

felt rather at his ease in the place. It cannot be asserted, however, that he appeared entirely at his ease this evening after he had read the "Programme" chalked upon the large easel blackboard beside the chairman's desk. Three "Freshman Debates" were announced and a "Sophomore Oration," this last being followed by the name, "D. Yocum, '18." Ramsey made immediate and conspicuous efforts to avoid sitting next to his roommate, but was not so adroit as to be successful. However, Fred was merciful; the fluctuations of his friend's complexion were an inspiration more to pity than to badinage.

The three debates all concerned the "Causes of the War in Europe," and honors appeared to rest with a small and stout, stolidly "pro-German" girl debater, who had brought with her and translated at slight abso-oot proofs (so she called them), printed in German, that Germany had been attacked by Belgium at the low instigation of the envious English. Everybody knew it wasn't true; but she made an impression and established herself as a debater, especially as her opponent was quite confounded by her introduction of printed matter.

When the debates and the verdicts were concluded, the orator appeared, and Fred's compassion extended itself so far that he even refrained from looking inquisitively at the boy in the seat next to his; but he made one side of a wager, mentally—that if Ramsey had consented to be thoroughly confidential just then, he would have confessed to feeling kind o' funny.

Dora was charmingly dressed, and she was pale; but those notable eye-lashes of hers were all the more notable against her pallor. And as she spoke with fire, it was natural that her color should come back quite flamingly and that her eyes should flash in shelter of the lashes. "The Christian Spirit and Internationalism" was her subject, yet she showed no meek sample of a Christian Spirit herself when she came to attacking war-makers generally, as well as all those "half-developed tribesmen" and "victims of herd instinct" who believed that war might ever be justified under any circumstances of atrocity. She was eloquent truly, and a picture of grace and girlish dignity, even when she was most vigorous. Nothing could have been more militant than her denunciation of militancy.

"She's an actual wonder," Fred said, when the two had got back to Mrs. Meigs' afterward. "Don't you look at me like that; I'm talkin' about her as a public character, and there's nothin' personal about it. You let me alone."

Ramsey was not clear as to his duty. "Well—"

"If any person makes a public speech," Fred protested, "I got a perfect right to discuss 'em, no matter what you think of 'em"—and he added hastily—"or don't think of 'em!"

"Look here—"

"Good heavens!" Fred exclaimed, "You aren't expecting to interfere with me if I say anything about that little fat Werder girl that argued for Germany, are you? Or any of the other speakers? I got a right to talk about 'em just as public speakers, haven't I? Well, what I say is: Dora

Yocum as an orator is just an actual perfect wonder. Got any objections?"

"N-no."

"All right then," Fred settled himself upon the window seat with a pipe, and proceeded, "There's something about her, when she stands there, she stands so straight and knows just what she's up to, and everything, why, there's something about her makes the cold chills go down your spine—I mean my spine, not yours particularly! You sit down—I mean anybody's spine, doggone it!" And as Ramsey increased the manifestations of his suspicions, lifting a tennis racket over the prostrate figure, "Oh, murder," Fred said, resignedly, "All right, we'll change the subject. That fat little Werder cutie made out a pretty good case for Germany, didn't she?"

Ramsey disposed himself in an easy chair with his feet upon the table,



"Well, What I Say Is: Dora Yocum, as an Orator, Is Just an Actual Perfect Wonder. Got Any Objections?" and presently chuckled. "You remember the time I had the fuss with Wesley Bender, back in the ole school days?"

"Yep."

"All the flubdub this Werder girl got off tonight puts me in mind of the way I talked that day. I can remember it as well as anything! Wesley kept yelpin' that whoever mentioned a lady's name in a public place was a pup, and of course I didn't want to hit him for that; a boy's got a reg'lar instinct for tryin' to make out he's on the right side in a scrap, and he'll always try to do something, or say something, or he'll get the other boy to say something, to make it look as if the other boy was in the wrong and began the trouble. So I told poor ole Wes that my father spoke my mother's name in a public place whenever he wanted to, and I dared him to say my father was a pup. And all so on. A boy startin' up a scrap, why, half the time he'll drag in his father and mother if there's any chance to do it. He'll fix up some way so he can say, 'Well, that's just the same as if you called my father and mother a fool,' or something like that. Then, afterward, he can claim he was scrappin' because he had to defend his father and mother, and of course he'll more than half believe it himself."

"Well, you take a government—it's only just some men, the way I see it, and if they're goin' to start some big trouble like this war, why, of course they'll play just about that same old boy trick, because it's instinct to do it, just the same for a man as it is for a boy—or else the principle's just the same, or something. Well, anyhow, if you want to know who started a scrap and worked it up, you got to forget all the talk there is about it, and all what each side says, and just look at two things: Who was fixed for it first, or thought they were, and who hit first? When you get the answer to those two questions everything's settled about this being 'attacked' business. As near as I can make out, this war began with Germany and Austria's startin' to wipe out two little countries; Austria began shootin' up Serbia, and Germany began shootin' up Belgium. I don't need to notice any more than that, myself—all the girls in the country can debate their heads off, they can't change what happened and they can't excuse it, either."

He was silent, appearing to feel that he had concluded conclusively, and the young gentleman on the window seat, after staring at him for several moments of genuine thoughtfulness, was gracious enough to observe, "Well, old Ram, you may be a little slow in class, but when you think things out with yourself you do show signs of something pretty near like real horse-sense sometimes. Why don't you ever say anything like that to—to some of your pacifist friends?"

"What do you mean? Who you

talkin' about? Whose 'pacifist friends'?"

"See, here!" Fred exclaimed, as Ramsey seemed about to rise. "You keep sitting just where you are, and don't look at me out of the side of your eye like that—pretendin' you're a bad horse. I'm really serious now, and you listen to me. I don't think argufy-ing and debating like that little Fraulein Werder's does much harm. She's a right nifty young rollypoly, by the way, though you didn't notice, of course."

"Why didn't I?" Ramsey demanded, sharply. "Why didn't I notice?"

"Oh, nothing. But, as I was saying, I don't think that sort of talk does much harm: everybody knows it goes on among the pro-Germans, and it's all hot air, anyhow. But I think Linski's sort of talk does do harm, prob'ly among people that don't know much; and, what's more, I think Dora Yocum's does some, too. Well, you hit Linski in the snoot, so what are you—sit still! My lord! You don't think I'm askin' you to go and hit Dora, do you? I mean: Aren't you ever goin' to talk to her about it and tell her what's what?"

"Oh, you go to bed!"

"No, I'm in earnest," Fred urged. "Honestly, aren't you ever goin' to?"

"How could I do anything like that?" Ramsey demanded explosively. "I never see her—to speak to, that is. I prob'ly won't happen to have another talk with her, or anything, all the time we're in college."

"No," Fred admitted, "I suppose not. Of course, if you did, then you would give her quite a talking to, just the way you did the other time, wouldn't you?" But upon that, another resumption of physical violence put an end to the conversation.

CHAPTER XII.

Throughout the term Ramsey's calculation of probabilities against the happening of another interview with Dora seemed to be well founded, but at the beginning of the second "semester" he found her to be a fellow member of a class in biology. More than that, this class had every week a two-hour session in the botanical laboratory, where the structure of plants was studied under microscopic dissection. The students worked in pairs, a special family of plants being assigned to each couple; and the instructor selected the couples with an eye to combinations of the quick with the slow. D. Yocum and R. Milholland (the latter in a strange state of mind and complexion) were given two chairs, but only one desk and one microscope. Their conversation was strictly botanical.

Thenceforth it became the most pressing care of Ramsey's life to prevent his roommate from learning that there was any conversation at all, even botanical. Fortunately, Fred was not taking the biological courses, though he appeared to be taking the sentimental ones with an astonishing thoroughness, and sometimes, to Fred's hilarious delight, Ramsey attempted to turn the tables and rally him upon whatever last affair seemed to be engaging his fancy. The old Victorian and pre-Victorian blague word "petticoat" had been revived in Fred's vocabulary, and in others, as "skirt." The lightsome sprig was hourly to be seen, even when university rulings forbade, dilly-dallying giddily along the campus paths or the town sidewalks with some new and pretty skirt. And when Ramsey tried to fluster him about such a matter Fred would profess his ardent love for the new lady in shouts and impromptu song. Nothing could be done to him, and Ramsey, utterly unable to defend his own sensibilities in like manner, had always to retire in bafflement. Sometimes he would ponder upon the question thus suggested: Why couldn't he do this sort of thing, since Fred could? But he never discovered a satisfying answer.

Ramsey's watchfulness was so careful (lest he make some impulsive admission in regard to the botanical laboratory, for instance) that Mr. Mitchell's curiosity gradually became almost quiescent but there arrived a

day in February when it was piqued into the liveliest activity. It was Sunday, and Fred, dressing with a fastidiousness ever his daily habit, noticed that Ramsey was exhibiting an unusual perplexity about neckties.

"Keep the black one on," Fred said, volunteering a suggestion, as Ramsey muttered fiercely at a mirror. "It's in better taste for church, anyhow. You're going to church, aren't you?"

"Yes. Are you?"

"No. I've got a luncheon engagement."

"Well, you could go to church first, couldn't you? You better; you've got a lot of church absences against you." "Then one more won't hurt. No church in mine this morning, thanks! G'by, ole sox; see you at the 'frat house' for dinner."

He went forth, whistling syncopations, and began a brisk trudge into the open country. There was a professor's daughter who also was not going to church that morning and she lived a little more than three miles beyond the outskirts of the town. Unfortunately, as the weather was threatening, all others of her family abandoned the idea of church that day, and Fred found her before a cozy fire, but surrounded by parents, little brothers and big sisters. The professor was talkative; Fred's mind might have been greatly improved, but with a window in range he preferred a melancholy contemplation of the snow, which had begun to fall in quantity. The professor talked until luncheon, throughout luncheon, and was well under way to fill the whole afternoon with talk, when Fred, repenting all the errors of his life, got up to go.

Heartily urged to remain, for there was now something just under a blizzard developing, he said no, he had a great deal of "curriculum work" to get done before tomorrow, and passed from the sound of the professor's hospitable voice and into the storm. He had a tedious struggle against the wind and thickening snow, but finally came in sight of the town, not long before dark. Here the road led down into a depression, and, lifting his head as he began the slight ascent on the other side, Fred was aware of two figures outlined upon the low ridge before him. They were dimmed by the driving snow and their backs were toward him, but he recognized them



They Were Dora Yocum and Ramsey Milholland.

with perfect assurance. They were Dora Yocum and Ramsey Milholland.

They were walking so slowly that their advance was almost imperceptible, but it could be seen that Dora was talking with great animation; and she was a graceful thing, thus gesticulating in her long, slim fur coat with the white snow frosting her brown fur cap. Ramsey had his hands deep in his overcoat pockets and his manner was wholly that of an audience.

Fred murmured to himself, "What did you say to her? 'Nothin'. I started to, but—'" Then he put on a