

Ramsey Milholland

by Booth Tarkington

Illustrations by Irwin Myers

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"What did you say then?"

"Noth— Oh, shut up! So then she skipped out to her Dorm, and I came on home."

"When did you see her next, Ramsey?"

"I haven't seen her next," said Ramsey. "I haven't seen her at all—not to speak to. I saw her on Main street twice since then, but both times she was with some other girls, and they were across the street, and I couldn't tell if she was lookin' at me—I kind of thought not—I thought it might look sort o' nutty to bow to her if she wasn't, so I didn't."

"And you didn't tell her you wouldn't be one of the ones to help her with her pacifism and anti-war stuff and all that?"

"No, I started to, but— Shut up!"

Fred sat up, giggling. "So she thinks you will help her. You didn't say anything at all, and she must think that means she converted you. Why didn't you speak up?"

"Well, I wouldn't argue with her," said Ramsey. Then, after a silence, he seemed to be in need of sympathetic comprehension. "It was kind o' funny though, wasn't it?" he said, appealingly.

"What was?"

"The whole business."

"What 'whole bus'—"

"Oh, get out! Her stoppin' me, and me goin' pokin' along with her, and her—well, her crying and everything,



"No, I Started To, but—Shut Up!"

and me being around with her while she felt so upset, I mean. It seems—well, it does seem all kind o' funny to me."

"Why does it?" Fred inquired, preserving his gravity. "Why should it seem funny to you?"

"I don't mean funny like something's funny you laugh at," Ramsey explained laboriously. "I mean funny like something that's out of the way, and you wonder how it ever happened to happen. I mean it seems funny I'd ever be sittin' there on a bench with that ole girl I never spoke to in my life or had anything to do with, and talkin' about the United States goin' to war. What we were talkin' about, why, that seems just as funny as the rest of it. Lookin' back to our class picnic, for instance, second year of high school, that day I jumped in the creek after— Well, you know, it was when I started makin' a fool of myself over a girl. Thank goodness, I got that out o' my system; it makes me just sick to look back on those days and think of the fool things I did, and all I thought about that girl. Why, she— Well, I've got old enough to see now she was just about as ordinary a girl as there ever was, and if I saw her now I wouldn't even think she was pretty; I'd prob'ly think she was sort of loud-lookin'. Well, what's passed is past, and it isn't either here nor there. What I started to say was this: that the way it begins to look to me, it looks as if nobody can tell in this life a darn thing about what's goin' to happen, and the things that do happen are the very ones you'd swear were the last that could. I mean—you look back to that day of the picnic—my! but I was a rube then—well, I mean you look back to that day, and what do you suppose I'd have thought then if somebody'd told me the time would ever come when I'd be 'way off here at college sittin' on a bench with Dora Yocum—with Dora Yocum, in the first place—and her crying' and both of us talking about the United States goin' to war with Germany! Don't it seem pretty funny to you, Fred, too?"

"But as near as I can make out,"

Fred said, "that isn't what happened." "Why isn't it?"

"You say 'and both of us talking' and so on. As near as I can make out, you didn't say anything at all."

"Well, I didn't—much," Ramsey admitted, and returned to his point with almost pathetic persistence. "But doesn't it seem kind o' funny to you, Fred?"

"Well, I don't know."

"It does to me," Ramsey insisted. "It certainly does to me."

"Yes," said Fred cruelly. "I've noticed you said so, but it don't look any funnier than you do when you say it."

Suddenly he sent forth a startling shout. "Wow! You're as red as a blushing beet!"

"I am not!"

"Yare!" shouted Fred. "Wow! The ole woman-hater's get the flushes. Oh, look at the pretty posy!"

And, jumping down from the window seat, he began to dance round his much perturbed comrade, bellowing, Ramsey bore with him for a moment, then sprang upon him; they wrestled vigorously, broke a chair and went to the floor with a crash that gave the chandeller in Mrs. Meigs' parlor, below, an attack of jingles.

"You let me up!" Fred gasped.

"You take your solemn oath to shut

up? You goin' to swear it?"

"All right. I give my solemn oath," said Fred; and they rose arranging their tousled attire.

"Well," said Fred, "when you goin' to call on her?"

"You look here!" Ramsey approached him dangerously. "You just gave me your sol—"

"I beg!" Fred cried, retreating. "I mean, aside from all that, why, I just thought maybe after such an evening you'd feel as a gentleman you ought to go and ask after her health."

"Now, see here—"

"No, I mean it; you ought to," Fred insisted, earnestly, and as his roommate glared at him with complete suspicion, he added, in explanation. "You ought to go next Callers' Night, and send in your card, and say you felt you ought to ask if she'd suffered any from the night air. Even if you couldn't manage to say that, you ought to start to say it, anyhow, because you— Keep off o' me! I'm only tryin' to do you a good turn, ain't I?"

"You save your good turns for yourself," Ramsey growled, still advancing upon him.

But the insidious Mitchell, evading him, fled to the other end of the room, picked up his cap and changed his manner. "Come on, ole bag o' beans,

let's be on our way to the 'flat house'; it's time. We'll call this all off."

"You better!" Ramsey warned him; and they trotted out together.

But as they went along, Fred took Ramsey's arm confidentially, and said: "Now, honestly, Ram, ole man, when are you goin' to—"

Ramsey was still red. "You look here! Just say one more word—"

"Oh, no," Fred expostulated. "I mean seriously, Ramsey. Honestly, I mean seriously. Aren't you seriously goin' to call on her some Callers' Night?"

"No, I'm not!"

"But why not?"

"Because I don't want to."

"Well, seriously, Ramsey, there's only one Callers' Night before vacation, and so I suppose it hardly will be worth while; but I expect you'll see quite a little of her at home this summer?"

"No, I won't. I won't see her at all. She isn't goin' to be home this summer, and I wouldn't see anything of her if she was."

"Where's she goin' to be?"

"In Chicago."

"She is?" said Fred, slyly. "When'd she tell you?"

Ramsey turned on him. "You look out! She didn't tell me. I just happened to see in the Bulletin she's

signed up with some other girls to go and do settlement work in Chicago. Anybody could see it. It was printed out plain. You could have seen it just as well as I could, if you'd read the Bulletin."

"Oh," said Fred.

"Now look here—"

"Good heavens! Can't I even say 'oh'?"

"It depends on the way you say it."

"I'll be careful," Fred assured him, earnestly. "I really and honestly don't mean to get you excited about all this, Ramsey. I can see myself you haven't changed from your old opinion of Dora Yocum a bit. I was only tryin' to get a little rise out of you for a minute, because of course, seriously, why, I can see you hate her just the same as you always did."

"Yes," said Ramsey, disarmed and guileless in the face of diplomacy. "I only told you about all this, Fred, because it seemed—well, it seemed so kind o' funny to me."

Fred affected not to hear. "What did you say, Ramsey?"

Ramsey looked vaguely disturbed. "I said—why, I said it all seemed kind o'— He paused, then repeated plaintively: "Well, to me, it all seemed kind o'—kind o' funny."

(To be continued)

ALEXANDER MILLS

Mr. J. R. Moore recently returned from a business trip to New York.

Rev. C. C. Matheny is home from the Southern Baptist Convention at Jacksonville. He reports a fine trip and a splendid meeting.

The Forest City-Alexander team is booked for a baseball game with the American Athletic Girls on the Alexander ground Saturday, June 10th. Come out and see the girls play. They will show that this is not a man's game alone, but that women play as well.

We were shocked recently to hear of the sudden death of Mrs. Summey, the mother of Mr. S. A. Summey, our superintendent, and Mr. L. M. Summey, of Alexander. Those from here who attended the funeral service which was held at the home of Mr. Summey at Shelby were Messrs. J. R. and Terry Moore, C. C. Matheny, G. C. Hamrick, L. R. Champion, G. T. Hawkins, L. D. Allen, and Clyde Hicks. The sympathy of the entire town goes out to the bereaved ones.

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