BROWN OF HARVARD

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CHAPTER I.

Madden's Tutor.

It was the kind of day in April that invites to languor, to close communion with nature, to the involuntary manufacture of spring poetry even if one doesn't know the difference between a dithyramb and an acrostic; the kind of day when you feel that it would be too bad to have heaven removed to some place remote from this heavenly earth; a day of indefinable yet certain yearnings and aspirations, of joy in the very passive act of existence, when the mildest form of mental exercise makes the labor of Sisyphus seem, by comparison, a mere boyish, gleeful romp. The very air appeared to be laden with the sweet promise of shady trees, of rich velvety green fields, of laughing brooks, of the teeming life and gladness of a fruitful summer—a day when a man, unless he be the most unreasonable and abnormal of creatures, can have no enemies, no thoughts other than those of forgiveness and sympathy, and the supreme luxury of doing nothing.

A vague notion of such things as these drifted deliciously into the not over ready mind of Claxton Madden as he lay sprawled—the whole six feet of him—on the broad window-seat in the study room which he shared at Harvard with his chum, Tom Brown. He was clad in all the outrageous incongruity of a college man when enjoying to the full the sweet seclusion of his own apartment. On his feet were a pair of faded Turkish slippers, their soles almost burnt through owing to his habit of resting them in a precarious poise on the tip of his andiron, and then neglecting, from very inertia, to remove them to a more respectful distance when the fire got too hot. His trousers were of the regulation college wide-hip fashion, a faint reminder of the "peg-tops" of the days of our fathers. The upper part of his body was encased in a sweater—that convenient college garment that so often covers a multitude of sins. And yet, in spite of the loose fit of his costume, it was easy to see that Madden was a young man of magnificent physical proportions. His head was rather small, almost of the Greek mould, and even the looseness of his sweater failed to conceal the massive shoulders, the thick, powerful neck, the immense expanse of chest; and as for the extravagantly wide trousers, the simple truth is that they were almost fully occupied by the fine muscular development of his hips and thighs and legs.

The room was typical of university life at Cambridge. It was one of those rooms designed especially for students, with doors leading off to the bedchambers, and still another door opening on the hallway. Madden and Brown had chummed together for three years, and that period had been sufficient for them to accumulate even a greater variety than usual of banners, posters, photographs, sofa pillows, junk of every description, the whole being arranged in barbaric confusion. Indeed, it seemed to have been their sole ambition, in the matter of interior decoration, to have as little of the bare wall exposed as possible, no matter what the artistic result might be.

It was only 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and yet the blinds of the large window looking out on the street were carefully drawn, and the place was enveloped in an untimely, unnatural dusk. It was, in fact, so dark that Madden was obliged to hold the book he was endeavoring to study close to his eyes, while his lips moved from time to time like those of a child in the painful effort of learning to read, and he hissed gently when he encountered an unaccustomed word—which, by the way, was a matter of not infrequent occurrence.

It was when he had met one of these verbal monsters for, perhaps the hundredth time, that he suddenly sat up, and, seizing the book in a vicious grasp, hurled it desperately across the room.

"Damn astronomy!" he apostrophized the helpless cause of his torture. "I wish it had never been invented. To think of my being confined to this hole when the boys are out on the river, when the air is full of such—such jolly smells. It's a shame to inflict such a thing on a healthy college man. Study? Why, who could study with the birds chattering away to beat the band, and everything so kind of—of out-doors I can actually feel the leaves growing on the trees. Astronomy! The stars! When a man only wants to get next to Mother Earth!"

He sat still for a moment gazing ruefully at the volume he had so unceremoniously spurned from him, and as he lounged back luxuriously against the cushions of the window-seat there came a sharp rap at the door. Madden's face brightened. Here was promise of a change, at all events. In his present mood he felt that he could even have welcomed a sociable dun.

"Come in," he shouted.

The door opened slowly, and there entered, first, a thin, scrawny young man, whose hair was already beginning to disappear, whose shoulders were stooped, apparently from much study, and who, evidently from the same cause, wore spectacles with enormously thick lenses. He was the exact antipodes of the hale, hearty, athletic figure before him. The latter addressed him jovially.

"Hello, Cartright—what's the game? I'm awfully glad to see you, old man. Been out trying for the crew, as usual, I suppose?"

They both laughed at this facetious sally, and then Cartright, turning to his companion who had followed him into the room:

"Madden," he said, "this is Thorne—Gerald Thorne. You may not know it, but he's in your class—I mean in your class at college. Possibly you've never met him at lectures. You remember you told me you wanted somebody to coach you in astronomy, so I've brought him around. He stands AI and can pull you through in spite of yourself. Think what a wonder he must be. Thorne, this is Claxton Madden, member of the crew, whose only weakness is a yearning to consume the midnight oil—olive oil on salads, you know."

Madden rose and grasped the stranger's hand. What he saw was a young man, with a serious, almost old face, from which the joy and bright, wholesome light of youth had apparently died out forever, if indeed they had ever been present there. He was, however, a man of tremendous muscular power, a circumstance that was manifest despite his somewhat ungainly carriage, his ill-fitting clothes, and the general embarrassment of his manner. He was fully an inch taller than Madden himself, and the quiet reserve of his physical prowess immediately commanded from the latter a respectful attention wholly dissociated from any admiration he might have entertained from Thorne's superior knowledge of astronomy. It is "physics," not astronomy or chemistry, or any other of the varied courses in the curriculum, that the true college man appreciates. And thus it was that Madden, in the enthusiasm for his visitor's powerful physique, began, in the most matter-of-fact way, to poke him in the ribs—eventually winding up by saying:

"Why, man, you're a credit to the university. Great! Say—do you row? Have they been after you for the crew?"

Thorne smiled, somewhat sadly it seemed.

"Yes, they have asked me to join the squad and go into training, but—I don't really see where I can get the time. I am working my way through college, you know."

Working his way through college! That meant tutoring, and drudgery of the worst kind, possibly even waiting on table—an entire cutting out of the ordinary, reasonable pleasures of college life, an existence so foreign to Madden's, that the latter could not help regarding his visitor with a look of curiosity, not unmingled with pity.

At this point, however, they were interrupted by Cartright.

"Hello!" he cried, noticing for the first time the drawn curtains, "what on earth are you all shut up for?"

Madden gazed at him dismally.

"Do you suppose I can devote my mind to——"

"Your what?" said Cartright in feigned amazement.

"That'll do for you. Don't try to be funny; my mind, I said, and strange to say I've got one left after trying to cram all this stuff into it. Do you suppose I can devote my mind to astronomy while the windows are open, and I can actually see the fellows out there on the river? My dear fellow, the only place to grind in is a dungeon, and I've tried to make my room as much like the Black Hole of Calcutta as possible."

"Oh, nonsense," returned Cartright with a laugh. "Open up and let the sun in. You know the sun's a part of astronomy. You'll find yourself all the better for it." Whereupon he walked deliberately to the window, and pulling back the curtains, sent the blind up with a snap. In an instant the room was flooded with the bright, declining sunlight of the spring afternoon, while the incessant chattering of birds on the tree directly before the window seemed to mock the prisoner in his self-immolation.

For a moment Madden glared at Cartright with a look of surprised annoyance.

"I say, old man," he ventured at length, "you've got a nerve—spoiling my dungeon, and interrupting my studies. How on earth do you ever expect me to pass my exams if you queer me this way?" Then he rushed eagerly over to the window, and, leaning on the seat, stretched his muscular frame through the casement.

"Oh, just look at it!" he ejaculated in a rapture, while he filled his lungs with the delicious aroma of the atmosphere. "Just look at it! And to think I can't even go out for a little toddle!"

Cartright laughed again.

"If you hadn't toddled so much this year you wouldn't have to stay in your dungeon and cram now."

Madden drew back into the room and placed himself by the side of his friend, so that the difference in their physical "make-ups" was brought out in almost ridiculous contrast.

"Old man," he said, as he smoothed Cartright's meager, sandy hair, "you know I really believe it would do you good if you could toddle a little bit more outdoors yourself. You're not getting the full advantage of a college education. O Lord!" he went on impulsively, "why are things so unevenly distributed in this world? Now, if you only had a little of my chest and arms, and I had a little of your—of your——"

"Brains," supplied Cartright. "Yes, I know what you mean. Some fellows are all intellect and no muscle; others are all muscle and no—er—er—no offense, old man. Well, I must be going. Thorne, I wish you joy with your brilliant pupil. You've got an excellent chance to squeeze blood out of a turnip."

And in his exit Cartright escaped only by a hair's breadth the tennis racquet which Madden had hurled at him with remarkable dexterity, considering that he had taken so quick an aim.

CHAPTER II.

A Lesson in Astronomy.

Madden walked over to the door, and picking up the racquet tossed it on the top shelf of a bookcase, thereby narrowly imperiling a small plaster cast of Venus de Milo. Then turning toward his companion he asked somewhat mournfully, as if he dreaded the inquisition that was to come:

"Why don't you sit down, old man? Pardon me if I get a little violent at times—I'll come out all right in the end."

Thorne took a seat near the study table in very obvious embarrassment. This fellow Madden was not at all of his "set." He had heard of him as a rich young man, inclined to be rather wild, except when he was in training for the crew—a man whose sphere of college life had never once come into contact with his own. As Cartright had hinted, though they were classmates, such is the wide diversity of existence at Harvard, he had, to the best of his knowledge, never seen him before, a circumstance that would cause a Harvard man of a generation ago to open his eyes with wonder, if not with disapproval.

Madden throw himself dejectedly into an arm-chair and tilted his feet into their favorite position on the andiron.

"Well, fire away, governor," he said. "Let's have the tooth out quick, and if you think it's going to hurt much, just give me gas."

The tutor drew a notebook and fountain pen from his pocket, and after carefully adjusting the latter, began, in a manner more embarrassed than ever.

"I—a—may I ask how far you have gone in this year's work?"

Madden stared at him blankly.

"Gone? How far I have gone?"

"Yes. What was the last lecture you attended?"

Madden looked at his companion again sharply, to see if perchance these apparently innocent words were the vehicle for some gibe. Thorne's manner, however, was ingenuousness itself. He was very evidently in earnest.

"The last lecture? Why, my dear fellow, I haven't gone to any. What do you suppose I would want you here for if I had been prowling around the lecture rooms all through the year? My dear chap, that's what I sent to you for—to throw those lectures into me that I've missed. I want you to boil the whole thing down into a nutshell," he added. "You are to give me the dose in capsule form."

Thorne gazed at him in still greater wonder. Was it possible for a man to go nearly through a term without attending a single lecture? He recalled his own bitter struggles, his sacrifices to get to college, and how punctiliously he had taken advantage of every opportunity afforded in the curriculum.

Madden, noticing Thorne's expression of genuine surprise, went on:

"If I had the faintest idea about all these azimuths and zeniths and things, and all that rot, don't you suppose I'd be out imbibing the atmosphere, instead of chinning with you? My dear fellow, my knowledge of astronomy is surprising, from one point of view, anyway. I really did make an effort to read up at the beginning of the year—got as far as 'right ascension'—you know it comes under the definitions on the first page. Well, sir, I couldn't for the life of me make out what it meant, and when I went to the instructor on the quiet, and asked him what was the difference between a right ascension and a left ascension, he gave me the ha, ha, right to my face. He did, on the level."

At this delightful confession, Thorne's somber face lighted up with an appreciative smile.

"Oh, I tell you," continued Madden, with a somewhat virtuous indignation, "if I'd known there was so much mathematics in astronomy I'd never have selected it. I thought it was a cinch—a sort of fortune-telling business, you know. 'Born under the planet Venus you will be loved by a light-haired lady,' and all that kind of thing. I never dreamed what I was going up against. But come on. I'm doing all the talking. Let's get to work."

Thorne settled himself into a serious and didatic attitude.

"Well, he said, adopting the dry, even tone of the pedagogue, and plunging in medias res, "following the mathematical investigations of Professor George Scannel, it is found that binary stars will tend to separate. Inertia will cause the tidal protuberances to lag behind so that——"

"Hold on!" interrupted Madden with intense seriousness. "'Binary stars!' 'Tidal protuberances!' Say, old fellow, you musn't—you really mustn't. I can't stand for it. Really, seriously, I don't care to know anything deep about the subject; deep, you understand. Why, if I got to chinning about binary protuberances the fellows would never forgive me. They would think I was trying to lord it over them. My idea is to get a few handy catchwords that'll make a good show on paper—see?"

Thorne gazed at him blankly.

"Catchwords? I can't say that I do."

At this juncture a strident voice floated in from the streets:

"Oh—h—h—! Clax!"

Madden sprang out of his seat, upset the andiron, and rushed over to the window.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, "there's Van! Hi there!" he shouted, as he thrust his body eagerly through the window frame, "what you want?"

"Come on out!" demanded the voice.

"Can't do it. Got a 'grind' up here stuffing me in astronomy."

"Any good!" inquired the voice, solicitously.

"Oh, pretty good," replied the otaer, wiggling his feet up and down as if he would like to spring from the window. "Kind of long-winded, though. I can't get in a word edgewise."

Angered, mortified, Thorne half rose from his seat, and then as quickly subsided. For somehow, despite his pupil's brusque manner, there was something about him that was engaging—something that was genuine. Thorne could not bring himself to believe that this wholesome, hearty young fellow could be intentionally rude.

"Well, so long," replied the voice from the street, "sorry you can't come out."

"So long," replied Madden. He turned from the window, then rushed back and once more thrust his head out precariously through the casement.

"Say, Van, what kind of time did you make up the river today?"

"Good!" was the answer. "Four seconds better than yesterday. We'll do those Englishmen to a turn when they come over. So long, old man. Awfully sorry you couldn't be with us."

Madden returned to his arm-chair and threw himself into it with an air of the most abject misery.

"Now, look here, old sport," he said petulantly, "you've got to get a move on you. I can't waste my time like this."

Instead of indignation, which perhaps he had a right to feel, Thorne gazed at his hopeful pupil with a most distinct sensation of astonishment.

"Well—er—" he said after a few moments of confused silence, "suppose I give you a sort of—a—a—table of the different binary stars with a few words of description after each?"

"Bully!" replied Madden, "that's the stuff—just enough to make a nice little show without learning too much astronomy. Wait a minute, though. I've lost my lead pencil." He groped for a while in a mass of books and papers which he had previously swept from the study table to the floor, and eventually succeeded in resurrecting a miserable stub of a lead pencil and a few loose sheets of paper.

"Now, let her go Gallagher!"

"Well, in the first place," began Thorne solemnly. But he was not destined to go farther. There was suddenly the sound of loud singing and tramping on the stairway, the door burst open unceremoniously, and three college men entered, their hands on each other's shoulders, in true penitentiary lock-step fashion, and chanting, to the old familiar tune:

Tom Brown's body is alive and feeling
good,
Tom Brown's body, here's a fact that's
understood,
Tom Brown's body's got a head that's
made of wood,
As we go marching on!

Madden looked upon his visitors with a cheerful disgust.

"Get out of here, you yaps. Can't you see I'm working?"

The intruders suddenly stopped, and stared at him in finely simulated wonder. Then, almost as if they had rehearsed the act, they dropped to the floor in a line, one upon the other. Madden snatched a book off the table and hurled it at them viciously. It struck the leader on the back of the head, but, paying no attention to this delicate reception, they rose simultaneously to all fours and began to march around Madden and Thorne chanting the words, "Grind, grind—grind, grind, grind," meantime keeping excellent time with their hands and feet.

The light of combat danced in Madden's eyes. Springing once more out of his chair he jumped on the prostrate line of his visitors and began to pummel them right and left.

"I'll teach you, Happy Thurston, and you, Tubby Anderson, and you, Jean de Reszke, to come butting into my room making rough-house when a man's working," he exclaimed, pounding each of his visitors as he mentioned his name.

"Ouch!" exclaimed he who had been punched as Happy Thurston. "Remember, we're your guests."

In the midst of the confusion there was heard the "Kronk, kronk" of an automobile horn under the window.

"It's the kid," cried "Jean de Reszke," better known to his parents as Warren Pierce—a young man who had received his nickname owing to the fact that he possessed a high tenor voice and sang on the glee club. All hands sprang from the floor and made a rush for the window, leaning far out and leaving nothing visible to the somewhat discomfited Thorne but a row of wildly struggling legs.

"Hi, kid!" yelled they of the legs—"Come on up, we're paying you a visit!"

There was a sound of singing on the steps and in the hallway outside, and in a moment the door was flung open, revealing a young man of medium height, thickset, with a handsome, happy, almost careless countenance, and a wealth of curly hair which cropped up round about the edges of a wofully unsizable cap.

"Hello, fellows," he cried in a tone of jolly welcome to his visitors, who had emerged once more wholly into the room—"glad to see you. My, how you've ——, grown — sideways — Tubby, since——"

But here Madden broke in.

"Oh, say, fellows, on the level," he said, sinking once more into his arm-chair, "I've got to get down to work. Won't you please, please go? Clear out, won't you?"

Tom turned to his chum, his blue eyes fairly beaming with glee.

"Well, old man," he said, "if you really have to work—if there's no way out of it, why, I won't tell you what I came to tell you. No, it wouldn't be fair to disturb him with the news—would it, boys?"

"News? What news?" asked Madden seriously. And then, his thoughts reverting to the first and chief object of his solicitude—

"Is there anything the matter with the crew?"

"No—the crew's all right," replied his chum reassuringly, "but—but say, boys—isn't it a shame he's got to work when—say, Clax, old horse," he added, breaking off suddenly, "would you mind retiring to your room while you perform this miraculous studying stunt of yours? I'm expecting some girls to tea."

"Oh, look here, Tom," said Madden in a tone of genuine disgust, "you don't mean to say you've invited a bunch of women up here when you know I didn't want to be disturbed?"

"Well," responded Tom solemnly, "the truth is I happened to meet Miss Sinclair on Brattle street and she looked so thirsty that I——"

Madden sprang out of his chair, his face glowing with delight, in marked contrast to his former expression of despair.

"No—did you though, really, Tom? Edith? Why didn't you say so at first?"

"Why, my dear fellow, you were so eager to grind, you know, that I thought it would be very inconsiderate."

"Oh, grind your grandmother," snapped back Madden, beginning to tug at his sweater preparatory to pulling it off. "Which way did she go?"

"Go?" replied Tom innocently. "Why, I'm sure I don't know. It may have been east—but come to think of it, perhaps she went west."

By this time Madden had succeeded in getting his sweater fairly over his head, and, with an inarticulate reply that did not appear to be altogether complimentary, groped his way into his bedroom.

"You needn't be in such a rush, old man," Tom cried out after him. "They won't be here for a good half hour. She's going to stop for Mrs. Ames and Evelyn."

"I say, Tom," said Thurston, who during the last few minutes had been lounging luxuriously on the window-seat, one knee crossed over the other and his hands clasped in Sybaritic repose under his head, "we don't want to butt into your tea fest. The truth is, we came up to ask you if we could have your benzine buggy for half an hour or so, if you're not going to use it."

"Sure thing," replied Tom cordially; "but don't try to play any Vanderbilt cup stunts. You know, last time——"

"Oh, that's all right. We'll be good. Much obliged, old man. Come along, fellows," whereupon Thurston and his companions hustled precipitately out of the room, to the tune of the national anthem set to appropriate words for automobiling purposes.

Scarcely had the door closed when it opened again, and a young man, pale, haggard, bearing very evident marks of dissipation, stepped slowly into the room.

"Hello, Ames," greeted Tom cheerfully, at the same time studying his visitor curiously. "You look a little seedy. What's up?"

Ames glanced meaningly toward Thorne, who, standing in the half-obscurity of the fireplace, had remained unobserved ever since Brown's entrance into the room. Tom, following Ames's glance, saw the stranger for the first time.

"Why—what the deuce?" he said—"I didn't know you were here. Who—who are you?"

Poor Thorne felt himself fairly overwhelmed with embarrassment.

"I—I was waiting to see—" he stammered—"do you think Mr. Madden will want me any more?"

"Will want you? What on earth should he want you for?"

Thorne shifted his position uneasily, clutching the edge of the mantel in a nervous grasp.

"My name is Thorne. I was asked—was employed by Mr. Madden to coach him in astronomy."

"Oh," replied Tom carelessly, "I guess he won't have any more use for you today." And then turning to the other, he inquired:

"Well, Ames, what can I do for you?"

There was a rudeness in his manner, unintentional to be sure, but still a rudeness, and it stung this sensitive, shy, powerful young man to the quick. And as he left the room it was with a feeling of wounded pride, of bitterness—of deep resentment.

(To be continued.)

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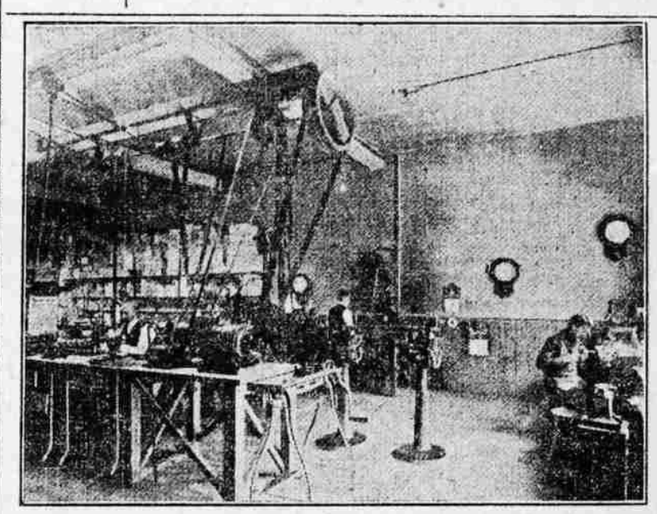

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