almost even with the Hammond crack. But now his breath threatened to go back on him utterly at every aching gasp and his legs weighed hundreds of pounds. The hope of victory, born suddenly back there by the turn, withered under the knowledge of defeat.

Then into his range of vision, standing sharply out against the confusion of dark figures lining the track to the right, leaped a girl in a white dress, a small, slim form with the reddest of hair and a pale, entreating face. And in the moment

that he saw her her hand shot out toward him waving a little slip of white paper and beckoning him on. And in the instant he remembered that there was more in this than a victory over Hammond; that on his winning or losing depended the success of the F. H. S. I. S.! To win meant a new dormitory for the school; to lose—But he wasn't going to lose now!



[“And something else, too!”](#)

Stride! Stride! Gasp! Gasp! He had an idea that Connor had vanished into thin air; at least he was no longer at his elbow! Faces swept by like strange blurs. The line was in front of him, half a dozen yards away. He wondered why nobody spoke,

why everything was so still; then awoke to the knowledge that the shouting was deafening. Cries for “Ferry Hill! Ferry Hill!” for “Hammond! Hammond!” rent the air. Another stride—another—and then somebody got in his way and he couldn’t stop and so tumbled over into somebody’s arms.

He had a dim idea that he was being dragged across the cinders. Then he had no ideas at all for a minute. When he got a good, full hold on his faculties again he opened his eyes to find Chub and Roy beside him. He smiled weakly.

“Did I—win?” he gasped.

“Two yards to the good!” said Chub. “We’ve won the meet, Dick, by a point: 66½ to 65½!”

“Yes,” cried another voice, “[and something else, too!](#) Look!”

Harry’s face, flushed, excited and radiant, bent over him as she held a little slip of white paper before his eyes. Dick looked and read with dizzy eyes:

COUNTY NATIONAL BANK OF NEW YORK CITY.

Pay to the order of Tom, Dick, and Harriet.....
Twenty-nine Thousand Three Hundred and Sixty
and 20/100 Dollars.

DAVID KEARNEY.

THE END

Transcriber's Notes:

Punctuation and spelling inaccuracies were silently corrected.

Archaic and variable spelling has been preserved.

Variations in hyphenation and compound words have been preserved.

The author's em-dash style has been retained.

[The end of *Tom, Dick, and Harriet* by Ralph Henry Barbour]