

## FRIENDS

It was a calm, beautiful evening toward the end of May; the birds were busily engaged repairing the ravages which their homes had undergone during the winter; the buds of the trees and hedgerows were opening into leaf; nature was preparing her summer garment. The sun, slowly sinking, shed a cloak of glory over the stately buildings of St. Bernard's, the tidy grass-plots, and the budding hedges. John and Frank reclined in silence by the side of the little brook, which babbled within a stone's throw of the college. John Daley's appearance betokened calmness and resolution; his companion, Frank Crawford, seemed agitated.

But why are these two secluded in this solitary retreat, when the other boys are enjoying a game of ball upon the campus, and why are they silent? Can the babbling brook, which has so often lulled the troubles of the past, give inspiration for the future? Or, perhaps, this is the last visit to their favorite haunt; perhaps they are unable to break the spell of that sacred silence with its pleasant memories; or is the little brook teaching them that same old lesson, "What is gone, is gone forever."

John Daley was one of a respectable family in the little village of Westville. He had completed his course at St. Bernard's, and tomorrow, he was to leave the college he loved so dearly. Frank Crawford, the son of wealthy parents in a large New England town, was an aristocratic looking boy of about nineteen years of age. He had come down East to college two years ago, a boy who had always been indulged by his parents, who was used to plenty of luxury, and who was totally unacquainted with the discipline of boarding-school life. No wonder, then, that during his first months at college, he saw only harshness in the prefect's admonitions and oppression in the rules. The foot-ball coach immediately selected Frank as a likely prospect to fill a place on the half-line, but half-line men

at St. Bernard's must be on duty for every practice, and undergo strict training; as a result, Crawford didn't make the team. Other college activities received similar attention, and Frank's only solace lay in the comforting thought that, in a short time, he and St. Bernard's would part company.

And so, the first term dragged on. The approaching examinations held no terror for Frank—he didn't care; they seemed to him only obstacles, delaying his departure. His father, alarmed at the many complaints against college life in every letter, and realizing that the time had come when his son must be taught to face the stern realities of life, foresaw that, if Frank should come home for the Christmas vacation, he would probably not return. A serious epidemic of sickness furnished a plausible excuse for keeping his son at college. Hence, shortly before Christmas, Frank was both surprised and annoyed when he received a letter from his father, informing him that he must remain at St. Bernard's during the holidays, because of sickness at home.

Alas! All Frank's plans were ruined; he was beginning to encounter the reverses of life, which fall to the lot of each and every one of us. Oh, if those youthful trials could be held off till maturity, youth would be the poet's "Summer holiday," but trials must come, and although they sometimes leave despair in their immediate wake, yet when they are bravely met and overcome, they constitute life's character-builders and the reserve force for the more severe setbacks of manhood.

Frank wasn't too well pleased with his father's solicitude for his health; he would have gone willingly into the midst of the sickness rather than remain where he was; but just about this time, a favorable alternative presented itself. John Daley, learning of his new friend's disappointment, and knowing very well how he hated the idea of remaining where he was, invited him to spend his vacation with him at Westville.



John had taken a fancy to the boy from the start. Although he disliked Frank's unwillingness to submit to college rules, still he detected in him an underlying goodness that drew him unconsciously to the strangely behaving American youth. Nor was the attachment one-sided, for Frank, soon after his arrival, began to admire this generous junior. He usually watched the football games with indifference, but when Daley made a "touch down," Frank felt a throb of pleasure at the feat. So this friendship developed in silence, until one morning, as Daley was leaving the gymnasium, he saw a crowd of the boys standing in a circle, attracted, as he supposed, by one of the not infrequent college fights. When he came up, sure enough, he beheld the bully of the college thrashing Crawford, who was offering only a passive resistance. Although Daley held an enviable reputation as a peacemaker, he shouted to Frank: "Take your own part" The words, with a look from their author were the encouragement which gave force to Frank's fists, and in a few minutes the bully was thoroughly convinced that his future tricks would not be directed toward Crawford.

After the incident, the two became inseparables. Frank went to Westville for Christmas, and although the rustic homestead did not glitter like a certain New England mansion, there was a wholesome atmosphere of contentment present which set Crawford at ease before he was there a day. John's mother and all the family did everything in their power to make this Christmas a happy one for their visitor, but there was one who succeeded more than the others, and this was Nora, John's younger sister, a buoyant and graceful girl of seventeen. She and Frank became very intimate, and on the day when the boys were to return to college, her's was the "Farewell" that lingered in Frank's memory.

During the next term, John and Frank continued their long walks together and often sat in the evenings on

the bank of the little brook. But that indolent, unrestrained youth of last term was changed; Crawford settled down to seriousness; his application astonished the teachers, and the prefect ceased to point a warning finger at him. The time wore on, but not so monotonously as before, and in that time there were precious moments for Frank, for not only was he remembered in John's letters, but he also received letters of his own from Westville. After closing, he left for home with new ideas of college life and with determined resolutions for the future.

The opening day of the following year found John and Frank back at St. Bernard's. They were both on the half-line of the football team, but this year there was no shirking regulations on Frank's part, and in the hard-fought games of the season it was the curly-headed, smiling youth who was responsible for many a victory. And now, at the end of the year, John is graduating and Frank has completed his freshman course and won the leader's medal.

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"Frank," shouted John, as if he had just awakened from a dream, "what are you thinking about?"

"I think we were both thinking," replied Frank, "but it is getting cool; let us go inside."

The sun had sunk and the darkness was descending, accompanied by the noise of the frogs in a near-by pond.

John and Frank must separate now, for they have widely different courses to pursue. Like two mountain streams, cradled in a common summit, as they flow down declivities, follow divergent courses, but are found again flowing side by side across the plain, so let us hope these two friends, who have fought their youthful battles together, may meet again. John leaves us and closes the door of a Jesuit Seminary upon the world and its vanities; Frank studies law, and in a few years is peaceably settled and married to the blue-eyed girl of his college dreams. Alas! After two years of happiness, the grave claimed



Nora; despair became possessed of the citadel of hope; bright future deeds were obliterated from a mind darkened with sorrow.

For many years he practiced his profession, but his mind was ever occupied with sad memories. Much against his will, he was appointed to the Supreme Court Bench. He proved a just, though merciful interpreter of justice. But his determination was ever slackening; he became careless about religion, and finally ceased attending Mass. But why the change? Did he loose his staff? Can it be said that he was unable to stand alone? So it has been with great characters of history. As they stand upon the giddy heights of success, there is a staff which the world does not see; it is a partner in their triumphs, and when it is removed, they grope for its support, and not finding it, they fall. Inspiration had died within Judge Crawford; he spent an apparently happy, but truly vacant life.

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It is a hazy autumn evening, the chestnut leaves are beginning to turn; the flower-pots show signs of recent frost. Judge Crawford is sitting listlessly in front of his beautiful home. Down the sidewalk, with brisk step, comes a white-haired priest. Father Daley had been preaching a mission in a near-by town, and remembering his old chum, he took this opportunity to call and see him. They shake hands, and the thrill which that firm grip gives to Crawford, together with the Missionary's steady gaze, throw back the curtain of time, and the Judge sees his faults. There is no need of persuasion—by the time that the big clock in the tower tolls the hour of nine, he has made his peace with God and is a happy man.

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Next morning, on the train which bore him back to his college, Father Daley read in the "Morning News" that Judge Crawford had died during the night.