

Frank Merriwell at Fardale

By GILBERT PATTEN

The Original BURT L. STANDISH

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WNU Service

SYNOPSIS

When Bart Hodge, a vain youth of sixteen, alights from a train at Fardale, he stumbles over a half-blind dog and in a rage kicks the animal. The dog's owner, Tad Jones, a small, shabby boy who supports his widowed mother, denounces him. This settles Bart and he slaps Tad. Frank Merriwell, an orphan of Hodge's age, prevents him from further molesting Tad. Although the two do not come to blows, Hodge sneeringly says they will have to settle their differences later. He and Merriwell had come to Fardale to attend Fardale academy. While Hodge consults Joe Bemis, truck driver for John Snodd, about his baggage, Merriwell, accompanied by Tad and his dog, Shag, start walking to Snodd's place. Presently the Snodd truck, with Hodge driving, rumbles down the road and kills Tad's dog. Occupying a room next to Merriwell's in the Snodd home is Barney Mulloy, who dislikes Hodge. They become good friends. Merriwell offers to help Mulloy get into one of the academy dormitories by appealing to Professor Scotch, a friend of Merriwell's Uncle Asher. As they leave the house that evening Hodge is talking to Inza Burrage, a friend of Belinda Snodd. Later they meet Tad, who now has another dog.

CHAPTER II—Continued

There was nothing to prevent them from looking in at the windows as they walked up to the front door. Hodge was surrounded by a group of amused girls with whom he was kidding in a free-and-easy way. Now and then he gave his head a jerk to toss back a lock of hair that soon fell down again over his eyebrows. Judging by his jaunty, cock-sure manner, he felt that he was doing all right for himself.

Barney made a queer sound in his throat. "Hold me, Frank," he said, "before I go in there and bounce the big chicken charmer out of a window."

At that moment Merriwell, himself, was itching to do something unpleasant to Bartley Hodge, who was giving particular attention to the slim, fair-haired girl who had played the piano at supper time.

But what surprised Merry most was the way he felt about that girl. She was good looking, all right; even better looking now, laughing up into Bart's face, than he had previously imagined. But wasn't that always the way? The stunners were always easy marks for any flattering show-off. They never seemed to have enough sense to see through such fellows. Inza Burrage, he decided, was just another in the beautiful but dumb class.

Now the girls were urging Hodge to sing again. "Again?" Of course that meant he had sung for them before this. But he hung off just enough to make them urge him harder. The system worked well. He yielded gracefully at the proper moment, on condition that Inza Burrage would accompany him on the piano. Then, together, they looked through Belinda Snodd's music to find something.

"Come on, Barney," said Frank. "Let's get upstairs where we won't have to hear this."

"You'll have to plug up your ears if you don't want to hear it up there, my lad," said Barney. "Me, I'm for sitting down on these steps and listening to Caruso warble. Don't leave me. Somebody may have to keep me from throwing rocks at him through the window."

So Merriwell, hoping for the worst, sat down with Mulloy. Meanwhile Hodge had found a song over which he was laughing. He called it a comic song, and that made Inza Burrage laugh, too.

Frank wondered if he would be able to sit it out, but he didn't want Barney to know about that.

There came a rippling prelude on the piano, and Bart Hodge struck into the song. It was something about "a maiden young and fair" who "dwelt by the blue Alsatian mountains," and it went on to tell how "came a stranger in the spring" who hung around whispering in the moonlight "till her heart was all his own." But Hodge could sing and he was burlesquing the sentimental old ballad in a way that made it really funny.

Frank squirmed on the step. Something inside him was squirming, too. Suddenly he laughed softly.

"Stay right here, Mulloy," he said, getting up. "I'm going to get my uke out of my trunk. I know a comic song to match that one and, by Jove, I'm going to sing it."

Hodge had just finished and was being warmly applauded when Merry came down again with his ukelele, which he had already put in tune.

"Now this," chuckled Mulloy as Frank sat down beside him once more, "will be the surprise feature of Belinda's party. I hope it's good."

"I'll let you be the judge," said Merry. Then, strumming the uke, he sang:

"Not a long time to come, I remember it well,
Alongside a schoolhouse a maiden did dwell,
She lived there in peace, her life was serene,
Her age it was fair and her hair was sixteen.

"This maid had a lover, a regular swell,
A cross-legged ruffian and bow-eyed as well;
He said, 'Let us fly by the light of your star,
For you are the eye of my apple, you are.'

"Just then her old papa appeared, it appears,
And looked at the scene with eyes in his tears,
His daughter embraced, her pale face he kissed,
Then he rushed with his nose at her lover's hard fist.

"He looked at her lover and told him to bolt,
He drew a horse pistol, 'twas raised from a Colt;
Said her lover, 'I'll die if I stay, it is true,'
Said he, 'So I'll fly,' and he flew up the flue."

Barney was rocking with smothered laughter. "Ah-ha," he cried, "that lad was a bird, Frank!"

All was very still within the house, but behind them sounded swift and heavy steps. Bart Hodge came out through the door into the moonlight. "Look here, Merriwell," he said hoarsely, "what do you mean by that dirty stuff?"

"Oh-ho!" said Mulloy. "Here's the dog catcher."

Bart blazed at him: "Mind your own business, Irish!" Then he again



"What Do You Mean by That Dirty Stuff?"

framed Frank, who had risen. "Who were you trying to insult by that cheap song?" he snarled.

"Why," said Frank, "what's all this about, Hodge? I was amusing myself—and Barney. I wasn't trying to insult anybody."

"Oh, no? With that stuff about 'her age it was fair and her hair was sixteen'! I resent it, and Miss Burrage does, too."

"Well, I don't mind you so much, Hodge, but I'm quite willing to apologize to Miss Burrage and assure her that nothing personal was intended."

Bart caught his breath sharply. His fists were clenched and his voice shook when he spoke again: "But that's a lie! It was meant as an insult to both of us."

"Now," whispered Mulloy to himself, highly pleased, "Frank will let him have it!"

To his great surprise, Frank answered quietly: "Hadn't we better talk this over somewhere else, Hodge? Let's not start a disturbance at Miss Snodd's party."

"You started it," panted Hodge, "but I'm going to finish it."

A girl came flying out of the house and sprang between them.

"Stop, Bart!" she cried. "Don't mind him! He's just too—too cheap!"

It was Inza Burrage, and the look she gave Frank burned him up with scorn.

Frank Merriwell didn't sleep well that night. He couldn't forget the look of scorn Inza Burrage had flashed at him before coaxing Bart Hodge back into the house. She had called Frank cheap, and the queer thing about it was that she had made him feel cheap. He hadn't foreseen that she might resent his little joke as a personal affront.

There had been another unexpected kick-back in that joke. It had given Hodge a grand chance to play the gallant hero, and he had not missed the trick. Like Inza, no doubt, the other girls at Belinda Snodd's party had been filled with great admiration by his excellent performance.

In Frank's room, after the affair, Barney Mulloy had said it was his belief that Hodge had been praying for somebody to hold him. As Barney saw it, Bart had been trembling with fear while he was roaring like a lion. But whether this was true or not, he had played the

lion and got away with it. It was his turn to laugh.

Barney had been disappointed. He had looked for something quite different from what had happened when Hodge had accused Merry of lying. "Maybe it wasn't a nice place to do it, Frankie," he had said, "but I never could have detained my fist from popping him on the nose. Now what'll he think of ye?"

But what Hodge would think hadn't put the pucker into Merriwell's forehead. He was annoyed at himself. Let Hodge think what he pleased and be hanged! Frank could laugh that off, but the sting of being made to feel cheap by a girl with a pretty face and a head as empty as a hole in a doughnut was what got him down. It never had happened before.

So Frank flopped around in bed quite a lot that night and punched his pillow twenty times, though the pillow wasn't at all to blame. Then, having wasted the most of the hours for sleep in such foolish gymnastics, he fell into a soggy doze just before dawn and had a tussle with a bear that caught him and shook him until he awoke. The bear proved to be Barney Mulloy, who had a hand on his shoulder.

"Will you never wake up, lad?" said Barney. "If that's the way you sleep you need an earthquake for an alarm clock."

Bright sunshine streamed in through the open windows. There was a sea tang in the clean morning air. This was another day. Steel springs seemed to shoot Frank out of the bed.

"Great snails!" he exclaimed. "It must be late."

"It was the bell for breakfast got me up some time ago," said Mulloy. "I thought you'd beat me to it, but you wasn't there when I got down, so I came back to see what was keeping ye."

"Well, go right back again," said Frank, "and take my apologies to the cook and waitress. Tell them I'll be there before they can boil and serve a couple of three-minute eggs."

He came down smiling, but Belinda Snodd gave him no answering smile when she placed the three-minute eggs before him. The response to his pleasant "good morning" was a slight nod that seemed to be wrought by remote control. But she brought fried bacon and hot rolls and wild strawberry jam and fragrant coffee to keep the eggs company, and that at least was cheerful.

Barney winked. "There's a bit of change in the weather," he remarked. "It's cooler this morning."

Merry didn't let the change spoil his appetite. He treated that breakfast right. Nor did he seem to notice the absence of Hodge from the table. He got along nicely without him there, anyhow.

After they had left the dining room, Mulloy explained that Bart had eaten earlier. Then following a brief chat with Miss Snodd in the front hall, he had made himself scarce.

"I stretched my ears and heard a word or two of what they were saying in the hall," Barney grinned. "It was something about a picnic. Now is it another spree they're cooking up?"

"Search me," said Frank indifferently. "Well, if it is I'll give you odds we won't be in on it."

"Don't make me cry, Barney. It's such a lovely morning."

Later Merriwell got on the phone and made an appointment to call on Professor Scotch in his study at eleven o'clock. The professor would be free to talk with him at that hour.

"Did ye mention me, Frank?" asked Mulloy anxiously.

"Not over the phone but I will

when I see him. Didn't I give you my word?"

"But I was a bit fearful you'd forget."

"I don't forget my friends, old man."

"Still, maybe it's not a thing you can do for me."

"Oh, cheer up," Frank gave him a stiff slap on the back. "I'm going to pull for you, Barney. I'm a selfish guy and I want you for a roommate."

A smile leaped into the Irish boy's face. "It's something I'd thought myself," he confessed, "but it seemed a little too pleasant to come true."

The mystery of Hodge's disappearance was still unsolved when Merriwell set forth to keep his appointment with the professor. Barney walked down the road with him as far as the gate to the school grounds.

"I'll be hanging around with my heart in me mouth when you come out, Frank," he said.

"You won't have to wait long," said Merry, with a cheering smile. "I'll make it snappy."

But it was almost half an hour, and it seemed half a year to Mulloy. At last he saw Merriwell returning. But he was walking slowly and his face was the face of a pall bearer. Barney's heart moved right down from his mouth into his shoes.

"Well," he forced himself to say when Frank came up and stopped, "slip me the bad news, lad."

"Can you take it?"

"I'll be no worse than I expected."

"Well, I hope you won't blame me. I broke an oar pulling for you. Professor Scotch had to listen. He asked me to send you to see him at four o'clock this afternoon."

"Aw," said Barney, "what's the use?"

"But maybe you'd better go. He told me he'd have a talk with the dean." Then Frank's tone and manner changed and he finished briskly: "And he said he was sure he'd be able to get you back on the accepted list."

Mulloy staggered. "You deceiving scoundrel!" he cried, shaking a fist at Merry's laughing face. "It was down and out you had me. I'll get even for that or my name is Bart Hodge."

"Now that makes me think of something else," said Frank. "I know where Hodge went to. He's been making a visit to the school."

"That," said Barney, staring past Merriwell's shoulder, "is something I've just this minute found out myself. He's coming out of the gate behind you and walking this way. And he looks as pleased as a cat that's swallowed a canary bird."

At that moment, as he came walking toward Frank and Barney, Hodge looked like a fellow who had no fault to find with himself or the world at large. It might be wrong to say there was a twinkle in his eyes, but they held, at least, a gleam of triumph.

"See the rooster strut," muttered Mulloy. "I'd like to crown him right on his comb."

"Take it easy, Barney," advised Frank.

"But if he starts to crow—" "Let him crow and get it out of his system. Don't make any false moves. Somebody'd see you and it would count against you."

"Now this," said Bart as he came up, "is an unexpected pleasure." The sarcasm in his smile matched his words.

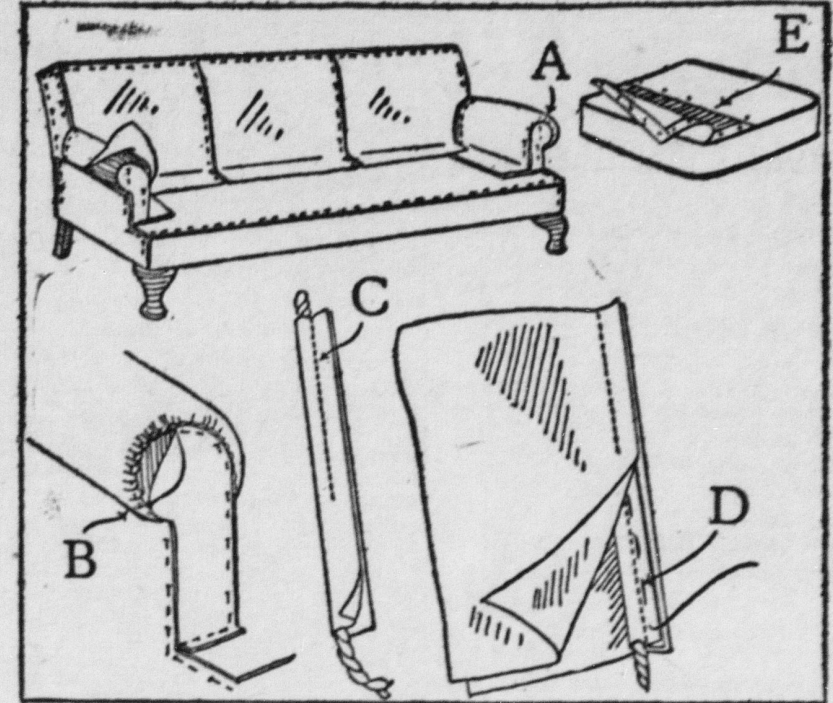
"Not entirely," said Merriwell. "I saw you come out of the school gym with two other fellows a while ago."

"Oh, did you?" Bart almost beamed. "They were friends of mine, Hugh Bascomb and Walter Burrage."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

HOW TO SEW

by Ruth Wyeth Spears



A Slip Cover With Welt Seams.

IN THE sketch at the upper left you see the pieces of a davenport slipcover fitted with seam lines pinned. The material is wrong side out as the welt or corded seams must be stitched from the inside of the cover.

Before the seams around the front of the arms are pinned as at A the arm cover edge of the seam must be gathered as at B.

The cable cord that is covered with bias material and fitted into the seams to make the welt may be purchased at any notion counter. The material to cover it must be cut on a true bias and stitched in place as shown here at C. The cording foot attachment for your machine must be used for this stitching so the sewing will come close to the cord. The next step is to either baste or stitch the covered cord to one edge of the right side of the seam as shown here at D. Then, using the cording foot again, stitch the seam as shown. Clip the seam edges around curves so they will not draw.

It will be necessary to leave an opening in the back to be fastened with snaps. Openings must be arranged on the underside of the seam cushions as shown here at E.

Every Homemaker should have a copy of Mrs. Spears' new book,



Smiles

Mistaken Identity

At a New York restaurant the colored waiter was handing around the cakes.

"Waiter," said a fair young thing, "I will have that chocolate éclair."

Sambo looked surprised, and then, in an offended tone, said: "Madam, dat's not an éclair, dat's ma thumb!"

"This is Mr. Snodgrass, our installment collector—he's been with the family for years."

Identified

The teacher was putting questions to the class.

"What do we call a man," he asked, "who keeps on talking and talking when people are no longer interested?"

"Please, sir," replied a boy, "a teacher."

THE TROUBLE

Rastus—What dis troubled old world needs am somethin' to remedy de status quo.

His Wife—Dat, Rastus, am what we's been hearin' so much 'bout lately. Jest what am de "status quo?"

Rastus—Dat am Latin fo' de mess de world am in.

Matched

It was during a big sale, and tempers were getting frayed.

"If I were trying to match politeness," said one customer, glaring hard at a saleslady, "I'd have a job to find it here."

"Have you a sample?" the saleslady asked.

Good Night

Bore—Talking about Africa makes me think of the time— Bored One—Good gracious, you're quite right. I must be going.

Fair Warning

"What's happened, George?" the wife inquired as her husband got out of the car to investigate. "Puncture," he replied briefly. "You should have been more careful," she said. "The sign said: 'Fork ahead!'"

SEWING. Forty-eight pages of step-by-step directions for making slipcovers, dressing tables and curtains for all types of rooms. Making lampshades, rugs, ottomans and other useful articles for the home. Leaflet of patchwork stitches now included if requested. Readers wishing a copy should send name and address enclosing 25 cents (coins preferred) to Mrs. Spears, 210 S. Desplaines St., Chicago, Ill.

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A man should choose a friend who is better than himself.—Chinese Proverb.

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Absence Noted

Love comes unseen; we only see it go.—Austin Dobson.

CHANGE OF LIFE

Raleigh, N. C.—Mrs. L. H. Simon, 33 S. Swain St., says: "At middle-life my nerves were bad. I could not eat or sleep and became weak. I took Dr. Pierce's Prescription and it stimulated my appetite and thus strengthened me; in no time I was enjoying life again. Buy it in liquid or tablets from your druggist. So how much calmer and stronger you feel after taking this tonic."

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