

**Ralph Henry Barbour**

A photograph of a baseball field with a large stadium building in the background, overlaid with a halftone dot pattern. The field is in the foreground, and the stadium is on the right. The background shows a clear blue sky and distant mountains.

*Rivals for  
the Team*

**Ralph Henry Barbour**

# **Rivals for the Team**

**A Story of School Life and Football**



Published by Good Press, 2022

[goodpress@okpublishing.info](mailto:goodpress@okpublishing.info)

EAN 4064066426644

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I AFTER PRACTICE

CHAPTER II PLAYERS AND COACH

CHAPTER III A MOONLIGHT PLUNGE

CHAPTER IV "I'M ORDWAY"

CHAPTER V HUGH FINDS A WORD

CHAPTER VI THE AWKWARD SQUAD

CHAPTER VII "HIS GRACE, THE DUKE"

CHAPTER VIII BATTLE!

CHAPTER IX CATHCART, PROCTOR

CHAPTER X HANRIHAN PROMISES

CHAPTER XI THIRTEEN TO TEN

CHAPTER XII TWO IN A CANOE

CHAPTER XIII BACK TO THE FOLD

CHAPTER XIV BERT CONFIDES

CHAPTER XV GRAFTON SCORES

CHAPTER XVI A BROKEN RIB

CHAPTER XVII FRIENDS IN NEED

CHAPTER XVIII BENCHED

CHAPTER XIX BEHIND THE BOATHOUSE

CHAPTER XX "HOBO" WINS FAME

CHAPTER XXI HUGH MOVES AGAIN

CHAPTER XXII POP ELUCIDATES

CHAPTER XXIII IN THE LIME-LIGHT

CHAPTER XXIV HUGH GOES TO THE VILLAGE

CHAPTER XXV BOWLES ATTENDS A FOOTBALL GAME

CHAPTER XXVI HUGH IS UNMASKED!

# CHAPTER I

## AFTER PRACTICE

### Table of Contents

“I’d hate to live up here in summer, Bert,” said Ted Trafford, carefully easing his five feet and ten inches of tired, aching body to the window-seat and turning a perspiring face to the faint breeze that entered. “It must be hotter than Tophet.”

“Well, it’s up high enough to get the air, isn’t it?”

“Oh, it’s high enough, all right! If I had to climb those three flights of stairs a dozen times a day——”

“Wonder why slate stairs seem harder than others,” said Nick Blake, fanning himself with a magazine.

“Because they *are* harder, naturally.” Ted looked about the study. “It isn’t so bad, though, when you get here. And I dare say it’ll be fine in winter. You haven’t an open fireplace, though.”

“I had one last year in 19. It was only a bother. If I had a fire the ashes got all over the shop. Besides, it was always so warm in the room that when I wanted one I had to keep all the windows open. There’s dandy steam heat in Lothrop.”

“There is in Trow, but——”

“Oh, get out, Ted!” interrupted Nick. “I’ve been in your study when the thermometer wasn’t over fifty! Everyone knows that Trow’s a regular barn in cold weather.”

“Well, some days, when the wind’s a certain way——”

“Trow’s older than this, isn’t it?” asked Bert Winslow. He had yielded the window-seat to his visitors and was

stretched out on the leather cushions of a Morris chair, the back of which he had lowered to the last notch. It was very warm in Number 29, for the study was on the top floor of the building and overhead the September sun had been shining all day on the slate roof. Then, too, since the Fall Term did not begin for two days yet, all but a few of the rooms were closed and what little breeze there was found scant circulation. Bert had opened the door and windows of 32, across the corridor, and that helped to some extent, but Lothrop Hall seemed to have caught all the heat of the past summer and to be bent on hoarding it on the top floor.

“Why, yes,” Ted was replying. “Trow was the first of the new buildings. It’s been built about twelve years, I think. I dare say the heating is better here and in Manning. Still, I never have any trouble keeping warm. You chaps over here are a pampered lot, anyway, with your common room and your library and your recreation room and—and your shower baths and all the rest of it! Sybarites, that’s what you are!”

“Don’t judge us all, Ted, by this palatial suite,” begged Nick. “Some of us live in monastic simplicity, in one bare little room.”

“I’ve seen your bare little room,” replied Ted, smiling. “You’re a lot of mollicoddles, the bunch of you. What time is it?”

Nick, stretched at the other end of the seat, his cheek on the windowsill and his gaze fixed on the shadowed stretches of the campus below, moved his hand toward his fob only to let it fall idly again.

“Look yourself, you lazy beggar,” he murmured.

“Seventeen to five,” said Bert, dropping his watch back with a sigh. Ted digested the information in silence for several minutes. Nick continued his somnolent regard of the campus and Bert thoughtfully tapped together the toes of his rubber-soled shoes.

“More than an hour to supper,” said Ted finally. “Not that I’m particularly hungry, though. It’s too hot to eat. Honest, fellows, I believe it’s hotter up here than it is in New York! If this last week is a sample of New England summer weather I don’t see why folks come here the way they do.”

“It’s the fine, pure air,” muttered Nick.

“Air! That’s the trouble. There isn’t any. This place is hotter than Broadway on the Fourth of July!”

“There’s a breeze now,” said Nick. “Get it?”

“Sure; it almost blew out the door,” replied Ted sarcastically. “Come on over to my place. It’s a heap cooler, I’ll bet.”

“I’m too tired to move,” protested his host. “We can go downstairs, if you like. I dare say it’s cooler in the common room.”

“Who’s with you this year?” asked Ted, his gaze traveling to the open door of the bedroom at the left.

“Fellow by the name of Ordway, or something. Comes from Maryland. Upper middler, I think.”

“How’d you happen to go in with him? Thought you liked rooming alone.”

“So I do, but I’ve had my eye on this suite ever since I came over from Manning. Gus Livingstone and I had it all fixed to take it together and applied last fall for it. Then,

when Gus didn't come back after winter vacation, I tried to get Nick to come in with me, and——”

“I wanted to hard enough,” said Nick, without turning, “but my dad kicked like a steer. He said seven hundred was too much for his pocket.”

“Wow!” exclaimed Ted. “Is that what this stands you? Seven hundred each?”

Bert nodded. “Yes, it's high in price and elevation too.”

“What do you pay downstairs, Nick?”

“Three hundred. That's what you pay, isn't it?”

“Two-fifty. Seven hundred for room and board, a hundred and fifty for tuition and a couple of hundred for incidentals; total, ten hundred and fifty a year! Say, Bert, I'll bet your old man will be mighty glad when you're through here!”

“Then it'll be college,” answered Bert, “and I guess that won't be much cheaper. We do cost our folks a lot of money, though, don't we?”

“We're worth it, though,” said Nick. “At least, some of us are.”

Ted Trafford laughed. “I'm worth two-fifty and you're worth three, eh? And Bert's worth seven. Well, it's a peach of a suite, all right, Bert, but I'd just as lief have my dive. Besides, I've got it to myself. When you have another chap with you he always wants to cut up when you want to plug. Not for mine, thanks!”

“Single blessedness for me, too,” murmured Nick. “When I was in Manning in junior year I roomed with young Fessenden and we nearly got fired because we were always scrapping. He was a quarrelsome little brute!”

“What happened to him? Did you kill him finally?”

“No, but I wanted to lots of times. He quit the next year. Went to some school in Pennsylvania. His folks wanted him nearer home, he said. I don’t see why they should!”

“Hope you like your new chum, Bert,” said Ted. “Broadway’s a funny name, though, eh?”

“Ordway,” Bert corrected. “I dare say we’ll get along. I have a nice disposition.”

Nick giggled and Bert gazed across at him speculatively. “Of course everyone knows why Nick rooms alone,” he added. “He’s too mean to live with.”

Nick raised his head to answer, but thought better of it. A vagrant breeze crept through the windows and the boys said, “A-ah!” in ecstatic chorus.

“Listen,” said Nick, suddenly propping himself up on the cushions. “I’ve got a good scheme!”

“Shoot!” replied Ted, yawning widely.

“After supper we’ll beat it down to the pool and go in! Will you?”

“Ugh! Mud and frogs!” said Bert.

“Mud and frogs your eye! It’s dandy if you don’t go to wading around. We don’t have to stay in the pool, anyway. Rules don’t apply before term begins. We can go in the river. No one will see us.”

“Safest thing,” said Ted, “is to find a canoe and upset, the way we did a couple of years ago. Pete used to go crazy and threaten to report us, but he couldn’t prove it wasn’t an accident.”

“Aren’t any canoes out yet, I guess,” said Bert. “And the boat house is locked.”



“Never mind your old canoes,” said Nick. “That’s an underhand scheme, anyway. Fair and open’s my motto! Oh, say, but that water’s going to feel good!”

“That isn’t such an awfully rotten idea,” said Ted. “I’m blessed if I know where to look for my trunks, though.”

“You don’t need ’em. It’ll be dark by half-past seven.”

“Not with a moon shining, you silly chump,” said Bert. “You can take a pair of running trunks of mine, Ted. Only, worse luck, I’ll have to unpack that box over there.” He pulled himself from the chair with a sigh of resignation and kicked experimentally at the lid of the packing case. “Wonder where I can find a hatchet,” he muttered. “Got anything I can bust this lid off with, Nick?”

“Got a screwdriver I use on my typewriter,” responded Nick helpfully.

“What time is it?” inquired Ted again.

“Find out, you lazy beast,” replied Bert. “Tell me how to get this thing open, you chaps.”

“Pick it up and drop it on the floor a few times,” said Ted.

“Bore a hole and put a dynamite cartridge in,” suggested Nick.

“Oh, all right, then you go without the trunks,” said Bert, returning to his chair. “I’d like to know why I pounded a million dollars’ worth of nails into it, anyway.” There was no solution forthcoming, it seemed. Nick had returned to his study of the world outside and Ted had picked up the discarded magazine and was idly looking at the pictures. Bert sighed again and stretched his arms overhead. Then he said “*Ouch!*” suddenly and loudly and ruefully rubbed a shoulder. Ted looked over and grinned.

“Sore?” he asked.

“Sore as a boil! You wouldn’t think a fellow would get so soft in summer, swimming and playing tennis and everything. I wish Bonner would let us off tomorrow. I think he might. It wouldn’t hurt him to give us a day’s rest.”

“He’s going to give us the afternoon off,” replied Ted. “Only morning practice tomorrow. You can thank me for it, Bert. It was my pretty little thought.”

“He wouldn’t have seen me on the field tomorrow, anyway,” remarked Nick. “I’m going down to the junction to meet Guy at three-something. Come on with me.”

“I wouldn’t make that trip in this weather for the King of England, much less Guy Murtha,” responded Bert impressively.

“I’ll buy you ice cream,” tempted Nick. Bert shook his head.

“Will you come, Ted?” asked Nick.

“I will—not! I love Guy like a brother, *but—*—”

“Oh, you fellows make me weary!” sighed Nick. “No sporting blood at all! No—”

“Is that your idea of sporting?” jeered Ted. “Get on a hot, stuffy little one-horse train and dawdle down to Needham Junction, four miles away, in something like half an hour? I’ve made that trip once this fall and, Fortune aiding me, I shan’t make it again!”

“Come on to supper,” said Bert. “It’s almost a quarter of. It will be cooler over there on the steps than it is here, too.”

“Just when I was beginning to get comfortable,” mourned Nick. “Say, Ted, did you do this last year?”

“Sure! Do what?”

“Come up for early practice.”

“I did. And we had ten days of it last fall instead of only a week. You fellows needn’t kick!”

“I do kick, though, Teddy, old scout! Look here, you! I gave up a whole week of the best sort of fun at Deal Beach to come up here and frizzle and fry in my juices and chase a contemptible football over a sun-smitten cow-pasture! Needn’t kick, eh? Why, man, back there there’s a nice cool breeze off the ocean and a band playing moosics and piles of eats and—and nothing to do but play around! And just because I’m—I’m patriotic enough and unselfish enough to leave all that you lie there like a ton of bricks and tell me I needn’t kick! I do kick! I’m kicking!”

“I hear you,” murmured Ted. “Go on kicking. Nobody’s going to miss you if you go back to Deal Beach tomorrow. We could have got on well enough without you, anyhow. You were simply asked because we thought you’d feel hurt if you weren’t.”

“I like your nerve!” gasped Nick. “My word! Who’s been doing the work for five days out there? Trying to get drive into you chaps is like pulling teeth! Why, you miserable sandy-haired——”

“Oh, come on,” begged Bert. “I’m getting hungry. Anyone want to wash up? Come along if you do. You’ll have to wipe your hands on your handkerchiefs, though. They haven’t given us any towels yet.”

“What’s the good of washing if we’re going in swimming later?” asked Nick, sprawling off the window-seat.

“Because for once, old son, you’re dining with gentlemen,” Ted answered, gripping the smaller youth by

the shoulders and propelling him towards the door in the wake of Bert.

“Honest?” wailed Nick. “I’d much rather dine with you, Ted!”

## **CHAPTER II**

### **PLAYERS AND COACH**

#### [Table of Contents](#)

A few minutes later the three boys were crossing the campus unhurriedly and with an impressive disregard of “Keep Off the Grass” signs. And three good-looking, healthy, well-set-up youths they were. Their bare heads—there wasn’t a hat among them—showed three distinctly different colors. Ted Trafford’s hair was sandy, Bert Winslow’s black, Nick Blake’s reddish-brown. Between sandy hair and brown lay a matter of four inches in height, with black hair halving the difference. In build the trio were again at variance. Ted was a big, broad-bodied chap, Bert was slenderer, without being thin, and Nick was at once short and slight. Although Nick was only five months Bert’s junior—and Bert was seventeen—his smallness made him appear much younger. He had a thin face, deeply tanned, and gray eyes. Nick’s usual expression was one of intense, even somber, thoughtfulness. He had, in fact, the appearance of a boy with a deep and secret sorrow. But in his case appearances were deceptive, or, if he had a sorrow, it was merely that there are only a certain number of ways to create mischief and that he had pretty well exhausted them all.

Bert Winslow was a very normal-looking fellow with good features, a healthy color under his tan and a pair of eyes so darkly blue that they seemed black. Ted’s features were more rugged, like his body, and, if such a thing is possible, his complexion was as sandy as his hair. He had a wealth of freckles and two rather sleepy-looking brown eyes very far

apart. Ted's countenance expressed good nature first, and after that a sort of quiet purposefulness. One wouldn't have expected brilliant mental feats of Ted, but one would have expected him to succeed where physical strength and dogged determination were demanded. Ted thought slowly, reached conclusions only after some effort, and then stuck immovably to his conclusions. He had been three years at Grafton School and during that time his great ambition had been to captain the football team in his senior year. He had attained that ambition and had now substituted another, which was, to put it in his own words, "Knock the tar out of Mt. Morris in November!" Having accomplished or failed in that, Ted would undoubtedly drag another ambition from the recesses of his mind. But at present that was enough. With Ted it was always "one thing at a time."

Between them, the three boys loitering across the grass represented just three-elevenths of the Grafton School Football Team. Captain Trafford played right tackle, Bert Winslow was left half-back and Nick Blake was quarter. Ted had played on the School Team ever since he had entered the lower middle class, which meant two years. Bert, who was now an upper-middler, had made his position only last season, beating out Siedhof in the final contests. Nick had been second-string quarter-back last year and now, owing to the graduation of Balch, had automatically succeeded to the position. Barring unforeseen and unexpected accidents, each of the trio was certain of playing the coming season through as first-choice.

At Grafton the school buildings stood in a row midway across the campus, a three-acre expanse of level turf

intersected by gravel paths shaded by elms and surrounded by an ancient fence of granite posts and squared timbers, the latter thoughtlessly set with an angle uppermost. In shape the campus was a square with one corner rounded off where Crumbie Street changed its mind about continuing northward and swung westward to River Street and, a half mile beyond that, the station. River Street marked the westerly limits of the school property all the way to the river, which, in its turn, formed the southerly boundary. The campus proper ended at School Street, but successive purchases had added many more acres between it and the Needham River, so that now the school property extended in an unbroken strip some two blocks wide from Needham Street, at the back, all the way down to the river. What was virtually a continuation of the campus lay to the south of School Street, but, since it was of later acquisition, it was, for some unknown reason, called "the green." A tree-bordered path led through the middle of the green to Front Street, and, across that quiet road, an ornamental gateway of old brick and sandstone and lacy ironwork. Set in the right-hand pillar was a bronze tablet bearing the inscription: "Lothrop Field. In Memory of Charles Parkinson Lothrop, Class of 1911."

Beyond the gateway the land sloped gently to the river, and here was the Field House, near at hand as one entered, the tennis courts to the right, the diamond beyond them, the running track to the left of the gate, with the School Team gridiron inclosed in the blue-gray ribbon, and, further toward the river, the practice field. Beyond that again, near

where Crumbie Street crossed by an old covered bridge on its way to Needham, stood the boat house.

But we are too far afield, for our present destination is that of the three boys whom we left crossing the campus. At one corner of the green, where River and School Streets intersect, stood two old-fashioned white dwelling houses. The one nearer River Street had been just there when the land was bought by the School, but the second had stood at the other end of the green and had been moved to its present location to make room for tennis courts. When, however, a few years later, Lothrop Field had been presented to the School the tennis courts were transferred thither and now, save for the two white-clapboarded, many-dormered houses, the green was only a pleasant, shady expanse of close-cropped sward. The old houses, used now as dormitories since the buildings in the campus failed to meet the requirements of the ever-increasing student body, still retained the names of their former owners. The larger one, nearer the side street, was known as Morris House, the other as Fuller.

At a few minutes before six this afternoon the front steps and the adjacent turf—there was no such thing as a porch or piazza on either dwelling—were sprinkled with boys. There seemed to be at least two dozen of them. As a matter of fact, until Ted, Bert and Nick joined them, they numbered exactly seventeen. In age they varied from sixteen to twenty, although only one of them, John Driver, commonly known as “Pop,” had attained the latter age. Pop was, as he laughingly explained it, “doing the four-year course in six.” That was a slight exaggeration, for Pop had been at Grafton



only four years, was now a senior and would undoubtedly be graduated next June whether he was willing or not! He was big and slow; slow to move, slow to speak and slow to anger. He played right guard in a steady, highly-satisfactory if not brilliant fashion.

Since this was Tuesday, the fellows who had gathered from various and, in some instances, distant parts of the country for early football practice, had been at Grafton six days. Those six days had been busy ones. There had been morning and afternoon sessions on each day and the weather had been almost unreasonably hot. More than one of the candidates showed the result of those strenuous days in his tired face and fagged movements. Not one of the twenty who had been bidden had, however, failed to respond. Those summons meant a week less of vacation time and an added week of hard labor, but it also meant honor, for only the most likely of last year's first and second players had been called on. While the fellows were occupying their rooms in the dormitories, neither of the big dining halls in Lothrop and Manning were open and so they were being served with meals at Morris where, in a room and at a table designed to accommodate only the dozen or fourteen residents of the two houses, they were packed in like sardines in a box.

However, none minded that so long as there was plenty of food on the dishes and plenty of milk in the big pitchers. Mr. Bonner, the coach, arrived just as the crowd had squeezed themselves to the two tables and had begun their onslaught. Somehow he didn't look quite like the popular conception of a football coach. He was of only medium size

and height and had the preoccupied expression of a business man with his mind on the day's sales. In age he was twenty-eight or -nine, had a somewhat narrow face, brown hair and eyes and wore a closely-trimmed mustache that was several shades lighter than his hair. The reason for the mustache was apparent when, on close observation, what seemed at first to be a natural crease running from one corner of his mouth was seen to be a deep, white scar. The mustache didn't hide the whole of that scar but it concealed the most of it. David Bonner had acquired it in a certain hard-fought game when he was playing end in his junior year at Amherst, and there was a story at Grafton to the effect that his opponent in that contest had subsequently fared much worse than Mr. Bonner had. However, as the coach was a remarkably even-tempered man, that may have been merely an invention of someone's imagination.

Supper proceeded with as much and probably no more noise than is usual when twenty fairly hungry youths are left to their own devices at table. There was a good deal of loud talk, some far from silent mastication, much rattling and clashing of dishes and, it is not to be denied, some horse-play toward the end of the meal. Two capable if not over-neat waitresses flitted in and out and did their best to supply the demands on the kitchen. Now and then Coach Bonner's voice was raised in warning, but for the most part that gentleman attended closely to the business of consuming his supper, and it was not until cold rice pudding had appeared as the final course that he entered into the conversation to any extent. By that time many of the

fellows, having either picked the raisins from their portion of the dessert or engulfed it with the aid of much milk and sugar, had moved back from the tables to loll more comfortably half in, half off their chairs. The four windows were wide open and a slight breeze was swaying the curtain-cords, but the heat of the day still lingered.

“I’ll trouble you for the milk, Willard,” said the coach, eyeing his pudding with but slight enthusiasm. “Thanks. Traf, I’ve been thinking that maybe it would be well to cut out practise tomorrow. You fellows have been at it pretty hard and this weather is trying. I thought it might be cooler tomorrow, but that sunset says not. What do you think?”

“Oh, we ought to be able to stand a little work in the morning, if we don’t do any in the afternoon. Still, it’s just as you like, Coach. It is awfully hot for football, and that’s a fact.”

“Have a heart, Ted!” implored Derry.

“That’s the scheme, sir,” exclaimed Nick Blake. “It’s going to be hotter than ever tomorrow.” Nick expertly thrust some bread crumbs down Pop Driver’s neck. “We’d all be better for a rest, sir. Just look at Pop here! Overcome by the heat, Mr. Bonner!”

Pop, squirming and muttering, really looked as if something was vastly wrong with him, but the coach didn’t seem inclined to accept Nick’s theory. He studied Pop’s spasms a moment in thoughtful silence and then pushed back his chair.

“We’ll cut it out for tomorrow, then,” he announced as he stood up. “And, by the way, Mrs. Fair will give us our

breakfasts in the morning, but we'll have to shift for ourselves at noon."

"They're going to serve cold lunch in Manning at noon, sir," said one of the boys. "I guess we can get in on that."

"All right. Next practise, then, will be Thursday at three-thirty. Traf, you look me up tomorrow evening, will you? There are one or two things—and bring Quinn along with you, please. Don't stay around here, fellows. Give Mrs. Fair a chance to get these tables cleaned off. Good night."

# **CHAPTER III**

## **A MOONLIGHT PLUNGE**

### [Table of Contents](#)

Coach Bonner passed out briskly and the fellows, with much scraping of chairs and good-natured horseplay, followed. Twilight was settling over the world. The sun had just dropped behind the distant spires and tree-tops of the village and on Mt. Grafton, the sugar-loaf hill behind the school, its last rays rested on the spindley observatory crowning the rocky summit. The campus was fast filling with shadows, and along the streets and walks the lamps made lemon-yellow points in the purple dusk. In Manning and Trow and Lothrop lights glowed wanly at the entrances, but School Hall and the gymnasium were dark. Doubtless there were lights, too, in the Principal's residence, far to the right, but the clustering maples hid all of that but the roof. A faint breeze fluttered from the southwest, but the evening was still oppressively hot. By twos and threes and in larger groups the fellows wandered away, some turning their steps toward the village, a half-mile distant, others seeking the dormitories. Bert, Nick and Ted, however, still loitered on the steps of Morris, waiting for the moon to rise, and with them loitered Pop Driver.

"It's frightfully hot over in my room," observed the latter, sprawling his big form over the steps. "I'm on the wrong side of the building tonight."

Bert prodded Nick with his foot. "Guess I'll bunk in with you, old man," he said.

“You’ll bunk on the window-seat, then. Why don’t you sleep in one of the rooms across the hall? No one would care.”

“Perhaps I will. Where’s that moon? Coming along with us, Pop?”

“I guess so. I’d like to stay in the water all night.”

“There’s the moon now, isn’t it?” asked Ted lazily.

“Someone lighted up in Fuller,” replied Bert. “Let’s go along down. We don’t have to have the moon, anyhow.”

“It’s a lot more fun,” said Nick drowsily, settling back against Bert’s knees. “Say, fellows, isn’t it nice that school begins day after tomorrow? Aren’t you all tickled to death?”

“Let’s not talk about it,” yawned Pop.

“No, come on and get that swim,” agreed Ted, getting to his feet and ungently tousling Bert’s hair. “If we wait for the moon we never will get in. And I’m hot and uncomfortable and——”

“Something’s happened to the moon,” murmured Nick. “Probably got a hot-box.”

“What about towels?” Bert got up, letting Nick subside violently against the steps.

“We can dry off on the float,” said Ted. “Come on. All in!”

Nick, rubbing the back of his head, arose with groans and protests and draped himself against Pop Driver.

“Nick wants to be carried,” he whimpered. “Pop, please carry Nick. He’s so ‘ittle!”

Pop complacently gathered the other in his big arms and bore him away around the corner of the house, Nick babbling nonsense. “Pop likes to carry his ‘ittle Nick, doesn’t he? Pop loves his ‘ittle Nick.”

“Pop loves him to death,” grunted Pop, depositing him suddenly in a barberry hedge. There arose a piercing wail from Nick as he came into contact with the thorns, the sound of cracking shrubbery and the thud of Pop’s feet as he hurried off into the darkness.

“Oh, you big brute!” shouted Nick. “You wait till I get hold of you! I’m full of stickers! Which way did that big, ugly hippopotamus go, Ted?”

“Straight on into the engulfing gloom,” answered Bert. “Look out for that clothes-line, Nick.”

“Pop!” called Nick sweetly. “Pop, come back to me, darling! Honest, Pop, I haven’t a thing in my hands! I just want to love you!”

“I’m busy,” responded Pop from the darkness ahead. “I got some of those old thorns myself.”

“Oh, Pop, I’m *so* sorry! Do they hurt, Pop? Come back here and let me drive them in for you!”

Peace was restored by the time they were passing the tennis courts. Eastward, above the trees beyond the little river, a silvery radiance heralded the moon. They skirted the running track and made their way to where, dimly, the dark form of the boathouse loomed ahead of them. When they reached it Pop experimentally tried all the doors, but found them fast. They disrobed in the shadow of the building and then, making certain that there were no passers on the road, a few rods distant, they raced down the float and plunged into the water with whoops of glee. When their heads emerged the moon had topped the trees and, save where the shadow of the covered bridge lay across it, the stream was bathed in silver. The water was warm, but far

cooler than the air, and Pop grunted ecstatically as he rolled over on his back and floated lazily, blinking at the moon. It was then that Nick obtained his revenge. Sinking very quietly, he swam across under water, emerged behind the unsuspecting Pop, and—

*“Glug-gug-gug!”* observed Pop, as his head went suddenly under and his feet flashed white in the radiance. When he arose again, sputtering and gasping, Nick was far across the stream, paddling gently and crooning a little song.

“There was an old man and his name was Pop.  
His head went down and his feet went up!”

Stirring moments then, ending in the terrestrial flight of Nick, Pop begging him to come back and be drowned! Finally they all gathered under the bridge and lolled on a crosspiece and dabbled their legs in the cool water and talked. Once a team went past overhead, and once an automobile sped across, roaring fearsomely and threatening to bring the old structure down on top of them. Then quiet again, and the winding stretch of the river below, black and silver. With the rising of the moon the little breeze had found courage and now blew cooler from the west. Nine o'clock struck in the village and they splashed back into the water and swam to the float. Half an hour later they parted in front of Trow, Ted and Pop turning in there and Bert and Nick going on to Lothrop.

Nick turned off at the top of the second flight and Bert continued to his room. But when he had donned pajamas the latter descended again, the slate steps gratefully cool to



his bare feet, and he and Nick stretched out on the window-seat and talked while the breeze blew past them and softly rustled the papers on the table. Ten o'clock struck. The conversation became fitful. Once Nick snored frankly and then jerked himself awake again, and replied brightly to an observation of Bert's made five minutes before. Through the window they could look for nearly a mile over fields and tree-bordered roads. A little way off the buildings of a small farm were clustered about the black shadows of a group of elms. Beyond that two streaks of silver glittered where the moon glinted on the railroad tracks. Bert wondered if, after all, the view from this side of the building was not more attractive than that from the front, wondered what sort of a chap this new roommate of his would turn out to be, wondered if he had not taken a pretty big chance in accepting him sight-unseen, wondered why Nick didn't wake himself up with his own snoring, wondered—

Some time in the early morning he disentangled himself from the encumbering Nick and groped his way down to his own room. He didn't remember much about it afterwards, though.

# CHAPTER IV

## “I’M ORDWAY”

### Table of Contents

Bert, for one, found himself at a loose end the next morning. He lingered as long as possible over breakfast, but the day promised to be even hotter than the one before, and his appetite was soon satisfied. He and Nick sat for a while in the shade of the trees near the middle gate, but the heat soon drove them indoors, and Bert climbed up to Number 29 and unenthusiastically wrenched the lid from the packing case there and set about the distribution of the contents. The few pictures were deposited against a wall, since it was best to see what his roommate was bringing before deciding as to the disposition of them. His books he found place for and he laid some extra clothing in the dresser drawers in the bedroom on the right. He had selected that room in preference to the one on the other side since Lothrop stood at right angles to the other buildings in the row and from “29b” one had an uninterrupted view along the fronts of Trow, School and Manning. Only the gymnasium, hiding behind the shoulder of the last dormitory, was out of sight. From the other bedroom, “29a,” much of this view was cut off by a corner of Trow, and Bert acted on the basis of “first come, first served.”

The study was a good-sized square room, lighted by two windows set in a dormer, beneath which was a wide and comfortable seat. A bright-hued rug occupied the center of the floor and the walls were papered attractively to the

height of the picture molding in tones of golden-brown. Above the molding was a foot of white plaster, and two plastered beams ran the length of the ceiling. The furniture was of brown mission; two study desks, a table in the center of the room, a Morris chair upholstered in brown leather beside it, two armchairs, two sidechairs, and a settle. The desks were supplied with green-shaded droplights.

The bedrooms were identical. Each had a single dormer window. Blue two-tone paper covered the walls and a rug flanked the single white iron bed. A dresser, a washstand and a chair completed the furnishings. There was generous closet room.

Bert was glad when Nick came in at eleven and gave him an excuse for stopping his half-hearted labors. Nick was down to a pair of soiled flannel trousers, supported by a most disreputable leather strap that scarcely deserved the name of belt, a white tennis shirt, open at the throat, and a pair of brown canvas "sneakers." And he looked as though he thought he still had far too much on as he stretched himself out on the window-seat, sprawled one foot over the edge, and hung the other across the sill.

"Four or five fellows came a while ago," he announced. "Leddy and Ayer and some others. Hairwig, too. Hairwig looks like he'd been sitting in the sun all summer. Tanned to beat the band."

Hairwig's real name was Helwig, and he was instructor in physics and chemistry. Being a German, the boys had at first called him Herr Helwig, and later had shortened it to Hairwig. The news of his advent didn't, however, greatly interest Bert, who inquired: