

discovered that the newcomer was regarding him intently with a pair of remarkably clear, hazel eyes that somehow caused him to suppress the exclamation.

Gloom fell upon the classroom as the last hope of field-day honors vanished; but the new student, happily unconscious of the air castles he had demolished, settled himself to his books in a contented fashion, highly exasperating to the Unquenchables.

Perhaps he rose a trifle in the estimation of his classmates when the Virgil recitation came, for he read as if Latin had been his native tongue, and followed the erratic hero with a speed that left most of the class floundering helplessly in the rear.

But this favorable impression did not last long. "How about the new girl—what does he call himself—Francis Percival?" demanded Matt Mayhew at recess.

"Girl!—old woman, you mean!" said Al Ferris, disgustedly. "Let's go and get an introduction to the old dame and pay our respects."

Accordingly a squad of boys bore down upon the newcomer, and carrying him off to the gymnasium proceeded to bewilder him with demands for performances on the parallel bars, the latest exercises on the flying rings, and other feats.

"Really, boys, you must excuse me," he said, desperately, at length. "I was a special student at Harland, and—and I don't know anything about it," he ended in confused distress.

"Oh, you're too modest!" said Al Ferris, maliciously; "try the rings now, and show us country fellows the way they do it at Harland."

Amid such shouting and laughter the boys arranged the bar, and, persuading the novice to grasp the rings, set him swinging briskly in a most unscientific manner.

"Stop, stop!" cried Francis, in terror, as his head came on a level with the gallery high above the floor.

But the boys pretended not to hear, and as he came within reach again Al Ferris gave him a push that sent him higher yet.

"Go it, granny," he cried, with a wink at the boys, who were convulsed with laughter at the spectacle.

"What are those fellows about?" muttered Jack Darrington, in the gallery, where he was overhauling some apparatus stowed away there.

Just then Francis, sick and dizzy, feeling his fingers yielding, caught desperately at the gallery rail as he swung up.

In another moment he would have fallen heavily to the floor below, but Jack, with

a sudden spring, caught him and lifted him over the rail into the gallery.

"You're a pack of idiots; clear out, the whole gang of you!" exclaimed Jack, wrathfully to the boys below, who stood agast at the catastrophe so narrowly averted.

The group of mischief-makers slunk away, and Jack turned to their victim lying prostrate on the gallery floor. He had fainted. Jack lifted him up and carried him to the open window, where the fresh air soon revived him.

"What must you think of me?" he said in a shamefaced way, as Jack bent over him.

"I think that was enough to scare any fellow that wasn't used to it. You might have broken your neck if you had fallen. Nobody can begin with the rings, but you'll work up to it by-and-by, if you'll let me teach you some of the lighter exercises. Come to my room now, and we'll look over the Greek for this afternoon," was all his rescuer said.

From that day Jack's warmest friend and admirer was "Granny Francis," as the boys persisted in calling him; and it soon became evident that the friendship was not all on one side either. Jack had championed the newcomer at first very much as he would have rescued a stray kitten from the hands of its tormentors, but he soon came to have a genuine regard for the quiet youth, who, under his delicate exterior, carried a clear, vigorous mind, a strong will, and an uncompromising honesty that made him respected by all who by any chance penetrated the proud, sensitive, half-irritable outer nature under which he concealed his many fine qualities.

"He's a bit flimsy outside, and he's been mollycoddled too much," said Jack to himself; "but he's made of the right stuff, and he'll beat us all yet, if I can only get him into the gym, and wake him up to something besides his books."

But Francis persistently refused to mix in the sports of the other boys. He gratefully accepted Jack's private instruction in gymnasium work, to the manifest improvement of his health and spirits, but from all but his friend he held himself coldly aloof. The memory of his rude introduction to his schoolmates rankled in his mind, while the boys, on their part, regarded him with a dislike which only Jack's presence kept from expression.

Al Ferris was his bitterest persecutor, and if Jack had known the meaning of that set look on Francis face when they met sometimes he would have made short work

of his secret tormentor. But Al never offended in Jack's presence, and Francis was too proud to complain.

Thus matters stood when one day near the close of the term an event took place which caused a strange confusion of ideas in the minds of those who still regarded "Granny Francis" as a "muff."

"Come on, fellows," said Al Ferris one fine Saturday morning. "They've taken away the boom above the Falls. Now's our chance to go canoeing without any logs in the way."

"The Falls," about a mile above the Academy buildings, was a favorite resort of the boys on half holidays. In a short time the whole school had assembled to join in the sport.

The lumbermen had just removed the "boom" that, stretched from the mainland to an island near the opposite shore, had spoiled the smooth stretch of water where the boys were fond of indulging in their favorite pastime of "canoeing." Higher up the river was intersected by sandbars or sprinkled with rocks, so that this smooth sheet of water above the falls was the only place for some distance where the members of the Canoe Club could disport themselves. Of course it was dangerous, but that only added zest to the sport.

"Now, look here, fellows," said Jack Darrington, coming up with Francis Percival, "the river's uncommonly high, and you want to keep a good bit above the Falls or you'll get into a scrape. The water goes like a mill-race out there beyond the Nose."

"Huh! guess Granny's been coaching him," muttered Al Ferris, who never lost the opportunity of a fling at Francis.

"Oh, shut up, Ferris," unceremoniously struck Matt Mayhew. "Jack knows more about the river than all the rest of us put together, and you know he ain't afraid of anything—except making a fool of himself like some folks. You'd better mind what he says, too; your old shell's the flimsiest in the club, and you can paddle about as well as a mud-turtle."

Al's only reply to this burst of frankness was to shove off his light shell and paddle nonchalantly toward the island, bent on showing that he was not afraid.

The other boys, more cautious, chose a point farther up, and the river was soon dotted by the gay little craft that flitted about like dragonflies.

Jack and Francis, standing on the bank, were meditating an expedition in Jack's little "Goldfish" when they were attracted by a shout from Al Ferris.