

THE ROMANCE OF DISCOVERY GULCH.

THERE was a good deal of excitement on the play ground attached to the boys' seminary, presided over by Dr. Inman. Edward Hunter, a lad of perhaps seventeen, had just been seriously injured whilst playing leap frog. Just as he was bounding over Robert Hunter—cousin—the latter, in the language of the boys, "humped himself," and, as a consequence, Edward was flung with tremendous violence upon a small pile of stones that lay near to the line of the game.

At that the game broke up, and the boys crowded around the inanimate form in great dismay, not knowing what to do, and too much frightened to reason upon the subject. Fortunately Dr. Inman had at that very moment been glancing at the game, and without waiting even to catch on his hat, ran down from the piazza where he had been standing. At the same time the janitor, alarmed by the cries of some of the smaller boys, came across from the garden. The two caught up Edward between them, and as tenderly as possible, carried him to the house. One of the larger boys was dispatched on a run for a doctor and another for water.

Robert Hunter remained on the play ground, surrounded by his school-fellows. They were all, with the exception of Robert and one or two of his particular friends, anxious enough to follow in procession to the house, but Dr. Inman sternly forbade it; and so they remained on the scene of the disaster.

Before long their tongues got to wagging furiously. There is a great deal of innate savagery about boys; and yet, after any mischief has been done, and it is too late for anything but pity, that wells out of their flinty little hearts in a great river. So Robert Hunter found that public opinion was setting against him in a great tide; and even his particular friend, Bracebridge Martin, was sulkily inclined, and but faint in his defense.

"Don't care, Bob Hunter," exclaimed one of the larger boys, "I reckon such things don't happen for nothing, and it was a mighty mean way to take it out of him. I'd like to know what boy is going to risk his neck playing with you if that's the style you're going to follow. I tell you if he's killed, it will go mighty hard with you."

Hunter was somewhat frightened over that view of the case, yet he hardly showed the amount of regret that an honest-hearted boy naturally would. He was more inclined to defend himself than confess and avoid.

"He ain't hurt, and I don't see any use making a fuss over him. He's just playing off, I'll bet you. He's just that kind of a fellow. He's behind with his algebra sums, and I know he hasn't his speech half written, let alone committed. So as he's not ready for to-morrow, he'll make the most he can out of this. If it don't save him lots of trouble, I don't know anything about Ned Hunter."

"Well, you might say you were sorry, anyhow. If I had laid up my cousin like that, I know I should be, but I don't believe you care at all."

"Oh, don't I? That's just the way. Didn't he tell the doctor who ran away and went to the circus, that

Saturday afternoon we got permission to go to Bayneville, and didn't he let the cat out and get us all caught in the melon patch. All the mean jobs ever done here were put up by him, and now you're just ugly enough to throw it up to me that he's my cousin. I can't help that, can I? And if his father chooses to waste his money sending him here, where he's got no business, instead of putting him out to a trade, that's something else I can't help. I wouldn't hurt him for anything, but if there was only some way of getting rid of him, you fellows would all be thankful enough to me."

"Come now, Bob, you're going a little too far. We don't like him because he's mean and all that; but when it comes to lessons, he's as good as the best of us. It's mean for him to tell on us, but if it wasn't for that I wouldn't wonder at the doctor liking him. He gives him less trouble than any of us."

Robert Hunter began an ugly rejoinder, but at that minute a boy came running up with intelligence about the victim, and the attention of everyone was at once turned to him.

"It might be worse, but its pretty bad as it is. The doctor says you're all to keep as quiet as you can to give him a chance, but it will be a couple of weeks before he gets out. He's jammed up awfully."

"Are any bones broken?"

"A couple of ribs—and his arm is out of joint, and his head cut open. He's used up, I tell you."

Hearing this, Robert Hunter, followed by his friend, Martin, strolled away, and he was a good deal more anxious to get out of earshot of his schoolmates than he would have been willing to admit, for he really was frightened.

That evening, when he heard that his cousin was easier and would not probably be permanently disabled or disfigured, his mind was a great deal easier, and for several days it was noticeable that he had lost his overbearing, domineering manner. So some little temporary good had come out of the affair.

At first none of the boys were allowed to see Edward. The doctor had provided an experienced nurse, and he was kept perfectly quiet. But by and by, when the danger seemed to be fairly over, they were admitted for a few moments, one or two at a time. Among the last to go were Bracebridge Martin and Robert Hunter.

They came in quietly enough, and by chance they were left alone with the patient, who had not been apprised of their coming.

He looked up in surprise, as they made their appearance, but at first seemed inclined to silence.

No doubt Robert would have willingly enough avoided this visit, but he knew that by many he had been looked upon with dislike, and remarks none too kind had been made about him, so that he felt forced not only to come into this room, but also to make some remark, and even, if possible, to secure forgiveness from one whom he felt was to all intents his victim, though of course he had not intended any such serious result.

"Well Ed," he said, at length, "I hope you're not