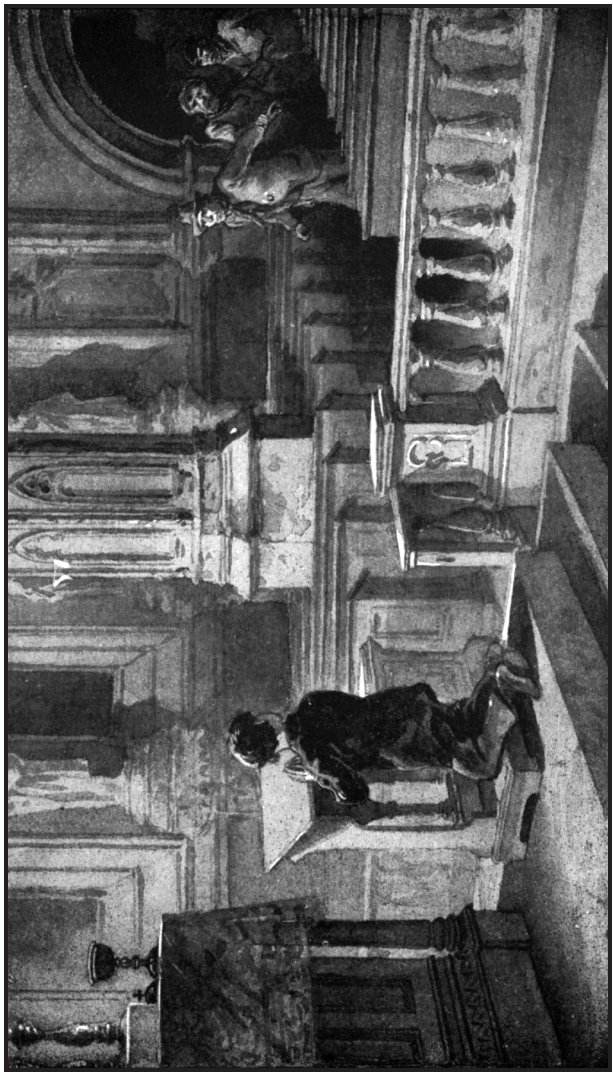


# **Claude Lightfoot**

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**OR HOW THE PROBLEM  
WAS SOLVED**

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"My God!" cried the atheist, jumping back and falling against Jordan. "What's that?"

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## Chapter I

*IN WHICH CLAUDE PUZZLES FRANK ELMWOOD*

“**T**HAT newcomer’s a queer boy,” observed John Winter.

“He’s lively as a kitten,” said Rob Collins. “I’ve been keeping an eye on him ever since the beginning of recess, and I don’t think there’s a square foot of ground in the college yard he hasn’t passed over. He’s tripped up five or six fellows already and just managed to get off being kicked at least twice. I think,” added Rob solemnly, and bringing into use the latest knowledge he had gleaned from a passing fit of attention in Chemistry class, “I really do think that he’s one of the Mercury Compounds.”

Whereupon Frank Elmwood, the third of the group, rang a “chestnut bell,” in answer to which Rob indignantly disclaimed any attempt at joking.

“Look,” exclaimed John, breaking in upon the playful dispute of these two bosom friends, “your Compound of Mercury is going to get into trouble, I’m afraid; he’s fooling around Worden!”

“Worden will kick him, sure,” prophesied Rob.

“Yes, and hard, too, the overgrown bully,” commented Frank, with a certain amount of bitterness in his voice and a frown upon his pale, energetic face.

The three speakers were leaning at ease against the storm door which opens upon the playground of Milwaukee College [that is, Academy]. It was ten o'clock recess, and the yard was everywhere alive with moving human figures. Like birds of swift passage, baseballs were flying through the air in all directions, and, on the run, of course, the multitudinous legs of small boys were moving from point to point. During recess the younger students seldom condescend to walk but, yielding to their natural and healthy inclinations, spend that quarter of an hour in a state of what is for the most part breathless animation. But among all these flying figures, the newcomer was eminently conspicuous. He seemed to move upon springs which, in their perfection, just fell short of wings.

On the way to Worden, he startled Charlie Pierson, the quietest lad in the college, by leaping clean over his shoulders. Charlie had been standing engrossed in watching a

game, his head bent forward, his hands clasped behind his back and, fortunately for the nonce, his legs spread so as to afford him a good purchase for the shock, when, without warning, the young madcap came flying over his head.

“Confound your cheek!” cried Charlie, the lazy, benevolent smile on his face almost disappearing; “if I catch you, I’ll pound your muscle till it’s sore!” And as he spoke, he took after the dancing madcap.

“Whoop! Hi! Hi! Catch me,” sang out Rob’s Chemical Compound, as with his head craned so as to keep his pursuer in sight, he broke into a swift run, followed heavily and clumsily by Charlie, who was not given to hard exercise.

Now it so happened that Dan Dockery, a lively lad and intimate friend of Charlie, had been intently watching the proceedings of the young vaulter. Taking advantage of the fleeing boy’s position of head, Dan planted himself, without being observed, in the path of the runner. As he had desired, a collision followed. Dan staggered back a few steps, while the lively youth bounded to one side like a rubber ball, rolled over and over, rose with a spring and a bound and, before Charlie could catch him, sprang away and dashed



head first into the stomach of no less a person than the bully Worden.

For the moment, Worden lost all power of speech, but retained sufficient presence of mind to grasp his unwitting assailant in a vise-like grip.

Thus caught in the toils, the newcomer set about a process of wriggling and squirming which it is difficult to imagine and impossible to set down. Legs and arms writhed and bent, while the whole body twisted and turned in every conceivable posture, till the eye became dazed and blurred in following the swift changes. But Worden, still choking and gasping, held on grimly. The small boy who butted *him* in the stomach was not likely to forget the incident to the last day of his life.

“You wretched little rowdy!” he began, recovering his breath and endeavoring to put his captive into a position where he could best be kicked, “I’ll teach you a lesson.”

By way of reply, the small boy effected a miraculous wriggle which brought him through Worden’s legs and rendered the intended operation of kicking, for the time being, impracticable. But Worden still preserved his hold and at once made a strenuous effort to bring the wriggler back into position.

At this point Pierson and Dockery, who despised Worden, as bullies are wont to be despised by the small boy, came to the rescue.

They sang in unison,

Worden, Worden  
Went a-birdin'  
On a summer's day:  
Worden, Worden, went a-birdin'  
And the birds they flew away.

And then by way of chorus, a dozen youngsters in the vicinity chimed in with—

Worden, Worden went a-birdin'  
And didn't *he* run away.

This was too much for the hero of these doggerels: releasing his intended victim, he started off in chase of his serenaders.

The cause of all this disturbance now made directly for the trio, who were still leaning against the storm door.

"What a stout pair of legs he's got!" exclaimed Collins. "And he moves with such ease. I never saw a little chap in knee breeches yet that looked so strong and so graceful."

"Yes," assented Elmwood. "And at the same time, he has such a sunny face: it's a healthy face too. It's not too chubby, and his complexion is really fine."

"And look at the smile he wears," continued John Winter. "It's what I would call sympathetic."

"Ahem!" grunted Rob.

"I mean," said John coloring, "that it makes you feel jolly and gay to look at it. You can see from the straight way he holds himself and from his build that he's a mighty strong little chap. He looks *sunny*—that's the word. His hair is really sunny. He's really a pretty boy."

"Pshaw!" growled Frank, "sunniness may be the right word, but prettiness certainly isn't. Almost any little boy, who's dressed well and who's not thoroughly bad, looks pretty. But this little chap is interesting."

"Hallo, Specksy!" cried the object of these remarks, who had been staring at his critics for full half a minute.

Rob and John joined in a laugh at Frank's expense. Though only seventeen, Frank wore spectacles.

"Hallo, Sublimate of Mercury!"

"You're another, and twice anything you call me!" came the quick answer. "I say, I like this school immensely. There's a yard to it where a fellow's got room enough to move around in."

"What school did you go to before you

came here?" Frank inquired.

"Sixteenth District till a few days ago."

"What happened then?"

"I got expelled." As he made his answer, he favored Frank with a series of winks. He had blue eyes, not over-large, but with a snap and sparkle about them which added much to the sunshininess of his appearance.

"Stop your winking and tell us why you were expelled," pursued Frank.

The artless youth had been hopping about impatiently during this dialogue, and, as Frank put him the last question, he flew at John Winter, seized John's hat and, without further ado, took to his heels.

With an ejaculation expressive partly of amusement, partly of annoyance, John took after him. He was the youngest and smallest of the trio—indeed, though a member of the class of Poetry, he still went about in knickerbockers—but in running he was second to none of his class fellows. After a sharp pursuit, he captured the snatcher of hats and brought him back wriggling to Frank and Rob.

"Now," puffed John, retaining his firm grasp on our young friend's wrist, "tell us about your being expelled."

"I was expelled for nothing—there!" with

a wriggle. "Let me go, will you?" More wriggles. "Let me go, I say!" Still more wriggles. "Ow-w-w-w! Stop squeezing!"

And in a seeming paroxysm of pain, the wriggler fell into a complete state of collapse and hung limp, a dead weight from John's hand, while lines and spasms of pain chased about his most expressive face.

Softened by pity, John let go. In a flash, the limpness was gone, and the brightest, happiest, sunniest boy, his hair shot with gold and dancing to its owner's motions, was hopping and skipping before the three poets, his right thumb raised to his pretty little nose and four fingers wriggling like the fingers of an excited Italian in the heart of the Italian game of Mora.

"Yah! yah!—fooled you, didn't I? Oh, didn't I take him in, Specksy?"

"Tell us how you got expelled," said Rob, "and I'll give you some chocolate caramels."

There was a cessation of hop and skip.

"How many?"

"Five or six."

"Will you give me one to start on?"

Rob handed him a caramel.

"Now," continued the sunny one, as he put the candy in his mouth, "how'll I know that you'll give me the rest?"

"Well I suppose you can trust me."

"No, you don't. I know your brother Walter, and he says you're no good. You just pass those caramels over to Specksy; I like Specksy." And the frank young gentleman glanced at Elmwood with open admiration.

"All right, Johnny," said Rob, as he executed the condition.

"You needn't call me Johnny," continued the newcomer, sidling toward Frank and making a sudden but unsuccessful grab at the candy in his hand. "My name is Claude—Claude Lightfoot, and don't you forget it, Specksy."

In answer to this appeal, Frank gave him a caramel.

"We're not particular about your name," put in John Winter, anxious to quote

What's in a name? That which we call  
a rose . . .

"Just what I was going to say," interrupted Elmwood, with a mischievous twinkle in his eye. "Go on, Claude, and tell us about your expulsion."

"It was all on account of a billy goat and a lightning rod."

"Ah!" said Rob. "Did the billy goat strike the lightning rod?"

Before replying, Claude extorted a third caramel from Frank.

“No, it didn’t. Last Wednesday a fellow stumped me to bring my billy goat to school. General Jackson (that was his name) behaved like a gentleman as long as we were outside the school building. I tied him up in the yard; but just as soon as I started to go into school, General Jackson began to get frisky; and then the fellow that stumped me loosed him, and he came bumping in after me—”

“Who? The fellow that stumped you?”

“No, the General. I wanted to run him out; but a lot of fellows stood at the door and shooed at him. Then General Jackson got mad and went just a-tearing down that hall and sent a lot of girls a-squealing, and one or two of them sprawling; and I came charging after. Some of those girls said that I was setting him on. I caught the General after he had scared the wits out of two of the women teachers—one of ’em had her hand on her breast and it was heaving like anything, and the other was standing on a chair with her skirts gathered about her, the way they all do when they see a mouse. The principal came down on me then—”

“Where did he come down on you?”

“On my hands—both of them, and said

that next time I cut up, he'd expel me for being something or other—uncursable, I think he said.”

“Incorrigible, you mean, Claude,” suggested Winter.

“That's it. I only heard the word once, and I was too excited to notice how he said it. So I went home and made up my mind not to take any more risks. But the next day, a fellow stumped me just before class to climb up the lightning rod to the third story and offered me a big apple if I'd do it. I forgot to think, and caught hold of that lightning rod and began to climb it hand over hand—.”

“Where did you learn to climb?” Frank inquired.

“I didn't learn at all, Specksy: it just came natural, I reckon. So I got up almost as high as the second story when one of those lady teachers saw me from a third story window. And maybe she didn't yell! Then a couple of other teachers, of course they were ladies, who heard her singing out, put their heads out, and they just howled, and I tell you I began to work my way down as fast as I knew how; but it was no use. Before I got to the ground, the principal was standing at the door and making eyes at me through his specks. When I got on my feet, he asked me



whether I could find my way home. He was awful funny with me—”

“Sarcastic, you mean,” said Rob.

“Maybe I do—anyhow it was a funny way of being funny. He told me never to show my face in that school again; and that fellow wouldn’t give me the apple, either. He wouldn’t even give me half. So I went home feeling bad about it all—”

“Especially about the apple,” suggested Frank.

“That’s so, Specksy; it was mean. I told Ma and Kate all about it. You see I wanted them to fix it all right with Pa, who’s awful fond of the public schools.”

“Did he go to the public schools himself?”

“No; he was born in Canada and didn’t come here till he was twenty.”

“Well, Claude,” said Frank, “it’s about time for you to come to a Catholic school anyhow.”

“Sure. It suits me all over,” answered Claude, who was now making repeated endeavors to touch the back of his neck with the sole of his right foot. “Ma’s been wanting me to go ever since I left Miss Wilton’s private school two months ago. She and my sister Kate are anxious for me to get ready for my First Communion. Pa was vexed and

wanted to put me to work. When Ma and Kate won him over, then the President of this College didn't seem to care about taking a boy that had been expelled. Then I got a letter from Miss Wilton, and Kate had a long talk with the President, and now I'm here on trial. Pa says he hopes they'll expel me from this College too. But Pa is so careful about me; you see he wants me to be an American."

"Why," put in John, "were you born in New Zealand?"

"Aw, now, aren't you funny? I was born here just as much as you were, and twice as much too. Pa thinks that if a boy wants to be an American he's got to go to an American school."

"What's the matter with this college?" queried Rob.

"I don't know what's—" Here Claude sprang upon Elmwood's back and was within a little of bringing that dignified young gentleman to the ground. As Claude's evident intention was merely to demonstrate the warmth of his friendship, Frank contented himself with reaching back after Claude and setting the young bundle of nerves upon his feet again.

"If you don't behave yourself, sir," he said

with a suppressed smile, "I'll put you over my knee."

Claude was about to make some derisive comment upon this remark when suddenly his face changed, and he darted away like a minnow when it catches sight of a pike. Worden, in this instance, was the pike. He came rushing past the three poets with an expression of anticipatory triumph when Frank Elmwood caught him by the arm. Quick as thought young Winter, who was something of a wag and a tease, seized Worden's right hand and shook it warmly.

"How are you, Worden? Glad to see you!" cried John, with a malicious grin.

"And I say, Worden, old boy, you're losing your dignity," added Frank. "What's your hurry, anyhow?"

Worden, fully Frank's equal in size and weight, was meantime endeavoring to break away from the strong, nervous grasp upon his arm, and of two minds as to swearing at these grinning captors.

"Look here, Elmwood, let go. Drop my hand, Winter. Let go, I say. Let go. Conf—you fellows are making a fool of me."

"They might just as well try to make a square circle," put in Rob, as with a bow and a smile he advanced to welcome ami-

able Mr. Worden, who for a wonder kept his temper, lest something worse should happen to him.

“Is the Mercury arrangement out of reach yet?” asked Frank of Rob.

“Sure! He’s at the far end of the yard, trying to see how high he can kick.”

“All right: you can go, Worden, and next time you get after a small boy, you heroic fraud, we hope you’ll have worse luck than you had now.”

Worden looked bowie knives at Frank, puffed his lower lip into a baby pout, stuck his thumbs in his vest and walked away with a sorry attempt at dignity. He made no further offer that day to wreak vengeance on Claude; for, although he was not a boy of fine discernment, there was something in the tone of Frank’s voice which he recognized as a note of warning.

As Worden walked away, Frank’s face settled into an expression of study. He took off his glasses and, while eyeing them with his severest look, rubbed them vigorously.

“A penny for your thoughts, Frank,” ventured Rob.

“I’m thinking of that sunny scalawag who is now kicking his legs about as though there never had been a yesterday, and it never

occurred to him that there'd be a tomorrow. He's bound to have hard times, just as sure as he lives to grow up. At present he has about as much sense of responsibility as a kitten. Now, I'm wondering how he'll develop. It's so hard to imagine almost any small boy changing into a man, but in most you can see a faint streak of seriousness. But Claude strikes me as being the concentrated essence of small boy, and I can't even begin to imagine how or when he'll change."

"Oh, I guess it'll come about in the ordinary way," said John Winter. "We were all small boys once—you needn't grin at me because I'm in knickerbockers. I can write verses and essays—and yet three years ago, I used to wonder how boys in Poetry class could do those things."

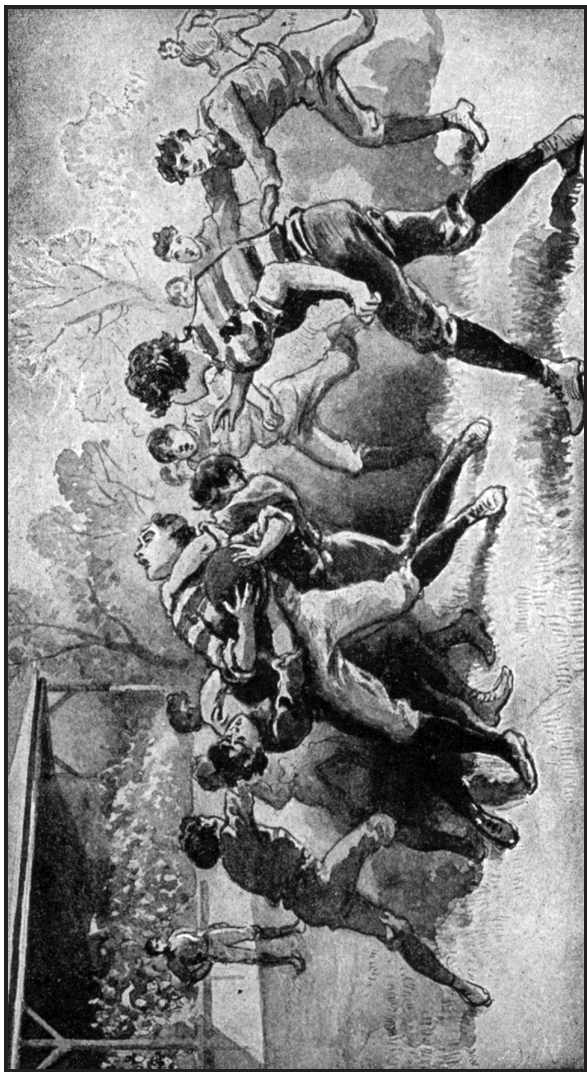
"I think you've given the true solution," said Rob. "We change with years: and Claude will take his medicine just as we did and change in the usual way."

"I don't believe it: I can't imagine it," said Frank.

And Frank was right. Claude's change was not to be the work of time. The difficulties of that change, its seeming impossibility and its sudden accomplishment form the subject matter of this narrative.

# **That Football Game**

**AND WHAT CAME OF IT**



“To the spectators it seemed as though Harry Archer were carrying the opposing eleven on his back. He shook off one, then another.”

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## Chapter I

*A LITTLE OF POETRY, A LITTLE OF MATHEMATICS,  
WITH THE PROSPECT OF A GREAT DEAL  
ABOUT FOOTBALL*

**M**R. GEORGE KEENAN, Professor of Poetry Class, having heard the recitation in Rhetoric and given a new lesson and an English theme for the following day, took up a bundle of papers from his desk.

There was a slight stir in the class indicative of awakening interest. Mr. Keenan had the gift of arousing enthusiasm in regard to English writing, and, in consequence, his scholars were ever ready to listen with eager interest to his comments on their attempts, whether in verse or in prose.

“I have examined this set of verses,” began the professor, “with much interest and pleasure. Out of eighteen exercises, twelve are very creditable. For imagination, Claude Lightfoot’s is far the best, while for finish of versification, Dan Dockery’s is admirable. I shall read these presently and also three or four others—Stein’s, Pearson’s, O’Rourke’s, and Desmond’s. But business before pleasure.

I have here a set of verses which, while they would not be particularly discreditable to a student in Humanities, are not all that one expects from a member of Poetry class. Here we expect something more than verse and rhymes, which are merely the dry bones of poetry; every English exercise given you in this class, unless it is expressly stated otherwise, is supposed to have some touch of passion, in the rhetorical sense of that word. Now listen to this:

#### A POEM ON NIGHT

The sun has slowly gone to rest  
Behind the mountains in the west.  
It gets a good deal darker now,  
The bird stops singing on the bough;  
The stars come out and at us peep,  
And little children go to sleep,  
And chickens, too, go off to roost.

“By the way,” interpolated Mr. Keenan, “are we to infer that children go to roost, too?”

And watchdogs from their chains are loosed,  
The stars come out, the moon shines, too,  
Although a cloud hides it from view.  
The crickets chirp, the bullfrog croaks,  
And many a man goes off and smokes.

The reading was here interrupted by an outbreak of laughs and giggles. Mr. Keenan

held up his hand.

“Here, now,” he said, “you have an example of how *not* to write poetry. The boy who composed this never for one moment during the composition of his doggerel placed before his imagination one concrete picture of night. He simply took nights in general and looked at them piecemeal. Hence, there is no order, no unity, no choice of details, nothing that would give an idea to the listener of any particular night from the beginning of Spring to the end of Autumn. The composer’s imagination is as dry as a stick. I dare say he hasn’t read three good books during the entire vacation just passed. Anyone reading these verses can see that in writing them he was ‘most unusual calm.’”

Just as this point a hand went up. It was Harry Archer’s.

“Well, Harry?” said Mr. Keenan, returning a smile for the grin on the student’s face.

“I wasn’t ‘most unusual calm,’ sir, when I wrote those verses.”

“Ah, you have told on yourself, Harry,” said Mr. Keenan, as several of the boys turned their merry eyes on Archer with new interest.

“Oh, they all know the way I write from last year, sir; and it doesn’t matter, anyhow.

But so far from being ‘most unusual calm,’ I was almost tearing my hair out after I got to the seventh line in one hour, and stuck there for almost another, trying to get a rhyme for roost. By the time I loosed those dogs on the scene, I was so mad that I could have done something desperate.”

Mr. Keenan laughed.

“Why, Harry, your own confession shows that you need not despair. Put your passion into your verse instead of pulling at your hair, and then who knows but you will turn out a poet.”

Mr. Keenan was about to read Claude Lightfoot’s verse on the same subject when the door of the classroom opened and Father Hogan, vice president of the college [academy], entered, followed by a young gentleman of sixteen.

The newcomer was attired in the extreme of fashion—his suit was of the lightest color, his trousers, below the knees, were of the widest; his hair was very long, parted in the middle, and plastered down on either side of the parting so as to allow only a small triangular portion of his forehead to be seen. For the rest, he was stout, cherry-cheeked, pretty and, aside from the evidence of scented handkerchief and many jewels, decidedly

effeminate. The newcomer was smiling recognition to nearly everybody in the room. He kissed his hand to Claude Lightfoot.

“Mr. Keenan,” said the vice president, “I bring you a new member for your class—Willie Hardy, who for the past two years has been attending classes as a boarder at St. Maure’s College [Academy].”

“You are welcome,” said Mr. Keenan, taking the boy’s hand in his.

Willie Hardy advanced his right foot, drew back his left, and bowed so low that the professor was able to trace the parting of his hair as far as the nape of his neck, where, for obvious reasons, it ended.

“It is not necessary, Mr. Keenan,” proceeded the vice president, “for me to introduce Willie Hardy to the students of this class. Willie has told me that he was with them in Second Academic, and I am sure they all remember him very well.”

“I know *I* do,” said Claude Lightfoot, with the sunny smile which he had carried undimmed up and on through the lower classes; whereat all the listeners, morally speaking, broke into a roar of laughter.

Mr. Keenan and the vice president were puzzled by this outburst of merriment. They were both unacquainted with Willie Hardy

personally, and, luckily for that smiling youth, knew nothing of his record at Milwaukee College [Academy]; and, as Willie joined in with the laughing quite heartily, they were not moved to inquire further into the matter.

The vice president withdrew; Willie was assigned a seat next to Claude Lightfoot, and Mr. Keenan was about to resume class work when the bell rang for the end of class.

“By the way,” said Mr. Keenan, “don’t forget about the meeting in the gymnasium of the members of the football team.”

Then he said prayers with the class and dismissed them. As Willie Hardy was going out, he motioned him to remain.

Willie stood smiling and radiant while the students marched out two by two into the corridor. One other boy, however, remained. It was Harry Archer. He was very red in the face, and very nervous.

“What’s the matter, Harry?” inquired the professor kindly.

“I—I’ve come to tell you, sir, that I can’t play football this year.”

Mr. Keenan had considerable command over his feelings, but I am bound to say that at this announcement his jaw dropped.

“Why, Harry,” he exclaimed, “you’re not in earnest, are you? We can’t get along with-



out our quarterback.”

“Oh, you will find plenty of good material, I hope, sir. I am awfully sorry, for I love the game, and I want to see Milwaukee College head and shoulders over every team in the city, but I can’t play this year.”

“I doubt very much,” Mr. Keenan made answer, “whether we have plenty of good material; but even granting this, there is no one in the college—in fact I believe, from what I have heard—there is no one in the city who can at all compare with you as quarterback. Are you quite serious in your resolution?”

“Indeed, I am, Mr. Keenan. I have been thinking about the matter ever since the middle of last August; and since the opening of classes last week, I have been thinking of it harder than ever. The fact is, I have been trying to find some excuse to play, but I really can’t. I am convinced that it is my duty to keep out of the game for this season.”

“I think I could play quarterback,” said Willie Hardy, who had been listening thus far with no attempt to conceal his interest.

“I hope, Harry,” Mr. Keenan went on, taking no notice, under stress of his disappointment, of Willie—“I hope that my reading of your verses and my comments on them have had nothing to do with your decision.”

“Oh indeed, no, Mr. Keenan!” protested Harry with much earnestness. “I know that my verses are bad, and the few words you said have convinced me that I ought to do a little reading, but I spend so much time at studying that I find none for books.”

“How much time do you give to your studies?”

“From three to five hours, sir.”

Here Willie, who was now standing behind Mr. Keenan, thrust his tongue into his cheek, and winked at Harry. The object of these polite attentions, however, failed to acknowledge the signals. Willie felt sure that Harry was lying and had thrown out these familiar signs to signify in the most friendly manner possible his opinion to that effect.

“Well,” said Mr. Keenan, “I would advise you to throw off an hour from your studies and give it to reading.”

“But, sir, I am working for that eighty-dollar prize for the best examination in Geometry.”

“Even so, Harry, that work need not engross your time; as a mathematician you are far and away the best in the class. Claude Lightfoot, excellent as he is, can’t come near you.”

“Yes, but that’s because I study at it three or four times as long as Claude. If I were

to let down in my work, Claude would run away from me in Mathematics in a week."

"That may be so, Harry; but meantime you are giving so much time to Mathematics and so little to English that you are in danger of injuring your literary gifts. If you were to pay more attention to each, you would secure a much better mental development. Mathematics and literary studies correct each other. An excess of Mathematics narrows or even dries up the imagination, while an excess in the study of literature develops looseness, vagueness and inaccuracy. You must try to balance yourself."

"That is true, sir; but I have made up my mind to get that eighty-dollar prize, if it is possible; and in the meantime I must let literature, outside of regular class work, go. After Thanksgiving Day I hope that I shall be able to do better."

"I shall be delighted, Harry, if you secure the prize. It will be an honor to our class and to our college."

"A good many high-school boys and private students under eighteen are working for it, and some of them have hired special coaches."

"Is anyone helping you?"

"No, sir; I am working pretty much by

myself. Mr. Lawrence, who taught us Geometry in Humanities, gave me a splendid start, and I find that under you I am learning, if anything, faster than ever."

Here Willie Hardy interposed.

"I thay," he said with a pronounced lisp, "what ith thith thing all about? Whothe going to give a prithe of eighty dollarth?"

"Didn't you hear about it yet?" cried Archer. "Have you been away from Milwaukee this summer?"

"Yeth," said Willie sweetly; "I wath thpend-ing my time out at a lake where there wath nobody to dithturb me. I gave nine hourth a day to reading poetry."

Mr. Keenan, who knew nothing of Willie, was impressed with this statement. Archer was impressed, too, but for a different reason. That richness of fancy which had made Willie notorious in former years at Milwaukee College had not deserted the pretty youth. He still lied with elegance and ease.

"Well, Willie," said the professor, "on the tenth of August last, the *Evening Wisconsin* offered a prize of eighty dollars to any boy or girl under the age of nineteen who should make the best examination in Geometry. It is open to any young person in Milwaukee who, on the thirtieth of November next, shall

present himself or herself at the Public Library Reading Room with one hundred coupons cut out from the issues of the *Evening Wisconsin*. Those who are to compete must come to the reading room with no paper of any kind save the one hundred coupons, which are to serve as tickets of admission. Paper, pens and ink are to be provided by the proprietors of the paper. Sharp at nine o'clock on the morning of November the thirtieth, every competitor will be handed a slip containing some fifteen or twenty propositions and problems in Geometry. These propositions and problems are to be made out by the city editor of the *Wisconsin*, who is an able mathematician; and as he is one of the projectors of the enterprise and a man of the most scrupulous honor, you see that there is little or no danger of unfairness. Now, Harry," continued Mr. Keenan, turning his eyes upon the young mathematician, "I think I see a chance to get you some extra help. How would you like to have a coach who would do his work for you as a labor of love?"

Harry's eyes danced.

"Oh! I should be infinitely obliged to you," he said.

"I should be glad to coach you myself, were

it not for two reasons. First, I have to give most of my time, outside of class work and preparation for it, to keeping athletics going among the boys. (This, it may be said in parenthesis, was quite true.) Secondly, even if I were free, I don't think that I should be of any assistance to you, as I am but a poor mathematician."

In giving the second reason, Mr. Keenan allowed his modesty to get the better of his judgment.

"I wouldn't think of letting you help me, sir," put in Harry, "because I know you have more than enough to do."

"Not more than enough, Harry. We never have too much to do, so long as we love our work and are able to do it. But there is a young Father in the college who has given all his free time for the last ten years to mathematics. He is now engaged in writing a book on Calculus and some time ago offered to help me in any way he could. I think that if I mention your case to him he will gladly give you a few hours a week. I have met many mathematicians, but no one who at all approaches him. If he finds that you have the ability, he will give you a training such as no boy in Milwaukee is likely to get."

"My!" cried Archer, "wouldn't that be fine!"

“There wath a profether at Thaint Maurereth who could square the thircle,” put in Willie.

Taking no notice of the remark, Mr. Keenan went on.

“Now, Harry, in case I get Father Trainer to help you, I want you to promise in return that once the contest is over, you will give yourself with energy—and I know you have plenty of it—to your English.”

“I promise right here and now, Mr. Keenan; and honestly, I feel as though you were heap-ing coals of fire upon my head. Here I come and disappoint you very much, as I can see, by refusing to play in the college eleven; and in return, you try to help me as though I were your best friend. Oh! I should like to play; it makes me feel so mean to refuse; but I can’t, sir. One reason is that I wish to give extra time to study, but that’s only a small part. I should like to tell you the other reason, but I can’t do it yet. Later on, sir, I hope to be able to tell you.”

“Very good, Harry. I am convinced that you are acting under a sense of duty; and, while I am sorry to lose you, I would rather have no eleven at all than have a single boy on it who was playing to the detriment of higher and more important interests.”

“Thank you, Mr. Keenan. I hope to be able to do something for you and for the college in the way of athletics next Spring. Good afternoon, sir.”

“Good afternoon, Harry; and be careful, my boy, not to study too much. Keep your health and strength. Even during these first ten or twelve days of class, I have noticed that your color is not so good as it was when I first met you last August, and there is the least little sign of a black circle under your eyes.”

“Oh, I’m pretty strong, sir; but I’ll try to look out.”

“Now, Willie,” said Mr. Keenan, as Harry left the room, “perhaps you can be of some use to me. Are you a football player?”

“That ith my favorite game.”

“Were you on the first eleven of St. Maure’s?”

“No, thir; but I wath to play on it thith year. I wath to be either tackle or quarter-back. Latht year I wath a thubthitoot.”

“Oh, indeed! That means a good deal, if the St. Maure’s team is all that it is cracked up to be. I am surprised that you did not go back to St. Maure’s to share in the glory of the team.”

“I would go back, thir, only I want more



time and the cluthion for thtudieth."

Mr. Keenan was edified. As he had been at Milwaukee for only four weeks, it is not surprising that he had as yet learned nothing of Willie Hardy, who had not returned to St. Maure's because he had been "requested" by the vice president to stay at home.

"Well," said the prefect, "we might try you for our football eleven. The withdrawal of Archer leaves us short of a man, and perhaps we could play you in the line. The boys attending here of sufficient weight for the line of rushers are all of them either already engaged on the team, or for one reason or another cannot play."

"Couldn't I play quarterback?"

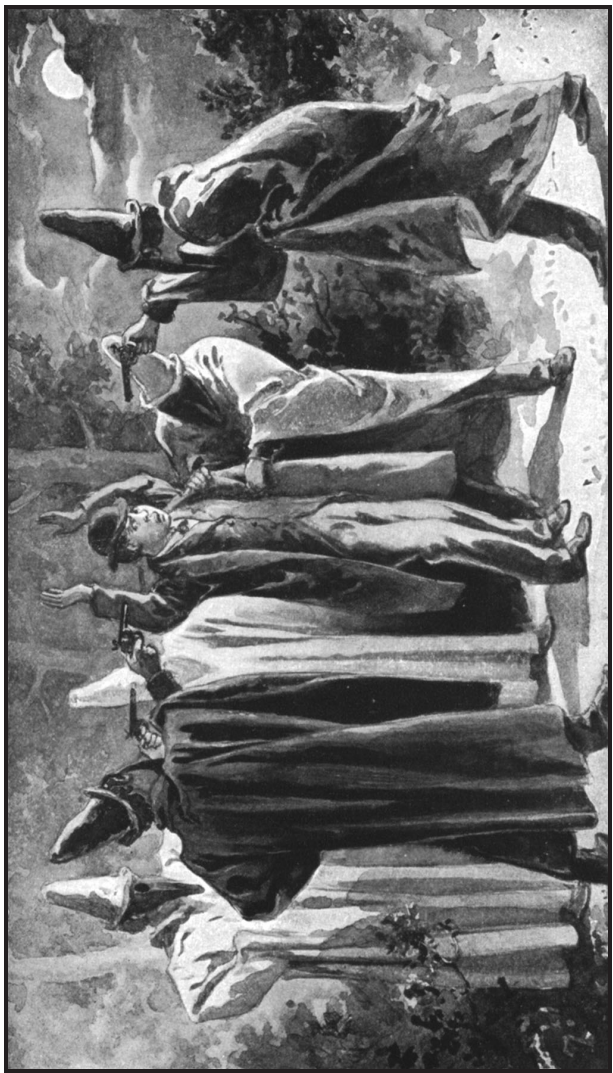
"We will see about that. Ah! There goes the bell for the football meeting. Come along with me, Willie." Mr. Keenan added, speaking rather to himself, "I expect to encounter a storm or two before we adjourn."

# **Ethelred Preston**

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**OR THE ADVENTURES  
OF A NEWCOMER**

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“Your money or your life!”

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## Chapter I

### *A LETTER FROM ETHELRED'S MAMA*

**S**EATED at his desk on a bright Wednesday morning toward the end of January, Father Edmunds, the reverend president of Henryton College, was gazing with a look of weariness upon the enormous mass of papers, pamphlets and letters piled up before him. The gaze and the weariness lasted but a moment; then he fixed his eyeglasses firmly upon his nose and set to work at distributing. While slipping the letters from his hand to a table at his side, he scanned their superscriptions, dropping some to the right and a great many to his left. The larger pile thus formed was made up of letters addressed to the students; the smaller, of those addressed to himself and his community. From the letters Father Edmunds went to the pamphlets, magazines and newspapers; and here the wastebasket came into service. With a dexterity born of long experience, the president could ascertain, in most cases at a glance, and without opening their wrappers, the general

character of the enclosed missives. Before he had done with examining these, the wastebasket had received a very generous moiety of current literature. The morning's mail thus sorted, Father Edmunds touched his bell, in answer to which a young gentleman, his private secretary, entered the room.

"For the vice president," said Father Edmunds, pointing to the mail of the students.

The secretary bowed, took the mail in his hands and withdrew.

Having thus narrowed his field of labor, Father Edmunds addressed himself to a more careful examination. Again taking up the letters, he selected his own. Opening these, he skimmed rapidly over the first five, pigeonholing three and dropping two into the wastebasket. But the sixth letter gave him pause.

It was enclosed in a dainty, scented, square envelope, and was a very lengthy production. Setting aside the evidence of the perfumery, the communication was evidently the work of a woman; it was written down and across the page in fat sprawling letters, where *m*'s and *w*'s and *x*'s and *v*'s were utterly indistinguishable. Father Edmunds sighed; he had struggled through such letters before. Nothing could be skipped, noth-



ing taken for granted. Not infrequently the most important part of such missives was to be found where crossings were thickest. He began, then, the reading with mild resignation. Suddenly an expression of awakening interest came upon his features. As he reached the third page a smile began to flicker; it burst into a flame at the fourth, and blazed on merrily to the end, when he exclaimed:

“Little Lord Fauntleroy the second!”

He laughed quietly, and added:

“I fancy the small boys of Henryton College are going to be awakened from their mid-winter dullness. I must see the vice president at once.”

“Father Howard,” he exclaimed, as he entered the vice president’s room a moment later, “have you room in the junior division for a Little Lord Fauntleroy?”

“I have, certainly; but I’m not so sure about the boys. They may try, in their innocent but abrupt way, to find out whether he is really and truly real.”

“Well, it would appear that he is real enough; just read this letter.”

Father Howard took the scented envelope, drew out the enclosure—and this is what he read:

REVEREND EDMUND C. EDMUNDS

*Reverend Dear Sir:* It is after reflection and thought and many tears that I address myself to your kindness. I now find myself, dear reverend sir, forced to face a trial, which, alas, but one week ago I could not so much as have fancied. My darling little boy and I must part. Ah, dear Father, if you but knew what that meant. No one but a mother can appreciate the grief which fills my heart. The dear child is the picture of his father. He is lovely and innocent and has never been away from my side—not even for one day. Whatever he knows—and he has gone quite far in spelling and botany, including the language of flowers—I have taught him myself, and in my teachings I have addressed myself to the heart rather than to the head. He is not at all like other boys, of whom it may be said that they are uniformly rude, but has all the refinements of a young lady. He is docile, amiable, cheerful, happy as the day is long—the sweetest child imaginable. All his little ways are lovely. He is generous to a fault, in which he resembles his father, and is as sensitive as I was in the days of my youth, and conscientious to a degree approaching scrupulousness. And yet I am not, after the fashion of most mothers, blind to his faults. My

little Ethelred is just the least trifle impetuous and inconsiderate. By those who do not understand him, he might even be called thoughtless. Nevertheless, he is *so* open to reason! A little talk, if kindly and considerately given and accompanied with a little coaxing, will never fail to bring him to his senses. He has never been subjected to corporal punishment—the dear child is high-strung, and *so* nervous, and would be injured for life by such barbarous treatment. *Under no circumstance must this child be touched*—this point I insist upon.

Ethelred is a delicate child. Just after teething he contracted a severe illness. [Here the fond mother goes into a detailed account of all Master Ethelred's various ailments and maladies, mentioning incidentally, but at some length, several diseases which, by an especial providence, he had just narrowly escaped. As these details are of little interest to the public at large, and do not bear directly upon the story, I omit them.]

Now, dear reverend sir, in view of what I have told you, you must see how necessary it is that the greatest care be taken of Ethelred's health. He should get a glass of milk at least four times a day—twice in the morning and twice in the afternoon.

“The boy should by all means bring a cow along,” muttered the vice president.

If possible, he should have sweet bread every morning at breakfast, a glass of port wine at dinner, and dry toast at supper.

“He should bring his cook along too,” interjected the president.

Ethelred is not a Catholic. I am an Episcopalian in theory, and my dear boy will probably join the same church. I am not a bigoted woman, and believe that there are good Catholics, many of whom will doubtless go to Heaven. My boy is naturally very religious, and I send him to your school because I understand that the moral training there is excellent. Miss Martin, whose nephew, Earl Meriwether, attends your College, gives me an excellent account of it. I do not know Earl personally, though his lamented mother and I were most *intimate* friends at school, and I feel that Earl, whose reputation stands very high, will be a suitable companion for my boy—as far as *any boy* can be a suitable companion for one who has had such home training as my Ethelred has enjoyed. If there are any *good* Catholic boys attending your College, supposing, of course, that their manners make some such approach toward refinement as we have reason to expect of

boys of the better class, I see no objection to my boy's associating with them *under due inspection*.

I am so agitated, dear reverend sir, that I find it almost impossible to put my thoughts on paper with any appearance of order. I should 'ere this have explained to you my reason for being obliged to separate myself from my sweet child. It is inevitable. Yesterday I received a telegram from London, England, stating that my husband has there been attacked by hemorrhages, and that his position is precarious.

Of course I must start by the next steamer. Gladly would I bring my little Ethelred along, but the poor child is so sensitive to seasickness that it would be literally flying in the face of providence to imperil his precious health—mayhap his life—by taking him along. The parting is difficult, but it must be made. Again and again I beg you to bestow every attention upon my darling, and *a mother's prayer* and *a mother's blessing* will accompany you through life.

Thanking you in advance for your kindness, and asking you to overlook the inaccuracies and blunders of a well-nigh distracted mother, I am, dear reverend sir,  
Yours most earnestly and beseechingly,  
ELEANOR PRESTON

P.S. Enclosed you will find a check or a draught or a bank note (I am not quite sure of the correct term) for four hundred dollars for Ethelred's expenses. On reaching London I shall forward more. My child will reach you on Thursday morning. I have been holding him back in hopes of getting some trusted friend to accompany him on his trip. I would go myself, but could hardly do so without missing the first steamer. Be a father, dear reverend sir, to my precious darling.

E. P.

"Such a boy," the president remarked, "hardly requires testimonials as to his character."

"Not if he's anything at all like what his mother makes him out to be," answered Father Howard. "Let us hope that he really is a swan in the eyes of others than his fond parent. Meantime it would be good to write for references. If you have no objection, I shall attend to that part of the matter myself."

And there was no objection.

On the next morning, at about the same hour, the college porter brought Father Edmunds a card. He read with a smile—

Master Ethelred Preston,  
Albany Villa, Brighton  
[At Home Tuesdays]

"I'm on my road to meet our Little Lord Fauntleroy," said Father Edmunds as he encountered the vice president in the hall.

Father Edmunds was a man whom long experience as a disciplinarian and as a superior had schooled in the control of his emotions. But as he entered the parlor and glanced at the new pupil he started back, while a slight exclamation forced itself from his lips. And he had reason for being astonished.

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## Chapter II

*IN WHICH THINGS BEGIN TO GO BADLY WITH  
EARL MERIWETHER*

**W**HILE Father Edmunds was mastering his astonishment in the parlor, matters were not proceeding with their wonted smoothness in the class of First Academic.