about by their twenty dollars. The story leaked out gradually, though Percy absolutely and constantly refused to talk of it in public.

Broadhead never returned.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

*IN WHICH TIPP MAKES A SPEECH.*

IT is hardly necessary to state that Mr. Middleton was let into the secret that swelled the breasts of the Artful Dodgers. He was delighted with their purpose and abetted the benevolent conspirators to the full of his power.

Before supper on a Monday evening Tipp approached Mr. Auber:

"Mr. Auber," he said, touching his cap very respectfully, "I wish you'd kindly let me have the keys of the wash-room. Myself and the rest of the Dodgers want to fix up in style."

A vision of flying shoe-brushes, knotted towels, missing shoe-blacking, much raising of dust, and general confusion shot before the prefect's fancy. He was familiar with such occurrences and he looked at Tipp very seriously.

"Oh, we're not going to cut up—honor bright, Mr. Auber. If there's a single thing out of place you can punish me."

Mr. Auber, much as he had suffered from Tipp, knew that the boy before him could be depended upon. Out of the wreck of Tipp's reputation truth had been saved; and it is hard to despise a boy so long as his word is sacred.

So the prefect tendered Tipp the keys; more, he



refrained from going near the wash-room, though for the next twenty minutes it was occupied by fifty boys who in the matter of scrapes were makers of history.

And his trust was well placed; never was there a more sober set of students than the fifty now in the wash-room. They spoke quietly and pursued their work steadily. One would think they were preparing for a funeral.

"There's one thing I notice, boys," said Tipp, when nearly all were ready to go out, "and it's worth thinking about. We've been in here nearly twenty minutes, I reckon, and Mr. Auber hasn't come near us."

"What did you tell him, Tipp?" queried Tom.

"I told him I'd be responsibe and that our fellows didn't intend to cut up. Yes, sir," cried Tipp, his eyes dancing and his face flushing, "and he takes my word and he trusts us Dodgers just the same as if we had acted like gentlemen all the time. There he is now, down at the other end of the yard, looking on at a game of 'nigger baby' just as if we were all in San Francisco."

"And I guess if most of us were in his place," put in Harry Quip, "we wouldn't trust the Dodgers half as far as we could see 'em."

I really believe the Dodgers as they left the wash-room were in love with Mr. Auber. They were a wild set of fellows, but owing partly to their naturally good dispositions and their religious training, partly to Tipp's control and Playfair's influence, they were roughly honest. Show a set of boys such as these that you value their honor, that you take their word as something serious and sacred, and you

can count on them infallibly. I am speaking here of the small boy.

The Dodgers created a sensation when they entered the yard. There were no "dudes" in that notorious association, the popular taste among them tending rather to slouchiness. But now! Tipp led the procession, wearing a stiff hat, and upon his spotless white shirt rested a jewelled neck-tie. He wore his "Sunday" clothes and his boots were blacked. Nor was it the perfunctory style of blacking which generally characterized his efforts in that direction; even the back of the heels (where the lively small boy finds it difficult to reach) shone as perfectly as the shining toes. Tipp's splendors were emulated, though not surpassed, by those of several others. In a word, and to bring the picture vividly before all, there were fifteen stiff hats in the crowd. Now, the Dodgers were known to be prejudiced in the matter of stiff hats, each member ordinarily feeling it to be his duty to smash in every one he could reach with his hand. Clearly, then, something great was at hand.

The bell rang for supper and the boys, with a promptness and order that were commendable, fell into ranks. So prompt were they that Mr. Middleton gave the signal to march before the large boys had fairly gotten together.

The large boys, still waiting the signal to start, at once noticed that there was something strange about the advancing line, and Mr. Cavanne, who with his back to the approaching procession was eying his charges, suddenly saw one hundred solemn faces break into luxuriant grins, like a transformation scene in a pantomime.



He turned; he saw the solemn-faced Tipp, the serious line of small boys, the fifteen stiff hats variegating the procession like so many banners; and then Mr. Cavanne, the strict, the exact tamer of boys and trainer of men, burst into a roar of laughter.

The small boys passed on unmoved, though their every step was accompanied by bursts of hilarity.

"Supper went off with a snap," Harry Quip remarked as we pushed out of the refectory, which being interpreted means that we ate a good quantity of food in the smallest compass of time.

"Mr. Auber," said Tom, "it's a pretty cool night, and if you please the fellows would like it if you'd open up the wash-room."

As not a boy remained in the yard, Mr. Auber was compelled to enter with the crowd.

On his entrance there was a dead silence. Tom moved over quietly to the door and shut it; every boy rose and removed his hat; and Tipp, nervous but eager-eyed, stepped forward.

"Mr. Auber," he said, "we Dodgers have permission to make you a present. Here it is."

Frank Burdock advanced and presented a silver watch. Mr. Auber took it mechanically with one hand while he began passing the other through his hair very rapidly.

It was difficult to judge which of the two was the more frightened, which blushed the more violently, Tipp or Mr. Auber.

"Ten to one they both faint," whispered the irreverent Quip in my ear.

"Go on, Tipp, you're doing immensely," said Tom in the voice that so often carried encouragement.

"Mr. Auber," continued the orator, shuffling his feet and getting one shoulder hopelessly higher than the other, "we've been a blamed hard lot."

One of Tipp's arms seemed to get out of joint at the escape of the word "blamed."

"Go on," growled Tom; "'blamed' is all right."

"And, sir, we've acted in such a way that I guess you wish we were all dead."

He paused.

"And buried, too," he added in a burst of inspiration. "But we didn't mean any harm, and we're sorry, and we like you, and we're going to do better—ain't we, fellows?"

Every variety of affirmation came mumbling forth from the chorus.

Then Tipp made a bow and limped away. He looked like a person suffering from almost total paralysis.

"Boys," said Mr. Auber, taking his hand out of his hair, "I'm astonished; I'm gratified; I'm touched. I wasn't prepared for this. I'm afraid I don't understand you at all. If things have gone wrong it must have been my own fault."

His lips quivered and his eyes grew moist.

"I'm not able to say what I'd like to say, but I'm deeply, deeply grateful."

With these words he ran the *watch* through his hair, but not a boy laughed.

"There's going to be a dead-lock," whispered Joe Whyte to Tom.

"I'll bet there won't. Boys," he added aloud, "three cheers for Mr. Auber."

All shrieked three times.

"And three cheers for the Dodgers."



The hurly-burly was renewed.

"Now, Mr. Auber," continued Tom, "there's half an hour left. Won't you please tell us a story?"

Mr. Auber's face put on new terror.

"I can't tell a story. I'd be delighted to oblige you all, but I never told a story in all my life."

"Perhaps you never tried, sir."

"Go on, Mr. Auber," implored Quip; "if you get stuck we'll help you out."

Mr. Auber put the watch in his pocket, to the great relief of many of us, who feared he would destroy it, ran his hands through his hair, and said:

"Once upon a time——"

He never finished that first sentence, but began bravely on another. It was the first step that cost. Presently Mr. Auber was transformed. His eyes flashed and his hands moved in easy, striking gestures; and in a flow of English, strong, pure, simple, the like of which we had never heard, he poured forth a tale of heroism and adventure that set our eyes blazing, riveted us to our seats, brought the tears to our eyes, and convinced us that we were listening to the most eloquent story-teller we could hope to meet with.

In the course of the narrative Mr. Middleton came in; but not six of the spell-bound audience, I dare say, observed his entrance. On he went, this wonderful Mr. Auber, till he had almost mesmerized his hearers. We suffered and loved and laughed with the hero, and when Mr. Auber came to an end none of us dared break the silence. Mr. Auber was gone before Tipp remarked:

"Well, that was stunning."

"It's the story of the 'Hidden Gem' all over,"

said Tom; "and the only thing that I feel bad about is that Percy missed it. Mr. Auber was the hidden gem."

Mr. Auber's trials were over. If any boy wished to give him trouble, he knew that he would have to answer to the Dodger crowd. Twice a week after supper during the winter did we assemble in the wash-room to hear our prefect's narratives. He carried us away with him—and up. His stories were elevating; they filled us with longings to be noble, to be heroic, and it is no exaggeration to say that the ideals of many were revolutionized.

For example:

Tipp came to Tom one day and said: "Tom, will you do me a favor?"

"If I can, certainly."

"Well, I want you to stop calling me Dodger.' Get Percy and all your chums to do the same. You see, I used to be proud of that name; but now—eh—you understand?"

And Tipp became Tipp again and went home to help his father at the end of the year, as honest, as gay, and as good as though he had done all the noble things which Mr. Auber had narrated of his choicest heroes.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

*IN WHICH IS GIVEN SOME ACCOUNT OF THE INTERCOLLEGIATE CONTEST AND IN WHICH WE BID OUR KIND PROFESSOR A LONG FAREWELL.*

"SAY, I went to Holy Communion this morning," said Frank as he came upon me in the yard after breakfast on a certain beautiful spring morning.



"Why, Frank?"

"For the Ciceronians. Other fellows went too, and there were lots of prayers said for you."

"Thank you, Frank."

"I prayed for you to get second place of honor."

"Indeed?"

"Yes. You see, Percy's first on my list. He's the best boy alive. Then Tom comes next. He's to get first place of honor. Of course all the fellows thought in the beginning of the year that you'd come out ahead. But you've been so bothered about Mrs. Raynor that you've given Percy and Tom a chance to catch up. Of course you don't expect me to like you as much as I do Percy and Tom!"

Frank gazed at me in anxiety.

I laughed.

"I'm glad that you like me at all, Frank."

"I believe you are," said our honest little man. "I've known them longer than I've known you. But you and Harry Quip are third and equal, and you can bet on me for a friend, and I do hope you'll get second place on the list of honor. You begin working at it at nine o'clock this morning, don't you?"

"Yes, Frank."

"Well, I hope you'll all do your best. You look heavy round the eyes, Harry. Didn't you sleep well last night?"

"Not as well as usual."

Indeed, I fear that few of our Ciceronian Society had slept well that night. We had been in a feverish state the preceding morning, and could not even take part in the sports of early spring with any relish. For my own part, my sleep was disturbed by unpleasant dreams. I held several interviews

with my ghostly uncle, at one of which he informed me that there would be no intercollegiate medal given out if I neglected to bring the murderer to justice.

Well, the day had come. How we bent ourselves to our work! The theme, though not extremely difficult, was quite long. I don't think that a single one of us Ciceronians so much as looked at each other during the four hours allowed us for our effort. What a groan of dismay went forth when Mr. Middleton announced that but fifteen minutes were left! Then, indeed, was there much scurrying and scratching of pens.

Time was called at length, and each boy handed in his paper, signed, not with his own name, but with a *nom de plume*. His own name, with the corresponding *nom de plume*, he put into an envelope and delivered to the vice-president of the college. The papers themselves were to be sent on to the donor of the medal, who was to put them in the hands of three competent and unprejudiced Latin scholars. These were to select ten papers in the order of their merit—the first in merit gaining the prize and the others taking the nine places of honor. The judges themselves, according to this plan, could have no more idea as to who were the leaders than the boys most interested.

"Boys," said Mr. Middleton when we were about to leave the class-room, "one remark. You all know how heartily I wish you success in this contest. But permit me to congratulate you now for what is far better. I congratulate you, my dear boys, on what, as Johnson truly says, is more than success—on your deserving it. You have done your



duty. That is the essential; success is the accident."

Calm and logical as these words may appear in type, they were spoken with such feeling that when Mr. Middleton came to the words, "You have done your duty," there was a quiver in his voice, and we felt more than repaid for all our endeavors.

"Much as I'd like to get the medal," said Tom, "I'd rather get words like that from Mr. Middleton than any prize they can put up. What names did you take, boys?"

"I took '*Sic itur ad astra*,'" said Percy.

"And I '*Gaudeamus igitur juvenes dum sumus*,'" said Quip.

"Mine was '*Parturiunt montes*,'" laughed Ruthers.

"'*Miserere mei, Deus*,'" said I.

"That's near mine," Richards exclaimed. "I took '*In te Domine speravi.*'"

"And I went to Horace for mine," said Tom—"'*Nil ardui mortalibus; cœlum ipsum petimus*,' and then I left out a word because I thought the examiners might find it between the lines of the whole theme."

"Oh," said Percy, "I remember it: '*Cœlum ipsum petimus stultitia.*'"

"Young gentlemen," cried Tom, "the Ciceronian Society is adjourned *sine die*. We'll now go to bed early and get ready to play those Juniors of the large yard another game, and see whether we can't do them up as we did last year."

We got ready accordingly, played the Juniors, and were defeated pretty badly. Keenan and Donnel were against us.

June came, and with it a renewal of that sweetest

of devotions, devotion to the Sacred Heart. We Ciceronians were all members of the league. Indeed, with the exception of myself, all of us were promoters. During the month I learned more fully the secret of Tom's meekness and Percy's sweetness of disposition.

It was the night of closing exercises. We Ciceronians were huddled together in the hall, and how we did growl at the music and speech-making and singing. When these things had come to an end we breathed a hearty thanks.

"There's the president going up. Why doesn't he hustle?" growled Tom. "Oh, gracious! he's got to dispose of those graduates first. Then we'll get our innings."

Not one of us attended to the conferring of degrees or listened with the least bit of interest to the able lawyer who addressed the graduates for something over an hour. At length our "innings" came.

"The gold medal in the intercollegiate contest between six competing colleges has been awarded to a student of St. Maure's—winner, Percy Wynn."

The applause which we Ciceronians broke into, ably supplemented as it was by the entire audience, would have startled the echoes of a muffled hall. Harry Quip and myself were necessitated to hold Tom Playfair down by main force, for he had jumped to his feet at the name and was about to disgrace us by dancing, a feat, by the way, which Frank Burdock, who, with his father, was in another part of the hall, did actually perform, to the smiling amusement of the astonished audience.

"Places of honor," continued the vice-president



when the applause, under which Percy was blushing violently, had subsided. "First—Thomas Playfair and Harry Dee, equal. Both of St. Maure's."

Tom and myself came very near blushing, and were happier than if we had won the medal. After all, we knew Percy was our superior, and had either of us outstripped him we would have felt that we were the favored children of luck. You may be sure that our fellow-members, as the applause continued, shook our hands and pulled us about in an ecstasy of happiness.

"Third place—John Ray, of a competing college."

There was a silence.

"Hurrah for John Ray, boys," whispered Tom. "Let's applaud him."

The people followed where we led.

"Fourth place—Harry Quip, of St. Maure's."

"Cæsar!" ejaculated Harry, his merry face taking on the hue of an angry sunset and retaining its color long after the clapping of hands had subsided.

"Fifth place—John Cynic, of a competing college.

"Sixth place—John Robertson, of a competing college.

"Seventh—Joseph Whyte, of St. Maure's.

"Eighth—Charles Seebert, of a competing college

"Ninth—Charles Richards, of St. Maure's."

Each of us named for a place of honor was presented by the president with a book, and as the audience realized that we, the successful competitors, were, with the exception of Richards, small boys in knickerbockers, they fairly went wild. Some among them must have got a hint of this magnificent victory for St. Maure's, for bouquets came flying upon the stage. Nothing could be seen of Percy

presently but his high shoes, his silk stockings, and his eyes and forehead. Percy's ten sisters were in attendance, and I have a strong suspicion that each one sent him a bouquet. Our hero of the hour, as the flowers still came, was in quite a predicament, when, to his relief, Master Frank Burdock came bounding upon the stage, his eyes flashing with excitement.

"I'll help you, Percy," he piped; "let them come on with their baskets. The biggest is the one I sent." And amid fresh applause Master Frank relieved Percy of a few of his bouquets and escorted his friend off the stage. Tom also was laden with flowers, for which I'm quite certain Percy's sisters were largely responsible. Nor were the rest of us forgotten. We could have combined that night and set up a fine florist's establishment.

None of us took interest in what followed. We soon stole out of the hall and shook each other's hands over and over. Willie Ruthers had received no mention, but, as he naïvely remarked, "We Humanities boys don't want the earth. Some of us had to fall through. But next year see if I'm not on."

Next day we went in a body to bid Mr. Middleton farewell. Our beloved professor was to leave us. His college work, for some years at least, was over.

"Aha!" he exclaimed gayly as we entered his room, "here are my little Ciceronians. But what's the use of my congratulating you on your success? The great thing is that you've deserved it."

He shook each of us warmly by the hand, nevertheless, and how sweetly, kindly did those gentle eyes of his shine upon us.



"Mr. Middleton," said Percy, "you're going away?"

"Yes; but after what happened last night I can leave the field of my college labors saying with holy Simeon, '*Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine in pace.*'"

"Well, Mr. Middleton," continued Percy gravely, "we've come to bid you good-by. All of us have been under you for several years, all of us long enough to love you. You have taught us to love our books, to love our religion, to love one another, and in teaching us all this to love you. Should we never meet again, Mr. Middleton," here Percy's voice almost broke and all of us cleared our throats, "you may be sure that we shall not forget you. Day and night our prayers shall rise to God that He may bless you and prosper you in all your ways; and should any of us go wrong for a time, should we forget your kind words, should we give up the pious practices you have taught us by example more than word, should we become such that we would not wish to meet you—O Mr. Middleton! I can't go on!"

And we all broke down with Percy. That last artless touch, more powerful than his prepared speech, overmastered all of us. And the brave, strong, earnest man we all loved so well turned his face from us, bent his head, and placed his hand upon his brow.

"God bless you, my dear boys. Good-by."

With that benediction upon us we left him, and none of us spoke till we had reached our yard.

There we found Donnel and Keenan awaiting us and looking unusually grave. "Good-by, boys," they said; "we're going for good."

"What! where?" General astonishment.

"John's going off to the seminary at Baltimore, and I'm going to the Novitiate to try and become a Jesuit."

There was a great deal of hand-shaking, though we spoke softly—parting is ever a sorrow, no matter how sweet. We had always looked up to George and John as model boys and leaders. None of us was surprised at the step they were about to take; some of us envied them. For all this, our parting was sad.

And so we broke up for the vacation. Changes were marking the inexorable flight of time. When we returned we missed three whom we had loved from their accustomed places, and we realized then that these changes, sad as they are, must go on year after year, till upon each of us comes the great change beyond which there is no shadow of vicissitude, no parting, but everlasting peace and deathless reunion.

## CHAPTER XXV.

*IN WHICH ROSE SCARBOROUGH RENEWS OUR ACQUAINTANCE AND SINGS US SEVERAL ASTONISHING SONGS.*

HARRY QUIP, Percy, Frank, Tom, and myself took our outing beside the pretty lake in Wisconsin, where we renewed our acquaintance with Mr. Scarborough and his graceless son. Rose renewed our acquaintance herself. She met us at the depot, all smiles and courtesies.

"Hallo, little girl!" called Tom.

"Hallo, sir."



"Can you sing 'Jesus, Saviour of my soul' yet, little girl?"

"Oh, yes, sir; and I know ten, eleven, twelve new tunes. How do you do, Frank Burdock? You didn't write to me, after all your promises."

Poor Frank blushed scarlet, Harry Quip grinned, while Tom choked and coughed and laughed till the tears ran down his face. Frank scowled on each of us in turn, but relented on catching Percy's eye.

The *enfante terrible* did not exactly perceive in what she had been witty, but taking it for granted that there were sufficient reasons for laughing, she joined us in our merriment. She continued:

"Say, Percy, I know two of your sisters. They go to the Sacred Heart Convent at Clifton, near Cincinnati. That's where I go to school now; and I'm going to be a Catholic next year; and that's where I learned to sing twelve new tunes, and I'm going to sing them all for Tom Playfair, because he likes my singing and I like him. [Here she gave Tom an ingenuous look, this *enfante terrible*, which sent Percy into a musical laugh and a flush of color upon Mr. Tom's cheek.] Oh, yes! I was talking about your sisters. They're the sweetest, nicest girls! Oh! how I love them. They're nicer than any girls I ever met—as nice and kind and gentle as you are, Percy."

Thereupon we all departed incontinently, leaving the artless miss not a little astonished at our strange conduct.

She bore us no ill-will, however, for she came over of set purpose that evening to sing, for Tom's special behoof, "Jesus, Lover of my soul." Very vividly as her sweet treble broke so gently upon our

ears did we recall the scene upon the lake. I turned my head aside till the little one had finished, and thought I heard a sob from Percy, but could not trust myself to look around.

"Your voice is nicer than ever, little girl."

"Is it? I'll sing you another song, Tom." Thereupon the delighted vocalist gave us a very pretty "*Ave Maris Stella.*"

We all applauded.

"Did you like that?" she asked, her eyes dancing.

"We did, little girl."

"Then here's another for you, Percy," and to our amazement and Percy's total discomfiture she sang a very tuneful German song, beginning "How can I leave thee?" but when she came to the words, "I would sooner life than thee resign," Tom held up his hand.

"Desist, little girl, desist!"

"I beg your pardon, sir."

"You see, little girl," went on Tom gravely, "we've got to draw the line somewhere."

"What do you want to draw a line for?" said this very ingenuous little one.

"All the way around that song, little girl. It's too personal. This isn't leap-year."

"Isn't it?" Rose was very much puzzled.

"No—you'll have to wait two years more at least before you can sing that song for Percy."

"Oh! but I've got another song for Frank Burdock."

"What's it about, little girl?"

"It begins, 'Believe me, of all these endearing young charms.'"

Even Tom could keep his countenance no longer.



"You don't mean to say, little girl, that the nuns coached you up in these songs?"

"Oh, no, sir. I learned them all by myself."

"You did! But they're love-songs."

Rose looked at him very composedly.

"I don't care! I'm not going to be a nun."

Whereupon Tom gave up.

From that day Miss Rose became a frequent visitor. She had a supreme disregard for conventionalities and conducted herself in a way that was certainly unique.

Vacation passed all too quickly. During these summer months I received, through my father, letters from the detective bureau, each and every one of them announcing a fresh clew. My father got weary of this at last and wrote:

DEAR MR. TINKER:—I am completely discouraged. If you announce any more clews I shall resign all hope of ever meeting Mrs. Raynor in this world. Tell your sleepless detectives to take a little needful repose.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN DEE.

In answer to which he received very promptly a heavy bill for services rendered. Each announcement of a clew cost a good round sum of money.

My father inclosed the full amount by return mail, and took occasion to inform the indefatigable Tinker that he would try to worry along without the services of his insomnia-ridden bureau, and that, were it necessary, he would be willing to pay him a certain yearly allowance to induce him and his men not to unsteady their intellects on the looking up of labyrinthine clews.