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OR,

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CHAPTER I.

"There will be lots of fun in the game today," said one of the students, "and I'll catch his glance as he shot a freezing look over our crowd."

Ralph Rolando was a Cuban-American. He was the son of a rich merchant—a petted only son who had been humored until his natural imprudence of temperament led him to imagine that he was a little king. He had plenty of money, and ever since his first arrival at the new school he had set himself up as a leader, and as he had, as has been stated, plenty of money, the position was yielded to him.

Ralph Rolando, unhappily, was not a good-tempered fellow, save when he had his own way in everything. He was what boys call a bully-dozer—a jealous fellow, loved only himself, and incapable of being most bitterly everything, and everybody unethical to his own pride and vanity.

The new student remained in his room until the seminary bell for prayers sounded, when he issued forth and reported to the president of the college.

After prayers an examination followed, and Tommy Weir was assigned to the several classes his proficiency entitled him to enter, and he settled at once right down to the routine of a student.

At the close of the school a young fellow named Perkins—Hiram Perkins—watched our hero as he came forth from the seminary, and advancing toward him, said: "Welcome to the school, my fellow-student."

"Thank you," said Tommy, as a bright gleam shone in his eye. "You are very kind to come and speak to me."

"Oh, I want you to feel at home. I was a stranger here a year ago, and I think I shall like you.

"Thank you; I hope you will like me. But I am here to study."

"Will you come and take a stroll?"

"Yes, I will be glad to go; I like walking."

The two lads started off together, and Hiram Perkins said:

"You are from New York?"

"Yes, I am the Duke of New York," came the startling answer.

"You are the Duke of New York!" exclaimed Perkins.

"Yes."

"Well, you are a distinguished person. I'm glad I am the first to make your acquaintance."

"Possibly you will not be so glad when I tell you how I came to bear the title."

"Let's hear."

"I'm not exactly the Duke of New York—sort of."

"Is that so? I'm sorry for you."

"Yes; and I may as well tell you my history. You see, somebody put me in a nursery, as far as I can learn, and afterward I was put in a regular orphan asylum, and when I got older I was adopted by a farmer. He was a good, kind man, but he died when I was about twelve years of age, and as I thought I couldn't find as good a friend in the country I started for New York, and I became a bootblack."

"You were once a bootblack?" exclaimed Tommy, in astonishment.

"Yes. I am bound to tell you the truth. I am not going to travel under false colors."

"But you found your father and mother since?"

"No."

"Then how is it you are able to come here to this expensive school?"

"I'll tell you about that; but may be you do not wish to learn since you know I am only an ex-bootblack?"

"See here, what's your name?"

Tommy Weir.

"Is that your real name?"

"Yes. It must be, as it was the name written on the card that was pinned to my clothes when I was left at the nursery."

"Excuse me; but you are a foundling?"

"Yes, I suppose I am."

"Well, Tommy Weir, I want to tell you right here, if you are a good, true fellow I'm going to be your friend, I don't care if you are a foundling!

"Thank you. I guess you will find I am a good fellow, and I am a gentleman, even if I was a bootblack, and I reckon my parents were good people."

"What makes you think so?"

"Because I've the natural instincts of a gentleman. I know I have; and I had all these feelings when I was running around for a job to black boots."

"If your parents were good people, why did they desert you?"

"I can't tell, but I've always imagined it was for some good reason."

"Well, Tommy, I'll stick to you."

"Thank you."
CHAPTER II.

There followed a moment's silence as Tom-
my Weir laughed, and then said:

"Do you mean when I tell you how I be-
came the Duke of New York?"

"Go ahead. I like to laugh." "Yes.
"Did you?"

"You're a queer fellow. I think a great
deal, and I've taken a photographic view
of the circumstances attending my career. I'm
not responsible for the fact that I am an orphan
and a headstrong lad, and I've made up my
mind to start out and make a corner for myself.

"There's one I know who will never notice
you."

"Who's that?"

"His name is Ralph Rolando, the dark-faced
fellow in the dining room with whom I saw you
the stage arrived. He set you down for a
fool."

"Did he?"

"Yes."

"Well, he'd better not run up against me
for a gentleman."

"Oh, he won't notice you at all; but if he
does you had better pay no attention to him."

"Why not?"

"He's the bully of the school."

"He is, chum?"

"Yes; and he is a strong, able bodied fellow,
a good athlete, and awfully domineering and
aristocratic. But you will be beneath his notice
and attention, so he will not interfere with you."

"He'd better not," said Tommy, in an
undertone.

"Halloo! Are you a fighter?"

"Well, I reckon I can take care of myself."

"But you can't get away with Ralph. He's
too strong, and he knows it. All the students
are afraid of him when his temper's up, and
nobody dares to meddle with him. Last year,
I had to do my own affairs; but other people had
better let me alone, even if they are as big as a
house and as strong as a lion."

"I'd advise you to keep out of Rolando's
way."

"I shall not put myself in his way; but he
must not interfere with me, that's all."

Tommy Weir took Hiram Perkins further
into his confidence; indeed, he did not appear
at all desirous of concealing any fact concern-
ing himself.

"If you were a bootblack," said Hiram,
"how did you manage to come to school here?"

"I'll tell you about that—it's a very roman-
tic story. You see, I told you how I was adopted
by a farmer, and how he died. Well, the day
afterwards I was 'skipped.'"

"You skipped?"

"Yes—I run off without consulting any one.
I was a bootblack, and became a little boot-
black, and I had knocked about for three years
or so, when one day I got a job to black the
boots of a queer-looking countryman I never
could tell whether he was a clergyman or a
school teacher. He was an odd-looking man, I
told him I was 15 years old, and he had a heart
in him as big as a bull. I thought he was a 'coon I could have some fun
with, so I commenced to 'rig' him on his little
ticket, while, in fact, they were trunks, and
the mud on them was an inch thick. It took
me a day to do it, I should say, to get this mud
off before I could begin to blacken up his old
clogs, but he was a better man than he looked,
and winked a gentleman as I ever met. I
finished his boots, made them shine like a
black mirror, and when I got through he asked:

"Well, sonny, how much?"

"'Five cents,' said I."

"'How much for knocking the mud off?'
'Nothing, sir. We get it good and bad,
and charge only one price.'"

"'What's your name, sonny?' he asked.
'I'm Tom Weir, sir,' I answered."

"'Eh, he cried, opening his eyes wider. You
are the Duke of New York?'"

"'Yes, sir,' I said again."

"'Eh,' he cried again."

"'Your name is Tom Weir?'"

"'Yes, sir,' I answered.

"'Who was your father?'"

"'I never had a father, sir, that I know of."

"'Well, why did you run away?'"

"'I was raised in a foundling home, sir.'"

"'You were?'"
"It's time enough when they do; but I like that title better."

"It's high enough, I reckon."

"If you've no objection, I'll give you that title."

"You don't trust the boys without any more."

"All right, just as you please. You seem to be a good, level-headed fellow."

"So do I; I've been through the mill. Most of the fellows here are rich men's sons. I am only the son of a farmer, and they look down on me, but if you let me we'll have some fun."

"Now I will give it out you are called the Duke of New York, and some day we can make an explanation of it."

"That's all right. I am ready to please you, but I tell you it will not be long before the true story will come out."

"Not unless you tell it."

"I will not tell it, but you say the boys look down on me."

"Yes; all on account of that fellow Ralph Rolando."

"He don't like you, eh?"

"No; he is an aristocratic fellow, and he will put on airs to you."

"Air don't hurt."

"He may try to impose upon you and insult you."

"He had better not try," came the answer, in a meaning tone.

CHAPTER IV.

Before the two new friends separated Hiram and Rolando secured a promise from Tom that he would not, under any circumstances, reveal his true history until such time as he had been connected with the matter.

"I am sorry to be put under a promise," he said. "How can you get square with him on my word?"

"I can; and you must promise me faithfully."

"I like to be obliging."

"You will obligge me very much." He smiled, I will promise."

"Now, remember, no matter what you hear or what attentions you receive, you are not to reveal any. Don't tell them anything you are merely to say it's nobody's business about your affairs."

"You're up to some game, Hiram."

"Yes, I am; and we'll have lots of fun, may be, unless Ralph should set to do you harm."

"Are you afraid he may do me harm?"

"He may."

"What can he do?"

"He can knock you to a quarrel and then give you a trouncing. It's his game; he's an awful mean fellow."

"He may provoke me to a quarrel?"

"Yes."

"And then give me a trouncing. Is that his way?"

"Yes, he is really such a sneak. He will not come right out and whack a fellow, but he will wound him into an assault and then gives it to him."

"That's his way, eh?"

"Yes."

"Hiram, let me tell you something: if this fellow, Ralph Rolando as you call him, comes among us at a game over me he will get the worst of it."

"Will you down him with a stone?"

"Yes; he is a stone with a stone; No; but he'll think he was hit by a stone if he ever molests me."

"Oh, you can't stand up against him?"

"I can't, eh?"

"No."

"What makes you think so?"

"He is as strong as a mule, and you are only a slight-built lad—rather delicate, I should say."

"That's your idea, eh?"

"One can see you are not strong."

"I look strong!"

"No."

"There came a peculiar look to Tommy's face and a gleam of harm, and laying his hand on his muscle, said:"n

"Feel there."

Hiram placed his hand as directed, and as he felt a great heap of muscle, exclaimed:

"My goodness!"

"How is that?" demanded Tom."

"My goodness gracious!" again ejaculated Hiram.

"Tom held back his leg and said, as he clapped his hand on his calf:"n

"Feel there."

Hiram did feel, and again he uttered a cry of amazement.

"Do you think I am a delicate little fellow now?"

"I never saw anything like it. You are a little giant."

"I am giant enough for any fellow in this school; they shrink who try to impose upon me, that's all."

"Can you spar?"

"Can I?"

"Yes, can you?"

"Well, it's just a natural accomplishment of mine; no matter what you hear or do, Ralph won't hurt you, and I will take a good fellow low to impose upon me or yourself. We'll just take care of them."

"How did you raise such a muscle—you look so slender?"

"It came by nature, I reckon, and a little practice helps a great deal. The boys here won't scare me, for fear any fellow around here will impose upon me or yourself. We'll just take care of them."

"Is your arm mighty strong?"

"Yes; all on account of that fellow Ralph."

"Very good."

"What position do you play?"

"I'm a pitcher."

"Is that your arm?"

"Yes."

"You bet!"

"Well, this is just jolly. I can see there will be trouble between you and Rolando."

"There will be, eh?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"He is the best rower in the academy; he is the prince of the academy ball team; in fact, he is way ahead of all the other boys in everything, and it's funny too."

"What do you mean?"

"He seems to discern something from instinct."

"What do you mean?"

"He took a prejudice against you at first sight."

"Did he do it, eh?"

"Yes; when you first arrived this morning I could see he had conceived a dislike for you. He may have come out in his books, or may have got down on you because you're so good-looking."

"Good-looking?"

"Yes. There's one thing certain: you will take with the girls, and that will make Rolando mad. He has a great heart, and he is, and you being handsome than he will make him come down on you.

"I don't care much for girls, so he will be all right there."

"But you haven't seen her yet."

"Oh."

"Myra Hubbard, the belle of the village, and the handsomest and smartest girl in the world."

"She won't care for me."

"But no one will know you were a fellow, and then I will be ready to start out in life."

"The two lads were walking along and were met by two girls, who hit each other, and the girl who was looked upon as the handsomest girl in the world, stared at the new student as she passed him, and the next moment Hiram exclaimed:

"There! I thought so. There'll be fun, you bet, and don't be silly to see that fellow Rolando laid out."

"What do you mean, Hiram?"

"That was Myra Hubbard who just passed."

"Which girl?"

"The girl behind the veil."

"Well?"

"She looked right at you; yes, she's struck."

"I know she would be, and she is the loveliest girl in America. Wait until you see her face."

Our hero did feel a thrill as he listened to Hiram's words.

CHAPTER V.

Hiram chanced to look around, and he exclaimed:

"Well, well! who would have thought of it?"

"Well, what do you mean now?"

"I can't explain it; I can't explain it."

"Oh, don't explain it; just look at you. See, the girls have crossed the road and are hurrying down on the other side. Let us walk over there and see what they choose."

"I wish she would let me see her face."

"Ralph Rolando is a little giant."

"The lads walked slowly and the girls crossed, and a second time passed our two friends. Hiram raised her veil, and Tom caught a passing glimpse of her face, and he was really charmed. It was indeed a beautiful face—one of the sweetest he had ever seen—and he appeared to be as merry and blithe as a bird.

"She's gone!" said Hiram.

"Like him," remarked Tom; and he added: "But I don't care; she will not care for me when she finds out I am only an ex-student."

"She need not find it out."

"I wouldn't let her be deceived for the world."

"Halloo!" cried Hiram, in a significant tone.

"What now?"

"The door."

"What?"

"You're gone also; it's love at first sight!"

"Nonsense; you're way off!

"We shall see."

That same afternoon Hiram met Ralph Rolando and the latter, hailing him, said:

"I see you've got acquainted with the new student."

"Yes."

"Who is he?"

"He is the Duke of New York."

"The Duke of New York?"

"Yes."

"By what do you call him the Duke of New York? There are no dukes in this country."

"That's what they call him—so I've been told."

"He told you himself, I suppose?"

"I guess not."

"Well, I met a man who knows him. When I asked him if he was the Duke, he wanted to drive that fellow away from her to see."

"Why do they call him the Duke?"

"Because he is so handsome, so rich, and so smart."

"He met Myra Hubbard while I was away, and she is dead gone on him at first sight."

"Bash! you are gone, Hiram Perkins. You always were a fool!"

"You may call me a fool, but you had better not."

"If it gets in my way I'll call him a fool quick enough."

"Take my advice, and don't do that, it's all."

"What do I care for a milk-and-water saw­ney?"

"You may find out he is not a sawney; and I tell you, take my advice and don't go fooling around him, that's all."

"I've a mind to give you a cuff!"

"What for?"

"Because he is so smart."

"You won't do much cuffering around here, I reckon, if the Duke once gets at you."

"Hiram moved away after his words of warning, and the Cuban marched off in quite a sulking mood. The truth is he had recognized that this Myra Hubbard was a smart youth, and he had conceived a great dislike for him from the first moment he beheld him.

Hiram was performed, but his suspicions, and Rolando was particularly worked up by the words, "Myra Hubbard is clean gone on him."

"I'll drive that fellow away from here mighty quick," was Ralph's muttered exclamation, as he crossed away.

That evening there was to be a country dance at the tavern, and quite a number of the students were on hand to see the fun. They were not permitted to take part in the dance, but they were on-lookers, and among those taking a
peep were Ralph Rolando, Hiram Perkins, and our hero, Tom Weir.

The boys were crowding around the door. Rolando came in rather late, and he commenced to elbow his way through the group, and finally he came to where our hero was standing; and he shoved the latter aside in a rough manner and with some asperity.

Tom's blood was up in a moment, and he pushed the Cuban back, and angrily demanded:

"Who are you pushing?"

"I'm pushing you."

"Well, don't do it again."

"Who are you, anyway?" came the demand.

"It don't matter who I am. One thing is certain. I do mean to be knocked around by you."

The boys spoke in a loud tone, and the keeper of the tavern, overhearing loud talking, appeared on the scene, and commanded silence.

The lads obeyed as the stared being ordered out; but Tom and Ralph eyed each other after the manner of angry boys who have had a disagreement.

After watching the dance awhile, Tom and Hiram walked away, and a few moments later were followed by Ralph and a friend. Ralph, when once outside, came toward Tom, and said:

"How are we outside, what have you got to say?"

"I've got as much to say as you have!" came the answer.

"You aren't coming down to the barn!"

"I dare go anywhere I choose!" retorted Tom.

"The barn was a building where the lads had fitted up a gymnasium, and where they had sparring and wrestling bouts. Tom, and he straightened up and braced himself for a lively tussle.

"Let him boast!"

Ralph's friend, with a sardonic leer upon his face, got down the sparring gloves, and invited when Ralph extended his invitation.

"Well, I am not sorry. You deliberately set out to annoy me; you renewed the annoyance after we had come out on the road; you invited me down to the barn. I will not exact an apology unless I am in the wrong. I never say I am sorry unless I am sorry; and I've done nothing to annoy you; but, for some reason, you set me upon from the start. You invited me to stand by and watch your invitation. This quarrel is not of my seeking, but yours. I will not apologize, and you can save time, I am ready."

CHAPTER VII

Tom had won the good will of many of the boys by his show of good sense and courage. Only that day he had been picnicked on by a little underdog, but he was game, and evidently not afraid of his larger antagonist. Tom, having a big heart and more uncomplaining, the eye is a powerful factor, an immense weapon in certain circumstances, and the boy who can teach you how to use it, as Tom Weir's eyes. He had a gleam in them that was wicked in a non-malignant sense, a sort of playful malice that was very unnerving to the other party.

"So you're bound to take the drubbing!" said Ralph.

"I am if you can give it to me."

"Do you think you can best me?

You can't beat me when you get through. Let him boast himself that takes off his armor."

"Fahlo! you're a Sunday-school boy, eh!"

"We'll see. I may go over Sunday, and knock you into the middle of next week." These boys all laughed. They admitted that Ralph was not really liked, and that the majority of the boys would gladly see him worsted.

The laugh riled Ralph, and he said:

"All right. I'll give you every chance."

"Thank you very much."

"Get yourself ready," said Ralph.

"I am ready."

Ralph took off his coat, but Tom did not, and one of the boys advised him to strip.

"I'm all right," answered Tom.

"You don't mean to box me, after all," said Ralph.

"I guess I'll give you a good mill."

The two boys had put on the gloves; two other lads were selected as seconds, a third one was deputed to act as referee, and then the two antagonists faced each other. It was wonderful how suddenly the delicate-looking Tom swelled to larger proportions the moment he placed his hands, and discovered also how he had grown. There was no awkwardness in his posture or movements, and a chill went through Ralph as he suddenly realized that he was to face a good match. The two lads spurred and feinted a half minute, and then Ralph suddenly advanced, and the other seemed to glide back, as though he had slipped upon a piece of orange peel.

There was blood in his eye as he rose and rushed at Tom; but he received some short-arm punching that staggered and blinded him, and he would have got another solid blow that would have knocked him off his feet, without any seeming effort, Tom sent forth his left hand and Master Ralph keeled over and was out.
"We are only exercising in fun." "But are you young gentlemen aware it is after hours?"

The boys all protested that they had not heard the bell.

"Get away to your rooms as quickly as you can, and I will say nothing about it," kindly his master.

The latter was the most popular teacher in the school, and the boys scattered and started for their rooms, excitedly discussing the interrupted "mill."

Ralph and his friend were the last to get out, and as they pondered forth Nelson Ward, his comrade, said:

"By ginger, Ralph! it was lucky.

"What do you mean?"

"The appearance of the teacher."

"Why?"

"He would have knocked you out. He's a wonder!"

"Is he?"

"He's a good fellow, isn't he?"

"You know what I was only playing a waiting game—finding him out! I'd rather have had about two minutes more that an honor."

"I'll give him a drubbing some day."

"I would."

"And I'll drub the Duke also some day."

"You had better not tackle him, Ralph."

"Oh, I know all about him. He is a good opener, but when it comes to a rough-and-tumble I'll fix him."

"Don't seek any trouble with him."

"Why?"

"He is a dangerous fellow—you can see that. We will get him out of the school—get him sent away."

"How can we do that?"

"He is a pretender."

"Yes."

"How?"

"He has come here pretending to be very rich, but I don't believe his folks have got a cent."

"What makes you think so?"

"Look at his clothes; they are of the cheapest sort. A fellow who has plenty of money would dress better than he does."

"That's so, and we will get him away from here, but I'll give him a good drubbing first. It won't do to let the boys think he can get away with me."

"They don't think so. I've taken care of that, and as long as you keep out of his way it will be all right."

"I'll fix him, Hiram, though!"

"You must be careful about that. But I do wish I could make him keep his mouth shut."

"He'll keep it shut."

On the day following came a half holiday, and the boys followed to play a match game of ball.

The academy students had a team, and Ralph Rolando was the acknowledged leader. There was no playing so exciting coming from a neighboring town in response to challenge.

The village and about all the students turned out to see the match, and among the spectators was our hero and his new friend, Hiram Perkins.

The game commenced, and it was a well-played game of ball. The academy boys were fast and skillful, and they made a bid for the credit of the victory. Up to the last half of the ninth inning the game was a tie, and Ralph and his friend were the last to go out, and all depended upon him. He faced a good ball, caught it on the end of his bat, and sent it far over the fence, amid a tempest of applause, made a clean home run, and won the game.

The next week the visiting team had done well, and he shouted and applauded loudly with the others. He was an ardent lover of the game, a good pitcher in his instincts, and was prepared to give full credit where it was due. The visiting team was quite a crack nine. They kept things up for the students, and they felt very sore over their defeat.

One of their number was a very violent fellow—a chap who was always in a hurry—and he bitterly felt the defeat, as he had made some bets with outsiders, and he was very much mortified at his loss in the matter of victory. He had looked upon the game as a soft thing, and after the crowd had gone away he made a bunch of students, and they felt very sore over their defeat.

The fellow turned on Tom, and demanded:

"What have you got to say about it, you white-faced dude?"

"I've got as much to say about it as any one, and I say the academy nine beat you fair and square."

"What do you know about the game?"

"Enough to know that you're no good."

Tom was a little riled at the fellow's insulting manner, especially as his remarks were made to students, who were gathered around. There was blood in the eye of the other fellow when Tom spoke out as he did.

CHAPTER IX.

The captain of the visiting nine lost his temper entirely, and, advancing to Tom, said, as he shook his fist at the last of the team:

"You're too fresh; no one asked your opinion."

"I've as good a right to express my opinion as any one else; it was an open game."

"Well, you shut up?"

"I won't shut up."

"You won't?"

"No, I won't."

"You'll make you."

"No, you won't."

The ball player lost his temper absolutely, and with high color he had his fist in Tom's face.

"You're a fellow to strike me. I only expressed my opinion."

The ball men knew that their companion was in the wrong, and dragged him away, and the truth is the fellow was but a bully after all, and although he struggled and made a great pretense of returning and renewing the contest, he submitted just sufficiently to be led off.

That evening Ward and his friend Rolando went together, and Tom, and the next moment he was rolling in the grass, knocked over by as pretty a blow as ever encountered a student.

At once there was a rush. The friends of the ball player ran to his assistance, and almost in term of dollars, while Tom had been compelled to take bad been squarely beaten on their merits.

The visiting team was quite a crack nine. They kept things up for the students, and they felt very sore over their defeat.

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Hiram walked on in a thoughtful mood. He was a little perplexed; he did not understand it, and the reports had come from the same source. Hiram had fallen into the trap. The latter was suddenly gone. Hiram thought the liquor complete possession of the guests. He looked out and saw Ward sustaining Perkins as our hero had caught him by the arm. He was under the delusion that he was heir to a big fortune.

Hiram, and Nelson Ward also smiled in a malignant fashion. But somehow you have always kept aloof from my friends, and we will have the best ball nine in Ameri-
11Umed enough of the liquor.

You're 

and I've all the evidence against you, but you can not. I got the warning.

I'd report you and put you on the blacklist. I never drank a drop of liquor.

I'd report you and put you on the blacklist if I was certain that you did it. I was awfully sick!

"And what do you mean?"

"You were drunk."

"And do you think I was given to understand I had been drinking?"

"Yes, and I have all the evidence against you."

"They are going to make me expose you!

"Is that the case?"

"Yes; I have all the evidence against you."

"And if they don't make you expose me, what will they do?"

"They will expel the son of the President.

"Then what will we do?"

"I must have been mad!"

"You were wildly drunk."

"I think you were drunk!"

"No, I do not think so!"

"Yes, I do.

And dare you declare that we got Hiram into this case?"

"That is just what I say."

"It is just what I say."

"You're a mean fellow, Ward; but I will promise not to say anything about it.

"We can not say anything about it."

"What were you there for?"

"And do you suppose he did?"

"Yes, and I have all the evidence against you.

"Did you lose your senses, and industrialize your brain?"

"Then what will we do?"

"And put you on the blacklist?"

"Yes, and if they don't make you expose me, what will they do?"

"Then we will make you expose us.

"That is just what I say.

"That is just what I say.

"That is just what I say.

"I will not tell you."

"I will not tell you.

"I will not tell you.

"Yes, and I have all the evidence against you.

"Did they give you the liquor?"

"They told me to drink all the liquor they had."

"That is what they did."

"That is what they did.

"Then what will we do?"

"We will make you expose us.

"That is true."

"That is true."

"That is true."

"I will not tell you.

"I will not tell you.

"I will not tell you.

"Then what will you do?"

"Then what will you do?"

"Then what will you do?"
CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN Tom saw Myra and Ralph gliding along over the ice a little spark of envy did not light in his eye. '' There was a lad of warm and ardent impulses, and Myra was so beautiful and so merry and looked so charming, her blue eyes and fair hair and rosy cheeks burned like roses under the excitement of the delightful exercise. Indeed, so charmed was our hero he stood a long time to watch them. 

Meantime Ralph and Myra glided along here and there over the glissary surface. "Have you any acquaintance of the new student yet?" asked Myra, as the two glided near the spot where Tom stood.

"No, and I do not care to make his acquaintance."

"Why not?"

"I have no reasons."

"I think you would be proud to make his acquaintance."

"Why?"

"He is surely a handsome fellow, and they say he is so manly and brave."

Ralph felt that he would find him out some day. He wanted to fight every one. He has already sought to quarrel with me. I wanted to be kind to him, but he is so envious. He received my advances in an insulting manner, and I compelled to let him alone.

"You are surprised, but I would not be discouraged—he may be sensitive."

He is ugly, that's what the matter with him. He is naturally so."

"Does he know that you possess his secret?"

"I suspect he thinks I know all about him."

"And you will not tell any one what you have told me?"

"Certainly not. I'll throw over him the chàng that is real good of you. Ralph. I am really sorry for him, and hope you will try and be friends with him, and you may do him much good."

"You ask me to perform a very disagreeable task."

"But you may accomplish a great deal of good. I'd do almost anything to oblige—"

"Look there!" suddenly cried Myra.

Tom Weir had struck off over the ice.
"I don't care to go."

"I'll go," cried Myra, and she glided away toward the circle that surrounded Tom.

Our hero was not a boy to show off, and the moment he discovered how much attention he was attracting, he started to skate off; but one of the tutors, Mr. Hamilton, who was quite an expert, arrived at that moment, and asked Tom to stop and show some figures.

Tom was an obliging fellow, and did lead off with several very difficult feats. Some of the lads with Mr. Hamilton tried them, but all failed or made but sorry attempts, and, still encouraged, Tom performed some still more difficult feats, and one of the boys called out:

"Where's Ralph Rolando?"

Nelson Ward had been among the lads, and when the inquiry came he started off to where Ralph was gliding around in a circle, and upon resuming his request he exclaimed:

"Have you seen that fellow skate?"

"Who?"

"The bootblack."

"Hold on, Nelson; you must not give that away. Only to you. But have you seen him?"

"No."

"By George! he's a wonder! To tell the truth, you're nowhere; and they are shouting for you."

"Shouting for me?"

"Who?"

"Some of the boys; you want to try something else. But don't you go there, he can beat you all to bottom."

"Hang him! I wish he'd never come here."

"Some one."

"No."

"Myra Hubbard is there and loud saying, 'That fellow has Spanish blood in him.' He is a Cuban; but he was born in New York, and to-day I heard something, and if he calls you bootblack we can get back on him."

"How?"

"Perkins hesitated, but after a moment said:

"Mindi, I do not vouch for the truth of what you say."

"No."

"You have seen the blacksmith of the village."

"Yes."

"He is a bit of a misfit. Hang it! he will carry the boys all with him if we don't look out. I've a good mind to tell the truth about him once and for all."

"No; you must keep silent."

"But it makes me mad to see Myra Hubbard so carried away with him. You ought to tell her."

"The best would do that?"

"It would open her eyes."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes."

"But you say she is applauding him."

"Yes; she is; and cries 'splendid' louder than any one else."

"She does?"

"Yes."

"Ralph was thoughtful and silent, and Nelson said:

"I'll tell her if I were you."

"Would you?"

"Yes, I would."

"I'd tell her."

"Yes."

"Nelle stared in amazement.

"Tell you her what?"

"Yes."

"That he is an ex-bootblack."

"Hang it! the girl is crazy; she is all gone."

"What do you mean?"

"I tell you she shows her admiration right out."

"Shut up, Nelle."

"It's true, and if I were you I'd tell every body the truth."

"I can't, Nelle."

"You can't?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I've promised not to tell."

"But what odds does that promise make? Let's tell Tom the chances. We can deny the other thing."

"But I've promised some one else."

"You promised some one else?"

"Yes."

"Who?"

"Some one."

Nelle was silent a moment, and then cried out, as an idea struck him:

"Did Myra make you promise?"

"Yes."

"The girl's a fool!"

"She made promise."

"I wouldn't have promised."

"She made me."

"Hang it! We'll have to drown that fellow!"

"Yes, we will, Nelle. We'll do something to get him out of the way," said Ralph.

CHAPTER XVI.

NELSON WARD and Ralph Rolando were two mud and disregarded youths. The new student who had appeared to their life, and everything—that seemed to excel in everything he undertook, and this last exhibition of his marvelous skill as a skater, to use a boy's term, completely killed them up.

Meantime our hero completed his exhibition. He had shown no reluctance in giving it, but Mr. Hamilton had led him on, and when Tom finally skated away he was greeted with a round of applause.

Later on in the evening nothing else was talked about save the wonderful skill of the new student.

In the evening Perkins entered our hero's room, and said:

"Well, you've beamed at it again."

"How?"

"I heard you drove Ralph Rolando off the lake."

"Yes."

"The boys say you did."

"I did not intend to do so."

"Did you know that Rolando was considered the best skater in the state?"

"Possibly he is."

"No; no; the boys say you beat him all hol low. You beat him at every thing, and I tell you he will hate you, and an idea has just come to me."

"Well?"

"That fellow has Spanish blood in him."

"He is a Cuban, I believe."

"His father was a negro; but he was born in New York, and to-day I heard something, and if he calls you bootblack we can get back on him."

"How?"

"Nelle."

"Perkins hesitated, but after a moment said:

"Mindi, I do not vouch for the truth of what you say."

"No."

"You have seen the blacksmith of the village."

"Yes."

"He is a bit of a misfit. Hang it! he will carry the boys all with him if we don't look out. I've a good mind to tell the truth about him once and for all."

"No; you must keep silent."

"But it makes me mad to see Myra Hubbard so carried away with him. You ought to tell her."

"This would do that?"

"It would open her eyes."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes."

"But you say she is applauding him."

"Yes; she is; and cries 'splendid' louder than any one else."

"She does?"

"Yes."

"Ralph was thoughtful and silent, and Nelson said:

"I'll tell her if I were you."

"Would you?"

"Yes, I would."

"I'd tell her."

"Yes."

"Nelle stared in amazement.

"Tell you her what?"

"Yes."

"That he is an ex-bootblack."

"Hang it! the girl is crazy; she is all gone."

"What do you mean?"

"I tell you she shows her admiration right out."

"Shut up, Nelle."

"It's true, and if I were you I'd tell every body the truth."

"I can't, Nelle."

"You can't?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I've promised not to tell."

"But what odds does that promise make? Let's tell Tom the chances. We can deny the other thing."

"But I've promised some one else."

"You promised some one else?"

"Yes."

"Who?"

"Some one."

"Some one."

"I'd rather get some one else," said the captain of the new nine.

"Why?"

"There is a prejudice against this Tom Weir. Several of the other lads at once cried out:

"We want to win, don't we?"

"Yes, we do."

"I tell you what I've heard; they are betting that the regular nine will beat us in one instance."

"I know something else," said another boy; "some of the girls are offering to bet bouquets and boxes of candy, that Rolando's nine will beat us three to one."

"Suppose they will?" came the answer from the captain. We have no right to hope to beat him, but I assure you, if they can play, the players will work so well together as a team."

"Tom Weir plays I think we can beat them, Mr. Perkins."

"Is he a good player?"

"He is a splendid player."

"What position does he play?"

"He plays any position."

"How do you know?"

"Never mind; you can take my word for it."

"Let's ask him to play," came a chorus of voices.

"All right," at length assented the captain.

Henry Hurlburt, like Hiram Perkins, was the son of a poor farmer, and he stood in awe of the son of the millionaire Cuban.

He had sometimes snubbed Hurlburt, but the latter had thought it best not to notice these mores, but he trespassed a memory of them in bearing all the same, and made up his mind that some day he would get square.

Rolando's team was the pride of the village. The sporting men of the town and the college had bet on the college team, and its captain was a hero with them. Ralph was really a splendid boy; he was not an expert student, but he did not dare betray his admiration. He worshiped her from a distance. He had rarely spoken to her, that is, he had never dared to do so—he feared he might betray himself.

While pretending to like Ralph Rolando as a friend who was a real boy, Tom Weir hated the tall Cuban-American with an intensity that was devouring him, and yet he feared him.

Henry Hurlburt, the son of Henry Perkins, was the son of a poor farmer, and he stood in awe of the son of the millionaire Cuban.
"But not a ball." 

"Hey, Hiram!" 

Hiram entered our room and said: "I'm a committee of one to tell you something, and I feel that you are invited." 

"Go ahead, old fellow." 

"There is to be a ball match." 

"When?" 

"Between the regulars and a selected nine." 

"Yes, I have heard about it." 

"You have been selected to play on the picked nine." 

"I have been selected!" 

"Yes." 

"Who selected me?" 

"The busy fellows." 

"Why not?" 

"Yes." 

"He may make a show of him." 

"There may be something in that." 

"You; bet this is your opportunity. Hang him! he can not be the best at everything, and just once we've got him."

"Possibly you're right. I'll bother him, and if he makes a base hit off me I'll eat the ball." 

CHAPTER XVIII. 

The base-ball match was the talk not only of the town, but the surrounding country. Old and young, white and men, were all more or less interested in the match. 

Ralph Rolando's regular seminary nine had won a great reputation, and Ralph was recognized as what is known as a phenominal pitcher. He pitched a wonderfully swift ball, and was master of all the curve tricks, and besides, he was recognized as a pitcher possessing what is called a "good head." He was cool in critical emergencies, and his popularity as an assistant of the nine was great. He was in the "swim," as far as popularity goes, and those who did not admire him did not understand why, while they did who were loud in their laudations of his skill.

As stated, when it became known that there was to be a ball match, the excitement became great, and the adherents of the two nines began to range themselves on sides. The large majority were enthusiastic over the first nine, and the others were silently hopeful as concerned the second nine; but there were few who were for the seminary nine, and the majority of the latter were ranged against Rolando's nine. Their own nines had been beaten by the seminary nine and hoped to see them taken into camp. So upon the day when the match was to take place there was a large assemblage present, and the excitement was at fever heat.

At length the two nines appeared upon the field. The scrub nine were sent first to the box, as it was their turn. They were the more discouraged because they were greeted with applause as they advanced to their several positions, attired in brand-new uniforms.

Tom Weir had been assigned to center field. He had not been consulted as to his choice of position, and it was one assigned without a word. Just before entering the field Hiram and Tom exchanged a few words.

"You must not lose your head, Tom, if they 'try' you," said Hiram. "You need not fear for me, Hiram, my boy." 

"I'm a suspicion that they have set two or three positions, and have already begun to@g*" 

"So much the worse for them, I reckon." 

"You must not lose your temper, Tom." 

"Never fear. I'll keep my eye on you, and look out for yourself. I'll do well enough." 

The lads opened up well. The ball was sent out to the outfielders, and passed rapidly from base to base, and then sent home, and the crowd cheered and applauded in a hearty manner.

A "singer" was sent to center field. There was some excitement. The eyes of all the students were fixed upon the player, Tom Weir, as he took his position. The latter let the ball pass through his fingers, and there followed a laugh and many comments.

Nelson Ward and Ralph Rolando were standing together, and both eagerly watched the ball as it went sailing out toward the pin they so cordially hated, and while the ball glided between his fingers and went sailing over his head, they laughed with the others, and Nelson Ward whispered:

"He's no good. I thought so. We'll send him leather-hunting, you bet." 

"I'll bet he hits the first time when he comes to bat," whispered Ralph back to his friend.

Myra Hubbard was standing near by, and so did Tom. Nelson glanced over at her.

"They counted a good deal on that new player, but he's no good." 

"Yes," replied Ralph. 

"He missed an easy ball." 

"He may be a little nervous." Myra, by her answer, showed how well she was up in the game. 

"Good players don't get nervous." 

"I've seen yours, my girl," said Ralph. 

"And you think it was an accident?" 

"It may have been.

"It's just there goes another for you—a regular fungo. Let's see what he'll do now." 

Even as Ward spoke the ball went skimming up in the air, and fell right in Tom's hands, but he failed to hold it, and again there followed a laugh.

"What did I tell you?" said Ward, again addressing Myra.

"Wait till the game commences," said the girl.

Henry Hurlburt had been watching the play of his nine, and he sought an opportunity to say to his friend Porthams:

"We're going to be weak in center field. Your friend Weir is no good."

"He may be a little nervous," said Hurlburt.

Hiram had seen Tom miss the two "flies," and he felt disappointed.

"Take me as a substitute," said Hiram, "if you please. He's in much practice he'll go all to pieces when the game commences. I've a mind to send in the substitute in any way don't it." 

"But the other fellows are playing so well we may win the game if we have a good center fielder." 

"Weir will be all right, you mark my words." 

A third ball was sent to Tom, and for the third time he let it pass through his fingers. 

By ginger! that won't do at all," said Hurlburt.

At this moment the signal was given for the regular seminary nine to take their places for the next practice, and their fleet on the field under a perfect ovation of applause, and they looked like champions. When the ball was passed around they acted like men who thought they had what the boys called "a soft thing." It may be they will change their minds. I'll change Weir," said Hurlburt. "Don't you dare, Hiram." 

"But we'll lose the game through him." 

"Give him a chance, and if he fails you can change him himself. I'll give him the tip to get hurt."

"It may be too late." 

"You will be a disgrace to change him without a chance." 

"Not so much a disgrace as to change him after he's been a success." 

"He may deserve it, then he does not now." 

"All right, I'll let him play; but we'll lose the game." 

The regulars played nicely during their practice. Ralph went to center field and took several times, that were sent out to him, and Ward walked over to Myra, and said:

"There's a pitcher for you—nothing passes through his hands." 

Henry Hurlburt was standing near by and overheard him. He was jealous of Ralph in that respect, and he again resolved to change Tom Weir off the next lineup.

"Why do you want to take him off, Hiram?" asked Myra. 

"I don't want to make a bet with a lady," said Nelson Ward. 

"You dare not!" came the taunting reply. 

"The chances are dead against you. I'll tell you what I will do, Myra: I'll bet you the regulars beat these fellows in one inning."
"How do you mean?"

"You are not in good form, Tom."

Again there came a twinkle to Tom's eyes.

"Rolando will have the laugh on you, and when you come up to him he will make a show of you."

"Will he?"

"Yes, and I am laying for the change."

"All right, I can stand it."

Hiram observed at length a singular confidence in his companion's sentiments, and he said:

"You're up to something;"

"Oh, no; but I'll be all right, and don't you forget it!"

"If you aren't nervous you may come out all right."

"My nerve is all right."

"Well, you know."

"I do."

While the above conversation was in progress, Henry Hurlbut had been talking to Ralph. He approached the opposing captain, and said:

"Ralph, I want to ask a favor."

"Go ahead."

"I want to change one of my players."

"Which a?"

"Tom Weir."

"Why did you put him on?"

"I was asked to do so."

"It's too late to make a change."

"Why?"

"The names of the players, in their order, have been given to the umpire."

"We can make the change if you consent."

"I can not consent."

"Why not?"

"It would not be right."

"Why not? What is the change?"

"I can't do it."

"You ought to be glad to win on your merits."

"That's all right; but you knew what you were about when you put that fellow on."

"And you refuse to permit the change?"

"Yes, I do."

CHAPTER XX.

HENRY HURLBUT was mad. "He considered Ralph had acted real mean, and it was true under all the circumstances Rolando had acted mean, and yet the young fellow could not let go the opportunity of triumphing over the student, who had excelled him in several other directions."

"I'll make a show of him!" he muttered, and when Ward came along the latter said:

"What's up?"

"I want to take the fellow Weir off his team and put in the substitute."

"You did not consent?"

"No."

"You're right; you would have been a goose. That fellow's no good, and you can make a show of him."

"You bet I will."

"And I've set the boys up to 'guy' him."

"That's real kind of you. We may give him such a 'show up' as will cause him to 'git.'"

"It would be just jolly if we could."

"Do you know Myra Hubbard offered to bet you could get her to 'win'?"

"What's she thinking of, then?"

"She does, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, she will have to make a good many more before this game is ended to-day."

"You bet! Oh, golly! won't I enjoy seeing you 'show him up.'"

"I'll make him appear like a fool. It was check for him to enter the other nine, but he's got check. He thinks he's something big, but we'll take him down a peg."

Henry Hurlbut, meantime, was very sure. He really believed his nine could win if it were not for his Josh."

"Hang it!" he muttered. "I must take him, and it would be a joke if he were to make the same inning run he could, but then he's no player, and he'll swamp us. I must get him to pretend he's injured in the first inning, and then the umpire will order him off, and let me put in a substitute."

Henry approached Hiram and Tom and said:

"You've got to play, Weir."

"Why?"

"Rolando won't let you off."

"Why not?"

"I'll tell you, he wants to win."

"He does, eh?"

"Yes."

"And thinks I'll lose the game?"

"Yes; and now we can fix him yet."

"How?"

"You can manage to get hurt in the first inning."

"Well?"

"And then the umpire will let me put in a substitute."

"Not in the first inning."

"Oh, yes, if you manage to get hurt pretty bad."

Tom smiled, and said:

"You leave it to me."

"Can you do it?"

"You shall not lose this game through me."

Henry understood Tom to mean that he would follow instructions about getting hurt, and said:

"You are a good fellow, Weir, and I'll never forget this good turn."

"That's all I think is to win?"

"Yes, especially since Ralph has acted so meanly."

"He'll be sorry," said Tom, in a quiet tone."

"Yes; we can fool him yet."

"You let me will it!" said Tom."

"I'm your friend, Tom Weir."

"Thank you."

Henry walked away, and Hiram said:

"What are you going to do, Tom?"

"Oh, I'll do what is right."

"And will you get hurt?"

"You wait and see."

"I wouldn't do it in the first inning."

"Why not?"

"You may get your nerve back and play a good game."

"That's so."

"Then you won't get hurt at first?"

"May be not."

"I'd like to see you play through the game."

"And will you?"

"I would. I'd rather go off the nine myself."

"But you're a good player."

"We can't beat those fellows, but I'd like to give them a close game."

"And think we can't beat them?"

"I do."

"Why not?"

"They are all in good form, and I will say that Rolando is a dandy pitcher. He's hard to beat."

"Who pitches for our side?"

"Henry."

"How is he?"

"He's a good, steady pitcher, and has plenty of nerve."

"How was it he wasn't on the regular nine?"

"Rolando is jealous of him. I think he fears him."

"And you would really like to see our side win?"

"I'd go hungry for a month."

"And if we win?"

"Ah, we can't!"

"We can't, eh?"

"No, it is impossible."

"What makes you think so?"

"They're too heavy for us."

"You think so?"

"Yes."

"We've got the best catcher."

"How do you know?"

"I watched other men, and I've been watching the other fellows."

"And ours is the better?"

"Yes."

"We shall see some fun before this game is over."

CHAPTER XXXI.

"You've a queer fellow, Tom," said Hiram.

Tom again smiled in a pleasant manner and said:

"There's a dead-set against me, but it will come all right."

Tom Weir walked away, and was passing a group of girls, when to his utter amazement one of the girls stopped forward and addressed him. She was quite a pretty young lady.

"Hello, my boy," she said.

"Tom came to a halt."

"I want to say one word."

"Yes, you are very kind," said Tom.

"My sympathies are with the new man."
"Why?"

"That's all," I said.

"And what?" I asked again.

"I'm trying to figure out what the two nines are more evenly matched about your nine.

"The first man of the regulars went to the bat. But he was angry and discouraged when the umpire called out ball against the pitcher. He showed that he knew it was a critical moment, and he set himself for a fine exhibition of hard pitching.

"The words passed from lip to lip: daisy, and a wild ball. Yes, I will tell you what I mean.


A great shout arose. Men, women, boys and girls, and his friends of the regulars were frenzied. The first ball was wide and Henry Hurlburt sent it into the stands. The second gained his first base, and the regulars again hit a base hit. And a second time

"We'll win," said the regulars from the bench. Hiram said to him:

"You make a wonderful catch, one of the most extraordinary catches ever seen upon that particular field. The two runners had crossed the plate, and Ralph had almost made the four of them when the decision came, "Batter out.""
test, and the regulars had also come to feel that they had no "walk-over." They lost their constant air of superiority, and as they took their position, the way they began to appreciate the situation. They had no "easy thing of it;" indeed, defeat or a draw game was among the possible and he had kept up their game of splendid. Henry Hurlburt, and the last man became dazed, struck wildy three times, and was retired. 

"It was a good move, however; indeed, thus far it had been one of the best games ever played on the grounds.

The scrubs were rising in the estimation of the on-lookers, and the students generally began to realize that they had two good teams, and the mark was up next batting. "It's a close thing, after all; I thought the regulars would annihilate them."

The regulars again faced Henry's pitching, and the first man out, the second secured his base on a bad fumble by the shortstop, and got secured second base on a good run. A man on second and only one man out was the score.

"Hang that fellow! It's the second time he's hit a two-base hit, but Tom made a splendid throw in, and Ralph was held at third base."

"We've got 'em!" Ralph shouted, and at the same moment the scrubs nine batter was caught out on a tip.

"Hang that fellow! It's the second time he's knocked us out." Ralph and Ward were dazed, and as they came together Ward said: "Hang that fellow! It's the second time he's knocked us out."

"He is a devil!" muttered Ralph, between his teeth. "I'm afraid we're gone, Ralph!"

"Gone?"

"What's the matter with you? Wait until I go to the bat again."

"Sure!" Ralph said. "You think we're going to die at third."

"Oh, by George! if you could only make a run!"

"I will."

"I hope you will. Hang that fellow! how the regulars are coming along!"

The applause was glib and bitterness to both Ralph and Ward. The game was up to the bench, Henry Hurlburt approached him, and shook his hand and patted him on the back: the applause was reserved and hearty. You bet I'd like to hit a home run; it would be a triumph over return to his base, but Tom made a wonderful catch away down near the fence. A shout arose from all over the field. It looked as though Ralph was going to die at third.

"You're safe!" Ralph shouted.

"I did get away catch away down near the fence. A shout arose from all over the field. It looked as though Ralph was going to die at third.

The first baseman was quicker than any man you ever saw; he was back to his base in quite the most violent manner, and the crowd, who understood what was going on, muttered: "It serves him right."

CHAPTER XXV.

About the weather. Ralph, you are losing your head."

Ralph shouted, and at the same moment the scrubs nine batter was caught out on a tip. The next man went out on a fungo foul, and Henry Hurlburt again faced the pitcher. Henry was careful, and watched warily for two very wild balls, and on one of them Henry made a safe run to second base.

"Ralph, you are losing your head!"

"Hang it! I'd rather be kicked than have him on second base."

"If you ain't careful you will give the game away. Henry is a great base runner."

"Be careful, old boy."

Ralph immediately settled down to business, saw that the ball was well up to the plate, and struck out, and the score still nothing to nothing and an inning in favor of the regulars.

As the same walk is Ward said to Roland:

hands on a bound over his head. It looked like a home run, but the center fielder backed up the left fielder and returned the ball, with a second splendid throw in, and Ralph was held at third base.

It would be impossible to describe the excitement. Ralph was safe, and the opponents were delirious. A man on third and nobody out—that was how the game stood. A run was certain, but, alas! the next batter, in the person of old Henry Hurlburt, hit a fly ball in the runner, tipped out. Still there were two batters to face the pitcher.

Ward had walked behind third base to catch the runners.

"Keep your eye peeled, Ralph," he said.

"We've got 'em."

The second man after Ralph struck out, and a groan arose from all over the field. It looked as though Ralph was going to die at third.

The next batter stepped to the plate. He was known to be the poorest and most uncertain batter on the nine. All hope of a run vanished. But Ralph hit a belt that it was all right, and just there he made a mistake. He was more watchful against a run in from third than anything else. The batter dead to rights. He was a little careless, Eternal vigilance is the price of victory. He sent in an easy ball, the batter made a lung at it; he caught it fair, and sent the ball over the second baseman's head and ran like a deer to first base as Ralph made a dash for the home plate.

"Safely!" came the decision from the umpire. One run in, and Ralph on first base.

The applause was deafening, and Ward, approaching Ralph, said:

"Now we've got 'em again!"

"I know we'd get 'em. Let's go in now and lay 'em out. We've got 'em ratted."

The man on first base was very proud of his achievement, and he became quite bold. He began to leap and flap on first base, and set his foot on a cap, but no one said anything. He had lost his cunning for one minute. He had seen that the game was a good one, the adventure was short of his base, and the decision came promptly:

A groan arose and comments were rife. "What a fool!" "I'd club him!" and all manner of remarks in condemnation of the base runner followed.

The facts were he was playing good ball, it is good tactics in such a game to pitch to other pitcher, but Ralph was angry. He did not like the little triumph the opposing pitcher had won, and he went over to the crowd in the most violent manner, and the crowd, who understood what was going on, muttered:

"It serves him right."

CHAPTER XXVI.

Tours far had it been a splendidly played game: the honors were about evenly divided between the two sides, and Ralph and Ward had both won especial honors in the game.

At the close of the inning described the game stood even; inning and one run in favor of the regulars, and it was Tom Weir to the bat.

"Now go for him, Ralph!" said Ward. "You bet I'd like to hit a home run; it would be a quicker than any man you ever saw!"

As Tom went to secure his bat Henry asked, and said:

"Sock it, Wir!"

"Shall I?"

"Yes."

"What do you want?"

"A homer."

"Certainly; you think so?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"In practice."

"What makes you think so?"

"Oh! I know."

"You're up to all the points."

"I don't like the way that fellow acts, and the regulars have the crowd with them. We must lay them out."

"But you will make a time if we do."

"Wait and see."

"You were fooling, I see."

"Fool?"

"Yes."

"In practice."

"What makes you think so?"

"Oh! I know."

"You're up to all the points."

"I don't like the way that fellow acts, and the regulars have the crowd with them. We must lay them out."

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"I don't like the way that fellow acts, and the regulars have the crowd with them. We must lay them out."

"But you will make a time if we do."

"Wait and see."

"You were fooling, I see."

"Fool?"

"Yes."

"In practice."

"What makes you think so?"
And I will make a friend of you?

"You will.

"You're a good friend.

"Oh, just make a home run, and I'll be your brother!"

Ralph also took an opportunity to caution Tom.

"Look out, Tom."

"Ward will do it.

"Rolando will make a clown of you if he can.

"Why can he," repeated Tom, in a significant tone.

"You lay for him for a good one."

"Well, I'll play the game."

"You'll raise her up in the air, and they have got to run it in."

"What shall I do?"

"If you get first, you're a dandy."

"All right; we'll see."

Tom Weir was a dandy as a ball player. He had one of the longest beads for points. He stepped up to the plate, and there was dead silence. The first ball came wide, and a ball was called on the batter. The second ball went over the plate, and Tom stood and let it go by, as though he were afraid of it. He didn't make an attempt to hit the ball.

A second ball went over the plate, and he stood like an idiot. The comment and asked:

"What's the matter with him? He is scared out of his wits."

Tom laughed. He had a sure thing. He sent in a swift ball over the plate but failed to give the curve. Tom's bat came round, and like a man at sea he tried the air and went sailing over the heads of the fielders. The latter made a rush, but a bird couldn't have over-taken a swift rush, but a bird couldn't have over-taken him. Tom meantime ran like a dear, and amid a shout such as can only be heard on a ball-field which before it was over the ball was returned even to the second baseman.

It was a magnificent hit—a clean, sure home run—there was no dispute, and Ralph was mad.

Tom had fooled him. His seeming fear was a trick; his standing like a dummy was a "guy." He was a good batter, and for the third time he had won the honors of the day.

"He's the man!" exclaimed the under-teacher, as Ralph came to the plate. "The boys are down to business."

"I've told you," said Myra. "This I told you is always greeted with enthusiasm, and Ralph to the bat—there was no dispute, and Ralph to the bat for the first strike.

Thus far it had been a magnificent game of ball indeed. The excitement of the scene had spread, for many came to witness the game who thought to attend it would be a one-sided affair.

Nearly all the under-teachers were on the grounds, and, as far as he had gone, it was the most exciting contest that had ever been fought there. Even the two clergymen of the village had heard of the great game, and had hastened to the field.

Meantime the game proceeded. Ralph had gone to each one of his men, had given them instructions, and had sought to encourage them to the best of their capacity, proving himself as an excellent captain and well fitted for the position.

Nelson Ward, who was quite a ladies' man, as the saying goes, walked over to where Myra stood in the midst of a group of girls, and the two beauties, exchanged with him the discouraging announcement:

"You are going to be beaten."

"Not by us," replied Ralph, "I told you so," said Myra.

"This I told you is always an irritating taunt.

"Wait and see," said Nelson. "You fellows thought you were going to walk right out of the game."

"So we will. Just wait until Rolando comes to the bat again.

"And wait until the Duke of New York comes to the bat again!" returned Myra.

"That fellow has been lucky. It will run some time."

"Then you do not give him credit for good playing?"

"I do not think so."

"You're wrong, my fellow has been lucky. It will run some time."

"If you lose the game you will owe your defeat to the Duke."

"No, we owe it to luck. But, girls, we will not lose the game. See that! our boys are going in now."

As Ward stepped, the first batter for the regulars sent a good safe hit over second base, and the next batter took a crack at the first ball offered, and forced the runner on a base on an excellent sacrifice hit.

"Our boys are down to business now," said Ward, to a party of girls. "That is only the beginning; we'll make a show of this inning—see if we don't."

The third time the regulars, however, went out on strikes; and it was two men out, and one man on second.

"Ward to the bat."

"Ward to the bat."

"Ward to the bat."

"Watch me!" said Ward, as he walked away to take his position at the plate.

The young fellow was in dead earnest, and he made a desperate drive on the ball. He made a tip, but it was not held, and the remark passed around:

"What luck! If he had got that ball square it would have been the hit of the day.

The second base was wide; the third went over the plate, and caught Ward napping.

There was a hush of excitement. A base hit meant one run, and probably the winning run of the game. He had been one chance, however. Henry Hurlburt was very deliberate; it was a crisis in the game, and at such moments he was cool and steady. Another ball was sent wide, and another, until it stood with but one ball and one strike to the credit of the batter and pitcher. Again Henry delayed, and Ralph called to the man on the base:

"Two men out. Run in on anything."

The last ball for the inning, and all was delivered. Ward made a terrible drive at the sphere, but, alas! the Fates were against him. He made a second tip and the ball landed in the grasped of the catcher. It was a wonderful catch, and the inning was over.

"What a fellow!"

Our readers will remember that Tom Weir had remained on the bench. He had made the under-teachers as good bats as they had the best catcher. He, the latter, like our hero, was a new-comer to the school, and it was a point from that day he made use of his knowledge. He caught Henry for a stinger and cleared the bases by a home run, thus maintaining his standing as a great catcher.

Never had such a game been played on the grounds. It appeared like a contest of gladiators. The first time Ralph hit the ball was the contest, and it did appear as though such would be the result.

Ward was again with the girls, and he exclaimed as Ralph crossed the plate:

"What did I tell you? Rolando is the boy! Now we've got 'em, since they will not make another run in the game. If it had not been for that lucky hit of the fellow from New York we would have lost."

"Wait until the Duke of New York comes to the bat again," said Myra. "That fellow has been lucky. We will go out on strikes. Rolando will fix him. You wait and see."

Rolando's was the only run made that inning, and the next inning for the scrubs Ward came to the plate.

There was great excitement and anticipation. Tom and Jack were perfectly cool, and had their eyes upon the game. The second over the plate, and a strike was called, the third ball our hero struck and made a point from the pitcher. The next ball was wide and also the succeeding one, and the expectancy was great.

"You're too weak," hissed Tom. "You're not worth the ball."

"I will not win the game," said Ward. "If I do, I will not win the game."

"You say you'll win; you'll deliver. Ward made a terrible drive at the sphere, but, alas! the Fates were against him. He made a second tip and the ball landed in the grasped of the catcher. It was a wonderful catch, and the inning was over.

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Yes, the game was even, and he had made two 'homers' in the game, a possible but rare feat.

The scrubs were jubilant, and the regulars were correspondingly cast down, and Ward and Rolando were particularly angry, as the run had been made against them. Now the issue had been made more clear.

The next three men of the scrubs went out in one-two-three order, and the game stood two to one in favor of the scrubs.

Three batters took their positions and were retired, and the game was indeed a tie, and the game went into the fifth inning of the game.

But no, neither captain would have it, as there was plenty of time to play two or three more innings if necessary, and it was decided to have the game proceed.

The scrubs went again to the bat. It was Henry Hurlburt who played a confidence and sent him a two-bagger, and made his bases by running very cleverly.

The excitement became intense and the friends of the scrubs, including the Duke, were very much impressed.

"If it was only the Duke at the bat the scrubs would have made a mistake," said the regulars.

We will here say that the application applied to Tom had been started on the field, and his fine play had fixed the pseudonym. The unexpected frequently happens on the ball-field. The next man to the bat for the scrubs made a base hit, and Henry was moved to second base, and the pitcher being out of the game, the catcher—the excitement was too much for him—and Hurlburt ran in and gained his run, making our game stand two to two with two out in the fifth inning of the game.

If we don't win the game to-night I'll pitch for the next one," said the Duke.

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If we don't win the game to-night I'll pitch for the next one," said the Duke.
"Yes, I do.

"What did he ever do to you to cause you to hate him?"

"I hated him at sight. I've no great love for these common fellows, anyhow.

"Yes, I do.

"And he will become very popular?

"Yes, he will. The boys are talking about him now, and some of his friends are whispering him up.

"How do I know it.

"You heard 'em?

"Yes, I did.

"Do you see, we will have to submit and have that fellow dominate over us?

"No, we won't.

"How shall we help it. I am afraid the boot- black business won't work.

"Why not?

"That's a mere fact there is too many fellows here who are lower-headed themselves, when you come right down to it.

"Do you I had been thinking?

"Yes.

"That same idea struck me.

"Yes, I have.

"I have good reason to dislike that fellow.

"Yes, you have.

"You have observed, then?

"Yes, I have.

"He started right in to lord it over me.

"It is.

"You noticed that?

"Yes.

"I see a jealous fellow.

"You can see that."

"He saw I was popular.

"Yes.

"And he set down to me from the start.

"He did.

"I thought away that he was my enemy.

"Yes.

"He commenced to make war on me in a quiet way.

"Yes.

"He insulted me that first night.

"Yes.

"What did he do?

"What did he do?

"What did I do so far.

"He has, that's sure.

"Now, what shall we do?

"We can put up some trick on that low fellow.

"Can we?

"Yes.

"Some way.

"What can we do?

"We can make up our minds to put our heads together and think out something.

"He is against us.

"Well, then, we are right in against him, and we'll down him yet."

CHAPTER XXX.

A raw days passed, and during those days Ward on many occasions spoke very highly of Tom Weir, and took particular pains to let the boys know how much Ralph Rolando admired the new scholar. He even spoke his eulogisms in the presence of Hirram Perkins. And one day Hirram said to our hero: "You have conquered Rolando."

"Have I?

"Yes.

"How do you know?"

"He wants to be friends with you."

"Does he?

"Yes.

"Does he really want to be friends with me?"

"Yes.

"What makes you think so?"

"He and Ward are very outspoken in your favor."

"Perkins was silent and thoughtful a moment, and then he said:

"Hirram, do you really like me?"

"Yes.

"And will you be true to me?

"Yes, I will. Why do you ask?"

"I have a bitter enemy in this school.

"You had, but I think you are the winner now. He is able to do you good service.

"Yes.

"Rollo and I have become friends."

"Well.

"He has lost his real friends.

"He is.

"And we will down him yet."

"No.

"Then why do you pretend such great friendship?"

"Those two fellows, Ward and Rolando, have displayed their friendship to me. That fellow will follow me through life.

"And what if they do?"

"Then why do they pretend such great friendship?"

"That's a mere fact, he is a fellow and I have observed, that they were bad boys at home, and some of them have had a chance."

"Yes.

"And you really have a chance."

"How?"

"I have a chance.

"I mean that.

"If I mean that.

"Yes.

"I mean that.

"Yes.

"And we will have to make friends with that fellow."

"I can never make friends with him."

"I mean we must pretend to make friends with him."

"But he may not let us do so."

"And you want to make friends with him?

"Yes.

"And what will you do then?"

"We will watch for a chance. But I want him to be on good terms with me and visit my house, and I want it to be thought we are the best of friends."

"Tell you now I think it will be hard to bring him about.

"We can do it if we manage it right.

"I will set to work at once, as I know some of the boys will do at the barn."

"All right; go down there."

"Will you come?"

"No, not to-night; but we will down that fellow yet!"
open warfare between us or a truce. I will never become my friend."

"If I were you I'd leave the school."

"Leave the school?"

"Be driven away by such a fellow!"

"I would not remain where there was a per-

son."

"No."

"I will never turn my back on him. No; I will

remain in this school."

"Yes; and I will best him every time."

A few days after, following the conversation re-

corded as having occurred between Hiram and our hero, Ralph Rolando gave a little entertain-

ment. It was at the invitation of Tom Weir and Tom Weir. The latter immediately

wrote a note acknowledging the compliment, but he wisely refrained from giving out the ground of close

application to study.

The entertainment took place, but Tom Weir was not present, neither did Hiram

remain when it was announced that an allusion was to occur at the residence of so be was fully capable of maintaining his posi-

tion. Tom Weir proved

CHAPTER XXXIII

Furious was the anger that glowed in Ralph Rolando's heart. He knew that he was

too impetuous; he knew he had not been wise enough; but he was wildly, madly in love.

It was a youth's fierce passion, and he lacked a man's discretion, even though it can be said

that this same passion has made fools of some of his contemporaries.

Rolando decided not to dance. He made an excuse; he said his head ached. Ward found

him sitting in a corner looking at the sky and muttering. He saw cloudy.

"What is the matter, Ralph?"

"Have you heard the news?"

"What news?"

"That fellow will lead the gentleman with Mr. Myra Hubbard."

"Well?"

"Great guns! what is the girl thinking of? Is she mad?"

"Why didn't you ask her?"

"I did."

"And she refused to dance with you?"

"She was already engaged to dance with that fellow."

"Hang it! I've a great mind to circulate the truth about him, and all hands will refuse."

"Yes, do it!" said Rolando.

Ward thought a moment, and then said

"You do it."

"No, I can not do it."

"Ward didn't dare now, seeing that he was not known."

He knew that if it was done under the circumstances he would be compelled to should-

er all the responsibilities.

This plan was carried into effect, and when Myra and Tom Weir went gliding about the large

room he saw that all the gentlemen except a few plaudits of admiration. They were

handsome couple and good dancers.

Ward whispered to Rolando:

"Did you ever see anything like it—that fellow is a beautiful dancer!"

"Hang him! he is a devil!" retorted Rolando.

"Ralph," said Ward, "I begin to think we were murder wed."

"Fooled!"

"Yes.

"Well, I've a suspicion."

"Out with it."

"You don't believe that fellow ever was a boot- black. I believe he told Hiram to tell us that lie. He is a wonderful fellow, and one of the most beautiful."

It followed, he was a millionaire, I'll bet a cockney, and he has given

out that story to get in at a hole. We'd better pair up for the contest. He wants us to tell it on

him so that he can come out and disprove it, and then show what a great fellow he really is. We have a splendid one."

The truth was, the same suspicion had passed through the mind of Ralph Rolando. It did

prove itself the bootblack could be such an accomplished fellow.

"We had better keep quiet," said Ward.

"I will wait and see."

The German proceeded and was a grand success. Tom Weir proved himself a splendid

dancer, and once that was done the other boys had little to say.

CHAPTER XXXII

The night of the entertainment arrived, and there was a great sensation in the com-

pany of young and happy people, and the most beautiful among all the girls was Myra

Hubbard. She was the most brilliant dancer, and in the advantage—Myra did look radiantly beau-

tiful.

Rolando looked upon her with burning eyes. He was madly in love. His passion fairly

raged within his bosom, and he almost choked when he thought of what he might do.

Some few moments' conversation passed between Myra and Tom. The former made an allusion to

the ball game, and Tom said:

"After you kindly encouraged me with that

flower I could not do aught else but make a

home run."

"And you did it well."

"I am surprised," said Tom, "that your sympathies were with the scrub nine."

"Why?"

"It would be but natural that you should desire the regular team to hold their suprem-

acy."

"My sympathies were with them until I be-

had how completely they were and how they ap-

peared to despise their opponents; and then

again, I heard of the other captain's measure."

"Measure?"

"Yes."

"To do what you allude."

"Henry will not that you could not fill the position well, and he asked to put in

an other man. The captain of the regulars refused his request."

"I don't know as you can call that unfair

according to base-ball rules. Henry had named him his, and could not be taken."

"Would you have decided the same way un-

der the circumstances?"

"Ah, yes! in the question of tempera-

ment. I am speaking of the exact rules under the conditions."

"Had Rolando acceded to Henry's request he

would have won the game."

"You seem determined to give me a great
day of creating excitement."

"Every one admits you won the game for the

selected nine."

"They were very kind."

At this moment the hostess came forward and

said:

"I am making up partners for a German. Will you dance with Mr. Weir, Myra?"

"I shall be proud to dance with Mr. Weir,"

came the reply.

"And will you and Mr. Weir lead?"

The sudden honor almost took Tom's breath

away, and we will here reveal a secret. Tom Weir had always been ambitious. He had al-

ways felt an inner consciousness that some day

he would be quite a man; and when he saw Mr. Weir in the company of the prettiest girls in town and

at the dance, he knew that he had an opportunity to

remain when it was announced that an allusion was to occur at the residence of so be was fully capable of maintaining his posi-

tion with Myra."

The latter, knowing he was from New York, concluded that as a matter of course he

was a German, and that he must be accessible to a German partner for the German, and Ralph

watched an opportunity to approach Myra, and he asked her to dance with him. The girl immediately

said:

"I am sorry, but I have a partner."

"You have a partner?"

"Yes."

"With whom will you dance?"

"Mr. Weir."

"Ralph started and exclaimed:

"Why, Miss Hubbard!"

"Well, sir!" said Myra, in a sharp tone.

"I am surprised!"

"Surprised, sir?"

"Yes, I am."

"Why?"

"To think that you will dance with that fel-

low?"

"Mr. Rolando, your words are not very com-

4
Tom was a brave fellow, and as soon as he re·
covered from the bewilderment he commenced a
cautious search in order to discover some clue
to the identity of his assailant; but owing to
the darkness he could discover nothing, and
after some time he muttered:
"Why should I look? I know who struc
that treacherous blow, and the party really
meant to injure me.
Our hero proceeded, and in due time reached
his room. He was pretty well wet through,
and there was quite a lump on the side of his
head, and he knew that the blow been
about an inch higher it would have caught him
across the temple, and would have killed him.
Tom stepped to Hiram Perkins’s room after
he had changed his clothes, and as Hiram had
not attended the school sessions, or three days
afternoon, the school hours had closed, Hiram
again entered his room, and asked:
"What is it, Tom?"
"Hiram!" said our hero, who had thought
the whole matter over. "I want to tell you
something, and you must keep my secret.
"Certainly I will."
"I met with an accident last night."
"What struck you?"
"Oh, I had a fall."
"That don’t look like a lump that came from
a fall."
"No, but I will explain. You see, I escorted
Miss Hubbard home.
After I left her at her home I started across
the creek to the little bridge across the creek
of woods I must have made a
false step and fell, and as I fell I must have
struck a sharp stone; at any rate, I found my
self in the water, and this morning I found this
lump on my head; but you must not say any-
ting to anyone about the search.
"That’s all right; but you are telling me the
real facts?"
"Don’t you know I always tell the truth; and
why shouldn’t I tell you the real facts?"
"There is no reason why you should not, but
I want you to remember that you had received a
thump on the head with a club."
You had a pleasant time at the general
last night?
"Yes; although I was only a looker-on. You
know I can’t dance fancy dances; but you took
the cake, old man, and Ralph Holands was mad,
it tell you.
"Yes; I reckon he was mad, and that is why
he left early.
"He didn’t leave early.
"He didn’t?"
"I thought he did.
"Why, no; I left before he did.
"Well, I am 
"Yes.
"I thought I saw him go away.
"Yes, you did.
"He may have gone away and then returned.
"No; he did not leave the house during the
while Knocking around.
"You are sure of that?
"Yes; why do you ask?
"That is a very queer story.
"No, it isn’t.
"Was he there when I left with Miss Hub-
bard’s party?"
"Yes, he was.
"And Ward also."
"Yes, they were there. Now tell me
why you ask."
"Oh! I have no particular reason for asking,
but it thought he so mad he went away.
"No; he remained there all the evening, and
during the last hour joined in the Virginia reel.
Two days passed, and during those two days
Tom kept up a continual thinking. We will
here state that he looked upon Ralph as his sa-
All, but if Ronaldo had remained at the
thing Tom had knocked off the bridge.
Mr. Hamilton visited Tom and bid him re-
main in bed a day or two, if necessary; and
Tom did not enter his room for two days, and at
end of that time the lump on his head had be-
come considerably reduced.
Our hero had had several conversations with
Hiram, and the result was, at length, that he
reached the conclusion that his friend assumed
the continued pres-
ence of Holands at the dance.
On the third day, when Tom came out, he
was dressed in the tail coat of the building. The
lump did not speak, but Tom eyed his foe sharply.
The latter, however, gave no sign, and Tom
was composed.
"It is possible I wrong that fellow. But
hang me if I do not get at the truth of this
affair! If I didn’t assassi, who did? That’s the
question!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Tom was a very cute and thoughtful youth,
and he had enjoyed a great deal of experience
while knocking around New York picking up
a living as a bootblack. Indeed, upon one oc-
casion he ventured into a great many detective
stories, and determined to
the whole affair. He had visited
several times. He had looked for foot-prints
in the mud, and had tried to unravel the mys-
tery, but he failed to make any progress until
at length he determined to attempt a regular
detective career.

The lad went over to the house where the
farm boy was
He had the stick when I sold it, and bought it
home."
"Yes; he bought it to give some one a
fall.
"Yes; he bought it to give some one a
fall.
"Yes; he bought it to give some one a
fall.
"I know you did.
"Suppose I did?
"You are trying to find out who cracked
your head?"
"You know?"
"May be I do.
"Yes; I will.
"Will you tell me what you are going to
do about it if I tell you?"
"I will do nothing.
"You won’t make a time over it?"
"No.
"You will promise that?"
"Yes, I will; but how did you know I re-
ceived a crack?"
"Tell me; I sold the stick to the fellow
who hit you. I did not know why he wanted
the stick when I sold it to him. But I followed
him up, and I saw he gave some one a crack
on the head. I did not know who got the crack
until afterward, but I knew it was one of the
boys.
"And how did you find out it was I?"
"You were the lad who was laid up after-
ward, and then I made up my mind who it
was.
"Why didn’t you come and tell about it?"
"I was afraid there would be trouble, and
I didn’t like to get mixed up in it; but after two
or three days passed I thought I’d have a talk
with you, so I just saw you come over here and
I got the stick and showed up.
"What was your object?"
"I wanted to ask you some questions, and
now that you have done so may be I’ll tell you
about it."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"Go on and tell me all about it."
"I will.
"Do so, the lad who won the ball game
for the scrubs against the regulars."
"I did my part.
"You did, and I like you, I won a
quarter on the game."
"So much as that!"
"I got the stick, and put me a quarter to five
the regulars would win, and I took the bet, and
I like you.
"Go on and tell me about the stick."
"You remember the night of the dance?"
"Yes.
"Well, that night a young fellow came out
of the house through the rear door. I met him
just as he came down by the stables. I had
this stick in my hand, and I came along:
"Give me that stick?"
"I will for five cents, I answered.
Well, he went down in his pocket quick.
plications as clear as that of a baby, and his eyes were perfect models of expressiveness.

It was not at all strange that Myra Hubbard was heeded, for as he accepted his position, and it is only fair to say that upon the eventful night when the incidents transpired that we have recorded, the two girls and the different friends and companions.

As Tom well knew, he had entered the semi-

study, and he explained he had time only for so doing; yet it must be confessed that ever since the incident of the flower, when he had spoken softly about the half-field, a bright picture had constantly been presented to his imagi-

nation.

He was not in love, but he was charmed, and certainly delighted in the society of the beauti-

ful girl, and under certain conditions he might have accepted and permitted himself to be charmed, but there was a shadow over his heart. He knew it, and he felt that it was wrong for him to permit false impressions to prevail con-

certing himself.

Myra was desirous to go home, Tom was left alone for a few moments, and had a chance to meditate, and the result was he mut-

tured.

"This will not do; I shall tell her all, It will be better for her, better for me. I am only the bootblack after all." "As stated, the two young people departed from the house together, and there was a pair of the best eyes on the owner of the eyes there came a whisper. "She's dead gone on that fellow, Ralph," the whisperer said. Ralph turned. His face was ghastly and his eyes gleamed with an angry light. "Tell her the truth, and not what you think she is after. She is foolish and young. He is fooling her. That fellow is a magician—he is a devil!"

"You were charmed Myra, that is certain." Rolando made no answer but walked away, and a moment later he passed from the house by a rear entrance and started to run swiftly across the fields, and the direction he pursued was toward the mansion where Myra Hubbard resided with her father.

"You see," said Tom, "I told you the truth. The lovely girls were walking slowly along the road. They had been talk-

	ion."

In a few moments, a certain "I'll tell you; I might go to some new school and I would win a friend, and—" I would be bound. "No," answered Tom, "I do not know. All you shall answer is this; I am here to help Hiram Perkins, and as I have told it to you."

"But if you went to another school you would not meet Rolando."

"I do not fear Rolando."

"He is a very vicious fellow, I think. I do not like him. My father appears to admire him. I do not. I think he is a very bad fellow at heart."

"Miss Hubbard, I can not run away from here because of Rolando, and that fellow may really prove a benefit to me."

"Why?"

"How?"

"He has conceived a great dislike for me, and he will cause others to do the same, and the consequence will be that I will encounter less temptations to neglect my studies. I am here to study. I naturally crave fun and excite-

ment, but this man's hatred will close many doors to me, and I will gain the time for study."

"But he may do some harm."

"Why should he?"

"Can not tell you exactly, but I fear he will."

"You need not fear; and now, Miss Hub-

bard, I have told you this, and I think you will not regard me as a friend."

"I am sorry, and I fear I am."

"Yes, it is very possible.

"To what will you home? asked Ralph."

"I am sorry—"

"You go home with that fellow, as your es-

orte."

"Yes."

"Did you ask him?"

"Mr. Rolando, you are dreadfully cross tonight!"

With these words Myra skipped away.

She was a favorite, and Myra made an excuse to proceed to her home immediately. She did not stay for the bound of the house, and she passed rapidly by, and when she and Tom passed out of the door a sinister pair of eyes was fixed upon them.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

As has been intimated, Tom Weit was a handsome fellow. He was not only singularly handsomely formed, but was so well proportioned that for him he possessed the blessed quality of personal magnetism to a large degree. His features were delicate and regular, his com-

plexions as clear as that of a baby, and his eyes were perfect models of expressiveness.

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bard, I have told you this, and I think you will not regard me as a friend."

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The Duke of New York.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Henry Hurlburt was greatly disappointed, but he was still hopeful, as he too had secured several new players, and in practice games his nine had shown up well in good form. Indeed, there were many discontented players who complained that the second nine could beat the first.

All that Tom would agree to was that he should be put on as a substitute or extra player. At length the day arrived when the match was to come off, and the event caused great excitement. Large parties came from all the country round to see the game, as it was tacitly understood that should the second nine win, they were to become the regular seminary representative nine.

The night before the match was to take place Nelson Ward and Ralph Roscoe together visited the hotel where Tom lived, and Tom was asked if he was going to play. He said:

"I will not go."

"You will leave the game, then?"

"Yes; I am angry with you."

"Why?"

"Because you have been beating them more than is necessary."

"I don't want you to say anything about it."

"I am going to make a speech to you about it."

"I don't want to think of anything about it."

"If you want to say anything to me, I will make an answer to it."

"I know you."

"You are not going to say you have a heart, are you?"

"No, I will not."

"I know you have the proof."

"No, I will not."
"Why!"

"I calculated upon winning."

"If you stand-off, you won one, and they won one."

"I know it; and they shall not have the chance."

"Don't let them win; win it yourself."

"No; they are too much for us. But do you know that Rolando is blowing around that he is only sorry you were not in our nine."

"He would like to have laid me out, eh?"

"Challenge them again."

"Will you play?"

"I'll do, in one condition."

"Well?"

"Let me pitch."

"Yes!"

"Certainly I will."

"I'll be glad to do it."

"Let me pitch, and we'll give them the same dose they gave you to-day."

"Yes, but you must not let on that I am to be in the game until the day before the match comes off."

"Why not?"

"I have my reasons."

"And do you really think we can win?"

"I will assure you a victory."

"And that will give us the series!"

Tony said:

"By George! I'll send him a challenge at once."

"Yes, do it; but keep mum about my playing."

"I will, of course, if we beat them I'm your brother for life."

"All right, we'll beat 'em. I wanted to see them win the game to-day."

"Tell me."

"Why?"

"I wanted that fellow Rolando to talk and blow around—I knew he would."

"And it will be a worse come-down for him if we win the odd game."

"Yes."

Henry Hurlburt went to center field; it was only a fungo game, but he got the batters to send him a great many balls.

"I see the scheme," said Ward, who was looking on with Ralph.

"What is the scheme?"

"We're to pitch."

"How do you know?"

"Don't you see Hurlburt is practicing for center field?"

"That will suit me."

"I am sure."

"Yes."

"Well, it would be better not to play the third game; everybody thinks now you can beat 'em."

"So we can."

"You know as well as I do that Weir is a hummer."

"One man can not win a game."

"One pitcher can."

"It will take a good one."

"Remember, I will give you out once."

"Yes, and I want to get square with him."

It would be hard to convey an idea of the excitement following the announcement of the probable playing of the third game, and at length, when on the day before the battle Hiram announced the fact as described in the opening paragraph of this story that the Duke of New York was to pitch for the scrub nine the expectation became keener.

The opinion, however, prevailed that the regulars would win; but Hiram claimed that Rolando would be the anointed one, and Ward, hearing his declaration, said:

"I'll make you a bet."

"I am not a better pitcher."

"That's the way with you fellows; you talk but you don't bet. You have no idea that the second nine will win."

"Yes, I have."

"You feel sure?"

"Yes."

"You are dead sure?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"You think because Weir is going to pitch it's a sure thing?"

"Yes."

"And you are dead sure?"

"Yes, I am."

"I'll tell you what I'll do with you."

"I was going to pitch."

"No, I only want to make an agreement."

"What is your agreement?"

"If the regulars win you shall hold your head under the school pump and ten boys select ed by me will give you a douse. If the second nine win you shall have a dash and spend it in the most witty way, when another of the second nine said:

"I'll make that wager with you."

"No; they are too much for us."

"You're as sure of winning as I am."

"Yes."

"I'll tell you what I'll do; if you'll go me two to one I'll bet you."

"Two to one."

"Name your bet."

CHAPTER XL

Hiram hesitated about making his offer, and Ward still hesitated to give Hiram such a chance to win. But eventually Hiram said:

"You are not worth making a bet with; but I'll make one with Rolando. Now go tell him."

"I will."

Ward did tell Rolando, but made the whole affair appear in a different light, and enerally disposed Rolando thought he saw a chance to drive Tom Weir from the school. He thought it would be the best joke in the world to have Tom under that pump as sure as your name is Hiram Perkins.

"This will lead to trouble, Tom."

"It's only a bet."

"It will not be fun if Rolando loses."

"Not to him, but to us."

"Life will be merry."

"It's his own challenge; he sent it to me."

"They will beat us, Tom, and it would kill me if you ducked."

"You won't see me ducked; but you will see Rolando under the pump, as sure as that game ever comes off."

"The news of the strange wager spread all over town, and as it was looked upon as only a good joke, one way or the other, no opposition was met except the challenge from Hiram.

Ward, however, began to feel shaky at the last, and he said to Ralph:

"I promised that bet if I were you."

"What! and lose such a good chance? No, no!"

"It may lead to trouble."

"What care I? That fellow will go under that pump or leave town, or be branded as a liar and a sneak."

"Oh, he won't back out!"

"Then it will do him good—and I know it will."

"But—"

"But what?"

"Suppose they should win?"

"Win?"

"Yes."

"Those fellows beat us?"

"Yes, they did once, you remember, when this fellow played."

"Oh, you're not heart; we will whet our wits."

"I think you will; but still there is the chance."

"I'll lose."

"Yes."

"Never! It will be the softest game we ever played. Those fellows are so bad feeling at the pump.

No, no; folly! but it will be a gay time for me to-morrow when we run that fellow to the pump."

"I am sorry this bet was made. There is bad feeling between you and this Weir."

"So much better. We'll wet up his feelings a little."

"But I fear."

"The possibility."

"That they may win."

"You need have no fear. My boys are in better trim than ever. I have had plenty of practice, and that fellow will come in fresh. We will annihilate them."

"He is not as fresh as you think. He has been missing every day with Henry Hurlburt and Hurlburt is confident his nine will win, and you know Hurlburt is a good player and has plenty of nerve."

"Bah! wait and see. You have no nerve."

"I have in a game."

"You are prepared to play your best, and then be ready to march to the pump and see us christen a fellow who thinks so much of himself."

Ward said, and at this point the girls know what is going to happen; we want them all there, it will be such fun."

"Yes, if you wish to come."

"Nonsense! I tell you we can't lose."

"But suppose you should?"

"We can't."

The day at length dawned when the great match was to take place, and the excitement spread as it had been on former occasions, and, if possible, greater.

At an early hour the people began to assemble on the ball-ground, and it was evident from the size of the crowd that there had been a larger crowd that had ever assembled there.

When the two nines appeared upon the field the whole assembly gave them a greeting. Ralph Ronaldo, however, was the hero of the day, and he felt as proud as the general of an army. The regulars went first to field for practice, as they were first at the bat. The two captains
CHAPTER XI

When it came to the turn of the second nine to take the field for practice, Tom, as he had arranged, went to the center field. The movement was a blind, as Tom did not wish Rolando to know until the last moment that he was going to practice.

Our hero had not forgotten the fact that the fellow Rolando had dealt him that terrible blow with the ball, and there was a desire on the part of the dace, and as though Weir was a noble fellow, he was not altogether as perfect as some heroes in Sunday-school. The second ball was a square one some day lurked way down in his heart. "Hallo!" cried Ward, as he saw Tom go to the center field, "that fellow ain't going to pitch, after all." "I reck'n he's been tried and found wanting, and I'm mighty glad of it." "Why?" "I would have enjoyed knocking him out of his own league." "It may be better, after all. I tell you I shall feel better when this game is won. You'll see." "Yes; I'll make a bet with anybody that we'll win." "What did I tell you?" "You fear we will not win?" "Do you see those fellows are playing with great confidence?" "Bah! they always practice well, but when it comes to the games, they are dreadfully terrible if you were compelled to go under the pump." "I go under the pump!" "Yes, you shall, and I know it. But I'll go under!" "Ward, you're crazy!" "I don't know. Do you remember you said I was all right if I got the devil?" "The Duke of New York?" "Yes." "We'll make a queer duke of you. Yes, the time has come to open up on that fellow. He will have to leave town after he goes under the pump." "He may leave town before."

"No, he will not. The boys are all posted and ready, and the moment the game is over they will make a rush for him." "I hope it comes out all right; but between you and me, and just between the two of us, I'm going to have the last word."

"We'll wash that off under the pump."

"And you are dead sure of winning?"

"Of course. Why, they have not the ghost of a chance."

At that moment there came the signal—practice. The game was about to commence. The regulars, as stated, were first to the bat, and when the pitcher took their positions Tom Weir advanced to the pitcher's box.

"Aha! what did I tell you?" said Ward.

"Don't you see?" "Weir is to pitch?"

"I'm glad of it." "I'm not. I tell you now I'm afraid of that fellow." The first man of the regulars went to the bat and he struck out, and upon walking away he was met by Rolando, to whom the batter said:

"That fellow is a terror! I never faced such balls." The man who had struck out was a good batter, and Ward said again:

"Blast his helmet! You hit that Rolando!"

"Baal! Wait until I get to the bat! I'll break him up."

"He'll just lay for you!"

"Will he?"

"You'll see."

"You're a fast one, Ward." "I'll admit it. Scared. you heard what Cary said."

The next batter also put the air three times; and, indeed, the second nine was waiting to see the effect of the game on the evening of the match. The second nine again came to the bat, and the score was twelve to two. The excitement was intense. A home run now came the call from a man in the crowd. There followed a dead silence. Rolando was deliberate, and sent in a good swift curve ball. Tom reached up, hit it, caught it pretty firm, and sent it over the second baseman's head, and it dropped between the former and center fielder. It was a good safe base hit. The man on second ran in and pitched the third batter, who was on first, to second. Ward, Weir, and Weir, and the bat. The excitement was intense.

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CHAPTER XLVII.

A week passed, and during that week there was a great deal of special interest rumored about that there was to be a reorganization of the nine. Some of the second nine were to be taken out, and some new members of the first nine were to be added. It was a long time before it was learned that Tom Weir should be taken on as one of the pitchers.

The proposition was made to our hero, and he absolutely declined to go on the nine, and so matters went on without the occurrence of any incident of special interest until one night Tom Weir walked off for a stroll. He had walked a long distance and had remained out until a late hour; indeed, he had transgressed the seminary rules, and he knew he would be compelled to sneak to his room to avoid censure on the part of the authorities.

Tom, as a student, had been a great success, and a month later he knew he would pass examinations when he proposed to enter college. Great hopes were in his heart, and bright dreams of a grand future were running through his head. He was deeply absorbed, but he failed to observe that his steps were being followed. He was a lonely part of the country where he had chosen to walk, and he had reached the loneliest part of the road. There was not a house within a mile in any direction, and he had no idea of the path he was walking. As he proceeded along, as stated, lost in deep and absorbing thought, he at length came to a part of the road where a stone wall ran parallel with the highway, and suddenly he heard the sharp report of a pistol, and a bullet whizzed over his head. Tom crossed a stand of trees and stood on a hill. He was completely dazed, but he was a nervous fellow and very quick-witted. He had learned to have his watch with him always. There was no moon, but the night was clear, and he saw a little cloud of smoke curl away from the stone wall at a point just opposite to where he stood. In the road.

Tom was unarmed, but he sprang toward the wall and there came a second shot, and, very fortunately, again the marksmanship was bad, but one fact was fully assured—the shots were intended for him; indeed, there had been a deliberate attempt to murder him. Our hero reached the wall undeterred by the second shot, and there he stood, and confronted him. Tom saw the gleaming barrel of a pistol leveled at him, and quick as thought he took a pistol from his pocket and confronted him. The hammer of the pistol closed down on an imperfect cap, and Tom was upon his assailant, and knocked the weapon from his grasp; at the same instant he exclaimed:

"Rolando, you have tried to murder me."

The youth stood confronting each other. Tom had knocked the weapon from his assailant's grasp, but Rolando still held a cane in his hand.

"Why have you sought to take my life?"

Rolando's eyes glittered and snarled like those of a wild animal, and he said:

"I will kill you!"

"And why should you kill me?"

"I am lying about you." "No." "You are in a passion." "You will not kill me, Rolando. You are a miserable, cowardly scoundrel. I knew that the first moment I set eyes on you, and this is the second time you have made an attempt on my life." "It's false."

"Then why are you not false, and you know it. You sought to kill me the night of the dance."

"And I will kill you."

"You will not kill me."

"I will kill you to-night. You have lied about me."

"You have lied about me."

"You have lied about me."

"I never said one word against you to that..."
There was a witness.

Rolando looked around in a furtive manner, as I bid you, or by all that's true and honest, I told him, to leave this town. You are very kind to show me such interest in me; but do not tell any one of it.

I know it and I know that moment had he realized what an elegant gentlemen—handsome, accomplished, men, what—a wretch I was choked with passion. and then dragging him toward the creek, and as there was no more undeserving wretch in the water was late there came an announcement that there be a real Impulse for you.

But I will not serve you as you deserve now. I will abide my time and give you a chance to consider what a wretch you are, and I will aid you to so consider by cooling your heated blood a little.

As Tom spoke he advanced toward the wreth—

It is true; and these two attempts to kill me will prove how high your character and his bitter desire for vengeance.

"Yes, I will."

"Who will not?"

"Do you know what?"

"Yes, she did.

"Well," said Tom, "I am not a liar, and you envy me because I am not, do you so afraid to save you, that I will strike me the night of the dance. The fellow stands ready to testify against you. He fully identified you. The snapshot you sent me, and I will keep my word, you miser able cur. You know sad indeed, and he murmured:"

"It is all over, and I was a fool ever to have thought of you in this way. How may I prefer charges against you. He fully established his identmca— and wealthy; she will forget that she ever met you or you might attempt to having your bite."

"Yes, she did?"

"I am a foundling, his being stricken down once and twice shot at by the Egyptian heart, and into the creek he went, and the water was later there came an announcement that proved how well she discerned your character."

"It is true, and these two attempts to kill me will prove how high your character and his bitter desire for vengeance.

"Yes, I will."

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"Yes, I shall be delighted to live there. Although I was born in the country, I have always
pined for city life."

"Will you not return here to school?"

"No; I shall attend an academy in New
York."

"And, upon the whole, you are pleased to
say?"

"Yes."

"Then I must bid you good-bye."

"Thank you, but Mr. Weir, I desire to ask
you a question."

"I shall be glad to answer any question you may
make.

"Why did Ralph Rolando leave the semi-
nary?"

Tom blushed and stammered, and the clear,
sharp eyes of the girl were fixed upon him.

"Do you know it?" at last Tom sput-
tered out.

"I am not asking you how you know it; I am
asking you if you know.

"I suppose so, Tom, that it was owing
to his illness."

"Do you think you are to leave the town?"

Tom gazed in amazement, and for a moment
did not answer.

"Will you answer me?"

"Do not press that question."

"If your answer would not be yes, if spoken,
you would answer me readily."

"Do you think so?"

"I do."

"And do you want me to answer you?"

"I do."

Tom was a proud fellow, and he was not just
himself in that moment, and he said.

"Why do you ask me that question?"

"I will tell you after you have answered it."

"Do you really desire that I should an-
swer the question?"

"I do."

"I do not; do not press it."

"Yes; I want your answer."

"The day may come when you will regret
your imposition."

"I did warn Ralph Rolando to leave the
town."

"And did you threaten him if he did not
leave the town?"

Tom was in a desperate mood. A certain sus-
picion had risen in his mind, and regardless of
all explanation, with a determination to
make no explanations, he answered, in a severe
tone:

"I did threaten him."

CHAPTER XLVII.

There came a troubled look to Myra’s beau-
tiful face as she said:

"Do not permit an assault upon him.
Did you throw him into the creek?"

"Yes, I did," came the answer, in a sturdy
tone.

The troubled look deepened upon Myra’s face,
and in reality anxious tones she asked:

"Why did you throw him into the creek,
and why did you threaten him and drive him
away from the town?"

"I have no explanations to offer."

"You will tell me why you threatened him?"

"I will not."

"Tom spoke in a tone of strong determination.
A certain suspicion flashed through the youth’s
mind and made him very angry. He placed a
certain dependence upon the explanation which,
and a deeper meaning upon the anxiety so vividly
expressed upon her beautiful face.

"Please tell me," she pleaded.

"Excuse me, Miss Hubbard, but my reasons
do not concern you—they can not interest you,"n

"I am sorry."

"Why?"

"Because I can make no explanations.
But you will."

"Tom spoke in an irritated tone, and the fair
girl still urged:

"Why not?"

"I will not."

"You absolutely refuse?"

"I do."

"Please consider your determination."

"I will make no explanations."

"Do you know your life was in peril?"

"How?"

"He came very near having pneumonia."

"So it was said, but I do not believe it."

"It is true."

"How do you know?"

"I will be more frank than you have been; I
asked the doctor."

"And he told you Rolando’s life was in peril?"

"Yes."

"You appear to have great interest in the
matter."

"I did have."

"Your anxiety is over now, and I am glad
for your sake."

"Thank you, but my anxiety is not over."

"You fear I may still pursue him?"

"Yes."

"You need have no fear."

"Did you not threaten to do so?"

"No."

"Please tell me why you threw him into the
creek and why you threatened him and caused
him to leave town?"

"I will not.

There came a harder look to Myra’s lovely
face.

"Your refusal leads me to suspect the worst."

"You may suspect what you choose."

"Tom had become really angry, and he spoke
in a defiant tone.

"Mr. Weir, we may never meet again."

"You will be consol ed," said Tom.

"Myra did not hear our ag-
gravated hero’s remark, and she said:

"I wish to hold you in better estimation.

"May I ask you one question?"

"Certainly."

"How did you learn I threatened him?"

"The doctor told me."

"And the doctor told you I threw him into
the creek?"

"Yes."

"The doctor has told you so much he may
tell you why I did so."

"He did.

"Will you tell me the reasons he gave for my
violence?"

"I can not."

"No! You refuse to tell me the real facts."

"I can tell you no more."

"How did the doctor chance to tell you any-
thing?

"It was not through chance."

"You asked him?"

"I did."

"Well, miss, it was an unpleasant affair.

"Then I was sure you would tell me all."

"I shall tell you nothing."

"You still refuse?"

"I do."

"Then I shall, as I said, be at liberty to form
more conclusions."

"Certainly."

"I am sorry, Mr. Weir. I met you on pur-
pose to afford you an opportunity to clear your-
self, but I had no thought of doing so.

"I do not."

"No, I can not. I did throw him in the
creek, and I did threaten him if he did not leave
the town."

"I am disappointed. I thought—"

Myra did not complete the sentence; she had
seen the chances are explanations might be fol-

TOM stood and watched her graceful form as
she walked away along the road, and he said;

"Ah, I am but a boodock head after all. So
the world goes. I see it all—even that beautiful
girl is designing and deceitful. She merely
used me as a foil to play upon, upon, upon,
and a deeper meaning upon the anxiety so vividly
expressed upon her beautiful face.

"I wish to think so," muttered Tom, as he
gazed after her, and started along through the
shrub-bordder path.

Indeed it was Myra and Ralph who occupied
the town, and actually Ralph, one day, went to
walk in the park. He was crossing one of the
routes where he had a stroll. He had heard
of the day, and even the day preceding his departure he called upon the
president of the seminary, and the two held
conversation; and among this talk there
came the prejudice against him, as it appeared to be
generally believed that he had done a great wrong to Ralph Rolando.

Tom, upon leaving the school, went direct to
New York, and from there proceeded up to
the coast and his gentleman friend; and, after
a short visit, returned to New York.

Our hero’s means were very limited, and he
took board in a small corner of New York.
A couple of days later on he was sent to work,
how hard was expected. It was the prejudice
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CHAPTER XLIX.

CHAPTER LI.

Wondrously beautiful was the fair girl upon whose face our hero's eyes were fixed, and that beauty was really beautiful was none other than Myra Hubbard.

Tom had hoped and believed that he had had an image of her in his imagination all his life, but it was an image forever as a disturbing element, but as his glance fell upon her there came to him a wild desire to possess her as she was. He had never before experienced in all his life.

He sat like one dazed for an instant, then capitulated to the desire and went through a valley—sudden attack upon his nervous system temporarily blinded him—and when he regained his vision clasped his hands that he was madly, wildly in love—ay, so madly in love that it had become a question of possession or death.

Our hero was a remarkably handsome fellow; indeed, he could safely be pronounced one of the handomest men in New York, for he possessed powers of fascination if he desired to exert them that few women could withstand; and besides, he was splendidly educated and accomplished in other directions.

Myra was truly a beautiful girl, and as the conviction forced itself on his mind that all that beauty was destined for Ralph Rolando, bitterness filled his heart.

The opera proceeded, but Tom paid little attention to the incidents presented upon the stage. He gazed was riveted upon the beautiful woman of the fa\[4/5 text, must be missing again\].

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Tom involuntarily said: "My name is Rolando." Forward, he murmured: "I do not reconstruct you, my good fellow.

"I'd like to speak with a word with you."

"Go ahead!"

While Tom was talking Rolando was taking measure with his eyes. The Cuban had developed into a great fellow.

"That is not true. But listen: I do not suppose through a truce for you and I? Do you want the answer?"

"You should, it will be a truce between us."

"As far as I am concerned you need have no fear; but I do not why you think you may meet me."

"Rolando laughed in a satirical manner, and answered: "Our hero set himself to study."

"Yes, my dear fellow, I am perfectly willing to forget. I had already forgotten that we ever met."

"We may meet again, but it will be a truce between us."
CHAPTER LII.

Myra laughed in an easy tone, and said: "Did you really desire to speak to me alone?"

"Do I not always desire to speak to you—are you not constantly in my thoughts?"

"You are."

"Well, how polite and complimentary you are."

"It is not politeness nor is it complimentary, Myra, you must understand the truth—you have understood all these years. I have completed my college course, and now we must come to a formal understanding."

"Why, certainly, we should come to a formal understanding."

Ralph did not like Myra's tone: it was too cold and flippant. He did not appear at all excited or even angry or apprehensive, but she was as indifferent as though merely joking with a child.

"Myra, I love you."

"You do?"

"Have not you got over that boyish fancy yet?"

"Do you call it a boyish fancy?"

"Why, certainly!"

"If it was a boyish fancy it has become a man's madness."

"Indeed!"

"Myra, you must put aside this indifferent manner."

"Shall I?"

"You must."

"Will I?"

"Do you not understand?"

"No."

"I love you madly!"

"Do you?"

"You know I do. Why trifte with me? Dear, good girl, have you not made me suffer long enough?"

"Do you really suffer?"

"I do."

"I am sorry."

"Then tell me the truth."

"Tell you the truth?"

"Yes, and cease trifling."

"What will you consider the truth?"

"I love you."

"So you said."

"I love you madly! I ask you to become my wife."

"I can not become your wife. It is nonsense."

There came the old-time glitter to Rolando's eyes.

"All nonsense!"

"What do you mean?"

"You need no answer from me."

"I need no answer from you?"

"No."

"I have asked you to become my wife."

"You know, my answer would be useless if you are an idiot!"

Ralph's face became ghastly in its pallor. This was what we say our story progresses. As the two passed from the crowd of revelers, Ralph said:

"At last, Myra, I have the pleasure of speaking to you alone."

CHAPTER LIII.

"You have been visiting her for years?"

"Yes, Madam."

"She always appeared to show a preference for your society?"

"Ah! you do not understand."

"Have you been proving a faint-hearted lover?"

"No, sir."

"What is the matter?"

"I do not know her feelings."

"You do not know her feelings?"

"No, sir."

"This is very strange. Are you a born fool?"

"No, sir."

"Then will you explain?"

"I can not understand her, sir."

"Can not understand her?"

"No, sir."

"Tell me all about it."

"During the time that I have been madly in love with her I have not been able to gain one indication that she loves me.

"You had better find out."

"I have sought to find out."

"Have you ever told her of your love?"

"No, sir."

"Then you are a fool!"

"No, sir, I am not. You can not fully understand."

"Understand what, my son?"

"What a peculiar person Miss-Hubbard really is.

"Ah! Do you suppose she would accept your attentions all these years if she did not love you? and do you know it is generally supposed that you two are engaged and that she is only waiting your return from college to announce the engagement?"

"I know this, sir, and the last time I saw her she gave me a hint."

"She gave you a hint?"

"Yes, sir."

"What hint?"

"I asked to write to her."

"Well?"

"She forbade me..."

"And did you mind the prohibition?"

"No, sir."

"You did write to her?"

"I did."

"Well?"

"My letter was returned."

"Your letter was returned?"

"Yes."

"That is a strange incident."

"Yes, sir, but I have an idea."

"What is your idea?"

"That she does not care a fig for me."

"Then why does she encourage your attentions?"

"She only tolerates them for old acquaintances' sake."

"Then, frankly, you have no hopes in that direction.

"I have not given up all hope—no, sir."

"Why not bring matters to a crisis?"

"I shall, sir."

"You had better do so."

"Yes, sir. You will find I am not a fool."

"She shall marry me!"

"But suppose she refuses?"

"She shall marry me, all the same."

"I do not understand you."

"I claim she has given me encouragement."

"Well?"

"I shall demand that she become my wife."

"Well?"

"If she refuses I will make her my wife."

"You will?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"I will not tell you how, but I will say that Miss Hubbard shall become Mrs. Rolando."

"There was a glitter in the fellow's eye as he spoke."

"Well," said the father, "you know what your prospects are?"

"I do."

"Act then. There is nothing more to say; but remember, there is no hope from our side as far as the business is concerned. You are still in the same situation as a millionaire, but you are the son of a ruined man. Make quick use of the present misapprehension, for neither of you know what moment the crash of expoune may come."

Ralph left the presence of his father lost in deep thought. That same afternoon he called at the residence of Mr. Hubbard, but Myra was not at home. Two days followed and he had not heard of her, so on the evening of the third day he met her at a grand cotillion party. He went forward and was coldly received, and bitterness glowed in his heart. He was determined, however, not to be dropped so easily. He could hide his time.

He turned to walk back to the room reserved for the gentlemen, when he suddenly came face to face with Tom Weir. The two young gentlemen passed each other without any signs of recognition; but as Rolando do walked on and started to pace the room, he muttered: "I wonder what that means? Where did that fellow come from? Why is he here?"

Later on Rolando met Myra, and he offered her his arm and requested a promenade. Myra accepted his arm. She had a purpose, as she was revealed as our story progresses. As the two passed from the crowd of revelers, Ralph said:

"At last, Myra, I have the pleasure of speaking to you alone."
Do not address me ever again, as long as you live!

"Excuse me, Myra; I was wrong; I know the charge is false."

Myra started to move away. Rolando seized her arm and cried:

"You shall not go until you forgive me!"

"Unhand me, sir!"

"Forgive me for this?"

"Will you release me?"

"Myra, you must forgive me!"

"Never!" "You are a sneak! I hold your ears in utter contempt!"

There came a terrible look in Rolando's malignant eyes, and he said:

"Wait; I cease to plead. I demand now that you listen to me!"

"You described that I listen to you?"

"I do. You shall not throw me over in this way. You shall not drop me after encouraging me all these years. You virtually promised to love me and become my wife years ago. You have permitted me to go on loving you. You have been my day-star all these years. I have studied and hoped, and only looked forward to the time when you should redeem your promise!"

Myra did not attempt to flee away. She allowed herself to be drawn back into the little anteroom which the two had occupied alone. There was deliberation in her glance, resolution in her manner, and she said:

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I say."

"Dare you say that I ever gave you encouragement?"

"It's true."

"Dare you say that I ever confessed to loving you?"

"Not in so many words, but by every other token. Yes, you led me on to love you, and now I live to find that you have not returned the love I have ever held for you in return. I am not a fool, and if you were merely coquetting it is your own fault. I shall hold you to your promise!"

"My promise?"

"Yes, your promise—what promise do you ever make to me?"

"You promised to become my wife!"

"I promised to become your wife!"

"Yes."

"When?"

"During many years. You did not promise in so many words; your promises were not tacit, but a tacit intimation, but binding enough."

"Mr. Rolando, can it be possible you have so deceived yourself?"

"I have not deceived myself; I am not a fool; and if you have met some one who has enthralled you to the point of distaste, you shall not throw me over in this manner."

There followed a moment's silence, and Myra answered, in a460 tone that passed his notice:

"Mr. Rolando, if you have made a sad mistake, I pity you. I excuse your conduct; but you are seeking to make appear that which is not true I shall learn to detest you."

"I have roared, and I believe you know it.

"And you deliberately charge me with deceiving you?"

"I deliberately charge you that you have encouraged me to love you and led me to hope that you loved me in return, and held out to me every possible inducement that you would become my wife."

"If you really do love me, your love has matured and blinded your vision; I never loved you, and from the very first moment I met you I deliberately set to make it appear to you that I did not care for you but loved you."

"Oh, how well you play your part now!"

"Will permit your insults to pass at this moment, but I never have the chance to insult me again."

"Myra, you shall become my wife; yes, I will not thus; one fell blow, permit the hopes of my life to be dashed to atoms. No, no; you shall love me. I believe you love me, and you shall become my wife."

"I shall become your wife?"

"Yes."

"What do you mean—do you threaten me?"

"You force me to threaten you."

"You force me to threaten you."

"Yes, by your cruel conduct you force me to threaten you."

And if you refuse to become my wife, what will you do?"

"You will not refuse to become my wife; you are but trying me. You always were fond of my cruel jokes."

CHAPTER LIV.

It is impossible to describe the change of expression that passed over Myra's lovely face. She was a wonderfully bright girl, however. At first she had been surprised, and for a moment she believed the man was sincere; but later on she came to perceive that the fellow was deliberately set to take advantage of her absence to make her feel deceived. Then she thought it was all a bold trick, and she became as indignant as the boldness of his scheme demanded.

"Consequences!" she repeated, in answer to the man's declaration as recorded at the close of the last chapter. "What consequences do you expect when you threaten me? Suppose you tell me that you will plunge into the river, and all that?"

"I will tell you nothing of the kind. I am not such a fool! I will not kill myself for a moment, and despise to make you feel the consequences of your deceit and treachery all the same!"

"You are a very odd fellow, but I will ever converse, I will let pass your insulting remarks and charges, and I will merely, as a matter of course, take what consequences I have to bear."

"I will proclaim your treachery to the world. I will let those know who now think you a pure and virtuous girl, that you are really a false, designing coquette."

"Myra laughed, and said, in a taunting tone: "Do you think that will harm me, coming from you?"

"I will follow you as long as you live! I will haunt you the world over! You have ruined my happiness—I will be a shadow upon you forever!"

"And do you think you can coerce me by these threats?"

"Myra, you shall see. The day will come when you will regret having fooled and deceived one who loved as madly as I have loved you. Yes, Myra, I love you as man never loved woman before."

"You do?"

"I spoke in an aggravating tone and with satirical emphasis. "Yes, I do. And listen: become my wife, as you promised. I have received a present of money and I will devote myself to your happiness. I can and will make you happy; carry out your treachery, and I will devote my life to vengeance on you.

"I'd rather trust your vengeance than your love. This is not the age for such heroes. You are mean, contemptible poltroon! And now,
CHAPTER LVI

ROLANDO's face was ghastly. His eyes glinted like those of an excited cobra; but from Weir was not a man to scan, and he moved away without another word, but he heard a bit of Mr. Weir's words.

Our hero found Myra waiting—she had been rather some time, and as Tom joined her he noticed that her face was deadly pale. Tom offered her his arm and as she clasped it a thrill of delight rushed through his veins. It was a natural and a wild delight—the happiest moments of his life.

As the two descended the stoop, Myra said:

"Oh, I was sorry for you to accompany me to the door."

Tom's blood ran cold in an instant; the delightful tingle in his veins and the joyful throbbing of his heart ceased, and he said, in a cold, stern tone:

"Miss Hubbard, it is not too late to withdraw your invitation. I will place you in your carriage and say good-night."

"But it is too late now. The interview is done."

"You speak in riddles."

"What explanation have you to offer?"

"But you do not desire my company. Let me withdraw."

"No—no; you must go with me. I will explain."

"I will not demand an explanation. I will regard this as the brief honor of seeing you to your carriage."

They were at the carriage door, and, in a quick, imperious voice...

"You must accompany me; I seek an explanation on my own account."

Tom entered, in a fury, into the carriage, and following her, took a seat at her side.

"You kept me waiting. Mr. Weir."

"Why did you do so?"

Tom laughed, and said:

"Do not compel me to answer."

"Yes, answer me."

"Then you compel me to confess my impulses.

"I do."

"I met an acquaintance."

"A friend?"

Again Tom laughed, and said:

"Please excuse my having detailed you, and do not make me explain."

"But I have promised you an explanation of a rude remark; I made; your explanation must please mine."

"It was merely an acquaintance I met."

"Not a friend?"

"An enemy?"

"Tom did not answer, and Myra said:

"Did I?"

"How do you know, and that is why I said I was sorry.

I had asked you to accompany me to my home."

"The meeting did not amount to anything."

"I fear I have made that man your enemy."

"Tell me just what he said."

"I can not."

"Did he bind you to secrecy?"

"No."

"Then tell me what he said."

"How did she come to tell you that?"

"I can not submit to a cross-examination on that matter."

"You misunderstood her."

"No, sir, I did not.

"Let me explain and you will understand."

"There did not exist a positive engagement; she has left me, and I have supposed until to-night that there was no such understanding.

Again our hero recalled Myra's words, otherwise he would have yielded, and he said:

"It is evident you have made a mistake, and Miss Hubbard does not desire your company."

"To-night she has asked me to accompany her."

"One moment. Tom Weir, you know me?"

"Yes, Miss Hubbard."

"The lady has made a statement to the contrary."

"She has!"

"Yes, sir; and since you have not told me the true facts, I can not yield."

"I have made a false statement to you?"

"Yes, sir."

"You said that you were affianced to Miss Hubbard."

"It is true."

"The lady has made a statement to the contrary."

"She has!"

"Yes, sir; and since you have not told me the true facts, I can not yield."

"I have not promised to become your wife?"

"Yes, sir."
"Ah! he hardly knew what he said himself." "It was a very bad argument because you were to accompany me home." "He would have preferred to have been your escort himself." "And what did he say?" "Oh, what he said does not amount to anything."

"As a friend I demand that you repeat to me exactly what passed." "Yes, I did.

"Can I really claim that you and I are friends?"

"Yes.

"Thank you.

"I see.

"Do not press me.

"I do; and I have excellent reasons for pressing you to answer." "He asked to be permitted to accompany you home again.

"How could he do that when I had invited you?"

"Well, he desired the honor, and I do not blame him.

"He must have presented some claim to the honor. Tell me plainly what he said. You may as well do it, for I shall persist until you tell me all.

"He intimated that you and he were engaged.

"The villain! He dared to suggest a fact so false? Tell me all he said.

"He repeated the conversation that had occurred, word for word, and when he had finished

"Mr. Welr, there is not one word of truth in all he said. I have merely tolerated that man's presence; I never liked him, and I never found pleasure in his company. There was not one thing I regret. In asking you to accompany me home, I have reawakened his enmity toward you.

"Reawakened his enmity?"

"Yes.

"Is he your enemy? and I know it.

The carriage at that moment came to a halt in front of Miss Hubbard's parlor home.

"Myra must enter my home with me. This conversation must be continued. I have some questions to ask.

"I accompanied Myra within her home, and a moment later they were sitting side by side in the grand parlor. Myra looked wondrously happy. She was excited, and her eyes gleamed with a preternatural brightness; her cheeks were flushed, and indeed she presented a glorious picture,--you, a raving one, in all her glorious beauty.

"Mr. Welr, she said, "some years ago, up in that same waste time in New York, I met you during a walk."

"I remember. I will never forget any incident connected with you.

"That is a very handsome compliment, and if sincere I am very grateful."

"I meant that I say.

"At the time alluded to I asked you a question.

"I remember.

"I asked you if you had threatened Ralph Rolando?"

"I remember.

"Yes.

"You said you had?"

"Yes.

"I asked you if you had warned him to leave the town?"

"Yes.

"I asked you if you had thrown him into the river?"

"Yes.

"I remember.

"And you admitted that you had done so?"

"I did.

"Ever since that moment I have thought a great deal over that gross confession on your part.

Tom remained silent, and continuing, Myra said:

"It has since struck me as very strange that you should so frankly answer my questions and press me for the accusations implicated in them.

"I merely told you the truth.

"Yes, and it struck me as very strange that up to that moment I had never discovered anything that suggested such vindictiveness in your temperament.

"I am not a vindictive man.

"Then I remembered that Ralph Rolando was a sallow, sly villain, and I remembered that he hated you, and again it struck me as strange that you should appear as the really revenged one of the two. Will you tell me now why you threatened him?"

CHAPTER LVII.

There followed a moment's silence, and strange, wild thoughts ran through our hero's mind; then there came a revulsion, and dark suspicions of some one else. Myra looked upon the lovely woman radiant in her rare beauty.

"Will you not answer, please?"

"Why do you ask me this?"

"I have a most excellent reason.

"Will you name your reason?"

"I will not. I have been rude and unfair and unmanly throughout, I will answer your question.

"I will not. I have been rude and unfair and unmanly throughout,

"I can not do it.

"Myra blushed, and said:

"I can not explain.

"Then I can not give you the explanation.

"And therein lay an awkward silence, but Myra was the first to speak. She said:

"You force me to a confession.

"Hold!"

"I will not. I have been rude and unfair and unmanly throughout, I will answer your question.

"I have been rude and unfair and unmanly throughout, I will answer your question.

"Why should I make a false statement?"

"You are laboring under a misapprehension.

"I am?

"Yes.

"In what respect?"

"You think I am a falsifier?"

"Miss Hubbard!" ejaculated Tom.

"Yes.

"Then you believe me to be a falsifier?

"As concerns this matter I do not.

The situation was an awkward and startling one.

"Why should I make a false statement?

"You are laboring under a misapprehension.

"I am?

"Yes.

"In what respect?"

"You think I am a falsifier?"

"Miss Hubbard!" ejaculated Tom.

"Yes.

"Then you believe me to be a falsifier?

"As concerns this matter I do not.

The frank avowal almost took Tom's breath away; his emotion and agitation at that moment were excessive.

"Do you understand--I do not seek his vindication.

"I do.

"You are very kind, and have been very explicit.

"Nor will I discuss that part of the affair; there was something behind it upon the street and he bid Myra adieu.

"Our hero exclaimed:

"You kindly showed me assistance, and I will never discuss that part of the affair; there was something behind it.

"I have preferred to have you call upon me.

"Why did you not expose him?"

"Yes; and you told me you had.

"And you told me you had.

"This was a most excellent trick, Our hero exclaimed:

"You should have exposed that man. Why did you deceive me?"

"I did not deceive you.

"I did not deceive you.

"All's well that ends well," said Tom, really feeling guilty as he spoke the adage.

"And in the end we passed the floor the moment, and then she said as she came and stood before Tom:

"Now, I am sorry I asked you to accompany me home. I have invited you for a great peril."

CHAPTER LVIII.

"You smiled, and said:

"You need not fear for me, as I do not fear that fellow. He can do me no harm."

"I do you kindly showed me particular attention that evening, or rather, you permitted me to show you particular attention."

"I remember.

"I accompanied you to your home that night.

"I remember.

"After I left you an attack was made upon me. I was knocked down with a club.

"And Rolando was your assailant?"

"Yes.

"Why did you not expose him?"

"You will not discuss that part of the affair; but I did obtain ample proof of his identity as my assailant; and later on he assaulted me again--I had not sought to abuse his honor.

"I have preferred to have you call upon me.

"Why did you not expose him?"

"When Tom had concluded, she exclaimed:

"And during the last four years I have permitted that assassin to reckons himself among my friends. Mr. Welr, you have done me a great wrong."

"How?"

"You should have exposed that man. Why did you deceive me?"

"I did not deceive you.

"I did not deceive you.

"All's well that ends well," said Tom, really feeling guilty as he spoke the adage.

"And in the end we passed the floor the moment, and then she said as she came and stood before Tom:

"Now, I am sorry I asked you to accompany me home. I have invited you for a great peril."

"You need not have fear."

"Tom remained a few moments longer talking with Myra, and then rose to depart.

"I shall see you again, Mr. Welr," said Myra.

"Do you wish to see me?"

"If it were not for that man's utter hatred I should desire to have you call upon me."

"And am I to be deprived of that pleasure because that man hates me?"

"I fear what occurs so.

"I do not wish to cause you alarm. I will not call until events shall occur that will remove all cause for alarm.

"Tom did not dare trust himself to say more, and he bid Myra adieu.

"Once upon the street and on the way to his apartments, strange, wild thoughts passed through our hero's mind. He did not dare enter anything beyond the instant the bright and glorious hopes that fitted across his brain, and he lived among darkness. He knew that there was something behind it.

"Then he heard a cry of alarm. He turned and saw a man lying upon the sidewalk. He ran toward the man and at the instant the man again in a wild tone shouted:

"Help! Help! Murder!"

"As the words escaped our hero's lips a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder, and Tom was jerked to his feet.
"Hold him," said Rolando. "He is my murderer. His name is Thomas Weir. He should be hanged.

The policeman sounded an alarm and a second officer appeared on the scene. Tom was carried to the back of the cell, and there just what was occurring, and when policeman number two arrived officer number one bid him summon a coroner.

"What has occurred?" asked officer number two.

"A cold-blooded murder. I saw this fellow strike that man to death."

When Tom heard those words, he exclaimed: "You got it wrong, officer; I do not know that man. I do not know how he became injured."

"That won't do," said the officer in return, "I've got you dead to rights! I was watching you. I saw you following this gentleman and I saw you approach his cell. You knocked on the door and there was no answer. For once we've got an assassin right.

An ambulance arrived, and Tom was led away and placed in a cell, but before he was consigned to a dungeon he heard the officer's report to the sergeant in charge, and the man gave a detailed account as to how he had seen Tom follow the dead man, for the report had circulated that the injured man had died. The officer further stated that he had seen the murderer strike the fatal blow, and had arrested him on the spot. Tom had then an hour to think over his knife once again in the victim's heart, and the bloody knife was handed to the sergeant at the door.

"I did not strike the man, I do not know who stabbed him!" declared our hero.

Tom, as stated, was placed in a cell, and then he had time to think the matter over calmly; his nerve had returned, and his blood ran cold as he realized that his case was not believed, and after his friend judged of his great surprise when, after the departure of the turnkey, and after she had been out of the room for a few minutes, he saw the guilty woman, and revealed the beautiful face of Myra Hubbard.
""Miss Hubbard, on my honor I did not strike him in self-defense.

"If your words are proved true I shall die!

"I did not strike him at all!

"I did not;"

Myra glared. She was amazed beyond expression.

"I do not understand," she said.

"Through her mind that Tom had lost his reason.

"Miss Hubbard, as true as I stand before you at this moment I am as innocent of that man's blood as a babe unborn!

"And you did not strike him even in self-defense?

"I did not.

"Thank Heaven!" came the ejaculation.

"I followed a moment's pause, and then Myra asked:

"How did he receive his wound?

"A man who was a believer in my innocence solemnly declare that I believe his wound was self-inflicted.

"A man of a wont.

Tom explained his theory, after having related all the circumstances attending the tragedy, and when he had concluded, Myra said:

"I believe every word you have spoken.

"I thank you from the bottom of my heart!"

Suddenly Myra exclaimed:

"I see it all now. Yes, yes, I remember!"

Tom remained silent, and Myra appeared again a bit ruffled.

"Mr. Weir, I recall a very significant incident.

"Indeed?"

"Yes—one that fully confirms your theory.

"I am thinking of it.

"Ralph Roland once brought me a novel to read. It was a French romance, and the whole story, in some sort, was a repetition exactly similar to what has occurred. A Frenchman revenged himself upon an enemy by committing suicide, a man who had made it appear that his foe had struck the fatal blow, and I remember Roland's comment. He said the suicide would have been a hundred thousand times more acceptable, not only to himself, and have sent his enemy to the gallows, and then he could have enjoyed his revenge."
CHAPTER LXII.

In our narrative, we are not seeking to de­
scribe the display of emotion that were be­
trayed by father and son, but we will say that the
approaches to a revelation were accompanied by
cravings of grief agitated on the part of both.

Tom had told his father all the facts of his
life at and gone over the minutest details, and
had convinced his father that in finding a son
he had found one of whom he could be proud,
save for the moment he rested under the
shadow of a grave accusation.

The conversation between father and son at
length led up to the subjodied narrative.

Judge Manders was the son of a wealthy and
very aristocratic man, who had accumulated
great wealth. He had concealed the fact, and
had sent his son at an early age into the
world to make his own way. Mr. Manders, the
father, had a strange look into his eyes, and he
was a very old man. He had lived to see his son become
a successful man, and when he died the truth
respecting his wealth became known, and Judge
Manders found himself several times a million­
naire.

Owing to his father's singular conduct, the
judge had been compelled to make his way in the
world, and had never felt warranted in tak­
ing unto the judge's wife, and at the age of five
and forty he was a bachelor. He then went
to Europe, and in Switzerland met a lovely girl
—a French woman in a French family whose guest
he was.

The governess was a highly educated girl—a
girl who had a fine future open to her, and
married her, and all the incidents connect­
ed with his marriage were commonplace and
unimportant.

A year's travel in Europe Judge Man­
ders brought his wife home with him to Ameri­
cas, and father and son lived in Geneva.

A French woman was his wife's attendant, and
when the child was a few months old child and
mother were separated.

The disappearance was one of the strangest
and most startling incidents of the time.

But one conclusion could be reached—the
nurse who stole the child, and it was six or seven
months afterward that the mystery was ex­
plained. Meanwhile the father of the stolen
child had become a wealthy man, and had received thousands and thousands of
letters in order to discover the child-stealer, but
all efforts failed. Meanwhile both parents were
almost distracted with grief, and one day after
the expiration of a year, the father and mother
were seated together talking over their bereave­
ment and trying to say

"Did I not know when I took your girl
home in Geneva that I was to be the innocent
cause of so great a sorrow to you?

The judge had hardly uttered the words when
his wife suddenly leaped to her feet, and throw­
ning aside the nurse, exclaimed

"The mystery is explained!"

It was some moments before she recovered her
composure, and then she said

"Our child was stolen by Mademoiselle Daub­
bet."

"What do you mean?" demanded the hus­
bard.

"I will explain; from the first moment that
the nurse who stole our child came into my
presence I felt an aversion toward her, but as
she had been recommended by our old family
physician, I saw nothing for it but to accept it.

Through my veins every time she came into my
presence during the first week of her advent in
our midst, there seemed to be an atmosphere
that came less strong, and as she appeared so skill­
ful she won my confidence. But many times it is difficult to determine from the tone of
her voice, and I discovered that her hair was dyed, and that in other ways she was
not so pure. I tried to make her feel the
result of vanity. I thought she was seeking
to make herself appear younger. But now I am
satisfied that it was my daughter's fault to make herself older. Yes, it is strange I never suspected
before, but it all comes to me now. I know why
her voice is strange. I have had to go to her
home, and the child was carried out from there—she has made good her declaration of vengeance!

"Are you aware of her vengeance?" repeated
her husband.

"Yes, my dear, and I am not going to tell you
anything about vengeance!" she answered.

"Did she threaten you with vengeance?"

"She did."

"Mademoiselle Daubet!"

CHAPTER LXIII.

When Mr. Manders heard his wife's state­
ment he was almost dumbfounded, and when he suf­
ciently recovered, exclaimed

"What has she done with our child?"

"We can really learn?"

"Who?"

"We will go to Switzerland."

In further talk with his husband, Mrs. Man­
ders explained:

"Mademoiselle Daubet was a half-crazy wom­
an—indulged in all manner of fancies—and it
was not strange that she should fall in love with
me in the singular manner I have related."

Mr. Manders and his wife did go to Switzer­
lard, and the astute lawyer arranged his plans.

a manner that he frightened Madame Dau­
"It is strange!" Mr. Manders exclaimed.

He found the undertaker, and an old man who
distinctly recollected the burial of the child.

He said he had seen the confession, started in to confirm it
"Is it strange?"

She declared that she had sold the child to an insolvent woman, and when she
"What strange!"

He said it was a fortunate circumstance that
the asylum was really Thomas Weir

Mr. Manders had a startling revelation to make; I will
utter the words when

"I say you were dead, your mother in time partly
must know."

"When?"

"In a day or two, and in the meantime you

Must you not say a word—neither will I, my son."

A strange look came into Myra's eyes as she asked,
archly

"Is it strange?"

"No That would be a misfortune, for then
your innocence could never be established; his

Shall I speak frankly?"

"Certainly!

Are you aware of the half-crazy woman on the
face of the earth."

"Do you really think so?"

"And you believe that?"

"I do, as I live."

"What strange!"

"What strange!"

A strange look came into Myra's face as, blushing to the

"If that is true, it is strange you never fell in
love with me."

Tom stood like a man paralyzed, but after a

"It is not strange."

Myra turned deathly pale when Tom made
this statement. He was a frank confession that
he had not fallen in love with her, but she
did ask in a trembling voice:

"Why not?"

"You know my story; I was but a

"My father was only a plow-boy, and after­
ward a mill-boy."

But now I am convinced that it was my daughter's fault to make herself older. Yes, it is strange I never suspected
before, but it all comes to me now. I know why
her voice is strange. I have had to go to her
home, and the child was carried out from there—she has made good her declaration of vengeance!

"Are you aware of her vengeance?" repeated
her husband.

"Yes, my dear, and I am not going to tell you
anything about vengeance!" she answered.

"Did she threaten you with vengeance?"

"She did."

"Mademoiselle Daubet!"
CHAPTER LXIV.

MYRA laughed merrily, and said: "I know you did all the work." "You did," I may say. "Yes," Tom trembled like an aspen leaf as he asked: "Dare I tell you that I love you?" "Do you?" "As man never so loved woman before!"

"There is no need of your telling me," muttered Tom. "You are not dreaming." "If it is a dream I may never awake!" "Well, you shall awake." "But, Myra, we must face the truth. This mutual confession is unfortunate. I will be a condemned criminal; you cannot become my wife. My father will make an insurmountable barrier."

"You are mistaken, Tom. Weir; your innocence must and shall be established." "I am not dreaming," Tom ejaculated. "Leave that to me. I said this man sought my fortune." "There is just where you are mistaken. This very morning the failure of Rolando's firm has been announced. All the partners have fled. The failure is one of the most disastrous stoppages that has occurred in New York for years. My father knew of their troubles months ago. He's a director in several banks, as you know. "But tell me, how will this failure affect me?"

"I will."

"How?"

"I can not tell you now." "Yes, tell me." "It will lead to Ralph Rolando's confession." "Never!"

"Why not?"

"Your father knows how to bring it about." "Your father?"

"Yes."

"Does your father know of the facts?"

"Yes; I have confessed all to him, and he will do anything for the happiness of his only child."

"I do not understand. You have confessed to him?"

"Yes."

"What have you confessed?"

"All." "All!" repeated Tom. "All?"

"My love?" asked our hero, in a hesitating tone.

"Yes."

"To your father?"

"Yes."

"And what does he say?"

"He is delighted."

"I am astonished!"

"My father is all you about."

"Knows all about me?"

"Yes."

"How could he know all about me?"

"He has traced your career from the moment you were taken off the streets of New York, and he has been upon you as I do, as one of the grandest young men he ever knew, and he approves of my choice."

"Oh my God!" ejaculated Tom. "What can it bring forth?"

"My father has suggested a plan."

"Tell it."

"Yes—to fully establish your innocence."

"What is his plan?"

"Ralph Rolando is a beggar."

"Well!"

"My father will pay him a large sum of money to tell the truth, and he will do it."

"The clouds are lifting at last, Myra. You are a noble girl, and I will have a revelation to make that will bring joy to your heart if you really love me as you say."

"I do love you, Tom—I have loved you all these years."

"Your father need not pay one cent; but I do think circumstances have turned in my favor, and the confession may be had."

"My father will joyfully pay the money."

"But he needs the money now."

Tom spoke in a peculiar tone, and Myra asked: "What do you mean? Have you been misunderstanding all these years?"

"No."

"Then you have certainly gone mad!"

"No, I am perfectly sane; and what is more, for the first time in my life wildly and madly happy—that is all."

"But you said your father would pay the money?"

"Yes, but you, my dearest, have opened up the way for the establishment of my innocence. But my father will pay the money."

"Your father?"

"Yes, my father."

"Who is your father?"

"One of the most respected and noblest of men."

"Tom, explain all this to me!"

"Will you promise to keep my secret?"

"Yes."

"Tom told Myra the wonderful story of the discovery of his father. The beautiful girl list-ened. She would have been all right; but now the wonderful narrative was completed: 'What a marvelous story! What a romance your life has been!'

"Yes; and after all the shadows have rolled away, and what a glorious midday sun is now shining in your life, it will be a splendid secret."

"What shall be done, Tom?"

"We will wait and see. Now you must tell all to my father. He has employed an eminent counsel, and he will act on your plan." "Tom, I feel assured that this man will con-fess."

"My dear, I will ask one favor; do not come here again."

"Why not?"

"Wait until I come to you."

"How can you?"

"I feel assured that acting on your plan my immediate liberty is assured."

"Tom, I shall go wild."

"We will wait and see."

"A few moments later and Myra departed, and Tom again commenced pacing his cell, one of the happiest men on the face of the earth, and we record in our next chapter.

CHAPTER LXV.

Two days passed, and during those two days our hero's father spent much time with him; and on the third day a gentleman was introduced into the cell who proved to be a famous detective. The latter asked Tom a great many questions, and then in the presence of his father suggested the plan for establishing his innocence.

The detective thought awhile, and said: "Your plan can be carried out and it will succeed; but we must avoid all explanations or revelations. Just leave this to me; and turn everything over to Mr. Mander, he asked: 'What sum will you pay to establish your son's innocence?'

"Any sum to the amount of a million if necessary.

The detective smiled, and said: "It would be half that sum to settle a dozen cases like this."

"I desire to save my son at all hazards." "Your self shall be saved."

"You speak very confidently."

"Yes."

"Then you have a definite plan?" "I have."

"What is your plan?"

"I can not tell you at present. I first desire to have a talk with the other side."

The detective shortly after took his departure. He was a long-headed man. He had thought over the whole matter, and had decided upon a little trick that was not only ingenious, but well calculated to be carried through with ease.

The detective proceeded direct to the hospital, and made arrangements—after he had proved his identity—for a private interview with Rolando.

The latter was lying in his bed, thinking over the misfortunes told him so suddenly come upon him. He was in a bitter mood, and as he lay there he muttered:

"Hang it! this scheme has failed. Had my father's bad luck been delayed a few weeks I would have been all right; but now the game is all against me—my moment he meditated, and then added: 'But I have my revenge—at least—the miserable cur who has stood in my path will be effectually removed. I will not be troubled by him any more.'

The fellow was able to walk around, and he from his cell ventured to pace the floor, and after a moment resumed his solitary meditations.

"I hang it!" he said, "if the governor had only fixed me with a few thousands I'd have been all right; I could have carried out a good scheme I had in my head; but now I hardly know what to do."

Rolando was still pacing the room when the detective was shown into his presence.

The latter glanced at the invalid a moment, and then said:

"How do you do, sir?"

Rolando was a keen, cunning fellow, and answered, in a slow, calculating tone:

"I do not know just what to say."

The detective smiled, and answered:

"That is not strange, since you never saw me before, to my knowledge."

"But you speak as though you knew me."

"Well, I've heard of you."

"This detective spoke he passed Rolando a card. The latter glanced at it and read:

"PIPER,"

"DETECTIVE."

A moment passed and the two men retired to a small private room.

You are in a bad scrape, Mr. Rolando, said the detective. "You have a definite plan?

"Oh, no; my wound is healing rapidly."

"Yes, so I've heard; and you expect in a few days to leave the hospital?"

"I do, sir."

Rolando was very wary. "Do you know where you will go when you leave here?"

"That is my business."

"Ah! So it is, young man! You will go to prison:"

"To prison?"

"How dare you!"

"Oh, dare anything!"

"Why will I go to prison?"

"Because your dastardly scheme has been all broken disclose. I have been on this case, and I have secured positive testimony, even to a witness who saw you stab yourself. You are in a bad scrape."

"Bah! you can't frighten me!

"I am not here to frighten you; I am here to get you out of a scrape and save scandal to a reputable family."

"The reputable family must take it as it comes."

"Hardly. See here, I will pay you twenty-five thousand dollars to own up the truth—to confess and save trouble. You will accept my offer or take the consequences. My advice has been to let you take the consequences, but others prefer the plan I suggest."

The detective spoke he passed Rolando a moment, and he said:

"You can not make a confession. I have al-ready testified to the truth."

"Say, young man, I can help you out of a bad scrape. I have a plan that will save you, and permit you to escape the consequences. My advice has committed a grievous wrong, and you can make twenty-five thousand dollars cash down."

"What is your plan?"

"Because your dastardly scheme has all been disclosed. I have been on this case, and I have secured positive testimony, even to a witness who saw you stab yourself. You are in a bad scrape."

"Bah! you can't frighten me!"
CHAPTER LXVI.

The arrangements with Rolando were completed, and it was agreed that he should receive the full sum of the proposition. Our hero, and he was to have ten days to complete the task. The detective appeared at the hotel, and his father, to whom he said:

"That fellow, like that, I'll never see again, for this is the last of the matter; and when the wounded man positively admitted that he had arranged it.

"You shall leave New York, and not return for three days. The final result was that our hero was leased honorably acquitted.

"What do you mean?" demanded Ralph. "You can't waste words! Where is Miss Hubbard?"

"How do I know anything about Miss Hubbard?"

"The members of the crew crowded around, when the detective, addressing them, said:

"You know that fellow, or every man will be put on board the tug and carried in Irons to the city!"

Rolanleo led forward to intercept him, when he received a blow from the man he had known to be his brother. Rolano laughed at the deck, and Tom dashed down into the cabin, Rolando leaped to his feet, and would have followed the latter part of the name was given as Miss Myra Hubbard, the daughter of the retired millionaire manufacturer.

CHAPTER LXVII.

When Tom Weir Manders finished reading the account there came a wild straining in his brain, and an hour later he was upon his way to New York.

He reached the city and repaired direct to the house of Mr. Hubbard. He found that gentleman prostrated with grief and apprehension, and the appearance of his daughter were living she had long mourned him as dead. The meeting between mother and son we will not describe, but it was a strange meeting, and one distinguished by a joy that can only come from a character cleared of all wrong. He was struck like a man suddenly brought face to face with a highly pleasant appearance of a high road of happiness and the death of a gentle and faithful mother who had so long loved him, and he will make her his wife—and the final result was that our hero was made a clean and clear proposition.

"You shall make it fifty thousand dollars and leave New York and not return for three days. You are concerned; do you want to any one else what you say to me."

"You shall make this a clean and clear statement;" said Tom. "For three days she had been a prisoner."

"I am here, and just in time!" cried Tom, as he sprang toward her.

"I told her an explanation of thanks, and Tom made the further discovery that she was bound hands and feet. It took but a moment to free her, and he said:

"Dearest, we will not stop for explanations now. We will hasten to your father."

"My attitude was somewhat burdensome, and Tom led her to the deck, and there stood Rolando as the rescued girl aboard the tug, and then he returned.

"Sha! shall we lash him to the mast, and punish him for his deserts?" said Tom."

"No," said the detective, in a low tone. "All's well that ends well. This is after all a fortunate occurrence. It shows his face in New York again we can send him to Sing Sing for life."

"Then after the latter part of the detective's declaration was spoken in a louder tone, and was overheard by every one on board the yacht. Tom and the detective retired to the tug, and the steamer for three days she had been a prisoner."

"For some reason or other, Rolando had no appearance of being apprehended by any one previous to the arrival of Tom Weir. And at the very moment the tug was being made fast to the steamer, Ralph was explaining his purposes."

"That same evening Myra was rescued once more, and the arm of her father, and one week later a marriage was announced as having been celebrated between Thomas Weir Manders, of Philadelphia, and Miss Myra Hubbard, of New York."

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