

MIDDIES AND THEIR FIGHTS UNDER CODE

Why Pugilism Is Rampant in the Annapolis Naval Academy

REVELATIONS OF BRANCH-MERIWETHER AFFAIR

What the Code Is and the Fistic Fights Which It Constantly Gives Rise to—Hazing the Most Fruitful of Primary Causes—Stories of Some of the Fights—A Duel of Former Years.

Annapolis, Md.—The recent revelations of fistic encounters among the midshipmen of the United States naval academy here growing out of the death of Midshipman Branch after a fistic fight with a lower classman named Meriwether are of a most sensational character. The curtain of secrecy has been raised, revealing a state of affairs in the inner life of the academy little dreamed of by the citizens of the country.

Judging by the reports, the chief business of the midshipmen is pummeling each other in accordance with the liberal interpretation of the Marquis of Queensberry rules. Part of the equipment of every man is evidently the belligerent chip. And he wears it in such a reckless manner that it flops off at the slightest touch of the aggressive code.

The "code?" What is it? Nobody seems to know. They say it is not written, so that it is not in documentary form. And nobody seems to be able to explain just how this much honored "Sir Code" acquired a residence in the academy, or just how he attained such an ascendancy over the young men being trained there for Uncle Sam's navy. But certain it is that he is there, and that he just does on fights which are sometimes more than bloody, as was the case when Branch went down and out. All fights are to a finish, and that word finish frequently means more than was intended or expected when the quarrel was in the making, and the challenge was being sent.

Years ago there used to be occasional fights among the midshipmen on the spur of the moment, and once in awhile a formal bout arranged for the settlement of some wrong, real or fancied. But there were no recognized rules governing or creating such affairs, and there was no regularity of their occurrence. But with the passage of the years the present honor system grew up, and with the invention of this "fight factory" for such it is, pure and simple, the fistic encounters became more frequent. It is said that the officers of the academy do not recognize the existence of this code of honor, even though they may

the rough-and-ready style of the midshipmen and their eagerness for the fray. A third classman had accosted a "plebe," or fourth classman with the admonition: "Hold up your head." Indignant at this attempt to "run" him—for graduation day was near at hand, and both were preparing to step up a class, and this promotion would, under the customs of the academy, take the "plebe" out of the grade of the hazed and relegate the office of hazer to the succeeding "youngster" or third class—he replied, defiantly: "Mind your own business!"

The third classman stood aghast before such audacity on the part of a "plebe," and as soon as he had recovered sufficiently from his astonishment to speak, he demanded: "You want to fight, do you?"

"Yes," replied the "plebe," who realized that there was no other way of settlement than in accordance with the recognized code of honor, although in comparison with the upper classman he was a veritable Zerkens in stature. But Midshipman McEntee, the "plebe," was no coward, in fact there is no room for the man who shows the white feather in the academy, and he began to strip for the fray, and right then and there in the open daylight, in a secluded spot of the academy grounds, the two midshipmen went at it. There was no referee and no seconds, but it was a fight to a finish nevertheless, and while the clever fists of the little "plebe" found landing places on the face of his antagonist and he colored, still he was worsted in the encounter, in fact so badly was he punished that he had to go to sick quarters. Erysipelas set in in the battered face, and he nearly crossed the river. Before he went to the hospital, the commandant of midshipmen observed his face and wanted to know what was the matter. "Matter," replied the plucky "plebe," testily, "there's nothing the matter with me."

The Class Fights. But the majority of fights in the academy are of a more formal character than the one described above. It is in the class fight where the code has

lighter before his admission to the academy. It seems he went to one of the upper classmen and said: "See here, I don't like the way my class is being treated." The upper classman was nearly surprised out of his wits, but recovered from his stupor—and only one who knows the full meaning of "rats" among midshipmen can have a correct appreciation of what that announcement from a "plebe" to an upper classman carried—the "rating" demanded: "Midshipman, do you want to fight?" "That's what I'm looking for," was the bold reply. The fight was arranged, and then followed a series of humiliating defeats for upper classmen, and there is no telling just where the affair might have ended if the academy authorities had not got wind of what was in progress, and put a stop to further encounters in that particular series. But it is said that the "plebe" boldly informed the officials that he "could whip the whole upper class."

Hazing and the Code. Most of the encounters in the academy come from hazing the "plebes," although the "unknown lady" and other things often figure as the cause belli. An upper classman resents a lower classman being too attentive to his "best girl," and any "galliness," or forwardness in a lower classman is sure to bring the offender to issue with the offended upper midshipman. Midshipmen have been known to fight

The story of Midshipman Charles G. Hunter is a peculiar and in some respects a sad one. The affair of honor into which he was drawn and which resulted in his killing his man, followed him all his days, like an evil nemesis, and he died with the words on his lips: "My life has been blighted, and all my happiness wrecked by the sight of that man lying dead on the bank of that little creek in Delaware—killed by my pistol shot—and a man I had met only twice before we stood facing each other on that fateful Sunday morning."

The Trivial Beginning. The duel grew out of a trivial incident, and the men who finally met each other on the field of honor were not the original principals in the affair. Henry Wharton Griffith and R. Dillon Drake, two society men of Philadelphia, in company with some friends sauntered into a billiard parlor at Third and Chestnut streets on the afternoon of Friday, February 17, 1880, and Drake, angered by an imputed insult upon his skill with the cue, struck Griffith in the face. Before friends could interfere Drake had severely whipped his companion. That evening a message was sent to New York to Passed Midshipman Charles H. Duryee, of the United States navy, asking him to come immediately to Philadelphia. Duryee arrived on the following Tuesday and the next day carried a challenge from

acceptance of Drake's challenge, but that action of society retorted that an adversary who had waited to screw his courage to the sticking point would not be accorded the honor of a meeting with a gentleman.

Miller quickly took up Hunter's challenge and sent his acceptance by Lieut. Edmund Byrne, an intimate friend, and Westcott was deputized to arrange with Byrne the time and place of the meeting. It was agreed that the duel should take place in Delaware a short distance below the boundary on the morning of the next day, and that, besides, the seconds, each duellist should be represented by one friend.

The Duel to the Death. The parties to the affair were on hand at the appointed time and place and after the distance had been paced off and instructions given as to the method of firing, the principals took their places. Not a word had passed between them.

"Gentlemen, are you ready?" came the question.

Each duellist assented.

"Fire—one—two—"

The last word of the count was lost in the report of the pistols, which were fired so nearly together that the separate reports could scarcely be distinguished.

Miller turned toward his seconds; his face was deadly pale; his pistol dropped from his hand; he placed one hand over his breast, then fell heavily to the ground.

Hunter advanced toward the fallen man, and in a loud voice that was filled with emotion, cried: "Gentlemen, I assure you that I had no enemy toward that man. His blood must rest upon the heads of others who have dragged him into their quarrels. Is he badly wounded, doctor?" he asked, with evident trepidation.

"He will not live five minutes," was the reply. "You put the bullet squarely into his breast." Kneeling about the dying man the little group filled with varying emotions, watched the life of the young lawyer quickly flow out.

"I would give my life if I could restore that man to life," cried Hunter, as he saw the dying gasp of his victim.

Agitation and Reform. The report of the duel, when it was published sent a thrill of excitement over the country, and created a sentiment so strong as to practically strike the deathknell of the honor code in this country. And it is not at all unlikely that the present agitation growing out of the Branch-Meriwether affair of "honor" may operate in a similar way and rid the naval academy of the operation of this baneful system.

We Are Prosperous.

Although the bill-fretted householder is not able to rid himself entirely of the thought that the butcher, the baker and the grocer are absorbing more than their per capita of the general prosperity; although there is more point than ever to the quip that, while it may not cost more to live, says the New York Globe, it costs more to make people believe you are living; nevertheless if a man, ceasing to search for the fly in the ointment and dismissing from consideration ills that may be peculiar to himself, will look abroad over society, he will find ample excuse for indulging in all the rejoicing of which he is temperamentally capable. The lot of the vast majority of the people of this country and this city was never as happy as now. We grumble and complain and get sad satisfaction from the expression of discontent; but the querulousness is only on the surface. Of green gaze, indeed, must be the vision that does not see that things are better and becoming better still. The rich may be growing richer, but so are the poor. There are more wants in the world to-day than yesterday, but, what is more to the purpose, more wants, although appetite grows with feeding, are satisfied. Material prosperity has so leaked down that it floods an ever increasing percentage of the population. Luxuries once confined to princes are now within the reach of everybody. The comfort of yesterday is regarded as the necessity of to-day. Rags and tatters have practically disappeared from our streets. Drunkenness is decreasing. The chronic repiner doubtless has his uses, and the existing order is far from perfect, but as we throw out the log we have reason to be pleased at the rapidity with which the old ship is traveling.

Cigarettes and Insanity. "Does cigarette smoking cause insanity?" was the direct question asked by a committee of the Medico-Legal society, of New York, of the medical superintendents of the hospitals for insane of the United States, and not a single case was reported in answer," says Dr. William B. Fletcher, in Medical Progress. "Responses from alienists of Europe showed great surprise, as the subject had never been thought of by them. Personally, I have examined over 200 works on insanity published in English, with the essence of German and French literature by translation, and by no alienist or medical writer of any repute is the word cigarette found in relation to causation, not in smoking tobacco in any form mentioned in connection with mental disease. In the past 20 years I have examined over 1,200 cases of nervous disease and insanity where the cause of the malady was given by their friends as the cigarette habit. In not one case have I reason to believe that tobacco had anything to do with the causation of the disease. The patients were all young men, and some of them insane without doubt. Some of them smoked cigarettes to excess, but their insanity was the cause of the excess; the excess was not the cause of the insanity."

Miller Dragged In. News of the controversy had spread among the naval officers at New York and Philadelphia, and there was sharp criticism of Duryee because he had not accepted Drake's challenge, despite the hair-splitting ruling of Lieut. Hampton Westcott. So, to clear Duryee of the imputation of cowardice, some friends in New Brunswick, N. J., wrote to Miller, the attorney, asking that the whole matter be referred to a committee whose decision should be final. To this Miller responded that, as Duryee had not accepted the challenge to fight, for reasons best known to himself, he and Drake looked upon the incident as closed.

The affair would doubtless have ended there had it not been for the entrance of Midshipman Hunter into the dispute. On March 10 he visited Miller, demanded the letter written from New Brunswick and went away in hot anger, because of the refusal of the lawyer to hand it over.

A few days later the New Brunswick letter was printed, and Hunter demanded immediate satisfaction. Miller disclaimed any responsibility for the publication of the letter, but the explanation was not accepted, and on March 17 Lieut. Westcott gave a caveat to Miller. The attorney again insisted that he had no connection with the publication of private correspondence and declined to accept the challenge.

Three days later Hunter posted Miller as a coward, concluding his declaration with the gratuitous assertion that the Philadelphia lawyer was a liar as well as a poltroon. This rapid fire oratorical bombast stirred Duryee to action, and he sent an

MUNICIPAL PROBLEM

WHAT CHICAGO CAN TELL ABOUT THE DELINQUENT CHILD.

CALLED SICK NOT CRIMINAL

Children Brought to Juvenile Court Have Home Surroundings Investigated—What Judges Have Found Out—Glance at Y. W. C. A.

CHICAGO, M. A. S. Mary McDowell, out at the university settlement, said the other day in a public address that the problem of the city is the problem of the child. Which seemed to set an old fact before us in a new light. The grown-ups are grown up, most of them have at least memories of green fields and running brooks to counteract somewhat the stone and gutters of town surroundings. Most of them are formed—though no doubt most of them need re-forming. But the little, impressionable, growing child, he sadly stands in need of the softening influence of unworldly Nature, needs elbow room, contact with the good and pure. And maybe a little child shall eventually lead us from this insane herding together, maybe he it will bring man back to the land. But present conditions must be met with, the city do what she can for her children.

Two Chicago jurists are able to speak authoritatively on the subject of delinquent and dependent children, Judge Tutthill and Judge Mack; Judge Tutthill was the first judge of our juvenile court, Judge Mack is his successor at this post. The former tells us in a single terse sentence pretty nearly the whole story of the tempted street urchin—"A poorly fed and poorly clothed boy is not a normal boy. The street urchin is almost always hungry, his food of the sort and limit as not to give the needed nourishment. What more natural than that he occasionally smash a slot machine and take possession of the popcorn or other goodies therein? What more natural than that he steal a bit of pipe now and then, break into a freight car and obtain goods he knows where to dispose of and no questions asked. The judges, who go back of the boys' offense in search of causes, lay the blame on the two evils of poverty and drink."

A Doubtful Guardian. POVERTY that makes it necessary for father and mother both to work for the family bread, leaves family guardianship, up-bringing of the children unprovided for. And when we learn from Judge Tutthill that the

largest number of boys finding their way into the juvenile court come from homes where there are large families, parents able to give smallest advantages, we ponder a little on the talk about race surdes; are minded of those verses recently appearing under the caption, "Be Ye Fruitful." Here is one member of the big family described—"Jim was the second; 'twas his fate To go his father's wretched gait." And we are given a picture of each in the miserable "lastly."

Judge Tutthill gives us further cause for thought when he calls attention to the influence of the police as a whole on crime among boys. He bids us consider the attitude of average policemen, their general weakness and roughness; it is a question whether the attitude is owing to their conception of impressing authority, or owing their pride in this authority, an authority they wish ever to keep on show. Whatever the motive, the results are pretty hard on the street boy; he regards men of the force as his natural enemies.

The odds are against the boy, the street boy. Just a little indulgence in boyish mischievousness, ebullition of youthful spirits, and down comes the arm of the law. The kid is arrested. On the boulevard a like action on the part of a boy would probably meet with no reproof.

One thing seems firmly implanted in the heart of a boy—good boy, "bad" boy, rich boy, poor boy, every kind of a boy—and that is a passion for justice, hot anger against injustice. The policeman makes a mistake in nabbing the boy; the boy never forgets it, from that on he is forinst the policeman, forinst the law and forinst for which the policeman is supposed to stand. The question is a big one; the juvenile court judge makes declaration that it is a national question, "for corrupt local political bosses are recruited from the ranks of the 'bad boys,' and they elect state and national legislatures."

Some Crying Needs. IN A SENSE this is a day of destructive criticism, institutions are analyzed and pulled to pieces, structures totter, no promise of new ones on firm foundations to take their place. As yet no perfect method for solving the municipal problem of the child is at work; but fine reforms are under consideration and in progress.

Pursuing the thought of the need of a wise guardian for the unguided child, the suggestion is made that it be the duty of a city's chief of police to instruct "the finest" that they commit themselves towards the street Arabs in a manner paternal, that they

Mr. Nervous—What's all that noise? Mrs. Nervous—Noise! That's Edith playing the piano. She's in the parlor with Mr. Sophy. As long as we hear the piano we may be assured that he isn't holding her hands and— Mr. Nervous—For goodness' sake! let him hold them.—Stray Stories.

Quick Awakening. There's nothing half so swift in life as the awakening from love's young dream.—N. O. Picayune.

make superhuman effort to look upon them as boys rather than embryonic criminals. Once before in these columns we referred to what is known as the Indianapolis plan of work among boys lacking proper home influence; in which plan, citizens of high character each take it upon himself to act the part of guardian to some individual lad for a specified time, look after his physical, moral and mental welfare, try to give him a lift in life. The Indianapolis plan has met with success, individual work is adjudged by far the most valuable.

Another suggestion of value is one wherein the public school is to be so changed that here, too, the individual boy may receive some attention, not be merely one of a mass. And in connection with this idea there arises the request for more ungraded rooms, rooms where the backward boy may receive the consideration he misses in the present overcrowded ward school. In Chicago, workers among the dependents and delinquents are asking for an enlargement of the parental school, demanding that boys of this class be kept out of the city institution that is really a prison; declare that the lads are not criminals, but "sick," in need of a hospital, not a prison.

The Evening Schools. IT WOULD appear that our evening schools are more and more ministering to adults, people eager to take advantage of privileges denied in their youth. It is of interest to visit one of these places where students, after a hard day's work at manual or other labor, have assembled to engage in still harder work with the three R's—or maybe with higher mathematics, with regular high school work, if you please.

Evening schools are held at nine high schools and 29 elementary. The attendance is 12,000; a goodly showing for "after working hours."

To these schools come the newly arrived Scandinavian, anxious to learn "apik English" that she may read the cook book recipes; here come Greek, German, Italian, Bohemian, Pole, Roumanians, Lithuanians—all the elements that make up cosmopolitan Chicago. And here may be found the darky mammy, taken with a sudden desire for "education." Over at the Scammon school, on the West side, which is thought to have the largest polyglot enrollment, one of the pupils is Dinah Dean, sixty and over, once a slave, now a proud atom in our public school system. Poor Dinah is having a hard time of it, probably often looks back regretfully to the cotton field and cotton field taskmaster as she works at learning by the sweat of her brow.

At the Scammon school Greeks and Germans are in the lead as students. In this student body one comes upon the lad of 15 and the mature man of 50, both bent over American books, an advance as an American citizen. And we come also upon simon pure Americans—if such exist, now—a man that either never before had a chance or never took advantage of it. An interesting place, the evening school, to study races, to study individuals, to study sociology.

The Traveler's Aid.

ABOUT a big railway station in a big city the traveler may notice an unobtrusive woman that daily haunts the place, a woman wearing a blue silk badge. If the traveler get close enough he may see that the gold letters spell

these words, "Traveler's Aid of the Young Women's Christian association."

Many young women in perfect safety pass unattended through the passenger stations, through a visit to the fascinating city; but there are cases that make it of greatest boon that such a friend and experienced helper exists as the Traveler's Aid. If one of these aid workers serves a woman that seems in need of help, looks lost, forlorn, she steps up and inquires if she can be of any assistance. If the interrogated is just bewildered by the size of the town, afraid to start out in search of friends that have failed to appear, then the aid to the traveler takes the form of hunting up the locality, escorting the perplexed young lady to the place she is doubtful about finding alone.

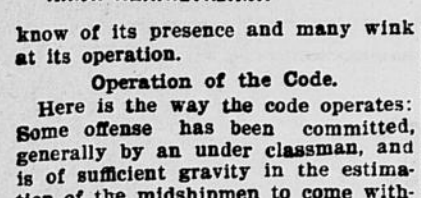
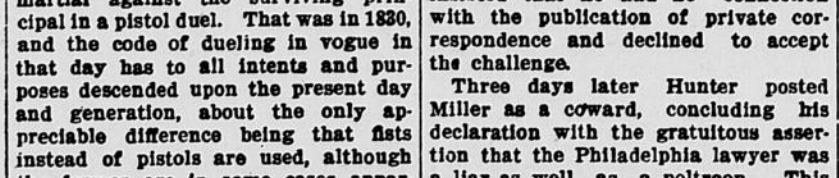
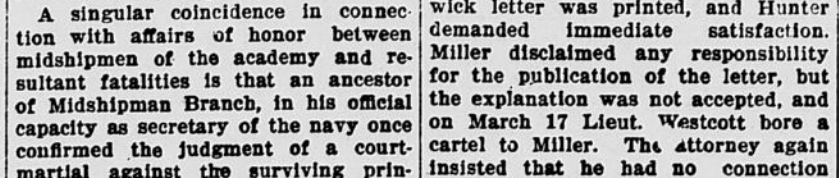
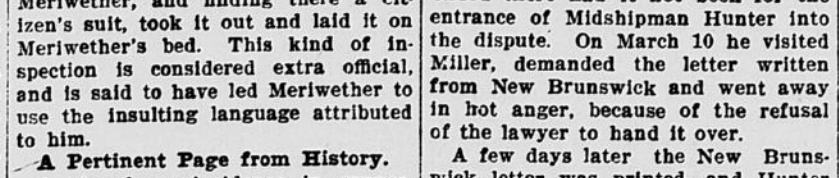
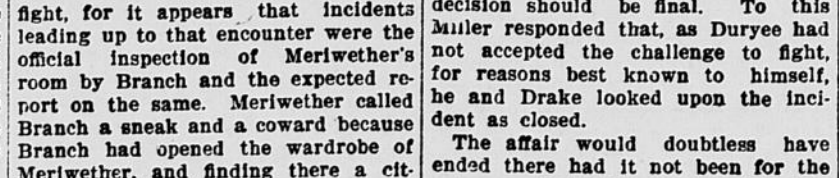
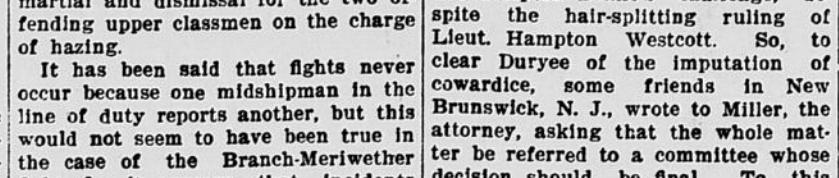
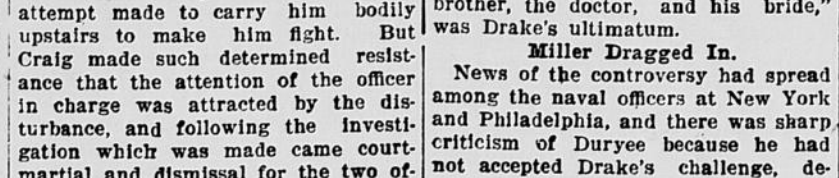
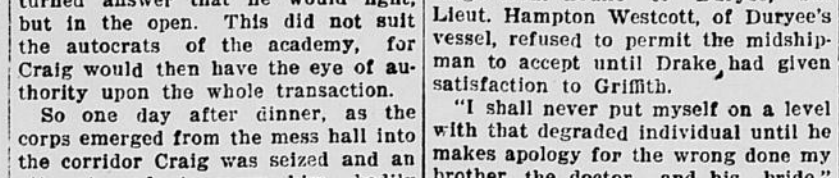
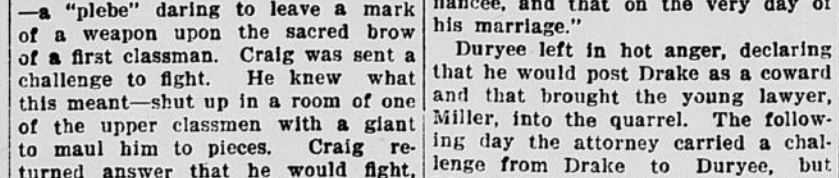
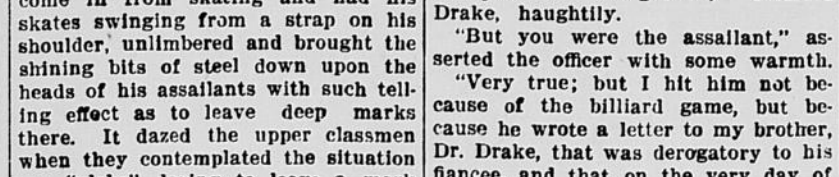
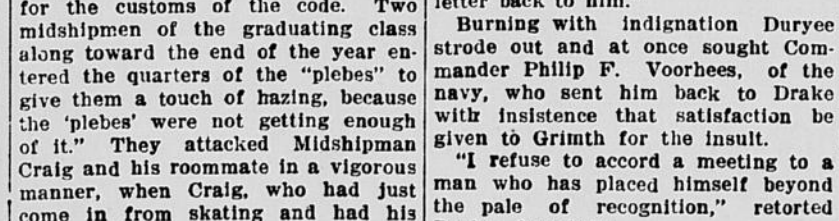
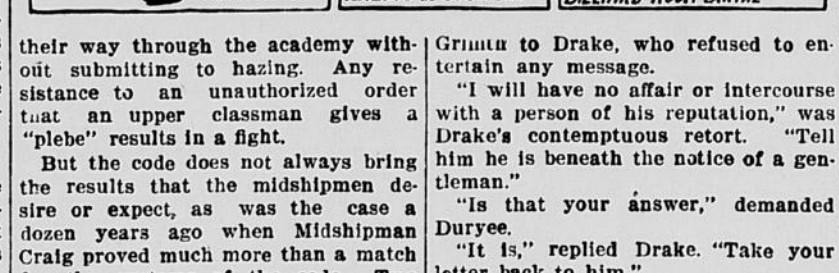
It is not alone in melodrama another kind of aid is needed by the attractive young stranger, and sometimes the Traveler's Aid finds it necessary to invoke the assistance of the station policeman in convincing her charge that she is in danger. When so convinced, gladly the young stranger accompanies her mentor to the friendly shelter of the Association building on Michigan avenue. If she has been brought to the city on the promise of honest employment and stands penniless when the employment is discovered dishonest, she is given a home here and the offices of the employment bureau are put to her service.

The Y. W. C. A. is criticised not infrequently for this, and that omission and commission. But it deserves commendation for much of its work. KATHERINE POPE.

Advantages of a Quarrel. "Gee, but I got a clinch!" "What is it, Tommy?" "I do anything I want ter, an' then I tell ma th't pa said I could. An' I tell pa th't ma said I could."

"But don't they get wise when they ask each other?" "New. Pa an' ma don't speak."—Cleveland Leader.

In Preference. Friend—What did the editor offer you for your poem? Post—Half a crown. "Why, that was an insult. What did you say?" "Nothing, I pocketed the insult."—Cassell's.



know of its presence and many wink at its operation.

Operation of the Code. Here is the way the code operates: Some offense has been committed, generally by an under classman, and is of sufficient gravity in the estimation of the midshipmen to come within the scope of the code, and a challenge follows. The president of the class names the time, the seconds are appointed, and in the place appointed—at the present time generally one of the wardrooms of the midshipmen—the combatants strip to the buff and fight after the most approved form of the prize ring. It is always a fight to a finish, and is generally so bloody and fierce that the most strenuous mill between professional prize fighters is but tame in comparison. The finish comes when one of the combatants fails to respond to the call of time after the lapse of the interval between rounds. No one at the academy can recall a single fight which has not been a finish affair, for it would never do for a man to stop until it was finished. To stop short of that would disgrace a man in the eyes of his fellow classmen, and he could never look them in the face again.

How One Fight Came About. Here is the story of how one fight was brought on, and is illustrative of