

# Ramsey Milholland

by Booth Tarkington

Illustrations by Irwin Myers

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**THE FIGHT.**

Synopsis.—With his grandfather, small Ramsey Milholland is watching the "Decoration Day Parade" in the home town. The old gentleman, a veteran of the Civil war, endeavors to impress the youngster with the significance of the great conflict, and many years afterward the boy was to remember his words with startling vividness. In the schoolroom, a few years afterward, Ramsey is not distinguished for remarkable ability, though his pronounced dislikes are arithmetic, "Recitations" and German. In sharp contrast to Ramsey's backwardness in the precincts of little Dora Yocum, a young lady whom in his bitterness he denominates "Teacher's Pet."

**CHAPTER III.—Continued.**

Here was a serious affront, at least to Ramsey Milholland's way of thinking; for Ramsey, also now proved sensitive. He quieted his friends—"Shut up!"—and advanced toward Wesley. "You look here! Who you callin' 'pups'?"

"Everybody!" Wesley hotly returned. "Everybody that goes around mentioning ladies' names on the public streets are pups!"

"They are, are they?" Ramsey as hotly demanded. "Well, you just look here a minute; my own father mentions my mother's name on the public streets whenever he wants to, and you just try callin' my father a pup, and you won't know what happened to you!"

"What'll you do about it?"

"I'll put a new head on you," said Ramsey. "That's what I'll do, because anybody that calls my father or mother a pup—"

"Oh, shut up! I wasn't talkin' about your ole father and mother. I said everybody that mentioned Dora Yocum's name on the public streets was a pup, and I mean it! Everybody that mentions Dora Yocum's name on the pub—"

"Dora Yocum!" said Ramsey. "I got a perfect right to say it anywhere I want to. Dora Yocum, Dora Yocum, Dora Yocum!"

"All right then, you're a pup!" Ramsey charged upon him and received a suffocating blow full in the face, not from Mr. Bender's fist but from the solid bundle of books at the end of the strap. Ramsey saw eight or ten objectives instantly; there were Wesley Benders standing full length in the air on top of other Wesley Benders, and more Wesley Benders zigzagged out sidewise from still other Wesley Benders; nevertheless, he found one of these and it proved to be flesh. He engaged it wildly at fist-cuffs; pounded it upon the countenance and drove it away. Then he sat down upon the curbstone and, with his dizzy eyes shut, leaned forward for the better accommodation of his ensanguined nose.

Wesley had retreated to the other side of the street, holding a grimy handkerchief to the midmost parts of his pallid face. "There, you ole d—n pup!" he shouted, in a voice which threatened a sob. "I guess that'll teach you to be careful how you mention Dora Yocum's name on the public streets!"

At this, Ramsey made a motion as if to rise and pursue, whereupon Wesley fled, wailing back over his shoulder as he ran. "You wait till I ketch you out alone on the public streets and I'll—"

His voice was lost in an outburst of hooting from his former friends, who sympathetically surrounded the wounded Ramsey. But in a measure, at least, the chivalrous fugitive had won his point. He was routed and outdone, yet what survived the day was a rumor, which became a sort of tenuous legend among those interested. There had been a fight over Dora Yocum, it appeared, and Ramsey Milholland had attempted to maintain something derogatory to the lady, while Wesley defended her as a knightly youth should.

The boys, unmindful of proper gallantry, supported Ramsey on account of the way he had persisted in lickin' the stuffin' out of Wesley Bender after receiving that preliminary wallop from Wesley's blackjack bundle of books. The girls petted and championed Wesley; they talked outrageously of his conqueror; fiercely declaring that he ought to be arrested; and for weeks they maintained a new manner toward him. They kept their facial expressions hostile, but perhaps this was more for one another's benefit than for Ramsey's; and several of them went so far out of their way to find even private opportunities for reproving him that an alert observer might have suspected them to have been less indignant than they seemed—but not Ramsey. He thought they all hated him, and said he was glad of it.

Dora was a non-partisan. The little kick was so diligent at her books she

gave never the slightest sign of comprehending that there had been a fight about her. Having no real cognizance of Messrs. Bender and Milholland except as impediments to the advance of learning, she did not even look demure.

**CHAPTER IV.**

With Wesley Bender, Ramsey was again upon fair terms before the winter had run its course; the two were neighbors and, moreover, were drawn together by a community of interests which made their reconciliation a necessity. Ramsey played the guitar and Wesley played the mandolin.

All ill feeling between them died with the first dust of spring, yet the tinkling they made had no charm to soothe the savage breast of Ramsey whenever the Teacher's Pet came into his thoughts. He day-dreamed a thousand ways of putting her in her place, but was unable to carry out any of them, and had but a cobwebby satisfaction in imagining discomfitures for her which remained imaginary. "Just once!" he said to Fred Mitchell. "That's all I ask, just once. Just gimme one chance to show that girl what she really is. I guess if I ever get the chance she'll find out what's the matter with her, for once in her life, anyway." Thus it came to be talked about and understood and expected in Ramsey's circle, all male, that Dora Yocum's day was coming. "You'll see!" said Ramsey. "The time'll come when that ole girl'll wish she'd moved out o' this town before she ever got appointed monitor of our class! Just you wait!"

They waited, but conditions appeared to remain unfavorable indefinitely. Perhaps the great opportunity might



"For Heaven's Sakes," Heinie Krusemeyer Demanded, "Can't You Shut Up?"

have arrived if Ramsey had been able to achieve a startling importance in any of the "various divergent yet parallel lines of school endeavor"—one of the phrases by means of which teachers and principal clogged the minds of their unarmed auditors. But though he was far from being the dumb driven beast of misfortune that he seemed in the schoolroom, and, in fact, lived a double life, exhibiting in his out-of-school hours a remarkable example of "secondary personality"—a creature fearing nothing and capable of laughter; blue eyed, fairly robust, and anything but dumb—he was nevertheless without endowment or attainment great enough to get him distinction.

He "tried for" the high-school eleven, and "tried for" the nine, but the experts were not long in eliminating him from either of these competitions, and he had to content himself with cheering instead of getting cheered. He was by no manner of means athletic, or enough of anything else, to put Dora Yocum in her place, and so he and the great opportunity were still waiting in May, at the end of the second year of high school, when the class, now the "10 A," reverted to an old fashion and decided to entertain itself with a woodland picnic.

They gathered upon the sandy banks of a creek in the blue shade of big, patchy-barked sycamores, with a dancing sky on top of everything and gold dust atwinkle over the water. Hither the napkin-covered baskets were brought from the wagons and assembled in the shade, where they appeared as an attractive little meadow of white napery, and gave both surprise and pleasure to communities of ants and to other original settlers of the neighborhood.

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For this nucleus or headquarters of the picnic, various expeditions set forth up and down the creek and

through the woods that bordered it. Two cavied boy fishermen established themselves upon a bank up-stream, with hooks and lines thoughtfully brought with them, and poles which they fashioned from young saplings. They took mussels from the shallows, for bait, and having gone to all this trouble, declined to share with friends less energetic and provident the perquisites and pleasures secured to themselves.

Albert Paxton was one person who proved his enterprise. Having visited the spot some days before, he had hired for his exclusive use throughout the duration of the picnic an old rowboat belonging to a shanty squatter; it was the only rowboat within a mile or two and Albert had his own uses for it. Albert was the class lover and, after first taking the three chaperon teachers "out for a row," an excursion concluded in about ten minutes, he disembarked them; Sadie Clews stepped into the boat, a pocket camera in one hand, a tennis racket in the other; and the two spent the rest of the day, except for the luncheon interval, solemnly drifting along the banks or grounded on a shoal. Now and then Albert would row a few strokes, and at almost any time when the populated shore glanced toward them, Sadie would be seen photographing Albert, or Albert would be seen photographing Sadie, but the tennis racket remained an enigma. They were sixteen, and had been "engaged" more than two years.

On the borders of the little meadow of baskets there had been deposited two black shapes, which remained undisturbed throughout the day, a closed guitar case and a closed mandolin case, no doubt containing each its proper instrument. So far as any use of these went they seemed to be of the same leisure class to which Sadie's tennis racket belonged, for when one of the teachers suggested music, the musicians proved shy. Wesley Bender said they hadn't learned to play anything much and, besides, he had a couple o' broken strings he didn't know as he could fix up; and Ramsey said he guessed it seemed kind o' too hot to play much. Joining friends, they organized a contest in marksmanship, the target being a floating can which they assailed with pebbles; and after that they "skipped" flat stones upon the surface of the water, then went to join a group gathered about Willis Parker and Heinie Krusemeyer.

No fish had been caught, a lack of luck crossly attributed by the fishermen to the noise made by constant advice on the part of their attendant gallery. Messrs. Milholland, Bender, and the other rock throwers came up shouting, and were ill received.

"For heaven's sakes," Heinie Krusemeyer demanded, "can't you shut up? Here we just first got the girls to keep their mouths shut a minute and I almost had a big pickerel or something on my hook, and here you got to up and yell so he chases himself away! Why can't nobody show a little sense sometimes when they'd ought to? A fish isn't goin' to bite when he can't even hear himself think! Anybody ought to know that much."

But the new arrivals hooted. "Fish!" Ramsey vociferated. "I'll bet a hundred dollars there hasn't been even a minny in this creek for the last sixty years!"

"There is, too!" said Heinie, bitterly. "But I wouldn't be surprised there wouldn't be no longer if you got to keep up this noise. If you'd shut up just a minute you could see yourself there's fish here."

Ramsey leaned forth over the edge of the overhanging bank, a dirt precipice five feet above the water, and peered into the indeterminable depths below. The pool had been stirred, partly by the inept pokings of the fishermen and partly by small clouds and bits of dirt dislodged from above by the feet of the audience. The water, consequently, was but brownly translucent and revealed its secrets reluctantly; nevertheless certain dim little shapes had been observed to move within it, and were still there. Ramsey failed to see them at first.

"Where's any ole fish?" he inquired, scornfully.

"Look!" whispered the girl who stood nearest to Ramsey. She pointed. "There's one. Right down there by Willis' hook. Don't you see him?"

Ramsey was impressed enough to whisper. "Is there? I don't see him. I can't—"

The girl came closer to him and, the better to show him, leaned out over the edge of the bank and, for safety in maintaining her balance, rested her left hand upon his shoulder while she pointed with her right. Thereupon something happened to Ramsey. This touch upon his shoulder was almost nothing, and he had never taken the slightest interest in Milla Rust (to whom that small warm hand belonged), though she was the class beauty, and long established in the office. Now, all at once, a peculiar and heretofore entirely unfamiliar sensation suddenly became important in the upper part of his chest. For a moment he held his breath, an involuntary action—he seemed to be standing in a shower of flowers.

"Don't you see it, Ramsey?" Milla whispered. "It's a great big one. Why, it must be as long as—as your shoe! Look!"

Ramsey saw nothing but the thick round curl on Milla's shoulder. That curl was shot with dazzling fibers of sunshine. He seemed to be trembling.

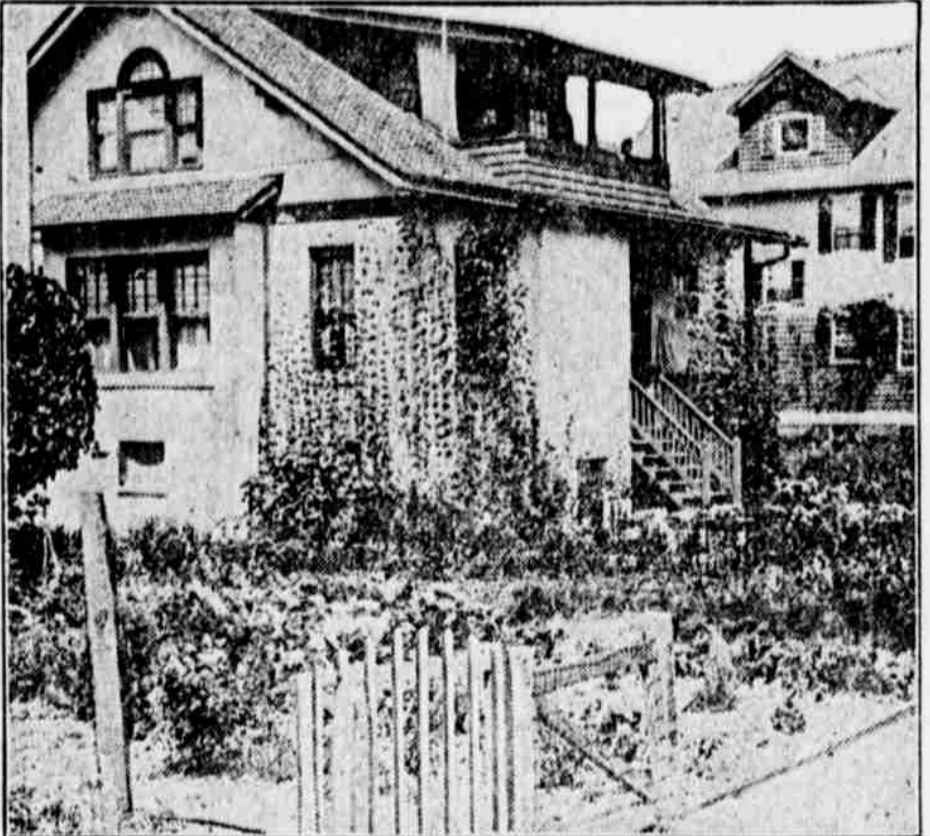
"The old resentment rose—he'd 'show' that girl yet, some day."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Sorrow often blinds people together.

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### MANY WILL SEED THEMSELVES

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Sufficient variety in planting the garden annuals will assure cut flowers all summer, suggests the United States Department of Agriculture. There are so many different garden flowers that are easy to raise, that almost endless combinations may be selected.

One would surely want an abundance of blue cornflowers, sometimes called "bachelor's buttons," "ragged sailor," "ragged robin," or a variety of other names. When placed in water after cutting, the flowers increase in size. The seeds of these annuals should be sown in the fall or in the spring from the time the ground is fit to work until the last of May in the North and the last of June in the South. They may be started earlier under glass. The young plants should be thinned to 4 to 6 inches apart. They thrive well on all moderately rich garden soils. When once established they will usually reseed themselves year after year.

Scabiosa, often called mourning bride, pin-cushion flower, and sweet scabious, is an easily grown old-fashioned half-hardy annual that is very attractive and satisfactory both for cutting and for borders and beds. The flowers, which vary from white through rose, crimson and blue to almost black, are borne on long stems and keep a long time either on the plant or when cut. The seed should be sown in the open ground after danger from hard frost is past and the plants will bloom in about 12 weeks. There are also hardy perennial kinds.

**The Popular Zinnia.**

The home garden is not complete without zinnias, sometimes called "youth-and-old-age." They are easily grown from seed sown in the open ground. When sown as soon as the ground is fit to work, the plants will bloom abundantly and continuously through the entire season. Of late great improvements have been wrought both in the color and form of the flower. Their colors are white, yellow, orange, pink, rose and scarlet. During the month of August zinnias are at their best.

To secure large flowers and a profusion of bloom the plants must be given ample room for full development as well as an abundant supply of food. Strong rich soils suit them. If the seeds are sown in a dwelling house or in a hotbed and the young plants are pricked out once or twice before being placed in their permanent situations more satisfactory results will be secured than from outdoor-sown seeds, unless equal care in thinning or transplanting is given. The plants can be used for groups, beds, borders, garden lines and summer hedges. Their average height is 2½ feet, ranging from 2 to 3 feet.

There are two forms of "baby's breath" of which the perennial is sometimes considered best, but the annual type may be used with good effect for combining with other cut

flowers. It is sown in the open ground as soon as freezing weather is past.

**For Fall Blossoms.**

The China aster is certainly one of the most satisfactory of the annual flowering plants. Its habit of growth adapts the China aster to close planting for cut bloom, for window boxes and also for bedding. It should not be confused with the attractive native, hardy perennial asters.

Plants from seed sown in the open ground in May and supplied sufficient moisture bloom abundantly in September and October, when the flowers are seen at their best. For July and August blooms, the seeds should be sown in March or April. When frosts occur during this season the planting will need to be done in a coldframe, a spent hotbed or in pots or boxes in a living room. Cover the seed about half an inch deep with rich light soil, and when the plants have three or four leaves transfer them to thumb pots or to other boxes, setting the plants about two inches apart.

After all danger of frost is past transplant the plants so treated to their permanent home, where they should stand about eighteen inches apart each way in well-prepared beds. Fresh manure or manure used in too large quantities sometimes proves injurious to them. Only thoroughly composted manure mixed with the soil is safe for these plants. Small quantities of air-slaked lime or of fresh wood ashes stirred into the surface of the beds are beneficial. When given plenty of water and rich, fine soil China asters can be grown into beautiful pot plants.

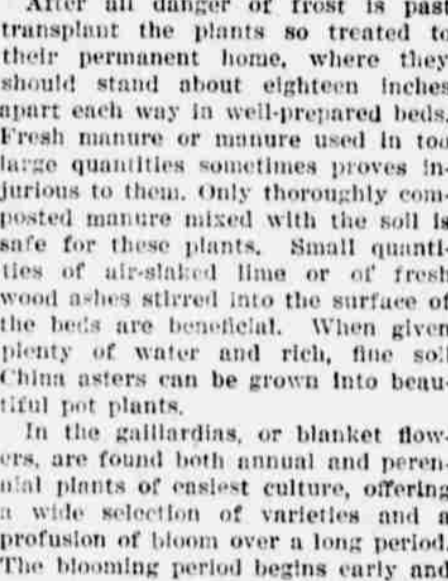
In the galliardias, or blanket flowers, are found both annual and perennial plants of easiest culture, offering a wide selection of varieties and a profusion of bloom over a long period. The blooming period begins early and

continues late in the autumn. These are plants well adapted to mixed borders and are very satisfactory as cut flowers. The stems are of good length, carrying the orange and crimson flowers well, while the cut flowers keep fresh for a long time when placed in water. The perennial types are often preferred.

**Plants Need Sun and Air.**

The annual galliardias are all propagated readily from seeds sown where they are to grow soon after freezing weather is past, although they can be started under glass and be transplanted to their permanent location as soon as killing frosts have passed. In either case, the blooming plants should not stand closer together than 10 to 12 inches. They grow and bloom best when fully exposed to sun and air and when planted on a fertile but light and well-drained soil.

Among various pleasing flowers one may choose from stock, calendula, candytuft, alyssum, phlox drummondii, petunias, ageratum, verbena, dahlias and gladiolus. Each gardener will have personal preferences easy to satisfy with the long list suitable for cutting when in bloom.



Petunia Window Box.

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