

# A Mean Trick

By F. A. MITCHEL

There is a certain college in New England in which until a few years ago young women were admitted to the courses. It is well known that it was the men students who brought about the passage of the regulation that no woman should thereafter be admitted as a student to the college. Why the young men objected was a puzzle to every one except the faculty.

The girls claimed that the reason of their being dropped from the college was that they took the scholarships away from the men, so that women instead of men were being helped through college. The boys declared that the reason why they did not want girls in college was that they took up room that otherwise would have been taken by men and there were fewer men to draw from for competing with other colleges in athletics.

This made the girls mad. It has been claimed that in order to take revenge on the men they put up a job to bring about the defeat of the college team that had been long in training for the annual regatta free to all colleges at Poughkeepsie immediately after the June commencement. There was every expectation that this team would win the race, and every one connected with the college was anticipating the eclat that would attach to their alma mater on account of the victory. The college was a small one, and it was hoped that the winning of a race so important would attract students—men, not girls.

About the 1st of June both the captain of the crew and its trainer pronounced that they had not only the best crew among the competitors so far as muscle was concerned, but they worked together better than any other and had the best stroke. From that time bad luck set in. Perkins (bow) gave out that his physician had forbidden him to row on account of a weakness of his heart. He had been relied upon to do great things, and it was doubted if as good a man could be found for the place. Stanford was selected, but every one knew that he was not Perkins.

Bowers, No. 6, one day was absent from practice. The captain lectured him. He was absent again. The captain declared that another such offense would put him off the crew. It came, and Bowers was fired. It was a great misfortune, for he was one of the best oarsmen in the crew.

And now misfortunes fell thick and fast. Tomkins, No. 3, while climbing a cliff to get a flower for one of the prettiest girls in college fell and broke his arm. The incident increased the antagonism against the women students. But they paid no attention to it, being bent on gathering in the prizes to be given out at the end of the term. Then Charnley, No. 7, all of a sudden said that his mother had set her face against his rowing, fearing that the strain would injure him.

The consequence of all this was that in the space of three weeks the crew had been so reduced that many were opposed to its being entered in the race. A meeting of the students was called to decide the question, and a vote was taken. There were many women students present, each having a vote, and they all voted for the entrance of the club at the regatta.

There was a howl among the men students, who declared that the women had injured the college greatly since they had been admitted, and now it

was evident that they would ruin it.

Well, the crew went to the regatta. There were more of the women students of the college at Poughkeepsie that year than ever before. They said they had come to see their alma mater win. They formed a knot of cheerers, though they had no leaders. Every girl looked inexpressibly happy.

There were six crews competing. At the signal to go they started together, but within a few minutes began to separate, the better crews leaving the poorer ones behind. When they reached the goal the college whose co-eds had come to cheer a victory came in last, being a hundred yards behind the next last boat.

Then the women students gave a cheer, but not a cheer of victory. It was a cheer for votes for women. Then they each and all went home, and their alma mater saw them no more.

In time the true reason for the running down of the crew and its failure came out. At a class meeting of the women students on the 1st of June a committee of the most fascinating girls were appointed to lay in wait for the members of the crew with a view to breaking down its efficiency. Each girl was assigned her object. Perkins was first captured and gave Ethel Curtis a promise not to row, she suggesting the story about his doctor and heart weakness. Bowers was snared by Louise Van Winkle. Tompkins was sent up the cliff for a flower by Winifred Turnlee, with the expectation that he would break something, and he came near breaking his neck. Charnley had no mother to oppose his rowing, but Lucia Harker stood in her stead. With the success of these four there was no need of any other members of the crew being lured.

When the students—men only—re-assembled in September every member of the crew who had been seen in company with a co-ed during the preceding June was cut by his fellow students. Not one of the men who had been duped had been rejected by the girl who duped him.

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