

# Frank Merriwell at Fardale

By GILBERT PATTEN

The Original BURT L. STANDISH

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WNU Service

CHAPTER VIII—Continued

On the road, he saw them pass over the crest of the hill, Inza still clinging fast to the saddle and Hodge urging his horse in the effort to overtake her.

Frank talked to his horse, encouraging him, and the creature seemed to understand. It took the hill grandly, it had stamina as well as speed.

Coming over the crest, Merry saw them again. Now Inza was fighting her frightened horse and Bart was gaining. Again Frank urged his flying mount to fly still faster. And the splendid creature flew still faster.

Then, above the staccato drumming of the animal's feet on the brown road, he heard another sound that gave his nerves a nasty jerk. It was the distant whistle of a locomotive. The whistle of the Limited.

There were crossing gates, of course, but Inza's horse, now crazed and blinded by terror, would crash into them unless stopped or turned. The picture of a frightful tragedy impending brought Frank's heart into his mouth.

But Hodge was gaining fast now. He was close. Urging his mount with hand and voice, he was drawing alongside. He reached for the bride of Inza's horse—and missed it. The animal he bestrode had swerved. Off he went to sprawl in the dust of the road.

The Sabbath quiet of Fardale was shattered by the mad clattering of horses' feet on the town's main street. Persons astride were electrified as they saw the runaway, with Inza still frantically fighting to check it, go tearing along that street toward the railroad crossing. They shouted or were dumb with the shock as they saw the pursuing boy, his face white and set, furiously urging his straining horse to greater efforts.

The Limited, making close to a mile a minute, whistled for the crossing.

The crossing man saw the runaway coming, with the pale-faced and almost exhausted girl fighting with the last bit of her ebbing strength to check the fear-maddened creature. He saw Frank Merriwell coming also, driving his own mount in a final spurt to reach Inza before her horse should crash into the lowered gate bars.

And the flying Limited, roaring through Fardale, would reach the crossing a split-second after the runaway must hurtle head-on against one of those bars.

Even if the bar withstood the shock, nothing could keep the girl from catapulting over the horse's head—over the bar and on to the railroad track.

The gate tender gasped and waved his red flag frantically. It was a useless, a ridiculous thing to do. Like puffing against a hurricane.

But the long run had told on Inza's horse a little. Her last desperate effort to check him had slowed him up some. It was enough to let Frank come alongside. He cried:

"Lean this way! Let go! Now!"

Until that moment she hadn't known he was in pursuit, but something—though she did not seem to think at all—made her obey instantly.

He had come up on her right and now he caught her out of the saddle with his left arm. That arm held her, dangling, tight against him as he surged on the right rein of his horse.

They just missed the rear of the one motor car that had stopped some distance back from the gate.

The Limited boomed over the crossing as horse, rider and rescued girl disappeared into a narrow alleyway between two small wooden buildings.

People were coming, on foot and in autos, breathless with excitement.

They found the boy and girl at the end of the blind alley, which was cut off by a shed. He was standing on the ground, his arm still round the girl, holding her up. Near them stood the sweat-covered horse, its sides heaving.

Frank was speaking to Inza as calmly as he could, which was not very calmly; for now he was very much shaken himself. He was telling her she was all right, which he realized was quite needless to tell her. She was holding her shaking hands over her eyes, but she took them away and looked at him without saying a word.

Nothing had ever happened in Fardale to cause quite such a sensation as Frank's performance in snatching Inza off a runaway horse just before the animal crashed into the crossing gate and went down with a broken neck. The story of his battle with the mad dog had been given a kidding twist by Pete Smith that had caused skeptics to chuckle or scoff, but this was different. Too many eye-witnesses were prepared to silence doubters.

Merriwell took Inza home in Tony

Accero's taxi after making sure the stout-hearted horse he had ridden would be taken back to Snodd's. Hodge, covered with dirt and gasping from his run, staggered up just as Frank was helping her into the car.

"Is—she all right?" Bart panted. "I—I tried to—"

"You did all you could to stop her horse," Merry admitted. "I saw you try."

Inza was still too shocked and dazed to say anything at all, but before her home was reached she had recovered enough to warn Frank not to tell her father what had happened.

"He's an invalid," was her explanation. "He's had a nervous breakdown and we don't let him hear anything that'll upset him in the least. We've never told him what happened that day in Mr. Snodd's grove. The doctor won't allow him even to read the newspapers."

Bernard Burrage was taking his daily afternoon rest in bed when they reached the house, and that



"Now, Don't Forget, Not a Word to My Father."

made it easier for Inza, who had feared her own nervous condition might cause him to suspect something.

"Now, don't forget, not a word to my father, should he awaken, Frank," she pleaded.

"Not a word," replied Frank.

For the time being she withheld some of the truth from her aunt, who was the housekeeper. She merely said that her horse had become frightened and run with her and that Frank had saved her from a nasty accident.

"I'll tell her the whole of it later, when I'm not in such a funk myself," she said to Merry when Mrs. Clayton left the room for a minute.

He would have left her then and returned to the school, but she asked him not to go so soon.

"I've just got to have a talk with you, Frank," she declared earnestly. "We've got our wires all crossed up. Please wait for me to get out of this rig and into something else. I won't be long."

It was queer, or maybe it wasn't, but he was willing enough to wait. There was something about her, and he was beginning to think it was more than the fact that she was such a positive stunner, that now made him ready to do more than a little waiting.

So he sat in the pleasant library and talked to Mrs. Clayton, who revealed herself to him as a widow and Mr. Burrage's sister.

Of course Mrs. Clayton was naturally curious about the details of what had happened when Inza's horse ran with her, but he escaped seeming to be offensive by laughingly saying he would let Inza tell it herself.

She came down shortly in a dainty frock that had bewilderingly altered her appearance.

Outwardly at least, she had shaken off the shock of her unpleasant adventure.

"But I've forgotten all about Walter," she said, laughing. "That's me, the champion forgetter. Somebody's sure to tell him about the runaway, and he'll turn a hand-spring. So I'm going to phone him now and let him know I'm all okay. I'll make it snappy, Frank."

Mrs. Clayton smiled as Inza danced lightly away into the next room to telephone. "She's always making things snappy," she observed. "She can turn a dull moment into a blaze of fireworks when she wants to."

and there's only one way to do it. I've got to talk to you about Bart Hodge. I want to tell you why I asked you to be friends with him."

Inza's words gave Frank a small jolt. She had kept him there to talk about Bart Hodge, and that was not so good. Almost anything else, he thought, would be better.

She saw a faint cloud pass over his face and spoke again quickly: "Now don't get me wrong, Frank. Wait till you've listened in on what I'm going to tell you."

She made him sit down again and then seated herself in front of him, where they could talk quietly and confidentially.

"I know what you've thought of my friendliness with Bart, for I'm not dumb even if you've imagined so."

He flushed. Was she a mind-reader?

"I'm going to betray a confidence to you," she went on frankly, "though I didn't mean to do so until today—until I heard you give Bart credit for doing his best to stop my runaway horse. That proved something to me, something I was pretty sure of before. It proved you're fair enough, generous enough, to give an enemy his just dues. And it makes you different from almost every other fellow I ever met."

His flush deepened. "I've never found it gets you much to knock anybody, even an enemy," he said. "Maybe I should have said, especially an enemy. For when you knock an enemy people know you've got it in for him and the knock has a kick-back that hits you right between the eyes. So maybe in my case you should call it a plain bit of sense instead of generosity, Inza."

"Well, then it's your plain sense I'm going to shoot at, Frank." Her smile was compelling and he knew he was falling for the spell of it.

"I had to work fast to get a little sense into Bart's head the day he took to his heels and left you to protect me from that mad dog."

"He came here to see me that very afternoon, and if ever a fellow was sunk he was. You can't imagine how humiliated and ashamed he was, Frank. He came to say good-by, for he had made up his mind to get out of Fardale before the sun went down. He knew just what he'd made himself look like, and he just didn't have the stomach to face it out in the school."

"I was ready to burn him up myself. I was just waiting to do it. That was why I'd seen him at all. Then he told me that all his life, ever since he could remember, he had had an unreasoning fear of dogs. It had made him hate all dogs. And suddenly I understood, for I, too, am silly that way. I have to force myself not to be afraid of dogs I know are perfectly harmless. A ridiculous little Dachshund can give me panicky jitters just by yapping at me. Isn't it goofy, Frank?"

"But Hodge has some other qualities that are not so admirable, either," said Frank.

"I know. I'm coming to them. But first let me tell you how I had to go to work on him to make him give up the idea of running away. I appealed to his pride. I told him he would look to me like an all-around quitter if he did that, not just a fellow with a silly fear of dogs. That was how I got under his skin and made him give me his word not to quit."

"But your brother said you were hot over the piece that appeared in the newspaper later. He said you were ready to fry Hodge."

"Well, I was. I go off the deep end that way sometimes, before I get all the angles on a thing. I hadn't seen the newspaper then, and the way I heard it Bart had said

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the old dog was merely sick and not mad at all, but when I read it I found Silas Gleason had said that. Then I had another talk with Bart."

"Just turned yourself into a guardian angel, eh?"

"I'm no angel, Frank. I'll never sprout wings. But I felt there was a mystery about him that I wanted to pry into. So I got out my pry and went to work. Maybe that wasn't nice, but I did it. Now, Frank, I'm going to tell you some things in strict confidence, and I wouldn't do it if I wasn't sure you'll never spill one of them to another living soul—Bart much less than anybody."

Merriwell was uncomfortable. He didn't feel like being made the sealed receptacle of Hodge's personal secrets, but she went on swiftly:

"Already, before coming here, he'd made a flop in two schools, and that had turned his father against him. His dad's one of those narrow hide-bound men without understanding or sympathy. I'd say he's a cold fish."

"He inherited money and never did anything else to speak of. All his life he's been living by a pattern, and he gets sore because his son doesn't do so too. They don't hook up very well. Bart's father never had a wild bone in his body, and so he can't get it when his only hopeful flies high and goes into a nose dive or a crack-up. Every time that happens he puts fire under Bart."

"But Bart's mother—"

"She's dead. He's got a step-mother."

"Well now maybe that explains it."

"But it doesn't. She's not the kind of a step-mother you're thinking about. Only for her Bart wouldn't be still trying."

"Then you believe he's trying, Inza?"

"Sometimes, but he's handicapped. He was brought up as a rich man's son and he's apt to be intolerant. That's the way I size him."

"Well, what—"

"Wait a minute, Frank. Let me lay it all on the line first. Bart went in for sports against the wishes of his father, who never took any interest in athletics. Now his father lays Bart's flops to the time he's spent on football, baseball and other things outside the usual curriculum. And he's threatened that one more blow-out is going to be just too bad for Bart."

"But I don't see how I can—"

"But you can do a lot for Bart, and all you need to do now is overlook his bad breaks and keep shooting straight with him. He'll come round in time. I've seen signs of it already. He has admitted to me grudgingly, that you're not the sort of fellow he figured you were."

"But you've asked me to be friendly with him, Inza, and I can't imagine our ever getting on that basis."

"You never can tell what'll happen, Frank. Don't I know it! He was all shot over his failure to stop my horse, and he gave you an awful queer look when you said so promptly he had done his best. The story isn't going to sound so good for him, but you can make it sound better by telling how he tried. That'll soothe his fallen pride a little. Won't you do that much, at least?"

Frank laughed now, his spontaneous, infectious laugh. "Why, that'll be easy, Inza. And I'd do that much more for you."

Laughing also, she flung out her hands again, impulsively, and caught his hands. "Now," she said, "I guess we've got those crossed wires all clear, Frank. Let's not get them snarled up again."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## One Hundred Lightning Flashes Sweep Across Skies of Globe Every Second

Sixteen million thunderstorms sweep the earth every year. Taking into account an average of 20 seconds between two lightning bolts, mankind must get used to the idea that 100 lightning flashes rip across the skies around this globe every second.

These figures have been gathered by Dr. Popowsky, the German meteorologist, reports a London United Press correspondent in the Philadelphia Inquirer.

According to Dr. Popowsky, a thunderstorm is the result of a "thermic bubble" caused by sun-heated air quickly rising into the cooler heights of the heavens.

Thunderclouds carry up to 300,000 tons of rain, sufficient to fill 6,000 big rail trucks.

Two German scientists, Renard, and Hochschwender, have constructed a "thunderstorm machine."

They have estimated from it that tension accumulated in a large thundercloud could be anything up to 5,000,000,000 volts.

This tension, together with electric power quantities from 20,000 amperes, would suffice to supply a big country with electric power for a whole year if it could be collected and utilized.

Two other scientists of the Berlin Institute of Physics, Lange and Urban, have made efforts to collect huge energies contained in thunderclouds for industrial power purposes.

A huge wire netting was hung up between the slopes of a rocky valley in the north of Italy, which is notorious for severe thunderstorms.

Electric energy accumulating in the air was conducted to two poles. A tension of 8,000,000 volts was gained which could be used to develop sparks 54 feet long.

Attain Majority at Marriage

In several states of this country, male and female minors, upon marriage, attain their majority, or the legal age which entitles them to manage their own affairs.—Collier's Weekly

## Smart Fashions for Daytime in Spring

A CHARMING basque frock for growing girls, and a house-dress for large figures, both smart and becoming, both easy to make. Even if you've done very little sewing, these patterns are easy to follow. Each one is accompanied by a complete and detailed sew chart. And a tour



through the shops will show you irresistible new fabrics to make them up in.

Basque Dress for Girls. No wonder girls love a basque dress like this! The fitted waist with its basque point in front gives them such a grown-up feeling. The full skirt, square neckline and puff sleeves are so becoming. Make this dress up for your daughter in taffeta or silk crepe in time for Easter, and later on in printed percale or dimity.

Large Women's Dress. The diagram shows you how easy this dress is to make, and it fits to perfection. Notice the raglan shoulder line, the waistline snugged in by darts. The roll collar, with the smart little tab in front, is very soft and becoming. Very comfortable to work round the house in, this dress is sufficiently tailored so that you can go shopping in it, too. Make it up in percale, gingham, broadcloth or tub silk.

The Patterns. 1491 is designed for sizes 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14 years. Size 8 requires 2 1/4 yards of 39-inch material, plus 1 1/4 yards of bias fold to finish the neckline and sleeves.

1395 is designed for sizes 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50 and 52. Size 38 requires 3 3/4 yards of 39-inch material. For contrasting collar, 1/2 yard, cut bias.

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Send your order to The Sewing Circle Pattern Dept., 247 W. Forty-third street, New York, N. Y. Price of patterns, 15 cents (in coins) each.

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## TIPS to Gardeners

TO INCREASE yield from the vegetable plot, the home gardener should grow "combined cultures."

The theory is to plant in closely spaced adjacent rows vegetables harvested at widely different times, using one before the other begins to mature.

Combine cauliflower, lettuce and radish, for instance. Plant cauliflower early in rows three feet apart. Between the rows plant lettuce, and between lettuce and cauliflower rows plant radish. Radishes are harvested early, then the lettuce, and later the cauliflower.

Following are several other combinations recommended by Harold Coulter, Ferry Seed Institute vegetable expert:

Carrots and parsnips in alternate rows two feet apart; radishes between first two rows; lettuce between second and third rows, and spinach between third and fourth rows.

Spinach rows two and one-half feet apart; radishes between spinach; pepper plants set between spinach when radishes are pulled.

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