

at his younger brother, who essayed to approach.

"Why, that's not such a bad subject," said his sister Kathleen encouragingly "That's easy to look up."

"Yes—for you."

"It might be worse than that, Bob," remarked his elder brother, Richard. "It might be 'The Influence of the Recent Presidential Election on the Money Market.'"

"There'd be some fun in that."

"It seems rather a singular subject to give a boy of sixteen," observed his mother thoughtfully; "but I think I know of one or two magazine articles that will help you. You will be equal to it."

Robert sat suddenly erect, with a flushed face and rumpled brown locks. "Do I look as if I knew anything about Mozart, as—or as not—a composer?" he demanded.

Kathleen laughed. "You do not, Bobby," she assured him.

"Well, I think you do rather," disputed Richard. "That football hair of yours has a wiliness and ferocity suggestive of the inspired musician."

"See here, Bobby dear," offered Kathleen, going over to the piano and rummaging amid piles of somewhat dilapidated sheet music, "I'll play you something of his, and you can gain your first impressions."

Bob subsided among the cushions, and Kathleen began. She looked around presently to discover the effect upon the aggrieved one, and caught him in the act of stealing from the room.

"You're an appreciative listener!" she cried.

"But I couldn't stand any more of that, you know," he murmured apologetically. "Give us 'Down in de Land where de Darkies Dance' and I'll stay. I guess I can't study up Mozart that way. It makes me go bluer than ever."

"When is your paper due?" asked his mother.

"Next Monday morning," replied Robert gloomily, and went out to forget his woes in a brisk hour of skating.

On Wednesday Mrs. Kendrick looked up various authorities on Mozart, and placed them at Bob's disposal. On Thursday she asked whether he had begun to work upon his paper, and received an evasive reply indicating that his other studies had recently become very pressing and that he had not yet found time. On Friday evening Richard attacked his young brother, and delivered a brief but pointed lecture upon the evils of procrastination. On Saturday morning the entire family fell upon the victim at the breakfast-table, and inquired enthusiastically concerning Mozart as a composer.

Goaded to desperation, Bob retired to the library, surrounded himself with encyclopaedias, propped his head upon his hand, chewed the end of his pencil, mangled the edge of his sheet of paper, and at length evolved the following introductory sentence: "Mozart was a great composer."

But the second sentence was not forthcoming. At the end of Bob's first hour of seclusion his mother looked in upon him; and, discovering him deep in one of the magazines containing a long article on Mozart with which she had provided him, came softly up behind him and peeped over his shoulder. Bob was absorbedly devouring a fascinating tale of adventure upon the high seas. Mrs. Kendrick glanced at the sheet of paper bearing the solitary opening sentence, and smiled. Then she quietly withdrew without disturbing the essay writer, who had not observed her presence.

Concluding at length the story of a battle

both bloody and briny, Bob drew a long breath and looked up at the clock. What he saw upon its face made him fling away the magazine, sit up straight in his chair, heave a gusty sigh which blew his paper across the desk, and bury his nose in the pages of the "Britannica." Suddenly he grasped his pen, thought a moment, studied two books alternately for a season, then began to write.

He looked upon the page of one book while he wrote a sentence, then upon the other book while he transcribed another sentence. The third sentence came from the first book, the fourth from the second, and so on and on, until five sheets of paper were covered.

The Scotch gong sounding the hour for luncheon rolled musically through the house, and Bob appeared promptly at the table. His eyes were sparkling; the third finger of his right hand, his left ear, and the edge of both cuffs were decorated with smears of ink.

"How's Mozart?" began Kathleen before she had unfolded her napkin.

"Enjoying his well earned repose," responded Bob, with a cheerful alacrity so different from his former doleful tone that Richard asked with surprise, "Finished that 'thing,' Bob?"

"All done."

"You must have written rapidly since eleven o'clock." This from his mother.

Bob glanced at her suspiciously. "Why?"

"I thought you were a good deal *à la* about that hour," she returned with a smile.

"That's not bad," acknowledged Robert nonchalantly. "Yes I did get off on Stevenson for a few."

Should you mind letting me see your essay?" asked Richard.

"Yes, I should mind," Bob fired up. "You'd cut it all up for me. It's bad enough to have old Allen get after it, but you college fellows think you know all there is to know about English."

"Since you know all there is to know about Mozart your English can be excused," laughed Richard. "All right, but I thought you might like to hear in advance that your work won't be criticised by the lenient hand of Prof. Allen."

"It won't? Why not?"

"Because I happen to have heard that he's been removed. The new instructor goes in Monday morning."

"Great Caesar! Who is it?"

"Washburn."

"What—not Mark Washburn! Why, he's at C——!"

"Lately assistant instructor at the college, yes. Now professor of English at your prep. school."

Bob came as near whistling as good table manners would allow. His brow clouded darkly, and a distressful pucker appeared about the corners of his mouth. Luncheon over, he followed Richard to the latter's room. "Say, Dick," he begged, "help me out, will you? Why, I shouldn't dare hand this thing I've written to Mr. Washburn. The C—— freshmen say he's death on cribbing; and my essay is cribbed, not exactly whole, but half and half—part from one 'cyc' and part from another—you know the way."

Richard nodded, smiling. Bob's eyes drooped.

"It would have gone all right with old Allen," he said shamefacedly. "But the thing is—I don't know how to write it any other way. What do I know about Mozart as a composer? What do I want to know? And the more I read, the more I don't know. I forget what the 'cyc' says about him the

minute the book is shut. What can a fellow do but crib? And how can a fellow that don't know one tune from another—except the things everybody whistles on the streets—how can he make up stuff on such a subject as this?"

"Times will be better from now on Bob. Washburn will never make you dash your brains against such rocks; he's up to date. He'll have you writing on things you enjoy, and he'll make you like your work. But you don't want to start in by giving him this stuff of yours if it's cribbed. He'll recognize the 'Britannica' and the 'Century,' however you've mixed them up; and he'll make you feel small."

"Then what *can* I do?" groaned Bob.

"I'll tell you. Sit down and read one good magazine article among those mother found for you, and read it until you understand it thoroughly and have really taken it in. Then put it out of sight and write your essay in your own words. Washburn will prefer original language to faultless English—cribbed."

Bob sighed heavily. "I know I can't do it," he said hopelessly. "An article on electricity, now—I could read that until I really got it into my head, because I should be interested in it; but this stuff about a fellow who composed things when he was an infant in arms, and played them himself before he got his double teeth—I've no use for him; and, as for telling all that about the influence his compositions had upon the music of his time—I guess not!"

But it was Saturday night presently, Sunday study was forbidden in the Kendrick household, and Bob dared not break rules, even in an emergency like this. At nine o'clock on Saturday evening that unhappy youth took off his cuffs, untied his collar, rumpled up his hair, gave utterance to a series of sounds resembling those of a harassed young lion, and sat down once more before the library desk. As he did so, Kathleen, who dearly loved to tease, began in the distance the Mozart Requiem.

A moment later she found herself whirled off the piano-stool, borne struggling and protesting from the room, and deposited on a divan in the reception-hall.

"Now will you be good?" laughed Richard, passing. "Let him alone, Kathie; he's desperate to night."

"Do you promise to let up on that?" growled Bob savagely.

"Yes," gasped Kathleen. "I only meant it as an inspiration, you know, Bobby."

"Inspiration—nothing! I want absolute silence in this house for the next two hours. Understand?"

And the grip on Kathleen's shoulders loosened. Bob dashed back into the library, and the door slammed with a violence that rocked the house on its foundations.

On Monday evening Mark Washburn, late instructor in the University of C——, now professor of English in the great preparatory school which is its nearest source of supply, sat down to the task of locking over several dozen essays, the sole subject for which had been dictated by his predecessor. His clear-cut, youthful looking face took on varying expressions as he worked, now of amusement, now of scepticism, again of something resembling irritation.

"Poor youngsters!" he said to himself at last. "Haven't I been there, and don't I know what wrestling with a subject too heavy for them these wretched papers show?"

Continued.