

# The Stooped to Conquer

IAN STRANGE, '14

Theophilus Turner stirred uneasily, then pulled a huge silver watch from his pocket. With a sigh he closed the big volume which he held on his knees, and rose from his seat on a mossy log in the shade of the elder bushes.

"Time for the bell," he muttered, stretching his gaunt frame.

Clad in butternut jeans and a long black coat, his hair, gray at the temples, brushed back from his prominent forehead, and a massive book under his arm, the school master was an impressive figure. Every day, out under the trees, he pored over his lone volume of Blackstone.

"Some day," he thought, "I'll leave this dull routine." Visions of the state Capitol filled his mind.

The sound of voices roused him from his reverie, and he crouched back behind the elder screen, the keen eye of the pedagogue alert. He knew the voices.

"Bud," Tad was saying in a voice worthy of a general, "Bud, me an Spec's goin' swimmin' to-day, 'stead of to school. You kin go on to school an' tell teacher Pa kep' me home to work. An' don't you tell Pa I went swimmin', either."

They were in plain view of the crouching figure.

Bud raised his round blue eyes appealingly from the figure eight which he was painstakingly tracing in the dust with a bare brown toe. But every line of his brother's dust-begrimed face showed that no quarter could be expected. He glanced furtively at Spec, who was looking at him imploringly from under an immense straw hat, which showed a modest border of red hair beneath, though a tuft of fiery bristles pointed heavenward through a hole in the crown.

Again Bud's eyes fell to the figure eight, but this time he did not see it. When he raised his head his eyes held a different gleam.

You got to let me go, too," he said decisively. "Before, I always went to school when you wanted to shoot cotton-tails, or when the geese was flyin', or the fish was bitin' good. But I won't this time. You got to let me go with you or I'll tell on you, an you know what Pa'll do." He paused to see if his last words had hit their mark.

Tad did know what Pa would do. He looked at his chum apprehensively, but Spec was untroubled by this spark.

"Aw, come on, Bud; be a game sport!" he wheedled, throwing an arm over his shoulder. "I'll give you two glassies if you'll do what Tad says." He held them out, hoping that the lust of the eye would conquer. But Bud's purpose was firm.

"I'm a-goin' with you," he declared doggedly.

"An' a agate," Spec added hastily.

"You can't buy me off that way," Bud persisted.

Tad tried a new trick. "If I can't buy you off,"—he glowered menacingly—"I can lick you. Now are you goin' to school an' not tattle to old Turner that me an' Spec went swimmin'?"

The school-master's eyes flashed as this fell on his ears, and he recognized the "Ole Turner" appellation.

Bud realized the futility of further argument against this new turn of affairs; so, muttering, he picked up his book-satchel and plodded down the road, kicking up as much dust as possible. He turned when he was well out of the reach of the other two and saw Tad regarding him with unmistakable satisfaction, hands thrust nonchalantly into his overalls pockets, his face wearing an ever-widening grin. Obeying a natural impulse, the vanquished raised his free hand to his nose,

and wriggled the extended fingers vigorously. Not deigning to look around he hugged his satchel to him and scurried on.

The boys all wondered why the school-master smiled to himself so much that morning.

The lengthening of the cool shadows cast by the willow trees over the swimming-hole first reminded Tad and Spec that they must soon return if Pa was not to know. Tad rubbed his stiffening shoulder thoughtfully. He had not been swimming often enough that season to toughen the hide.

"We better go home, hadn't we?"

"I guess so. Let's wash off."

At this they ducked under, and came up sputtering. Tad began jumping up and down on one foot, pounding his dripping head with his open palm, shriveled now like a washer-woman's.

"Jiminy Crickets! Did you tie up my clothes?" He turned to see Spec holding up his overalls, tied into a muddy ball.

In answer Tad reached for his own clothes, and brought forth a shirt, knotted into an unrecognizable wad.

"I s'pose you think I did this, too, then soaked the knots so I'd have to chew beef," he retorted, holding it up.

Both buried their teeth in the bedraggled garments, tugging at the knots. Then at the same instant they raised their heads and voices.

"Bud!"

A snicker from behind the clump of blackberry bushes startled them. Then a voice answered, "Not Bud, but I." It was the voice of Old Turner!

He appeared through the bushes. "Good-night, boys," he said, waving his hand airily as he walked away. "Your paternal parents await you."

Gentle reader, let night's black pall hide the succeeding scenes.

## TWILIGHT

ELEANOR DEXTER, '15

The gleaming sun sinks slowly down;  
A sheet of yellow gold, the lake,  
Save where some leaves of red and brown  
The shining surface dot and break.

Across the lake upon the grass,  
The white cup of a lily droops.  
A wild fowl towards the gray morass  
Across the shining surface swoops.

The night hawk utters its weird scream,  
A shrill farewell to parting day,  
And wakes the outlet from his dream  
To seek his luckless evening prey.

The glittering stars in heaven clear  
Lie mirrored in the dark blue deep;  
The horned silvery moon doth peer  
Above the wood where shadows creep.

The murmuring pines along the shore,  
Whose needles now no breeze doth bend,  
Shelter the birds that sing no more;  
For darkness rules the world again.