

# Ramsey Milholland

by Booth Tarkington

Illustrations by Irwin Myers

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### THE FIGHT.

**Synopsis.**—With his grandfather, small Ramsey Milholland is watching the "Decoration Day Parade" in the home town. The old gentleman, a veteran of the Civil war, endeavors to impress the youngster with the significance of the great conflict, and many years afterward the boy was to remember his words with startling vividness. In the schoolroom, a few years afterward, Ramsey is not distinguished for remarkable ability, though his pronounced dislikes are arithmetic, "Recitations" and German. In sharp contrast to Ramsey's backwardness is the precocity of little Dora Yocum, a young lady whom in his bitterness he designates "Teacher's Pet."

### CHAPTER III.—Continued.

Here was a serious affront, at least to Ramsey Milholland's way of thinking; for Ramsey, also now proved sensitive. He quieted his friends—"Shut up!"—and advanced toward Wesley. "You look here! Who you callin' pups?"

"Everybody!" Wesley hotly returned. "Everybody that goes around mentioning ladies' names on the public streets are pups!"

"They are, are they?" Ramsey as hotly demanded. "Well, you just look here a minute; my own father mentions my mother's name on the public streets whenever he wants to, and you just try callin' my father a pup, and you won't know what happened to you!"

"What'll you do about it?"

"I'll put a new head on you," said Ramsey. "That's what I'll do, because anybody that calls my father or mother a pup—"

"Oh, shut up! I wasn't talkin' about your ole father and mother. I said everybody that mentioned Dora Yocum's name on the public streets was a pup, and I mean it! Everybody that mentions Dora Yocum's name on the pub—"

"Dora Yocum!" said Ramsey. "I got a perfect right to say it anywhere I want to. Dora Yocum, Dora Yocum, Dora Yocum!"

"All right then, you're a pup!"

Ramsey charged upon him and received a suffocating blow full in the face, not from Mr. Bender's fist but from the solid bundle of books at the end of the strap. Ramsey saw eight or ten objectives instantly; there were Wesley Benders standing full length in the air on top of other Wesley Benders, and more Wesley Benders zigzagged out sidewise from still other Wesley Benders; nevertheless, he found one of these and it proved to be flesh. He engaged it wildly at fist-cuffs; pounded it upon the countenance and drove it away. Then he sat down upon the curbstone and, with his dizzy eyes shut, leaned forward for the better accommodation of his ensanguined nose.

Wesley had retreated to the other side of the street, holding a grimy handkerchief to the midmost parts of his pallid face. "There, you ole d—n pup!" he shouted, in a voice which threatened a sob. "I guess that'll teach you to be careful how you mention Dora Yocum's name on the public streets!"

At this, Ramsey made a motion as if to rise and pursue, whereupon Wesley fled, wailing back over his shoulder as he ran, "You wait till I ketch you out alone on the public streets at I'll—"

His voice was lost in an outburst of hooting from his former friends, who sympathetically surrounded the wounded Ramsey. But in a measure, at least, the chivalrous fugitive had won his point. He was routed and outdone, yet what survived the day was a rumor, which became a sort of tenuous legend among those interested. There had been a fight over Dora Yocum, it appeared, and Ramsey Milholland had attempted to maintain something derogatory to the lady, while Wesley defended her as a mighty youth should.

The boys, unmindful of proper gallantry, supported Ramsey on account of the way he had persisted in likin' the stuffin' out of Wesley Bender after receiving that preliminary wallop from Wesley's blackjack bundle of books. The girls petted and championed Wesley; they talked outrageously of his conqueror; fiercely declaring that he ought to be arrested; and for weeks they maintained a new manner toward

him. They kept their facial expressions hostile, but perhaps this was more for one another's benefit than for Ramsey's; and several of them went so far out of their way to find even private opportunities for reproving him that an alert observer might have suspected them to have been less indignant than they seemed—but not Ramsey. He thought they all hated him, and said he was glad of it.

Dora was a non-partisan. The little prig was so diligent at her books she gave never the slightest sign of comprehending that there had been a fight about her. Having no real cognizance of Messrs. Bender and Milholland except as impediments to the advance of learning, she did not even look demure.

### CHAPTER IV.

With Wesley Bender, Ramsey was again upon fair terms before the winter had run its course; the two were neighbors and, moreover, were drawn together by a community of interests which made their reconciliation a necessity. Ramsey played the guitar and Wesley played the mandolin.

All ill feeling between them died with the first duet of spring, yet the tinkling they made had no charm to soothe the savage breast of Ramsey whenever the Teacher's Pet came into his thoughts. He day-dreamed a thousand ways of putting her in her place, but was unable to carry out any of them, and had but a cobwebby satisfac-



"For Heaven's Sakes," Heinle Krusemeyer Demanded, "Can't You Shut Up?"

tion in imagining discomfitures for her which remained imaginary. "Just once!" he said to Fred Mitchell. "That's all I ask, just once. Just gimme one chance to show that girl what she really is. I guess if I ever get the chance she'll find out what's the matter with her, for once in her life, anyway." Thus it came to be talked about and understood and expected in Ramsey's circle, all male, that Dora Yocum's day was coming. "You'll see!" said Ramsey. "The time'll come when that ole girl'll wish she'd moved out o' this town before she ever got appointed monitor of our class! Just you wait!"

They waited, but conditions appeared to remain unfavorable indefinitely. Perhaps the great opportunity might have arrived if Ramsey had been able to achieve a startling importance in any of the "various divergent yet parallel lines of school endeavor"—one of the phrases by means of which teachers and principal clogged the minds of their unarmed auditors. But though he was far from being the dumb driven beast of misfortune that he seemed in the schoolroom, and, in fact, lived a double life, exhibiting in his out-of-school hours a remarkable example of "secondary personality"—a creature fearing nothing and capable of laughter; blue eyed, fairly robust, and anything but dumb—he was nevertheless without endowment or attainment great enough to get him distinction.

He "tried for" the high-school eleven, and "tried for" the nine, but the experts were not long in eliminating him from either of these com-

petitions, and he had to content himself with cheering instead of getting cheered. He was by no manner of means athletic, or enough of anything else, to put Dora Yocum in her place, and so he and the great opportunity were still waiting in May, at the end of the second year of high school, when the class, now the "10 A," reverted to an old fashion and decided to entertain itself with a woodland picnic.

They gathered upon the sandy banks of a creek in the blue shade of big, patchy-barked sycamores, with a dancing sky on top of everything and gold dust atwinkle over the water. Hither the napkin-covered baskets were brought from the wagons and assembled in the shade, where they appeared as an attractive little meadow of white napers, and gave both surprise and pleasure to communities of ants and to other original settlers of the neighborhood.

From this nucleus or headquarters of the picnic, various expeditions set forth up and down the creek and through the woods that bordered it. Two envious fishermen established themselves upon a bank up-stream, with hooks and lines thoughtfully brought with them, and poles which they fashioned from young saplings. They took mussels from the shallows, for bait, and having gone to all this trouble, declined to share with friends less energetic and provident the perquisites and pleasures secured to themselves.

Albert Paxton was one person who proved his enterprise. Having visited the spot some days before, he had hired for his exclusive use throughout the duration of the picnic an old rowboat belonging to a shanty squatter; it was the only rowboat within a mile or two and Albert had his own uses for it. Albert was the class lover and, after first taking the three chaperon teachers "out for a row," an excursion concluded in about ten minutes, he disembarked on that; Sadie Clews stepped into the boat, a pocket camera in one hand, a tennis racket in the other; and the two spent the rest of the day, except for the luncheon interval, solemnly drifting along the banks or grounded on a shoal. Now and then Albert would row a few strokes, and at almost any time when the populated shire glanced toward them, Sadie would be seen photographing Albert, or Albert would be seen photographing Sadie, but the tennis racket remained an enigma. They were sixteen, and had been "engaged" more than two years.

On the borders of the little meadow of baskets there had been deposited two black shapes, which remained undisturbed throughout the day, a closed guitar case and a closed mandolin case, no doubt containing each its proper instrument. So far as any use of these went they seemed to be of the same leisure class to which Sadie's tennis racket belonged, for when one of the teachers suggested music, the musicians proved shy. Wesley Bender said they hadn't learned to play anything much and, besides, he had a couple o' broken strings he didn't know as he could fix up; and Ramsey said he guessed it seemed kind o' too hot to play much. Joining friends, they organized a contest in marksmanship, the target being a floating can which they assailed with pebbles; and after that they "skipped" flat stones upon the surface of the water, then went to

join a group gathered about Willis Parker and Heinle Krusemeyer.

No fish had been caught, a lack of luck grossly attributed by the fishermen to the noise made by constant advice on the part of their attendant gallery. Messrs. Milholland, Bender, and the other rock throwers came up shouting, and were ill received.

"For heaven's sakes," Heinle Krusemeyer demanded, "can't you shut up? Here we just first got the girls to keep their mouths shut a minute and I almost had a big pickerel or something on my hook, and here you got to up and yell so he chases himself away! Why can't nobody show a little sense sometimes when they'd ought to? A fish isn't goin' to bite when he can't even hear himself think! Anybody ought to know that much."

But the new arrivals hooted. "Fish!" Ramsey vociferated. "I'll bet a hundred dollars there hasn't been even a minny in this creek for the last sixty years!"

"There is, too!" said Heinle, bitterly. "But I wouldn't be surprised there wouldn't be no longer if you got to keep up this noise. If you'd shut up just a minute you could see yourself there's fish here."

Ramsey leaned forth over the edge of the overhanging bank, a dirt precipice five feet above the water, and peered into the indeterminate depths below. The pool had been stirred, partly by the ineffectual pokes of the fishermen and partly by small clouds and bits of dirt dislodged from above by the feet of the audience. "The water, consequently, was but brownly translucent and revealed its secrets reluctantly; nevertheless certain dim little shapes had been observed to move within it, and were still there. Ramsey failed to see them at first.

"Where's any ole fish?" he inquired, scornfully.

"Look!" whispered the girl who stood nearest to Ramsey. She pointed. "There's one. Right down there by Willis' hook. Don't you see him?"

Ramsey was impressed enough to whisper. "Is there? I don't see him. I can't—"

The girl came closer to him and, the better to show him, leaned out over the edge of the bank and, for safety in maintaining her balance, rested her left hand upon his shoulder while she pointed with her right. Thereupon something happened to Ramsey. This touch upon his shoulder was almost nothing, and he had never taken the slightest interest in Milla Rust (to whom that small warm hand belonged), though she was the class beauty, and long established in the office. Now, all at once, a peculiar and heretofore entirely unfamiliar sensation suddenly became important in the upper part of his chest. For a moment he held his breath, an involuntary action—he seemed to be standing in a shower of flowers.

"Don't you see it, Ramsey?" Milla whispered. "It's a great big one. Why, it must be as long as—as your shoe! Look!"

Ramsey saw nothing but the thick round curl on Milla's shoulder. That curl was shot with dazzling fibers of sunshine. He seemed to be trembling.

"The old resentment rose— he'd 'show' that girl yet, some day."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## OLD LEGENDS OF THE ESKIMOS

Really Poetical Beliefs Held by Primitive People Concerning the Sun and Moon.

There are many legends of the moon. Almost every ancient people has its moon story, but that of the Eskimos is particularly interesting and poetical. It tells how, long ago, before there were a sun and a moon in the heavens, a brother and sister lived alone in an igloo. One day the brother grievously ill-treated his beautiful sister, who became so enraged that, picking up a flaming brand, she chased him out of the igloo and into the sky. And ever since then she has been chasing him. She is the sun and he the moon.

Since the first astrologer foretold the future, and the first gypsy warned of a "dark stranger," the full moon at the birth of a female child has been supposed to portend an unfortunate career. Upon those male children born at the full of the moon a healthy, vigorous body and longevity were bestowed. Children of both sexes, born on the wane of the moon or on the increase, would assuredly die young, or if they did outlive expectations it would be because they were guilty of some great crime.

**Early Astronomical Instruments.**  
The earliest known astronomical instruments of German make have recently been described by Dr. J. Hartman of Göttingen. They belonged to the philosopher and astronomer, Cardinal Nikolaus of Cusa, who lived from 1401 to 1464, and comprised a "torquetum," for measuring the longitude

and latitude of the celestial bodies, an astrolabe and two celestial globes.

A note has been found in the cardinal's own handwriting, stating that he purchased three of these instruments in the year 1444, together with 16 astronomical treatises, for the sum of 38 florins. Doctor Hartman believes that at least two of the instruments were made by one Nikolaus Hybech of Erfurt, who was born in 1370.

### Saved by Mankind.

The ginkgo tree, which is a native of China, long ago ceased to exist as a "wild" tree. But it has been cultivated in many countries, and is hardy and persistent wherever it is planted in the temperate zone. The ginkgo is one of the few species that have been saved from extinction by man as an offset to the many species, vegetable and animal, that have been exterminated by him. The ginkgo flourishes in the northern part of the United States, and is favored for park planting. Because of its unique two-lobed leaves it is sometimes called the "maidenhair" tree.

### Indigestion and Commuting.

A physician, who has practiced both in New York city and in a suburb near the metropolis, claims that suburbanites suffer from indigestion to a greater extent than do the city dwellers. He says the habit of bolting the breakfast, which the commuter is forced to do in many instances to catch his train, is responsible for starting the day wrong and causing indigestion.

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Sunburned Steel.

A marine outfit was undergoing inspection in a tropical region. The inspecting officer was "hard-boiled." Seizing Private Murphy's rifle like a lion going after a round of raw beef, he bellowed:

"What's this, rust?"

"Ch, no," said Murphy. "That's sunburn."—From the Bulletin, organ of the D. C. Branch of the Second Division Association.

Transparent.

"What do you understand by 'sheer folly'?" "I suppose it's the kind you can see through easily."

Details Desired.

"He pressed his cheek to hers. The color left her cheek."

"You mean he rubbed it off?"

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