IT WAS LARRY LOGAN WHO FUMED AND IMPLORED. . .

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THE PLAY THAT WON

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BY

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"FOR THE FREEDOM OF THE SEAS," "UNDER THE YANKEE ENSIGN,"
"THE HALF BACK," ETC.

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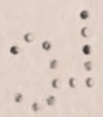

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WHEN the knock came Ted was slumped on his spine in the Morris chair, the green-shaded lamp beside him and a magazine propped on his chest. It was Saturday night and study was not imperative, for which he was grateful. The baseball game with Prospect Hill in the afternoon had been a hard one, and the victory—for Warwick had won in the tenth—had left him rather tired, and he had passed up a lecture in the school auditorium in favor of rest and solitude at home. Which is why the knock on the door brought a sigh and a frown. Of course, he might remain silent, but the light shining through the transom would be a give-away, and the caller might be Trev or Corwin with his everlasting stamp album: Trev was a sensitive kid and easily hurt. So Ted laid down his magazine and said "Come in!" in no very enthusiastic tone. To his relief, the visitor was Hal Saunders.

"Hello, Bowman," said Hal, glancing about the study. "George around?" His eyes sought the darkened bedroom as he closed the door behind him.

"Gone home over Sunday," replied Ted.

"Gone home!" Hal's tone held so much of dismay that Ted wondered.

"Yes, his father's been sick for about a week or so, and he got leave from faculty. Went right after the game."

"Gee!" exclaimed Hal worriedly. "He didn't say anything to me about it. I wish I'd known. I want to see him about—something important." To Ted's discomforture he seated himself on the window-seat and moodily stared at the lamp. "When's he coming back?"

"Monday. He got permission to cut morning hours. I guess he will be on the twelve-forty-six."

"That'll be too late," said Hal aggrievedly. "By Jove, that's rotten! I don't see why he couldn't let folks know he was going."

Evidently overwhelmed by the news, he made no move to depart. He was a good-looking fellow of sixteen, well-made, tall and lithe, with light hair and eyes and a fair complexion which even

three months of baseball had failed to darken. In contrast, the boy in the Morris chair was a year younger, shorter, heavier, more compact, with dark eyes and hair and a face which, if not handsome, was rather attractive in spite of the fact that sun and weather had tanned it to the hue of leather and that the tip of the nose was peeling. Both boys were members of the School Nine, Ted being right fielder and Hal first-choice pitcher. They were not, however, very good friends. Ted thought Hal traded too much on his ability as a twirler. It was undeniable that he was an exceptionally good one, perhaps the best that the school had ever had, but in Ted's opinion Hal would do well to forget the fact now and then. He didn't understand what his room-mate, George Tempest, saw in Hal to admire; that is, beyond his playing. Naturally George, being captain of the team, would feel kindly toward a chap who so often pitched to victory, but he needn't overdo it! Ted was fond of his room-mate and so it is possible that jealousy had something to do with his mild dislike of Hal Saunders.

Presently Hal raised his eyes from a frowning contemplation of his shoes and Ted was surprised at the trouble shown in his face. It was a most

unusual thing for the self-satisfied, rather superior Hal Saunders to exhibit anything approaching discomposure. In spite of himself, Ted's sympathies were touched. "Was it something about the Team?" he asked.

Hal shook his head. "No, it was—something——" He hesitated. Then: "I wanted to borrow some money from him."

"Oh!" murmured Ted. It was, he reflected, a lot like Hal to make a fuss about an unimportant matter like that. Perhaps the other read the thought, for he suddenly said defensively:

"I'm in a dickens of a hole, Bowman, and I was pretty sure that George could help me out. Now I'm blessed if I know what to do!"

"Won't Monday do?"

"Monday morning might, but Monday afternoon will be too late—unless——" Hal fell into silence again. Ted wondered if Hal was trying to find courage to ask him for a loan. He almost hoped so. It would be rather a pleasure to refuse it. "It's Plaister, in the village," Hal went on after a moment. "He's got a bill of twelve dollars and eighty cents against me. I've been owing the old skinflint some of it since last year. And now he

says that if it isn't paid by to-night he will go and get the money from 'Jerry.' And you know what that will mean!"

Ted did know. "Jerry" was the popular name for Doctor Morris, the Principal, and when "Jerry" learned that Hal had transgressed the very strict rule against having bills at the village stores, punishment would be swift and stern. Why, Hal might be dismissed from school! The very least that would happen to him would be probation!

"Maybe he's just bluffing," offered Ted, but with little conviction in his voice.

"No such luck," answered Hal. "He's threatened twice before and I've begged him off. This time he means it. I found a letter from him in the mail this noon. I was going to speak to George before the game, but there wasn't any chance, and I—I sort of funked it anyway. Besides, I thought there was time enough. Plaister won't do anything until Monday. I was pretty sure George had the money and I guess he'd have let me have it. I meant to beat it over to the village right after chapel Monday morning. I hadn't any idea he was going away!"

"Too bad," said Ted, more than half meaning it.

"How the dickens did you ever manage to run up a bill like that, Saunders?"

Hal shrugged. "Oh, I don't know. I'm always buying fool things. Plaister was keen enough to charge 'em until he had a nice big bill against me. Afterwards, too. It got so I was afraid not to buy anything he showed me for fear he'd ask me to pay up."

"But you get an allowance——"

"A dollar a week," said Hal slightingly. "How far does that go? Mother sends me a little now and then. If she didn't I wouldn't have a cent in my pocket, ever. I'm a fool about money, and dad knows it. And he will know it a heap better about next Tuesday!"

"But look here, Saunders. Won't Plaister stand to lose if he goes to 'Jerry?' Faculty always says that shop-keepers giving credit to the fellows will be deprived of the school trade. Seems to me Plaister will think twice before he risks that."

"Oh, he will tell some hard-luck yarn and 'Jerry' will believe him. You know how 'Jerry' is. Barks a lot, but doesn't bite much. Yes, he might be scared to do what he threatens, but his letter sounded mighty earnest. He's got me going, any-

way. I say, Bowman, I don't suppose you—er—happen to have ten dollars you'd let me have? I'd have to pay it back fifty cents a week, but——"

"Sorry," said Ted, shaking his head. To his surprise he found that he really was sorry—a little. Hal's gloom enwrapped him again.

"No, I suppose not. And I don't guess you'd care much about lending to me if you had it. You don't particularly love me. Well, I guess I'll toddle." He arose and stood uncertainly a moment before he moved toward the door.

"What will you do?" asked Ted anxiously. "If—if you get put on 'pro' we'll be in a nasty fix! Hang it, Saunders, you've got to do something, you know. Crouch would last about two innings in the Temple game! Why don't you see Plaister to-morrow and get him to wait another week? After next Saturday it wouldn't matter."

"I've talked to him until I'm tired," replied Hal wearily. "It's no good. Maybe he won't do it, or maybe I can scrape up the money by Monday. I'm tired worrying about it. I'd just as lief get fired as have this thing hanging over me all the time."

"Maybe he would take part of it and wait for the rest."

"He won't. I tried that. He says he's waited long enough and—oh, a lot of drivel. You know the way they talk. Well, good-night. And say, Bowman, just keep this to yourself, like a good chap, will you? I don't know why I bothered you with it, but I'd rather you didn't say anything about it."

"That's all right. I won't talk. Good-night. I hope you—come out all right."

Hal nodded dejectedly and went. Ted took up his magazine, but after finding his place in it he let it drop once more. If Plaister did what he threatened, and Ted knew the hard-featured little shopkeeper well enough to feel pretty certain that he would, it would be all up with Warwick's chances for the baseball championship that year. With Hal Saunders in the points they might defeat Temple Academy next Saturday. Without him they couldn't. Neither Crouch nor Bradford was good enough to last three innings against the Blue's hard-hitting team. The knowledge brought real dismay to Ted. Personally he wanted a victory for the school team, but it was the thought of George's dis-

appointment that moved him most. George, like every captain, had hoped and worked for a triumph harder than any of the others. For Ted's part, he would go back next year, but this was George's last chance. Ted was miserably sorry for his friend. He was such a corking fine fellow. Ted recalled the day last September when George, learning that fate in the shape of faculty had wished a strange and two years younger boy on him as room-mate, had acted so mighty decent about it. Lots of fellows in George's place, thought Ted, would have been mad and grouchy, but George had never let Ted guess for a moment that he wasn't entirely welcome. And all through the year George had been a perfect brick. He had helped Ted in many ways: had got him into Plato Society, helped him at mid-year exams, introduced him to nice fellows, coached him in batting until he had become proficient enough to beat out Whipple for right field position. Ted's feeling for George Tempest was a mingling of gratitude and hero-worship that amounted to a very real affection, and the thought of George's unhappiness in case the final game of the school year went against Warwick troubled him greatly. Temple Academy had routed Warwick

overwhelmingly last year and the sting of that defeat still remained. Warwick wanted revenge, and her three hundred and odd students had their hearts set on obtaining it next Saturday. But to none did it mean quite what it meant to Captain Tempest. Ted tossed the magazine aside and stood up. "Something ought to be done," he muttered.

In the bedroom he produced a small tin box from its hiding place in a dresser drawer and emptied the contents on his bed. Three one-dollar bills and many silver coins, when counted, came to exactly fourteen dollars and seventy-five cents. He had been accumulating the hoard ever since Fall with the intention of buying a bicycle when he went home in the Summer. When he had about five dollars more he would have enough. He hadn't told Hal that he didn't have the money. He had merely politely refused to make a loan. And he had no idea of changing his mind. Hal's fix was no affair of his, and Hal could get out of it as best he might. Certainly he couldn't be expected to give up a whole Summer's fun for the sake of a fellow he didn't like much anyway! Resolutely he placed the money back in the box and the box again in concealme

"He will wriggle out of it somehow," he said to himself.

Sunday was rainy and seemed weeks long, and Ted missed George horribly. He saw Hal Saunders at dinner and again in the evening, and it was apparent from Hal's countenance that he had not yet found a way out of his difficulty. Ted went over to the library after supper feeling very angry with Hal, angry because that youth had endangered the success of the nine, because his foolishness was in a fair way to bring grief to George, and because he had somehow managed to make one Ted Bowman distinctly uncomfortable! Ted surrounded himself with reference books, but all the work he did scarcely paid for the effort.

Ted did not say anything to George, when the latter returned on Monday, about Hal's affairs. After dinner that day he received a summons to the Office, and although conscious of a clear conscience he couldn't help feeling a trifle uneasy as he obeyed it. One didn't get an invitation to confer with "Jerry" unless the matter was one of some importance. Events subsequently justified the uneasiness, for when Ted closed the Office door behind him the second time he was on probation!

He could have stood his misfortune better had George been decently sympathetic, but George was disgusted and mad clear through. "You've no right to do silly stunts when you're on the team," he stormed. "You've got a duty toward the School. A fine thing, isn't it, to get on 'pro' four days before the big game?"

"Well, you don't think I *asked* for it, do you?" demanded Ted indignantly. "Don't you suppose I wanted to play Saturday just as much as anyone?"

"Then you might have behaved yourself. You know perfectly well that Billy Whipple can't hit the way you can. What did you do, anyway?"

"Nothing much. I didn't really do anything, only 'Jerry' thinks I did and I can't—can't prove that I didn't!"

"That's likely," grunted George. "You must have done something."

"All right, then, I did. Anyhow, it doesn't matter whether I did or didn't. I'm out of the game. I'm sorry——"

George withered him with a look and slammed the door as he went out.

After that life was hardly worth living, Ted thought. George scarcely spoke to him and the

rest of his former team-mates were not much more cordial. In fact the whole school apparently viewed him as a traitor, and he felt like one. Thursday morning Dr. Morris announced that hereafter the students were not to make purchases at Plaister's, and Ted found a certain ungenerous comfort in the shopkeeper's misfortune. In the afternoon, while he was studying in his room—he had avoided the ball field since Monday—Hal came in with George. For some reason Hal appeared to view Ted more leniently than the other players did, perhaps because, having so nearly attained probation himself, he had sympathy for a brother offender. Hal's greeting was almost cordial. George's was only a grunt. Ted pretended to study, but he was really listening to the talk of the others. Presently Hal said indignantly:

"I wonder what they've got against Plaister, George. It's a shame to shut down on him like that."

"Some chap's run up a bill, probably," answered George indifferently. "Faculty was after him last year for giving credit."

"Well, I'm sorry. The old codger's mighty white, and I ought to know it if anybody should. I owed

him something over twelve dollars, some of it since last year, and he came down on me hard last week and said that if I didn't pay right up he'd go to 'Jerry.' He had me scared stiff, and that's no dream! I had visions of being fired, or at least put on 'pro,' and so I came over here Saturday night to see if I could get some money from you. I had only about two dollars to my name. But you had gone home. Bowman offered to loan it to me"—Hal winked at Ted's startled countenance and grinned—"but I wouldn't take it. I tried at least a dozen other fellows, but every last one was stoney broke. I expected all day Monday to get an invitation to the Office——"

"I'm sorry I wasn't here," interrupted George regretfully. "I could have fixed you up. Better let me do it now."

"Not for anything," laughed Hal. "You see the old chap never showed up and I had my nervous prostration for nothing. All he did do was to send me the bill Tuesday morning—receipted!"

"Receipted!"

"Yep, paid in full! Just scratched it right off his books. I suppose he thought he might as well. Afraid to get in wrong with faculty, maybe. Still,

it was pretty decent of him, wasn't it? Of course I'll pay him as soon as I can, but he doesn't know that."

George agreed that it was decent indeed, but he looked somewhat puzzled. The incident didn't tally at all with his conception of Mr. Jabed Plaister.

Saturday dawned breathlessly hot, and the game, set for two o'clock, was postponed until three. The wait was hard on the nerves of the players, and Billy Whipple, who was to play right field in place of Ted, was plainly unsettled. Ted knew of no reason why he should not enjoy the painful pleasure of watching the game, and so, when Loring, the Temple Academy pitcher, wound himself up for the first delivery, Ted was seated cross-legged under the rope behind third base with a very disconsolate expression on his perspiring countenance. To-day the consciousness of virtue failed more than ever to atone for his being out of the game. He strove to find consolation in the reflection that there was another year coming, but the attempt was a flat failure.

The heat had its effect on spectators and players alike. The cheering and singing lacked "pep" and the rival teams comported themselves as though

their one desire was to get back to the shade of the benches. Ted glowered and muttered at the slowness of the contest. In the first two innings only a long fly by the Temple second baseman that was neatly captured by Whipple and a couple of inexcusable and innocuous errors livened the dreariness of the game. The third inning began like the preceding ones but promised better when, in the last half of it, Warwick got a man to second on the first clean hit of the game. The Brown's cheerers came to life then and, although the next batter fouled to catcher, making the second out, Warwick paid for the vocal encouragement by putting the first run across on a hit past third.

Temple got men on third and second bases in the first of the fourth and tried hard to bring them home, but Hal Saunders, having allowed a hit and walked a batsman, retrieved himself and saved the situation by knocking down a hard liner that was well above his head. Very coolly and leisurely he picked it up, while the man on third scuttled to the plate, and threw out the batsman at first.

The fifth inning went better. The air had cooled perceptibly and both Hal and Loring were now twirling real ball and the game was becoming a

pitchers' battle pure and simple. When Hal got down to business, hits became as scarce as hen's teeth, nor was Loring much behind him in effectiveness to-day. Batters stepped to the plate, swung or waited and retired with trailing bat. One-two-three was the order. The game went into the seventh with Warwick's one-run lead looking very large. Ted, his disappointments forgotten, was "rooting" hard and tirelessly behind third. Temperature was now a matter of no moment. Warwick was ahead, Hal was mowing 'em down and victory was hovering above the brown banner!

It was in her half of the seventh that Temple evened up the score. With two gone and first base inviolate Temple's third man up, her chunky little tow-headed shortstop whose clever playing had frequently won applause from friend and foe, waited cannily and let Hal waste two deliveries. Then he swung at a wide one and missed. The next was another ball, although it cut the corner of the plate, and, with the score against him, Hal tried to bring the tow-headed youth's agony to a merciful end by sneaking over a fast and straight one. But the shortstop outguessed him that time. There was a mighty *crack* and away arched the ball. And away sped

the batsman. Probably he had small hope of safety, for the sphere was making straight for the right fielder, but he knew enough not to jump to conclusions. Which is why, when the ball bounded from Whipple's hands, the runner was almost at second. Urged on by the delighted coaches, he slid into third a few inches ahead of the ball.

What caused Whipple's error I do not know. He had the sun in his eyes, of course, but he had made a harder catch under like circumstances in the second inning. But better men than young Whipple have done the same and so we needn't waste time trying to find an excuse for him. The mischief was done, and four minutes later the Temple captain had tied up the score with a Texas Leaguer back of third.

There were no more hits in the seventh and none in the eighth. In the ninth Temple almost won by a scratch and an error after Hal had lammed an inshoot against a batsman's ribs and he had reached second on a sacrifice bunt. But the error, while it took him to third, did no more, and Hal settled down and struck out his tenth man.

Warwick got one runner to second in her half, but he died there and the contest went into extra

innings. By this time the sun was behind the trees at the edge of the field and a faint breeze was stirring. Ted was parched of throat and hoarse of voice and was alternately hopeful and despairing. The tenth inning went the way of the others. Hal had two more strike-outs to his credit and Loring one. In the eleventh the strain began to show. Hal passed the first man up, the second hit safely, the third struck out, the fourth laid down a bunt in front of the plate. Temple shouted and raved in delight. But Hal was still master. Another strike-out averted the threatened disaster. Warwick went in in her half with Captain Tempest up. George tried hard to deliver, but made an easy out, third to first. The next batter had no better luck. The third was Billy Whipple. Billy was known as a fair batsman, although to-day he had signally failed. Maybe Loring eased up a trifle. If so he produced his own disaster, for Billy picked out the second delivery and everlastingly whanged it!

In Ted's words, it went where it would do the most good. It fell to earth twenty feet short of the gymnasium steps and ten feet beyond the center fielder's eager hands. Billy didn't make the circuit because George Tempest himself, coaching behind

third, blocked his path to the plate. There was a howl at that, for it did seem that Billy might have made it. But playing it safe won out for once, for Loring was a bit shaken by that blow at his record and Warwick's next batter hit safely between second and shortstop and Billy romped home. That ended the scoring in that inning, but the Brown was again in the lead and Warwick shouted and chanted.

Ted, realizing the effort Temple would make to even things up in the twelfth, and knowing that the head of her batting list was up, was on tenter-hooks. Warwick had the victory in her grasp if she could only hold it. But Hal had been showing signs of fatigue the last two innings and there had been a perceptible let-down. Ted anxiously took counsel with himself. Then he jumped to his feet and ran around to the home bench. Hal, his face rather drawn and plastered with dust in the wrinkles, was pulling on his glove when Ted reached him.

"Saunders," said Ted breathlessly, "if you can hold 'em we've got the game!"

Hal viewed him with disgust and weariness. "You surprise me," he replied, with a weak attempt at sarcasm.

Ted laid a hand on the other's arm and took a

firm grip there. "Cut out the mirth," he said. "You go in and pitch ball, Saunders. Get me? Don't you dare let up for a second. If we——"

Hal shook him off. "What's wrong with you?" he demanded. "Sun-stroke? You're a fine one to make cracks like that! Beat it, kid!"

"Listen to me," said Ted earnestly, dropping his voice. "If Temple wins this game I'll go to 'Jerry' and tell him what I know. I mean it, Saunders!"

"Why, you little rotter!" gasped the pitcher.

"That's all right. You heard me. You pitch ball, Saunders!"

"I'm going to," sputtered the other, "and when I get through I'm going to knock your silly block off. Now get out of my way!"

Ted went back to his place well satisfied. Saunders was mad clean through and Saunders would pitch real ball! And Saunders did. Not since the game had started had he worked more carefully, more craftily, and although he had three hard hitters to put aside he never faltered. Up came the Temple third baseman—and back again to the bench. The Blue's captain followed him and, although he brought Ted's heart into his mouth four times by knocking fouls, he, too, had to acknowledge

defeat. Temple was frantic now as she saw defeat impending. For luck she sent a substitute player in for the third batsman and Hal promptly put his first two deliveries across for strikes while triumphant Warwick howled with delight. Then a ball, and another one, and——

"*He's* OUT!" cried the umpire.

It was after eight. The riotous celebration had dwindled to mere sporadic outbursts of joy out on the campus. Ted was talking with George on the window-seat in their study. The victory had put the captain in high spirits and since dinner he had returned to the old footing with his room-mate. They had talked the game over from first play to last, and Ted, happy in the renewal of friendly relations, was seeking a fresh topic lest George should become bored with his society and go away when there was a knock at the door and Hal strode in. Recalling the threat he had made, Ted viewed his appearance with some apprehension, but Hal showed no intention of removing Ted's "block" in the designated manner.

"I got something to show you fellows," announced Hal, striding across to the window. "Look

here. Read that. No, wait a minute till I tell you." He drew back the sheet of paper he had thrust toward George. "I thought it would be only the decent thing if I thanked Plaister for cancelling that account, see? So yesterday I wrote a nice little note and mailed it to him. This is what I got in answer. Found it in my room after supper. Read it out loud, George."

"'Jabed Plaister, General Emporium, Dealer in——'"

"Never mind that," interrupted Hal impatiently. "Read the writing."

"If I can," agreed George. "Let's see. 'Dear Sir: Yours of like date to hand. I gave the other boy a receipted bill and I don't know what you are talking about unless you are trying to get funny and I'll tell you plain there's a law for such as you. And if you hadn't paid I would have seen your principle just like I said I was. Lucky for you you did. Respectfully, Jabed Plaister.' Not so very respectful, either! Well, what about it, Hal?"

"Don't you see? Someone paid that bill. I didn't. Who did? That's what I came here to find out." He turned suddenly to Ted. "Did you?" he demanded.

Ted stared back blankly.

"Did you?" insisted Hal. "You *did!* What for? Why——"

"He hasn't said so," interposed George.

"He doesn't need to. He isn't denying it, is he? Besides, he knew about it. Look here, Bowman, I'm much obliged, of course, and all that, but I don't understand why—after you'd refused me that night——"

"Well," said Ted at last, slowly, seemingly seeking inspiration from his shoes, "I knew that if you got fired or put on probation and couldn't pitch today we'd get licked. I—I ought to tell you frankly, I guess, that I didn't do it on your account, Saunders. There was the School to consider, and—and George. I knew he'd be all broke up if we lost the game. I had the money put away for—for something, and so I decided that if Plaister was really going to make trouble I'd pay him. I met him on the road Monday morning right after breakfast. I tried to get him to take five dollars, but he wouldn't, and so I paid it all and he gave me the receipted bill. I ought to have told you at once, but—well, I was sort of peeved at you and I didn't. Finally, when it got to be supper time and I hadn't

told you, I was ashamed to, and so I stuck the bill in an envelope and put it in the mail. That's all; except that someone—I guess it was 'Granny' Lockwood: he's always mooning around the landscape—saw me give the money to Plaister and told 'Jerry.'"

There was a moment's silence. Then George said: "But you could have told 'Jerry' the truth, Ted."

"What good would that have done? He'd have put Saunders on 'pro,' and that's just what I was working against. Don't you see?"

"Mighty white," muttered Hal.

"I wish you had told me, Ted," said George. "I talked a good deal of rough stuff. I'm sorry, kid."

"That's all right," said Ted. "You didn't know. You see, I'd promised Saunders not to talk about it."

"Bowman, you're a perfect brick," exclaimed Hal. "I know you didn't do it on my account, but you got me out of a beast of a hole, and—and I'm mighty grateful. And you'll get that money back just as soon as I get home. I'll tell dad the whole story and he'll come across, never fear. Of course I'll have to promise to keep inside my allowance

after this, but I guess I'm about ready to, anyhow. Last Monday I'd have promised anything! And I'll see 'Jerry' at once——"

"There is no sense in doing that," interrupted Ted. "There's only four more days of school and I don't mind."

"But you're in wrong with faculty——"

"Not very. 'Jerry' was awfully decent. Said my record was so good he wouldn't be hard on me. There's no use in his owning up, is there, George?"

"No, I don't think there is," answered George after a moment's consideration. "Ted's taken your punishment and you've learned your lesson—I hope."

"I have," agreed Hal, emphatically. "But it doesn't seem fair to—to Ted. He was done out of playing, and a lot of fellows think hardly of him——"

"Shucks," said Ted, "I don't mind. You fellows know how it was, and the others will forget by next Fall. And we won. I'm satisfied."

"We won," said George, "because of what you did, Ted, and for no other reason. I don't see any way to give you credit for it without getting Hal

into trouble, but there's one thing I can do, and I'm going to do it."

"What?" asked Ted uneasily.

"See that you get your W."

"Bully!" applauded Hal. "Only, do you think you really can? If Ted didn't play——"

"Who says he didn't?" demanded George. "He must have. It was his play that won!"

THE GREAT PECK

EIGHT of us were in Pete Rankin's room that night, all freshies and all candidates for the '21 football team, unless you except this fellow Harold Peck that I'm telling you about. Jim Phelan had brought him along, because, he said, he looked lonesome. Jim had planned to room with a chap he had chummed with at Hollins, but he had failed in exams and faculty had stung him with Peck. That's one drawback to rooming in the yard at Erskine: you can't always choose your roommate. Peck was sort of finely cut, with small, well-made features, dark hair and eyes and a good deal of color in his face. And he was a swell little dresser. Rather an attractive kid, on the whole, and maybe a year younger than most of us there. He didn't make much of a splash that night, though, for he just sat quiet on Pete's trunk and looked interested and polite. Being polite was Peck's specialty. I never knew a chap with more different ways of thanking you or begging your pardon.

We were mostly Hollins or Enwright fellows, and we were there to get the freshman football team started. Dave Walker, the Varsity captain, dropped in for a few minutes and helped us out; and after he had gone again we got to talking about our chances of turning out a good enough eleven to beat the Robinson freshies, and who would play where, and one thing and another, and presently Bob Saunders, who had played half for Enwright last year, asked: "What have we got for quarterback material, fellows?"

Trask, another Enwright chap, said: "Kingsley," but no one enthused. Tom Kingsley had been a second choice quarter on Trask's team and had been fairly punk, we Hollins crowd thought. Pete Rankin yawned and said he guessed we'd find a couple of decent quarters all right, and Jim Phelan said, sure, you can always catch a quarter when he was young and train him.

"I think I'd like to try that job," I said. "I guess it's easier than playing tackle. You don't have to exert yourself. You just shove the ball to someone else. It's a cinch!"

"You'd make a swell little quarterback," laughed Pete. "You're just built for it, Joe."

"Well, I'm down to a hundred and eighty-one and a half——"

"I don't think I ever saw a crackerjack quarter," Jim Phelan butted in, "who wasn't sort of small. Did you, Pete? Remember Warner, of two years ago? He was my notion of a properly built lad for the quarter. Wasn't he a wonder?" Pete said yes, and "Toots" Hanscom, who will take either end of any argument you can start, tried to prove Jim all wrong, and then everyone took a hand. But Jim is stubborn, and he hung out for the small kind. "Take a chap like—well, like Peck there. If he knows the game he will play all around your heavy man or your tall one."

Everyone turned to size Peck up, and he looked embarrassed, and Toots sniffed and asked him his weight.

"About a hundred and forty-two, I think," said Peck.

"Thought so. He'd have a swell chance, Jim, against those husky Robinson freshies!"

"Sure he would," answered Jim, stoutly. "I don't say he'd be a marvel at plugging the line, but I do say that if Peck was a football man a good coach could take hold of him and make a rattling

good quarter of him. It isn't beef that counts in a quarter, Toots. It's brains and pep and knowledge of football."

"Piffle! Peck wouldn't last five minutes!"

"Better induce Mr. Peck to come out," suggested Monty Fellows. "Then we can see who's right."

Jim started to hedge. "I didn't say Peck was the man. I said a fellow of his size and build. Peck isn't a football player, and so it wouldn't prove anything if he tried it."

"Haven't you ever played at all, Mr. Peck?" asked Pete.

"Oh, yes, thanks," replied Peck. "We had a rather good football team at my school and I—er—I tried for it year before last. But, of course, I was pretty light, you see——"

"You could soon beef up, I'd say," said Pete. "Maybe you'd have better luck this time. Had you thought of it?"

"Why—why, I did mention it to Phelan, but he thought I'd better wait until I was a bit heavier——"

Everyone laughed at Jim then, and Jim tried to explain that he hadn't thought of Peck as a quarter. "Just the same," he said stoutly, "I wish he would

come out and try for the position. I'll risk it! I'll bet he will make good! Come on, now, what price Peck?"

"Oh, really," began Peck, "you mustn't hope much of me, Phelan! You see——"

"That's all right! You agree to try for the quarterback position and do as you're told and work hard and——"

"And grow a few inches," said Toots slyly.

"And I'll guarantee that you'll be third-string quarter or better by the end of the season! What do you say?"

"Why, it's very flattering," answered Peck, looking around and smiling deprecatingly. He had a nice smile, had Peck. "But I'd be awfully afraid of disappointing you."

"I'll risk that," said Jim. "You show up tomorrow at three-thirty, then."

Peck murmured something that sounded like consent and Jimmy Sortwell asked: "Where is your home, Mr. Peck?"

"Winstead, Maryland."

"Oh," said Jimmy. "I asked because I wondered if you were any relation to the Peck who played on the Elm Park High School team last year."

"What is his first name, please?" asked Peck.

"I don't know that I ever heard it. I never met him, but the team came on from Chicago last December and played a post season game with one of the Boston teams and licked the stuffing out of them. This fellow Peck was quarter, and he was a wonder. Don't you fellows remember reading about him? Some of the papers in the East here made him All-Scholastic quarter, and that's going some, for they hate to name anyone west of Albany!"

"Seems to me I remember something about a remarkable quarter on some Western team that played around here last year," agreed Pete. "Don't recall his name, though."

"It was probably this fellow I'm telling of. He wasn't much bigger than you, either, Peck, I'd say. Perhaps a little heavier, eight or ten pounds. He was a stunning player, though, a regular marvel. And that sort of helps out your contention, Jim."

"I don't believe I have any relatives in the West," said Peck. "Of course, there might be some distant ones——"

"Well, if you take after your namesake," laughed Burton Alley, "we won't kick a mite!"

"Thanks," said Peck, "but, of course, you mustn't expect much of me. There's a great deal to learn about football."

"Well, there's more to it than croquet," said Toots dryly, "but don't let that scare you. With Jim looking after you you ought to get along fine!"

"Really, do you think so?" asked Peck, gratefully. "Thank you ever so much!"

We had a whooping big freshman class that year and didn't expect much trouble in finding all the material we needed. But we had reckoned without the war. A lot of fellows were so full of it that they couldn't see football. There was talk of introducing military training at Erskine, too, and although that didn't come until later, there was a lot of excitement over it. Of course, we were all strong for the military stuff, but some of us couldn't see the necessity for making the world safe for Democracy before we had knocked the tar out of the Robinson freshmen. It was more than a week after college had started when we finally got four full squads together.. The Athletic Committee assigned us a Graduate School chap named Goss as coach. He had played tackle for Erskine three years before.

We didn't cheer for him much at first, but he turned out fine. He wasn't much on the up-to-the-minute stuff, but he was a corking tactician and hard as nails when it came to discipline. And he was so set on teaching the rudiments before the frills that we were soon calling him "Old Rudy."

Faculty held us down to a six-game schedule, which was a shame, for we could have licked any team of our weight in New England. Besides, the Varsity was all shot to pieces, because so many last year men had enlisted, and was a sort of a joke, and we always took the crowds away from her. We were really the big noise that Fall and should have been allowed a decent schedule. Of course, every good team has its troubles, and ours began after the Connellsville game. We beat her, all right, but she laid up two of our best linesmen and proved that neither Kingsley nor Walker was the right man for quarter. We had two other candidates for the position in Ramsey and Peck. There wasn't much to choose between them, it looked; only Peck had a good press agent and Ramsay hadn't. Jim Phelan was still backing his roommate strong. Toots Hanscom told us that Jim was coaching Peck for an hour every evening. Said he dropped into their

room in McLean one night and found Jim holding the book on Harold and putting him through a regular exam! Anyhow, Peck was certainly coming all the time, and when we met the Taylor freshies the next Saturday he had his chance in the third period. He got mixed a couple of times, but I couldn't see any signs of nervousness, and he surely made us hump ourselves. And he played his position mighty well besides. Jim certainly had no kick coming against his pupil, for Peck played good football that day, barring those two mistakes in signals, and ended up in the last three or four minutes with as pretty a forward pass to Trask as you'd want to see. Trask didn't quite make the goal line, though, and so we accepted our first defeat, Taylor nosing out 12 to 11. But we'd played good ball, and we knew it, and the school knew it. And you can bet that Taylor knew it, too, for she was just about all in when the whistle sounded.

Peck got quite a lot of kind words that day, and Jim Phelan went around saying "What did I tell you?" and making himself generally obnoxious. But that didn't win Peck the quarterback position, for Kingsley was still the better man, especially when he was going well, and young Peck went back

to the second squad Monday, and Jim spoke darkly of "bonehead coaches." More trouble developed that week: Wednesday, I think it was. Pete Rankin—I forgot to say that we'd elected him captain without much opposition from the Enwright crowd—hurt his knee in a scrimmage and had to lay off. And one or two other chaps went wunky and so Townsend Tech didn't have much trouble with us, three days later. Kingsley started at quarter and Peck didn't get a show until the last of the third period. Then he played the same nice game he'd played the week before and speeded us up so that we managed to score our second touchdown. And, considering that we had six second- or third-string fellows in the line-up by that time, that wasn't so poor. And 11 to 20 didn't sound as bad as 7 to 20, either. So Peck got the glad hand in the locker room afterwards and old Rudy stopped him on his way to the showers and spoke kind words.

By that time the college was beginning to sit up and take notice of Peck. Fellows asked where he'd played before, what school he'd come from and so on. No one seemed to know, and when you asked Peck himself he was sort of vague, and so blamed

polite that you didn't have the crust to keep on asking. But I made out that he'd skipped around between two or three schools down Maryland way, and I believed it until two things came off simultaneously. The first was Peck's sudden "arrival" in football. It occurred the Thursday after the Townsend fracas. Kingsley was suffering from shell shock by reason of having been slammed around by big Sanford, the Townsend fullback, in the third quarter, and old Rudy started Peck when the scrimmage began. Well, I don't know what had got into little Harold that day; or I didn't know then. Afterward I thought I had an inkling. Anyway, he was a revelation. Pete Rankin said awedly that Peck was a composite reincarnation of Eckersall and Daly. So far as I know, those two old-timers are still alive and kicking, but you get Pete's idea. He meant that Peck was a peach of a quarter that day; and that goes double with me. We went up against the Varsity scrubs, and they were a heavy, scrappy bunch, even if they didn't have much team play. Peck seemed to sense just the sort of medicine that would do 'em the most good, and he proceeded to dose it out to them right from the kick-off. He used Saunders and Hanscom for play after play

until we were down to the scrub's twenty-yard line, bringing Hanscom around from right end and busting him through left tackle. He and Saunders were light and quick, and they got the distance in three plays regularly. Then, down on the twenty, he switched to his other backs, Fellows and Curtis, and piled 'em through to the two yards. The scrubs pulled themselves together then, and two tries failed and Peck gave the pass to Curtis for an overhead heave to Saunders. But Bob was spilled in his tracks and, with three to go and one down left, Peck faked a try at goal and kited around his left end with the pigskin cuddled under his elbow and slipped across the line near the corner very nicely.

Four minutes later we scored again. The scrub's kick-off was short and I wrapped myself around it and busted along for nearly twenty yards and landed the ball on the forty. Then Saunders slipped up for the first time and Peck tried a forward to Hanscom that grounded. Curtis smashed through for four and then Peck took the law into his own hands again and, faking a pass to Saunders, hid the ball until the scrubs were coming through. Then he found his hole, slipped right through the middle of the line, ducked and squirmed past the secondary defense

and raced off straight for the goal. And believe me, that kid could run! The scrub quarter was the only man with any license to stop him, and Peck fooled him near the thirty yards, and went right on and placed old Mister Pigskin squarely between the posts.

I'd got sort of roughly handled by the big mutts when they stopped me after I'd caught the kick-off and Old Rudy yanked me out, and so I didn't see any more of the scrimmage. But they said that Peck kept it up right to the end, making another corking run from near the scrub's forty to her five, and handling the team like a veteran. Monty Fellows, who could spill language that would gag you or me, said that Peck was inspired and that he had "indubitably vindicated Phelan's contention." I thought so, too, though not in just those words, and so when I ran across Jim on the way to College Hall after dinner that evening I started to hand him a few bouquets. But he only grunted and looked peeved, and I eased up and asked: "What's jangling your heart strings, Jim? I should think you'd be pleased to see little Harold vindicating your—er—whatyoucallems." He sometimes called him Harold to annoy Jim.

"You would, eh?" growled Jim.

"Sure I would! Haven't you toiled with the kid all Fall and taught him all he knows and everything?"

"I thought so," said Jim significantly.

"What do you mean, thought so?" Who else is responsible? Of course, I'm not saying Peck wouldn't have learned football after a fashion even if you hadn't——"

Jim laughed harshly, like a villain in a play. "Say, Joe, you do a lot of talking with your mouth sometimes, but maybe you can keep a secret. Can you?"

"Secrecy's my middle name. Shoot!"

And after a minute Jim shot. "He fooled me, all right," he began ruefully. "I thought he was as green as grass and even when he'd learn a thing too blamed quick to be natural I didn't suspect. I said, 'It's just natural football instinct he's got. You can't explain it any other way.' Wasn't I the bonehead?"

"Sure! But what——"

"Listen. This morning I wanted a collar stud. Mine had rolled under the bed or somewhere and it was late. So I pulled open Harold's top drawer. I knew he had a little fancy-colored box there where he kept studs and things and as he had gone to

breakfast I thought I'd just help myself to one. What do you suppose was the first thing I saw when I lifted the lid?"

"Great big snake?"

"Cut the comedy! One of these little gold footballs you wear on your watch chain!"

"Well?" I asked, not catching the idea.

"There was engraving on it and I read what it said. 'E. P. H. S., 1917,' Joe! What do you know about that?"

"Still I don't get you. What's E. P. S. stand for?"

"E. P. H. S., you dummy! Elm Park High School! Don't you remember Sortwell telling about a fellow named Peck who'd played with Elm Park and asking Harold if he was any relation?"

"Oh!" said I. "Now I savvy! But, look here, Jim, you don't think Harold's this Elm Park star! Why, didn't he say——"

"No, he didn't," answered Jim sourly. "He was mighty careful not to. He said maybe Peck was a distant relative or something. And he let me teach him how to play quarterback! Must have had lots of good laughs at me, eh? If I hadn't been an utter idiot I'd have tumbled to the truth long ago. Why,

no one could pick up the game the way he has! Look at the way he played to-day! He fooled the whole bunch of us, anyway. I wasn't the only come-on. Only, why? What did he do it for?"

"Search me! But look here, what does he say? Has he fessed up?"

"He hasn't said anything because I haven't. How can I? Borrowing a chum's collar stud is all right, but when you run across something you're not supposed to know about you keep your mouth shut. If I told him I was helping myself to a stud and happened to see that gold football, what would he think? He'd think I'd been snooping, of course. But I don't need to ask him. It's as plain as a pikestaff. That football is one of those given to the members of last year's victorious Elm Park team. I looked up the record. They played eleven games and won all but two. And Harold was quarterback and was a regular James H. Dandy. And now you know why I'm a trifle peeved, Joe. Wouldn't it set you back some to find that you'd been teaching the fine points of football to last season's All-Scholastic quarterback?"

I said it would. Then I asked Jim what he was going to do about it and he said glumly:

"I'm going to keep my mouth shut, and so are you. What he wants is for us to find out we've been fooled, so he can have the laugh on us. Nothing doing! If he wants to come out as the Great Peck he can do his own announcing. Then I'll tell him I knew it all along, and the laugh will be on him, hang him!"

We chinned some more and then I left him. In a way, thought I, it was sort of mean of Peck to put it over on Jim like that, but at the same time it was funny, and I had to chuckle a bit now and then for the rest of the evening. It was a shame not to tell the other fellows, too, but Jim had made me promise to keep quiet and so I couldn't. But I got some fun out of it, for the next afternoon I overhauled Harold going over to the field and I said to him:

"It's funny, but you remind me an awful lot of that chap who played quarter for Elm Park last year. You look a lot like him around the eyes. And the lower part of his face, too. His name was the same as yours, you know."

"Really?" he asked, most polite. "Elm Park is out near Chicago, isn't it?"

"Yes, but the team came East last Fall for a post-

season game. You said you weren't related to him, didn't you?"

"I don't think I said just that," replied the fox. "I'd hardly dare to. As a matter of fact, our family has relations in the West, although I've never heard that any of them lived in Chicago."

I didn't want to give the snap away, so I shut up then, but I couldn't help admiring the way he carried it off. Never batted an eyelash! Some boy, Harold!

They made him first choice quarter then and he was never headed all the rest of the season, although Kingsley and Ramsey tried their hardest to overhaul him, and he kept getting better and better right up to the Robinson game, running the team for all that was in it and never letting a game go by without pulling off a few fancy stunts on his own. I could see that there was a coolness between him and Jim Phelan, but it seemed to me that Peck was still unsuspecting that his secret was discovered. So I guess he often wondered why Jim had stopped giving him pointers and being chummy. Of course they were still friendly and all that, but Jim couldn't forget that Harold had put one over on him. And

so things stood when we faced the Robinson freshmen in the final game.

As the fellow said about the war, we had a good day for it: cold and snappy, with almost no wind. Robinson brought over a big bunch of rooters and a good many of our own old boys came up for the game. And there was a sprinkling of khaki, too, for some of the grads were in service; and even the Navy was represented by a Reserve lieutenant. He was a corking looking chap, and when I ran across him just after lunch he reminded me so much of Harold Peck that for a minute I thought it was Harold got up that way for a joke. But he was bigger than Harold, and a couple of years older, I guess, and when I'd had a second look at him the resemblance wasn't so strong. Still, it was there, and when he stopped and asked me which was McLean Hall his voice sort of sounded like Harold's. Anyway, he was a corking, clever-looking lad, and I got to wondering how one of those blue uniforms would look on yours truly.

I'm not going to bore you with the game in detail. It was some game, but you've watched many better ones. Robinson got the jump on us at the start and scored a goal from our twenty-eight yards. I

guess we had stage fright or something, for we sure played like a lot of kids in that first period. Even Pete Rankin got temperamental and fell over his own feet time and again, and young Peck tried hard to show how not to play quarterback. But Robinson's score was just what we needed, for in the second period we pulled ourselves together and inched along for the goal line and finally pushed Curtis over for a touchdown. We were pretty well started on the way to a second when time was called for the half. As Toots Hanscom had missed goal, the score was 6—3 when we crawled back to the gym. We thought we'd done pretty well until Old Rudy started at us. Then we realized that we weren't much better than a gang of Huns. He certainly did take the skin off! According to him Robinson should never have scored and we should have had twenty-one points tucked away. At that, he wasn't so far wrong, for we had surely pulled a lot of dub plays in that first fifteen minutes. Anyhow, when he'd got through with us we were ready to go back and bite holes in the Robbies!

The third quarter gave us another touchdown, and this time Toots booted it over. But Robinson

wasn't dead yet, and she put a scare into us when she sprang a new formation and began to circle our ends for six and eight yards at a try. Pete was put out of it and Gannet, who took his place, was pretty punk. We lost two or three other first-string men in that third period, and so when Robinson worked down to our fifteen-yard line we couldn't stop her. We did smear her line attacks, but she heaved a forward and got away with it, and kicked the goal a minute later. That made the score 11 to 10, and the world didn't look so bright for us. And then, when the last quarter was about five minutes old, Saunders, who was playing back with Peck, let a punt go over his head and they had us with our heels to the wall. Curtis punted on second down and the ball went crazy and slanted out at our forty-yard line. Robinson tried her kicks again and came back slowly. Pete Rankin put himself back in the game and that helped some. About that time when the enemy was near our twenty-five, Peck got a kick on the head and had to have time out. Old Rudy started Kingsley to warming up on the side line, but Peck, although sort of groggy, insisted on staying in, and Pete let him.

They edged along to our twenty and then struck

a snag and that's when I stopped taking much interest in events, for I was the snag. When I came around I was lying on a nice bank of hay, with every bone in my head aching, and Prentiss was playing my position. So what happened subsequently was seen by little Joe from afar. Robinson put another field goal over and added three points to her score and we saw the game going glimmering. There was still five minutes left, however, and an optimist next to me on the hay pile said we could do it yet. I didn't think we could, but I liked to hear him rave.

The five minutes dwindled to four and then to three. We had the ball in the middle of the field and were trying every play in our bag of tricks. But our end runs didn't get off, our forward passes were spoiled and we were plainly up against it. Young Peck's voice got shriller and shriller and Pete's hoarser and hoarser, and the rooters were making noises like a lot of frogs. And then the timekeeper said one minute and it looked as though there was nothing left but the shouting.

We still had the pigskin and had crossed the center line two plays back, and Pete and Peck were rubbing heads while the Robbies jeered. Then

something broke loose, and after I'd got a good look at it I saw that it was Peck.

I don't know how he got away, for it looked as if he had sort of pulled a miracle, but there he was, dodging and streaking with the mob at his heels and a quarter and a half laying for him up the field. The optimist guy almost broke his hand off pounding my sore shoulder and I let him pound, for the pain helped me yell. Pete and Trask trailed along behind Peck and it was Pete who dished the waiting halfback. After that Peck had a free field and it was only a question of his staying on his feet, for you could see that the kid was all in. He got to wobbling badly at about the fifteen yards and I thought sure a Robinson chap had him, but the Robbie wasn't much better off and they finally went across, staggering, with Peck just out of reach, and toppled over the line together. Then bedlam broke loose.

I must have forgotten my bum ankle, for the next thing I knew I was down at the goal line with half the college, and the Naval Reserve lieutenant had Peck's head on his knees and was telling Tracy, the trainer, what to do for him. Tracy sputtered indignantly and swashed his sponge and Toots missed

another goal and the game was over. The crowd got some of the team but I was near the gate and made my getaway. And so did Peck, thanks to the lieutenant chap, and we were halfway to the gym before the fellows missed him. We fought them off then right up to the gym door and dodged inside, and Peck, who was all right now except for being short of breath, said: "Thanks, West. I want you to know my brother."

"Your brother!" I gasped. The Navy chap laughed and shook hands.

"And proud of it," he said. "The kid played good ball for a fellow who couldn't make the team last year, didn't he?"

"Couldn't make—Say, what's the idea?" I gibbered. "Didn't he play quarter for Elm Park?"

"Why, no," said the Navy guy, "that was me! Harold never played any to speak of until this fall. He tells me that a roommate of his taught him about all he knows. I want to meet that fellow!"

"Oh!" said I, still sort of dazed. "Well, I guess he will be mighty glad to meet you, too. You see, he got it into his head that your brother was the great Peck, and——"

"But I never told him anything like that!" ex-

claimed Harold. "Why, I even pretended I'd never heard of you, Herb, for fear they might think I was —well, trading on your reputation, don't you see! I don't understand how Jim could have got that idea!"

"Oh, he gets crazy notions sometimes," said I. "At that, though, he wasn't so far off, because if you're not a Great Peck you're a mighty good eight quarts!"

Which wasn't so poor for a fellow with half his teeth loose! Now was it?

TERRY COMES THROUGH

"YOU'RE up next, Slim," said Captain Fosdick, leaning forward to speak to Maple Park's third baseman. "Get out there and let 'em think you're alive." Whittier hoisted himself from the bench and leisurely viewed the row of bats. Selecting two, he ambled out toward the plate. Guy Fosdick, or "Fos" as he was generally called, turned again to Joe Tait, frowning. Joe, a heavily-built, broad-shouldered boy of sixteen, chuckled.

"It's no use, Fos," he said. "You can't put pep into Slim."

Fos's frown melted into a smile. He was a good-looking chap at all times, but when he smiled he "had it all over Apollo and Adonis and all the rest of those Greek guys." I am quoting Joe. Doubtless Fos's smile had a good deal to do with his immense popularity at Maple Park School, a popularity that had aided him to various honors during his four years there.

"Sometimes I think he does it to rile me," said Fos. "The day they had the explosion in the chemical laboratory Slim was out in front of Main Hall, and still going, before any of the rest of us were through the door! *Good boy, Archie!*" Browne had slammed a grounder between Linton's shortstop and second baseman and filled the bags. "Two gone," he said regretfully. "If Slim doesn't do more than he's been doing——" His voice trailed off into silence as he gave his attention to the Linton High School pitcher.

"Did you see Wendell get down to third?" asked Joe admiringly. "That kid can certainly run!"

"Terry Wendell? Yes, he can," agreed the captain thoughtfully. "Put Terry on base and he will get to third every time. He's a fast one, all right. But you've got to stop right there, Joe."

"How do you mean, stop?"

"Terry never comes through. He gets just so far and stops. I don't know why. He got to first on an error, stole second nicely, reached third on Archie's hit and I'll bet you a red apple he will die there."

"Oh, come, Fos, you're too hard on the kid. He's

a pretty fair fielder and his hitting isn't so rotten, and you say yourself that he's fast on the bases."

"Until he gets to third," responded Fos. "Maybe next year Terry will make good, Joe, but he doesn't deliver the goods yet. I'm sorry, because he's a friend of yours——"

"We room together."

"But I've got to let him go. He's had a fair trial all Spring, Joe, and the coach would have dropped him two weeks ago if I hadn't put in my oar. He's a nice kid, and he's promising; but promises won't win from Lacon two weeks from Saturday. If—— What did I tell you?"

There was a chorus of triumph from the knot of Linton adherents behind third as their right fielder pulled down Slim Whittier's long fly, and Captain Fosdick jumped up.

"But that wasn't Terry's fault," protested Joe. "A fellow can't score on a third out!"

"I didn't say it was ever his fault," replied Fos, pulling on his glove. "But it's what always happens, Joe. He doesn't come through. Call it hard luck if you like, but that's the way it is. All out on the run, fellows!"

When the Linton center fielder had swung thrice

at Morton's delivery without connecting Joe arose from the substitute's bench and strode off toward the track. He had no doubts as to the outcome of the game, for with but three innings to play it was unlikely that the visitors would overtake the home team's lead of six runs, and he was due for a half-hour's work with the shot. But he felt sorry about Terry. Terry was a nice kid and he was fond of him, and ever since he had known him, which meant since last September, Terry had tried and failed at half a dozen things. Terry had just failed of making the second football eleven, had almost but not quite finished fourth in the four-forty yards in the Fall Handicap Meet, had been beaten out by Walt Gordon for cover-point position on the second hockey team, had been passed over in the Debating Society election and now, just when, as Joe very well knew, Terry was beginning to congratulate himself on having made the school baseball team, Fate was about to deal him another blow. It was really mighty tough luck, Joe growled to himself; and if Fos had been anyone but Fos he would have suspected him of prejudice. But Terry Wendell's troubles were forgotten when Joe had thrown off his wrap and had the twelve-pound shot cupped in

his broad palm, and weren't remembered again until, just before six, he pushed open the door of 12 Munsing.

Terry was pretending to study, but Joe knew very well from the discouraged look on his face that Fos had spoken and that Terry's thoughts were far from the book before him. He looked up at Joe's entry, murmured "Hello!" in a rather forlorn voice that tried hard to be cheerful and bent his head again.

"How'd the game come out?" asked Joe, banging the door with unnecessary violence.

"We won; twelve to eight."

"Linton must have got a couple more runs over after I left," said Joe. "How did you get along?"

"Oh, pretty punk, thanks. I got one hit, rather a scratch, and was forced out at third. I got as far as third again and Whittier flied to the Linton right fielder and left me there."

"Hard luck! How about your fielding?"

"Three chances and got them." There was silence for a moment. Joe nursed a foot on the window-seat and waited. At last: "I'm out of it, Joe," said Terry with a fine affectation of indiffer-

ence. "Fosdick told me after the game that they'd decided to get along without my valuable services."

Joe pretended surprise. Terry cut short his expressions of sympathy, however. "It doesn't matter," he said. "I mean I ought to have known how it would be. I didn't, though. I thought I'd really made good at something finally. I wrote home only last Sunday that I'd got on the nine. Well, I can sit back now, can't I? There isn't anything left to try for!"

"Pshaw, that's no way to talk, Terry. There's your track work, remember. You're pretty sure to get your chance with the quarter-milers."

"I'm going to quit that. I know what'll happen. Either they'll drop me the day before the Dual Meet or I'll trail in in fifth place."

"Quit nothing!" said Joe disgustedly. "You're going to stick, kid, if I have to lug you out by the feet and larrup you around the track!" Terry smiled faintly at the idea.

"You won't have to, Joe. I was only talking. I'll keep on with the Track Team as long as they'll have me. Maybe——" He hesitated a moment and then went on doubtfully. "Maybe I can get Cramer to try me in the half, Joe. I have an idea

I could run the half better than the four-forty. Anyway, I'll stick. And I'll try my hardest. There—there must be *something* I can do!"

Terry Wendell was fifteen, a nice-looking, well-built boy, rather slender but by no means frail, with frank brown eyes, somewhat unruly hair of the same color and a healthy complexion. He had entered Maple Park School the preceding Fall, making the upper middle class. He was good at studies and was seldom in difficulties with the instructors in spite of the time he consumed in the pursuit of athletic honors. Of course entering the third year class had handicapped him somewhat and his circle of friends and acquaintances was far smaller than if he had joined the school as a junior, but he hadn't done so badly, after all, for Joe Tait had kindly taken him in hand and become a sort of social sponsor for him. What friends Terry had were firm ones and, had he but known it, liked him none the less for the plucky way in which, having been turned down in one sport, he bobbed up undismayed for another. But Terry, not knowing that, suspected the fellows of secretly smiling at his failures, and had become a little sensitive, a trifle inclined to detect ridicule where none was meant.

Which fact probably accounts for the falling-out with Walt Gordon the next day.

It was Sunday, and as perfect a day as the Spring had given. May was nearly over, the trees in the campus and on the long slope of Maple Hill were fully clothed in fresh green and the bluest of blue skies stretched overhead. Maple H' ., which rises back of the school, is crowned b, a great granite ledge, from which one commands a view of many miles of smiling countryside. The Ledge is a favorite spot with the students and its seamed and crumbling surface is marked in many places with evidences of fires and, I regret to say, too often littered with such unlovely objects as empty pickle bottles, cracker boxes and the like. On this Sunday afternoon "Tolly" hailed the bottles with joy and, having collected five of them, advanced to the farther edge of the rock and hurled them gleefully far down into the tops of the trees. Tolly's real name was Warren Tolliver, and he was only fourteen, and for the latter reason his performance with the pickle bottles was viewed leniently by the other four boys. Tolly's youthfulness gave him privileges.

Ordinarily the party would have been a quar-

tette; Joe, Terry, Hal Merrill and Tolly; but to-day they had happened on Walt Gordon and Walt had joined them. He was a heavily-built chap in appearance, but when he was in track togs you saw that the heaviness was mostly solid muscle and sinew. He was Maple Park's crack miler and, beside, played a rather decent game at center field on the nine. He was respected for his athletic prowess, but beyond that was not very popular, for he thought a bit too highly of Walt Gordon and too little of anyone else. But none of his four companions really disliked him or had resented his attaching himself to their party. When he cared to, Walt could be very good company.

Stretched on the southern slope of the ledge, where sun and wind each had its way with them, the five boys found little to say at first. The climb had left them warm and a trifle out of breath. It was the irrepressible Tolly who started the conversational ball rolling. "Know something, fellows?" he demanded. Joe lazily denied any knowledge on any subject and begged enlightenment. "Well," continued Tolly, "when I get through college——"

"Ha!" grunted Hal. Tolly tossed a pebble at him and went on.

"When I get through college I'm coming back here and I'm going to build one of those aerial railways from the roof of Main Hall to this place. It'll cost you fellows twenty-five cents apiece to get up here. No, maybe I'll make it twenty-five for the round-trip."

"I'll walk before I pay a quarter," said Walt.

"You won't be allowed to, because I'll buy up the hill and put a barbed wire fence around it. You'll have to ride."

"How are you going to run the thing, Tolly?" asked Joe. "Pull it up yourself?"

"Electricity. There'll be two cars. Wouldn't it be fine?"

"You'll let your friends ride free, won't you?" Terry inquired.

"Yes, but I shan't have any then. It'll cost too much."

"All that doesn't cause me a flutter," said Hal. "By the time Tolly's out of college I'll be dead."

"Don't you believe it," Joe chuckled. "It won't take him two weeks to get through college—if he

once gets in. It'll be a case of 'Howdy do, Mr. Tolliver. Goodby, Mr. Tolliver!' "

"Huh!" grunted Tolly. "That's all you know about it, Joey. I can get in any college I like, and——"

"Yes, but suppose they found you?" said Hal.

"I'm getting letters every day from all the big ones: Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Cornell——"

"Vassar," suggested Joe helpfully.

"That's what comes of being a real ball-player," concluded Tolly. "Everyone wants you."

A groan of derision arose. "A real ball-player!" said Hal. "You poor fish, you never caught a ball but once in your life, and then you couldn't get out of its way!" Hal rolled over a little so that he could see Terry. "You never heard about that, did you, Terry?" he asked. "It was last Spring. Tolly was trying for the nine and the coach sort of let him hang around and look after the bats and keep the water bucket filled, you know. The only trouble was that he was so small that fellows were always falling over him, and finally Murdock, who was captain then, decided to get rid of him. But Tolly hid behind the bucket and Murdock couldn't find him, and one day we played Spencer Hall and a

fellow named Williams, the regular left fielder, was sick, and another fellow got spiked or something and there was only Tolly left. So Murdock called him and Tolly crawled out from under a glove——"

"Aw, dry up," grumbled Tolly.

"And they put him out in center, just to fill up, you know. Of course Murdock told him that if a fly came toward him to run like the dickens and not try to worry it. And sure enough one of the Spencer Hall fellows lit on a good one and sent it into left. Tolly was dreaming away out there, or picking daisies or something: I forget: and all of a sudden he heard a yell and here was that awful ball sailing right down at him! It was a horrible moment in Tolly's young life. He tried hard to run away, but the pesky ball just followed him. If he ran back the ball went after him. If he ran to the right the ball went that way too. It was awful! Poor old Tolly nearly fainted. Center fielder was coming hard for it, but it was a long hit——"

"The longest ever made on the field!" interpolated Tolly proudly.

"And he couldn't reach it. Tolly saw that there

was no use trying to escape, so finally he stood still, resolved to sell his life dearly, and put up his hands to ward off the ball. Well, sir, Terry, that ball went right against Tolly's hands and Tolly gave a cry of fear and fell down unconscious!"

"Is that so?" demanded Tolly indignantly. "Well, the ball stuck, didn't it? And I wasn't so unconscious that I couldn't jump up and peg to shortstop, was I? *Huh!*"

"So after that," concluded Hal, "as a sort of reward for accidentally saving the game, they let him sit on the bench and called him a substitute fielder."

Terry joined in the laughter, and then, catching Tolly's eyes on him, stopped suddenly. There was something of apology in Tolly's look and Terry understood. It was Tolly who had profited by his failure. Tolly would play right field after this. He was made certain of it the next moment, for Walt Gordon remarked:

"Well, you're all right now, Tolly. They can't keep a good man down, eh?"

"How's that?" asked Hal, who was not a ball player, but performed on the track, being one of the school's best sprinters and no mean hand at the hurdles.

Walt shot a questioning glance at Terry. "Don't you know, Hal? Why, Terry has decided to quit us," answered Walt. "What's next, Terry? The Tennis Team?"

Terry flared instantly, quite as much to his own surprise as to theirs, for he was not usually quick-tempered. "You mind your own business, Walt," he snapped. "I'll attend to mine."

Walt flushed. "Is that so?" he sneered. "Well, I'm just curious, that's all. There's only the Tennis Club left, you know. Unless you go in for chess."

"Cut it out, Walt," said Joe. "Let him alone."

"Then tell him to let me alone. I didn't say anything to make him jump down my throat. Everyone here knows he's had a whack at everything there is and fallen down. If he doesn't like to hear that he knows what he can do. I'm ready to——"

Terry leaped to his feet. "Then come on!" he cried, his eyes blazing. "If you can do anything besides talk, prove it, you—you big——"

"Shut up, Terry!" commanded Joe sternly. "And sit down. There isn't going to be any scrapping. You mustn't fly off the handle like that. And you, Walt, shouldn't say such things. There's no

disgrace in trying and failing as long as you don't grouch about it. Terry's plucky to keep on trying, I think."

"Of course he is," agreed Tolly warmly. "You shut up, Walt."

Walt shrugged disdainfully. "Oh, very well. Four against one——"

"There's one thing I haven't fallen down at yet," interrupted Terry, still angry, "and that's running, and——"

"Also-running, you mean," laughed Walt. "You're the finest little also-ran in the history of the school, Wendell!"

"Am I? Let me tell you something, Gordon. I'll be running when you've quit. If I'm an 'also-ran,' you're a quitter. You quit last Fall because Hyde had twenty yards on you in the next to the last lap. You thought no one——"

"That's a lie! I turned my ankle on the board——"

"Did you? Well, you walked well enough five minutes later. Look here, I'll bet you right now, anything you like, that I'll win more points than you when we meet Lacon!"

"Don't be a chump, Terry," begged Hal.

"Oh, piffle!" sneered Walt. "You won't even be on the track!"

"That's my lookout. Will you bet?"

"No, he won't," said Joe. "And that'll be about all from both of you. Now dry up. If I hear any more from either of you I'll chuck you over the ledge. Is this what you chaps call a peaceful Sunday afternoon?"

"All right, I will dry up," replied Terry. "But he heard me. And I mean what I said. And when the Dual Meet is over he will know it!"

The next afternoon Terry went across to the field the moment he had finished his last recitation. Mr. Cramer—Sam to the older boys, but "Coach" to the others—was busy with a bunch of hurdlers, amongst whom was Hal, when Terry arrived, and he had to wait several minutes before he was able to claim the trainer's attention. Down at the farther end of the oval Joe and a half-dozen others were moving about the pits, while various white-clad forms jogged or sprinted around the track. The Dual Meet with Lacon Academy, Maple Park's dearest foe, was only a little more than a fortnight distant and a late Spring had held back the team's development discouragingly. This Monday after-

noon Coach Cramer was in a hustling mood, and there was a hint of impatience in his voice when he called the hurdlers back for the third start.

"Stop trying to beat the pistol!" he barked. "The next fellow who does it will stay out. Now then, on your mark! *Set!*

Bang went the pistol and six slim, lithe figures hurled themselves forward and went darting down the lanes. Hal began to gain at the fourth hurdle—they were doing the 220-yards sticks—and at the finish was running strong. Terry noticed that he held back between the last barrier and the string and let Porter breeze past him into first place. While the next squad were taking their places Terry addressed the trainer.

"Mr. Cramer, don't you think I might try the half, sir?" he asked. "I've sort of got a hunch I can do better at a longer distance than the four-forty."

"Hello, Wendell. What's that? The half? We don't need you in the half, my boy. You stick to the quarter. I guess that's your distance, if you have any. How are you feeling to-day?"

"Fine, sir."

"All right. Jog a couple of laps and then try

some starts. I'm going to give you quarter-milers a trial at four."

"Yes, sir: and about that half, Mr. Cramer. There wouldn't be any harm in my just trying it, would there? I mean later on, after the trial."

"I don't know." The coach and trainer turned and looked Terry over speculatively. "No, I guess not, if it's going to please you. But take it easy. Three minutes is fast enough. I'll tell you now, though, that it don't do you any good, for we've got so many half-milers that we can't use them all."

Terry managed to scrape past in fourth place in the four-forty trial, beating out Connover and Dale, and felt rather proud until Mr. Cramer dryly announced the winner's time to have been 54 3/5 seconds, which was more than a second slower than it should have been. He wrapped himself in his gaudy green-and-red dressing gown and went over to watch the jumpers for awhile, and finally, when the field was nearly empty and Pete, the groundskeeper, was removing the standards, he walked over to the start of the distances, wriggled out of his gown, limbered his legs a minute and then went off, hugging the inside rim. He had to guess at his speed. He knew from watching others that the

eight-eighty was a different race from the quarter and all the way round the first lap he held himself back so that he might have some reserve for the finish. But when he had put the turn behind him and entered the backstretch on the second lap his lungs were protesting and his legs had lost their spring. It was a pretty wobbly runner who at last crossed the finish, and who was glad to sit down for a moment, his gown flung around his shoulders. He was thankful that none of the few fellows remaining had apparently noticed his journey along the homestretch. He went back to the gymnasium rather discouraged, but a shower-bath perked him up considerably, and after he had talked with Joe he felt still better. For Joe pointed out that after having run in a quarter-mile trial he had scarcely been in ideal condition to do himself justice in the eight-eighty. Joe wasn't especially sympathetic toward Terry's ambition to add the half-mile to his repertoire, but he was too good-natured to throw cold water on it.

The next afternoon Terry divided his time—and, since he was no longer essential to the nine, he had plenty of it—between the routine prescribed by the coach and his self-training for the half. Perhaps had

Terry been viewed by Mr. Cramer a trifle more seriously he would not have been allowed to risk overtraining, but the coach wasn't especially impressed with the boy's efforts. Perhaps next year Terry might find himself, and it was in that hope that the coach gave him such encouragement as he did. Of course Terry didn't go the full half-mile on Tuesday, nor yet on Wednesday. He knew better than to do that. What he did do was follow in a general way the instructions given to the half-milers. He tried short sprints of thirty and forty yards at top-speed, jogged a mile each day and at last, on Thursday, cut in with the half-milers and ran the three-quarters with them—or, rather, behind them—at a fairly good clip. He was trying hard to learn this new distance, and it wasn't easy. He knew fairly well how hard he could go for the four-forty without running himself out, but twice around the track, with eight corners to reckon instead of two, was a vastly different proposition.

And yet, when Saturday came and he gave up seeing the Prentiss game for the sake of running, he felt sure enough of himself to ask permission to enter the trial with the regular half-milers. Mr. Cramer gave rather impatient permission and Terry

took his place in the second row and tried to remain unconscious of the looks of surprise or amusement with which his companions viewed him. Terry Wendell was in a fair way to become rather a joke, it seemed. But Terry didn't do so badly in the trial, after all, for out of the field of twelve he finished seventh. It was a poor seventh, to be sure, and he never learned his time, but he thought that Mr. Cramer observed him a bit more tolerantly afterwards, even if he had nothing to say to him. That race taught Terry one thing, which was that the half-mile was not so long as he had reckoned it. He had run too slow in the first lap. Another time, he told himself, he would know better than to let the others get away from him like that. He had finished the race with a lot of reserve which, had he called on it before, might have put him in fourth place at least.

Relations between him and Walt Gordon were strained. Walt, secure in the knowledge of his supremacy in the mile run, was not worried by Terry's new activity. Walt was pretty sure of handing over five points to his school in the Dual, for Lacon was known to be weak in the mile, and was equally sure that if Terry managed to secure

the one point that went with fourth place he would be doing more than anyone expected of him. But Terry's accusation to the effect that Walt had quit in the Fall Meet held just enough truth to be unpleasant to the latter youth, and his feelings in consequence were not very cordial toward Terry. As to the incident mentioned, why, it didn't amount to much in Walt's judgment, but, just the same, he preferred that fellows shouldn't suspect it. He *had* turned his ankle in the third lap, just as he had said, but there was no denying that had Hyde not had a fifteen or twenty yard lead on him he would have finished the race without untold agony. As it was, it wasn't worth while. Everyone knew that he was better than Hyde. And Walt hated to be beaten! He and Terry didn't speak to each other just now: didn't even see each other if they could help it: but Terry heard from Tolly that Walt was making amusing remarks about the new half-miler: and it needed only that to make Terry buckle down to track work harder than ever.

Tolly had covered himself with glory in the Prentiss game, getting two hits off the visiting pitcher, which was one more than anyone else had secured and two more than most. And he had fielded well,

besides. The fact that Prentiss had won the contest in a last fatal inning didn't detract from Tolly's glory. Terry, though still hurt over being dropped, was glad that Tolly had succeeded to his position, and said so, and Tolly showed vast relief. "I was afraid you'd be sore at me," he explained. "I didn't want you to think that I was trying to get you out, Terry. Anyway, you'd have done just as well as I did if you'd been in my place." Terry wanted to think that, too, but he couldn't quite do it.

On Monday Mr. Cramer surprised him by saying: "I guess you'd better cut out your sprints today, Wendell. You didn't do so badly in the half Saturday and I've half a mind to let you see what you can do. How did you come through?"

"Fresh as a daisy, sir."

"Well, go easy this afternoon. Jog a mile and do a short sprint at the finish. If I were you I'd try for a shorter stride, my boy. It looks to me as if you were straining a bit. There's nothing in a long stride if it doesn't come natural."

The next day, when work was over, the coach spoke again. "I'll put you down for the half, Wendell," he said. "There's no doubt about your being

a better middle-distance runner than a sprinter. And I'm not sure that you've found your right line yet. Next Fall, if I were you, I'd have a try at the mile. Maybe you can run them both. There'll be another trial about Friday, and if you show up well I'll enter you for the Dual."

Terry went back to Munsing Hall with his heart beating high. He found Hal Merrill and Phil Hyde there with Joe. Hyde was an upper middler, a slim, dark-complexioned fellow with quiet manners. He and Hal roomed together over in Warren. "Here's another one," said Hal as Terry entered. "Want to go on a hike Sunday, Terry?"

"I guess so. Where?"

"Bald Mountain. We're going to take grub along and make a fire. Phil's getting too fat and wants to reduce."

"That's a bully way of doing it," Terry laughed, viewing Hyde's lean form. "Bald Mountain's a good five miles."

"And the last mile all uphill," added Joe grimly. "I'm game, though. Who else is going?"

"Guy Fosdick, I guess, and Tolly. We don't want too many. Take that alcohol stove of yours, Joe, will you? We'll make some coffee on it. I don't mind

frying steak on an open fire, but coffee's something else again."

Presently Phil Hyde said to Terry: "I hear you've blossomed out as a half-miler, Wendell." Terry said "Yes" suspiciously and waited for the inevitable joke. But Phil only remarked that he hoped Terry would beat out some of those "one-lungers."

"'One-lungers' is good," approved Hal laughingly. "Some of those fellows, like Lambert and Tilling, have about as much license to be running in the half-mile as I'd have to—to throw the hammer!"

"Our chance of winning the Dual is about as big as a piece of cheese," growled Joe. "I was figuring this morning and all I can see with a telescope is forty-four points. We can count on first and second in the hundred-yards and in the mile, but I don't see another first in sight; unless it's in the high hurdles."

"Better not count on that either," said Hal. "Munroe can beat me out two times out of three. But what about your own stunt? Mean to say you aren't going to get a first in the shot-put."

"I'm not counting on it," replied Joe. "Cobb, of

Lacon, has been doing thirty-seven feet right along in practice, I hear."

Hal whistled expressively, but Phil advised them not to believe all they heard. "And don't be too sure of second place in the mile, either, Joe. Walt's been doing a lot of talking about how poor our hated rival is, but I've a hunch that some of their milers will give us a good tussle. Of course, Walt's sure of his five points, but I may be lucky to get one instead of three. You can't tell. Besides, they'll enter four or five men to our three, and that gives them the edge of the start. Still, I guess we've got a show for the meet, Joe. If you can see forty-four points to-day we can hustle around a week from Thursday and round up a few more. Never say die, old dear!"

From Tuesday until Friday Terry lived in a condition of alternate hope and despair. There were times when he felt that he was bound to fail in the trial and times when he believed that he could make good. He was still working at the quarter, but there was no disguising the fact that at least three of his team-mates had made better progress in their training than he had, and he felt very certain that his only chance of representing Maple Park the fol-

lowing Thursday lay in qualifying with the half-milers.

Mr. Cramer sent them away at a little after four that afternoon, a round dozen in all, of whom no more than six could expect to be chosen for competition against Lacon. After it was over, just two minutes and eleven seconds later, Terry was surprised to think how easy it had been. He had not made the mistake this time of holding back at the start, but had pushed to third place at once and held it to the last corner of the first lap. Then Howland set him back and he passed the line running fourth. Stevens, setting the pace, yielded as they turned into the backstretch and Terry was again in third place. A red-haired senior named Wallace gave him a hard race along the straight, but Terry beat him to the turn by a stride and hugged the rim as he came around into the homestretch. By that time the field was strung out halfway around and two of the competitors had fallen out. Howland had taken the lead and was having it nip-and-tuck with Green. Terry followed a good half-dozen yards behind. Stevens put a scare into him just short of the finish, but Terry had something left and beat him across by a few strides. The

next morning Maple Park's entries for the Dual Meet were mailed to her rival and the name of Terry Wendell was amongst them.

There was no work for the track and field men on Saturday, and so Terry and Joe sat together and saw the Lacon Academy Baseball Team go down to defeat by the score of 6 to 5 in a ten-inning contest filled with thrills. Starting out as a pitchers' battle, it developed toward the end into a fielding competition. Both sides took to hitting, but hardly a hit got beyond the infield unless it was a high and safe fly, and victory depended on perfect defense. It was, properly enough, Captain Fosdick who broke the tie in the tenth. With one gone and a man on first, Fos laid down a bunt that should have been converted into an easy out. But Lacon's taut nerves jangled badly and the third baseman, trying for speed, pegged wide of first. The runner on first kept on to third and then, with the ball speeding across to that bag, took a long and desperate chance. He put his head down and scuttled for the plate. Had the third baseman not been rattled by his previous misplay, the runner's chance would have been poor indeed, but the Lacon player, surprised, doubtful, hesitated an instant too long and

then had to throw hurriedly. If the ball had reached the catcher below his waist he might have sent the game into the eleventh inning, but he had to reach for it, and before he could sweep it down on the runner that youth had hooked a foot across the rubber and the baseball championship of the year was Maple Park's.

That victory cheered the school hugely and was accepted as a good augury for the Meet. And it was reflected in the spirits of the five boys who met in 12 Munsing at two the next day and, a few minutes later clattered downstairs and started off on their picnic. Fos had failed them at the last moment, and so the party was composed of Joe, Terry, Hal, Tolly and Phil Hyde. Each one carried his portion of the provender and cooking apparatus, Hal looking picturesque with a skillet flapping over his hip. Tolly produced a chorus of contemptuous protest when he wheeled his bicycle from concealment alongside the entrance of Munsing and nonchalantly mounted it.

"This is a hike, you lazy beggar!" said Joe. "Get off that thing!"

But Tolly explained. He was a good explainer. "That's all right for you fellows, but I'm not up

to ten miles to-day. Think of what I went through yesterday, Joe! Winning a game like that one takes it out of you!"

"You didn't even get a hit!" jeered Hal.

"Hits aren't everything," answered Tolly loftily. "Someone has to do the brain work. Besides, five miles *is* a bit of a jaunt when the last two are uphill, and we can take turns on the wheel. And we can strap a lot of things on it, too, and not have to lug 'em."

That sounded more reasonable and Tolly won. Later they were thankful that he had, for Fate brought about circumstances that made that bicycle a fortunate possession. They didn't try for a record and consumed nearly three hours in reaching the top of Bald Mountain. The roads were good until they reached the little village of Pearson, at the foot of the mountain, but from there they had rough going. The wagon road which wound to the summit by devious ways was rutted and rock-strewn and the last half of it was pretty steep. But they took it easy and were on top before five and at half-past had their fire going in the stone fire-place that some thoughtful persons had built several years before. They still had three hours of daylight

before them, a cooling breeze swept past them from the southwest and they were comfortably weary and as hungry as five bear cubs. Hal cooked and Terry officiated at the coffee pot. After all they had to make coffee over the fire, for, although Joe had faithfully brought along his alcohol heater, he had made the lamentable mistake of forgetting the alcohol! But the coffee tasted all right, even if it was muddy. And the steak—well, when Tolly got his first taste of that steak he just turned his eyes Heavenward and said *"Oh boy!"* in awed rapture. There were baked potatoes, too, a bit solid in the middle and somewhat charred outside but fine elsewhere, and toast—if you could wait for it—and bananas and cakes of chocolate. Nothing marred the beatific success of the jaunt up to the time that the fog arrived. It was Joe who drew the attention of the others to the fact that the wide-flung landscape below them was no longer visible. As a fog on Bald Mountain is a damp and chilly affair, and as it is no particular aid to finding one's way down a road that twists like a grapevine, they decided to make an early start.

They still had the sinking sun in their eyes when they began the descent, but when they had dropped

a few hundred feet the gray mist was about them and, as the sun took that moment to disappear behind the mountain, they found that they had to proceed slowly and cautiously. It would be no difficult task to walk off the winding road and so get down faster and more painfully than desired. Tolly, who had eaten well but not wisely, had his wheel as well as himself to navigate and was frequently heard regretting the fact that he had yielded to the blandishments of the others and fetched it along! More than once the party came to a pause while Joe, leading, gingerly sought the direction of the erratic wagon road. The fog began to depress them and affected even Tolly's good-nature. Twilight deepened the gloom and called for an increase of caution, and Joe had just finished an admonition to keep well toward the mountain side of the road when the accident happened.

There was a sharp exclamation of dismay and then a crashing of the bushes and low, stunted trees and silence. "What's that?" called Joe startledly. "Anyone hurt?"

"Someone went over!" cried Hal. "Terry, I think!"

"I'm here! Tolly?"

"Here! I think it was Phil. O Phil!" There was no answer. They called again, creeping cautiously to the unguarded edge of the road. "I heard someone stumble," gasped Hal, "and then something that sounded like *'Gee!'* and then——"

"We've got to go down there," said Joe. "I wish we had a flashlight. Who's got matches?"

They found him presently, thirty feet below, lodged against a small boulder that projected from the steep face of the cliff. They could get no reply to their anxious appeals, and when, by the light of many matches that burned dimly in the heavy mist, they found the back of his head wet with blood the explanation confronted them. Tolly went quite to pieces and babbled incoherently, but the others, to their credit, kept their heads in spite of their horror and fear. It was a hard task to get him back to the road, but they did it at last, and then an attempt was made to use the bicycle as an ambulance. But two trials showed the impossibility of that, for the road was never meant for bicycle traffic. To search for poles to make a litter of was out of the question, for the trees were small, wind-twisted things and the gloom was too deep for searching further. In the end it was Terry's plan that was adopted.

The others were to carry Phil between them as best they might and he would take the bicycle and get to Pearson as fast as he could and bring the doctor back.

Terry is not likely to forget that ride down the side of Bald Mountain even if he lives far beyond the allotted age of man. Once started there was no actual stopping, since he discovered to his dismay that Tolly's wheel had no coaster brake. All he could do was hold back to the best of his ability, try to keep away from the outer edge of the road and trust to luck. Fortunately the fog thinned almost at once and the road was dimly visible ahead. But rocks and ruts were not visible, at least not in time for avoidance, and more than a dozen times Terry's heart jumped into his throat as he felt the wheel bound aside perilously near the edge. After a minute or two the descent became more gradual and the roadbed better and he threw discretion to the winds and went tearing, bounding down, clinging to handlebars and saddle on a mad coast. In spite of his danger, or perhaps because of it, there was an exhilaration that made him forget for a moment or two the purpose of his errand. But then a vision of Phil's white face under the dim light of

flickering matches returned to him and he shuddered and would have gone faster yet had that been possible. Then the mountain road straightened out, the fog was gone, the wind ceased roaring past his ears and making his eyes water and lights shone faintly through the late twilight ahead. Short of the village he found his pedals again and, save that his cap had left him far back, presented a fairly reputable appearance as he brought up before the gate of the little white house on which he had noted in the afternoon a doctor's sign. Fortunately the physician, a middle-aged and rather stodgy man, was at home, and fortunately too his small automobile was standing in the lane beside the house, its little engine chugging merrily, and in less than four minutes Terry had leaned Tolly's bicycle against the white picket fence and was rattling and jouncing away into the early darkness with Doctor Strang. Presently the little car was panting against the increasing grade but still going well, dodging stones and obstacles, and before it was forced to acknowledge defeat Joe, Hal and Tolly came into sight through the darkness with Phil on their shoulders.

Then, with Phil on the back seat of the car and

the boys hanging on wherever they could, the automobile was somehow turned and sent racing down the road again. Terry helped carry the still unconscious boy into the doctor's office and then stood by while an examination was made. There was one long sigh of relief from all when the verdict was given. Phil had had a pretty hard blow on the base of the brain, producing unconsciousness, explained Doctor Strang, but there appeared to be no fracture of the skull, and it was likely that a few days in bed would bring him around where he could try more fool stunts like walking off the side of a mountain! After that the doctor got efficiently busy and ten minutes later Phil, conscious again, but pretty well bruised and not inclined to talk, was back in the car and they set off for Maple Park. It was nearly nine when they reached school and long after midnight before sleep came to either Terry or Joe.

Phil was a sick looking boy when Terry came in to see him for a minute the next afternoon in the infirmary, but he spoke hopefully of being all right by Thursday and Terry went off to the field presently with no premonition of what awaited him there. Lacon's list of entries had arrived and Mr.

Cramer and Steve Cooper, the latter captain of the Track Team and Maple Park's all-around athlete, had looked it over and gone into executive session. Lacon had six nominees for the mile run against Maple Park's three. Of course she might not start them all when the time came, but if she did Maple Park was due for a hard time. Six against three, with all the possibilities of pace-making, pocketing and general team-work, was too great an odds, and coach and captain did some tall thinking. If Hyde was able to run they might chance it, but if he wasn't they would have only Gordon and Pillon; two entries against six!

"I don't like it," said Mr. Cramer. "It doesn't look good, Cap. Whether Hyde enters or doesn't it's safe to say that he won't be much use to us. I'm for filling up with two or three men to make it look like a race, anyway. We can count on Gordon copping first or second place, but we need more points than that. That Lacon bunch can kill off Pillon easily. Look here, let's start a couple of half-milers. They can't do any harm and they may worry Lacon a bit. If Howland makes the pace half-way through it may upset Lacon's calculations and let us edge in for third place. Howland and

Green and—I wonder about young Wendell, Cap. The boy's got a lot of grit and he will try anything you can show him. And I'm not so sure he isn't meant for a miler, anyway. At least he might give those red-and-gray fellows a tussle. Sound fair?"

Cooper thought it did, and that's why, when the day's workouts were over three surprised half-milers were trying to get used to the knowledge that just three days later they were to "kill themselves" in two laps of a mile run. Neither Howland nor Green showed much enthusiasm at the prospect. There would be perhaps thirty minutes between the races, but Howland didn't think that he would have much appetite for the mile after running the half, no matter how much rest he got between whiles. And Green spoke to much the same effect. Of the three only Terry was pleased. Terry was more than pleased. He was supremely delighted. He didn't imagine for a moment that he would secure first place, or second, or third, but he had a sort of sneaking idea that fourth place might not be beyond the possibilities, and when he recalled that rash boast to Walt Gordon he realized that one point might save him from utter disgrace. He had often wondered why on earth he had ever issued

such a crazy challenge as that! He had as much chance of winning more points than Walt as—as he had of flying!

There was easy work on Tuesday and none at all on Wednesday, save that certain of the team were sent on a walk into the country in the afternoon. Terry was among them. So was Walt Gordon, still haughty and contemptuous. Hyde was not. It was known now that Phil had been dropped. He was still in bed and still plastered and bandaged. Maple Park wasn't thinking any too well of her chances of winning the Meet just then. Terry was no longer down for the four-forty. In something under three weeks he had developed from a quarter-miler into a distance runner, which was, to use Tolly's phrase, "going some!" As the day of the Meet drew near Terry began to experience a mild form of stage-fright, and there were moments when he almost, if not quite, wished that he had been less ambitious and had only the four-forty to win or fail in.

Thursday dawned with a drizzling rain. Before noon the sun came out hotly, but the track was sodden and slow and the jumping-pits little better than mud-holes. Lacon arrived, colorful and noisy,

at twelve and by two o'clock the athletic field was a busy scene. The small grand-stand was crowded and spectators to the number of nearly a thousand lined the rope outside the track. A tent which flew the cardinal-and-gray of Lacon Academy had been set up as a dressing place for the visitors and about it lolled or strolled a fine-looking band of invaders. The trials in the 100-yards dash opened the event, while pole-vaulters and jumpers began their leisurely competitions.

Maple Park showed up badly in the first events. Hal Merrill won her only first in the sprints and got a second place in the high hurdles. In the low hurdles he failed to qualify, getting a poor start and not being able to make it up. The quarter-mile went to Lacon and she took eight of the eleven points. In the field events, however, the home team was showing up unexpectedly well and, when the half-mile was called, the adversaries were running close as to scores. That half-mile proved to be a pretty run. In spite of rumor, Lacon was not so strong as feared, and Howland finished a good eight yards ahead of the next runner, a Lacon youth. Terry got third place, to everyone's surprise, beating out a red-and-gray boy in the final twenty yards.

Terry got more applause from his schoolmates than Howland, I think, and walked back to the gymnasium breathless but delighted. At last, he told himself, he had really succeeded in something, and even if winning third place and thereby adding two points to Maple Park's score wasn't anything to gloat over it was highly satisfactory to him!

With all events save the mile run, the hammer throw and the pole vault decided it was still anyone's victory. Maple Park had 51 points and Lacon 48. Then, while the milers were limbering up in front of the grand-stand, word came of the hammer-throw and Lacon had taken six of the eleven points and was now but two points behind. She had already secured a first in the pole-vault and it was a question what of the remaining places she would capture. It very suddenly dawned on the spectators that the Meet hinged on the last event and that the victory would likely go to the team winning the majority of points in the mile run!

Perhaps it was as well for Terry's peace of mind that he didn't know that, for he was feeling rather out of his element and extremely doubtful as to the part he was to play. His instructions had been to get up with Howland and Green and force the

running as long as he could, taking the lead from Howland, in case that runner secured it, and making the pace a hot one to at least the end of the second lap. But they had placed him in the second row of starters and well toward the outer edge of the track and he foresaw difficulties in making his way to the front. Gordon was almost directly ahead and Pillon was second man from the pole in the first rank, with Howland rubbing elbows with him. Then the word came to get set and an instant later they were off, crowding in toward the board, jostling and scurrying. But that didn't last long. In a moment or two all had found their places, a long-legged Lacon runner named Shores setting the pace. At the turn Pillon went past Shores and Howland passed Pillon. Terry was in fifth place, with Green just ahead. Walt Gordon was seventh man and Mullins, the Lacon hope, was ninth. Once around the turn Howland caused a ripple of surprise by drawing ahead at a killing pace. Shores accepted the challenge and the leaders generally moved faster, but neither Gordon nor Mullins altered their speed a mite. Terry moved into fourth place and the field began to string out. Howland kept the lead to the end of the lap and then weakened, and Terry,

THEN THE PISTOL DROPPED AND THEY WERE OFF

remembering instructions, strove to get to the front. But Green was at his toes and a Lacon runner had him effectually pocketed as they went into the turn. Consequently it was Green who became pace-maker, and a hard pace he set. One by one the tail-enders fell farther and farther away and the contestants formed into two groups. At the half distance the order was Green, Shores, Pillon, Terry, an unknown Lacon runner, Gordon and Mullins. Well back trailed Howland and three Lacon men.

Green was soon finished as a pace-maker and in the back-stretch Shores was again in front. As Green dropped back to Terry he gasped: "Get up there, Wendell!" And Terry tried, but the Lacon unknown moved even and held him at every attempt, and then came the turn and Terry gave it up. The race was telling on him now and his legs were getting heavy and his lungs hot. Into the homestretch they went, the crowd shouting wildly. As they sped past the mark the brazen gong clanged, announcing the beginning of the last lap, and at that instant Mullins dug his spikes and edged himself forward. Past his team-mate he went, past Terry, past Pillon, and took his place close behind Shores. From behind him Terry heard the Lacon supporters shout

their triumph. He wondered where Walt was. Every instant he expected to see the blue-and-white runner edge past him. But they made the turn and straightened out and still Gordon held back. Terry grew frightened then. Shores and Mullins were gaining. Pillon came back steadily as Terry dug harder and sought to overtake the leaders. The unknown Lacon man—his name later turned out to have been Geary, but at the time Terry had to hate him without being able to put a name to him—crept up and past. Terry's fleeting glimpse of him showed him a runner nearly "all in" but making a desperate effort. Terry took courage and set his pace by the unknown's. And just then the sound from across the oval took on a new note and something appeared at Terry's shoulder and slowly moved into sight and Terry, to his great relief, saw that the something was Walt Gordon.

It was only when Walt had put a half-dozen yards between them and leaned to the turn that Terry realized with sudden alarm that Walt was in little better condition than the unknown who, just in front of Terry, was wavering badly, his head sagging. Shores yielded the lead to Mullins half-way around the turn and an instant later Terry passed the un-

known. He was running now with only a firm determination to finish. It would have been the greatest joy in life to have staggered aside and dropped full-length on the blurred expanse of sod at his feet. He wasn't even thinking of points or places. He only wanted to finish what he had started, and he prayed silently and incoherently to be allowed to keep his feet past that distant white mark.

Down at the finish were straining eyes and taut nerves, for the pole-vault was over and Lacon had won first place and fourth and the score now stood 61 to 60 in favor of Maple Park. As the runners made the turn Maple Park's supporters read defeat. Showing the pace, but still looking strong, came Mullins with a good five yard lead over Gordon, who was a scant yard ahead of Shores. Four or five paces behind them was Pillon, about ready to quit, and Terry, scarcely less willing. The unknown had disappeared. If Gordon had looked better Maple Park would have found reason to hope, but he was already slipping. For once his well-known ability to sprint at the finish was lacking. Terry, looking across the last corner, saw Walt's head fall back. Walt recovered the next instant, but Terry

understood. Pillon, too, was giving up. There was nothing to it now but Lacon, and maybe the Meet would go to the Cardinal-and-White! Terry's distorted face writhed with a scowl. If only he had somehow kept himself fresher! If only he could cut down that distance! They were in the home-stretch now and the finish was in sight. There wasn't time, even if he had the strength and lungs.

Pillon was no longer in sight to Terry now: only Shores, wobbling on his long, spindley legs, Walt, losing at every stride, and Mullins, ready to drop but still fighting. Still fighting! Why, two could play at that game! After all, thought Terry, he was still there and his legs were still working under him and his breath was still coming! Perhaps if he tried desperately—— There might be time——.

Somehow he reached Shores, ran even with him for an instant and passed him. Then Walt came back to him, slowly but surely. He was running in a dream now, a dream filled with a great noise that seemed to come from very far away, a dream that was a nightmare of leaden limbs and aching lungs and tired body. He felt no triumph when he pulled up to Walt, no exultation when he went past him. He hardly knew that he had done so. His

wavering gaze was fixed on the one last form between him and the nearing goal. He knew now that he could never overtake it, but he kept on, doggedly, fighting against exhaustion at every stride. The great noise was louder in his ears but meant nothing to him. A little distance away down that interminable gray path other forms were stretched from rim to rim. When he got there he would be through. That would be wonderful!

Something tried to get in his way and he weakly put out a hand as though to push it aside, but some saving sense, or it may have been utter weakness, prevented, and he let it fall again. He scraped slowly past the obstacle, slowly because the obstacle appeared to be going his way and hung at his elbow for what seemed long minutes, and staggered on. Once his feet got sort of confused and he nearly fell, but he saved himself. He had forgotten Mullins now, everything save his desire to reach that goal, to finish what he had attempted, to come through! And suddenly he was struggling weakly against arms that tried to hold him back, panting, swaying.

"Let me alone!" he gasped. "Let me—finish!"

"You have finished, Terry!" said a voice that was very far away. "You've won, you crazy kid!"

So that's how Terry "came through" and how Maple Park School discovered a new miler. Also how the Blue-and-White won the Dual Meet from Lacon, for Walt Gordon staggered over in fourth place, making the final figures 67 to 65. Walt was never quite the same after that, for his self-esteem had had a pretty severe blow, and as a result he was much more likeable. He must have been, else he and Terry would never have roomed together the next year.

SPOOKS

DANIEL WEBSTER JONES, JR., had solemnly pronounced anathema, malediction and imprecation upon Talbot Cummings. He had put his whole heart and soul into it and concentrated until his head felt funny. That had been yesterday afternoon, just after dinner, and now, more than twenty-four hours later, there was Cummings stalking untroubledly along the sloppy walk in the direction of the library, for all the world as if Jonesie's passionate utterances had been benedictions and blessings. Gee, it was enough to make a fellow doubt the efficacy of condemnation! Jonesie flattened his somewhat button-like nose against the pane in order to watch his enemy's ascent of the library steps. It was February, and such things as steps and walks were treacherous surfaces of glaring ice under pools of water. But Cummings never even faltered, and Jonesie's radiant vision of his enemy prostrate with a number of

broken limbs and all sorts of mysterious internal injuries, to say nothing of outward contusions, lacerations and abrasions, faded into thin air. A prey to keen disappointment, his painfully oblique gaze unwavering, Jonesie watched Cummings disappear and the big oak door closed behind him.

Disconsolately he sank back on the window-seat, rearranged his feet on "Sparrow" Bowles' treasured crimson silk cushion and again took up his book. But although it was one of Kingston's corkingest sea-yarns, to-day it failed to hold Jonesie's attention, and presently it was face-down on that young gentleman's stomach while his thoughts pursued the hated Cummings.

Cummings, you must know, had dealt a frightful blow at Jonesie's dignity. Cummings might call it a joke, but its victim viewed it rather as a dastardly attempt to disgrace him. It had started with a perfectly excusable confusion of words on Jonesie's part; and if blame lay anywhere save on Cummings it lay on the English language, which contained words that looked alike and meant differently.

Cummings, who roomed next door, had dropped in to borrow an eraser, and while Jonesie, who

didn't possess such a thing, was obligingly rummaging through the cherished treasures of the absent roommate, Cummings's reptilian eye had fallen on a composition on which his host had been engaged and which he had left on the table. Jonesie had next heard a choking sound from the visitor and had then witnessed his hurried departure, composition in hand. Surprised, Jonesie had made outcry. Then, suspicious, nay, chilled with dire apprehension, he had given chase. But a moment of delay had been his undoing. Below on the steps, where, since it was a mild, thawing day, most of the inhabitants of the dormitory were awaiting two o'clock recitations, Cummings was already reading aloud Jonesie's epochal essay. "'The ancient Greeks,'" gurgled the traitorous Cummings, "'had a law forbidding a man to have more than one wife.'" The reader's voice broke, and Jonesie felt that the tears were near his eyes. "'This they called *monotony!*'"

"Well, what's wrong with it?" Jonesie had demanded indignantly, striving to recover the paper. And that, somehow, had increased the hilarity. After that it was no use pretending that he had discovered the mistake and was in the act of

remedying it when Cummings had entered, no use declaring, as a final desperate resort, that he had purposely written it that way for fun. No one believed him, no one even listened to him. Everyone just laughed and laughed! For a minute Jonesie had laughed, too, but he couldn't keep it up. And Cummings had waved the beastly paper out of his reach and gurgled "'This they called *monotony*'" over and over, until Jonesie's temper had fled and he had kicked at Cummings's shins and promised to get even if it took him a million years! He had said other things, too, which we won't set down here. And his tormentor had simply laughed and choked and gurgled, and fought him off weakly until, after awhile, a lucky grab had secured the torn and wrinkled paper and Jonesie had fled back to his room with it. Since then life had been a horrible nightmare. His appearance in class rooms had been the signal for idiotic grins and whisperings. The demure smiles of the instructors showed to what far distances the story had spread. Dining hall was a torture chamber. "What was that law the ancient Greeks had, Jonesie?" came to him across the table, or "Guess I'll try the apple sauce, Billy, just to vary the *monotony*."

As I have said, the month was February, and February at prep school corresponds to August in the larger world. It's the "silly season." The weather is too utterly "punk" for outdoor life. Detestable thaws ruin sledding, skating and skiing. It it still too early for Spring sports. Even mid-year examinations are things of the past. Gray skies, frequent rains, rotten ice, slush and mud: that's February. Studying wearies, reading palls, one tires of everything. Room-mates who have lived together in harmony for months throw hair-brushes at each other and don't speak for days at a time. It is, in brief, a deadly dull, wearisome season, a season in which the healthy boy welcomes anything that promises to enliven his pallid existence, when mischief finds its innings and when the weakest, sorriest joke is hailed as roaring farce. At almost any other time the jest on Jonesie would have been laughed at good-naturedly and forgotten the next day, but now it was a thing to be treasured and acclaimed, nourished and perpetuated. Jonesie knew that until baseball practice started, or—or one of the school dormitories burned to the ground or something equally interesting happened, he would not hear the end of that putrid joke, and that if

he had ever been uncertain of the correct meaning of the word monotony that uncertainty was gone!

Disturbed by such knowledge, he stirred fretfully and the book fell to the floor and lay there unheeded while his thoughts engaged the subject of curses. He had always understood that a curse if properly formulated and delivered with earnestness and solemnity invariably did the business. Only just before Christmas Recess he had read a corking story in which a quite ordinary curse had worked wonders. He tried to find flaws in the maledictions he had cast on Cummings but couldn't. As he recalled them they were perfectly regular, standard curses, and he didn't see why nothing had happened. Of course, it might be that curses didn't act right off quick. Or it might be—and Jonesie gave a mental jump at the thought—that it was necessary to sort of help the curse along. Maybe it wasn't enough to just launch it: maybe you were supposed to get behind and shove! In other words, if he wanted ill-fortune in its most dreaded form to overwhelm the obnoxious Cummings perhaps he had better set his mind at work and sort of—sort of think of something! Not a bad idea at all! Be-

sides, hadn't he most earnestly promised Cummings to get even with him? He had. Therefor——.

Jonesie knit his troubled brow and half closed his innocent gray-blue eyes and gave himself to the problem. There was no use in attempting physical punishment, for Cummings was seventeen and Jonesie fourteen, and Cummings was tall and broad and mighty and Jonesie was only what his age warranted. No, what was needed, what was demanded was a revenge that would hold Cummings up to public ridicule as Jonesie had been held up and keep him suspended until the world tired of laughing. But just how——.

The door of the adjoining room banged shut and Jonesie knew that Cummings had returned from the library. A second *bang* proclaimed books deposited on the table. He hoped Cummings had failed to get what he wanted. One usually did at the school library. He heard his hated neighbor draw his chair to the window and heard it creak under its load. If only, thought Jonesie, it would give way instead of always threatening to! Eying the door between the rooms that hid the enemy from sight, Jonesie contemplated a fresh curse; something with more "pep" than yesterday's; less

academic and more in the vernacular. But that would necessitate arising, and he was very comfortable, and he decided to give the original curse another twenty-four hours to deliver the goods; meanwhile, of course, aiding and abetting said curse to the best of his ability so soon as his cogitations should suggest——.

The cogitations ceased and Jonesie, his gaze still on the communicating door, slid noiselessly from the window-seat and tiptoed across the room until he stood in front of it. Then, thrusting hands into pockets to aid thought, he began a slow, close and minute study of it. It was quite an ordinary door, placed there when the dormitory was built in order, presumably, that the two rooms might be thrown together and used as study and sleeping apartment. But Randall's didn't believe in too great luxury, and you drew only one room and, if economical, shared it with another fellow. Talbot Cummings didn't share his, which to Jonesie was most satisfactory. Jonesie whistled under his breath as his eager eyes became acquainted with every niche and angle and knot and bit of hardware before him. Of course the door was locked, and the key was doubtless in safe keeping at the office, but besides

being locked it was secured by a bolt on each side; and some secretive former occupant of Jonesie's room had plugged up the keyhole with red sealing-wax. When it did open it swung into the adjoining room, and, as the hinges were on the inward side of the door, Jonesie was denied contemplation of them. He was also denied contemplation of the knob for the excellent reason that it was not there. He recalled having detached it but couldn't remember for what purpose. Not that it mattered, however, for what is a knob between enemies?

At intervals Jonesie retired to the window-seat and scowled over his problem. At intervals he arose hopefully and stared anew at the door. Beyond it, unsuspecting of the malign influences at work, Cummings read on in peace. The brief afternoon darkened to twilight. Across the yard pale lemon-yellow pin-points of flame struggled above the entrances. Below the door a thin line of radiance indicated that Cummings had lighted up. But in Jonesie's room darkness crept from the shadowed corners until only the window remained visible, a grayish oblong in the encompassing gloom. And presently the eerie silence was shattered by the sound of a sinister chuckle.

Daniel Webster Jones, Jr., arose phenomenally early the next morning and at eight o'clock, having attended chapel and eaten a hearty, if hurried breakfast, might have been seen entering the popular hardware emporium of Bliss & Benedict. At four minutes to nine, after a return journey through unfrequented streets and alleys and an entrance to the building by way of the furnace room door, he turned the key in the lock of Number 14 and unburdened himself of numerous packages which he thereupon secreted where they would be safe from the prying eyes of the chamber-maid. After which he seized on certain books and hurried to a nine o'clock recitation.

It cannot be truthfully said that he was a shining success in classrooms that morning, although he managed somehow to "fake" through. His fresh, cherubic countenance shone with the light of a high resolve and for the first time in two days he faced the world with fearless eyes. Whispered jibes fell from him harmlessly. Instructors, noting his innocence and nobility, viewed him with a suspicion born of experience.

At ten-thirty Jonesie had a free half-hour. Returning to his dormitory he glanced across to

the second floor of Manning and was filled with gratitude. For there, in the school infirmary, "Sparrow" Bowles was interned with mumps. Three days ago Jonesie had deeply resented his room-mate's good fortune, charging the Fates with inexcusable favoritism, but to-day he had no fault to find. Envy and all uncharitableness had departed from him. Indeed, instead of begrudging "Sparrow" his luck, he sincerely hoped that the malady would continue for at least a week longer!

I now offer to your attention Talbot Cummings. Cummings was an Upper Middler, a large, somewhat ungainly youth of seventeen addicted to bookishness and boils. But in spite of much reading he was not a learned nor brilliant youth, and in spite of the boils he had little of Job's patience. He thought rather well of himself, however, and prided himself on a delicate wit which was really rather more blatant than delicate. In spite of the fact that he avoided all forms of athletics and abhorred physical exertion, he was well-built and, when free from gauze and surgeon's plaster, was rather comely. Upper class fellows viewed him tolerantly and lower class boys pretended an admiration they didn't feel because he had an uncanny ability for

finding their weak spots and holding them up to ridicule. As has been said, Cummings lived alone. In the matter of furnishings he affected artistic simplicity, leaning toward fumed oak and brown leather. His study—he liked to call it study rather than room—was supposed to express individuality. The table was never littered. There was a very good-looking drop-light with a near-Tiffany shade, three or four soberly-clad books, an always-immaculate blotting-pad and a large bronze ink-well which, as he invariably wrote with a fountain-pen, was more ornamental than necessary. So much for the table. The dresser, instead of being the repository for numerous photographs and miscellaneous toilet articles, held a pair of silver-backed military brushes, a silver shoe-horn and one large photograph in a silver frame. The bookcase was always orderly. The window-seat adhered to the color scheme of brown and tan, the tan necessitated by the wall paper, which was not of his choosing. The cushions were of brown ooze leather or craftsman's canvas. If I have seemed to dwell overlong on the room and its furnishings it is for a reason presently to be perceived.

At a few minutes after twelve that day Cummings

threw open the door of his study and paused amazed. Nothing was where it should have been. The lovely near-Tiffany shade rested precariously atop a pile of pillows in the middle of the floor. The drop-light dangled over the edge of the table. The volumes in the bookcase leaned tipsily outward at various angles. The silver-framed photograph smiled blithely from the top of the radiator. And so it went. Everything was elaborately misplaced. Cummings viewed and swallowed hard, doubled his fists and hammered at the portal of Daniel Webster Jones, Jr. There was no reply and the door proved to be locked. Bitterly, Cummings vowed that so his own door should be hereafter! It took him a long time to restore order and he narrowly escaped being late for dinner.

He failed to encounter Jonesie until four o'clock. Then they met in a pool of water in front of Whipple and Cummings spoke his mind to an amazed and uncomprehending audience. Cummings offered to accommodate Jonesie in a number of ways, to wit: to break his head for him, to kick him across the yard, to make his nose even stubbier than it was and to report him to faculty. Jonesie closed with none of the offers. Instead he viewed

the irate Cummings with surprise and heard him patiently, and in the end Cummings was assailed by doubts, although he didn't allow the fact to be known. Surely such an innocent countenance and demeanor could not hide guile! Fearing that he might apologize to Jonesie if he remained longer, he tore himself away, muttering a last unconvincing threat.

Cummings slept that night, as always, with his door locked and a chair-back tilted under the knob. (Once in his first year at Randall's there had been a midnight visitation attended by unpleasant and degrading ceremonies.) In the morning he awoke to find that the pillows had moved from the window-seat to the foot of the bed, doubtless accounting for a certain half-sensed discomfort. Also that his clothing, left neatly arranged over a chair, now lay scattered over the floor. He arose in a murderous mood and tried the door. It was securely locked, the key was in place and there was the guardian chair just as he had left it. He cast unjustly suspicious looks at the eleven-inch transom. It was closed as usual, nor could it be opened from without in any case. He went to the window. Below was a sheer twelve feet of straight brick wall. From his

casement to the casement on either side the distance was a good three yards. Then and not until then his gaze fell on the communicating door and he said "Ha" triumphantly and seized the knob. It came forth in his hands and he staggered half across the room. When he had recovered himself he said "Huh!" But further investigations left him still puzzled, for the stout bolt on his own side of the door was shot into its socket and secured. Cummings went to breakfast in a detached frame of mind that caused him to walk into Mr. Mundy, the Hall Master, in the corridor, and, later, to say "yes" when he meant to say "no." As a result of the latter mistake "Puffin" Welch seized on his second roll and devoured it before Cummings awoke to the situation.

Thus, then, began the amazing series of depredatory visitations that befell Talbot Cummings; or, rather, his study, for so long as he was on hand nothing befell. All one morning he remained uncomfortably concealed beneath the bed, thereby cutting four recitations and being obliged to invent an unconvincing attack of toothache. And while he lay there, inhaling dust, he heard Jonesie arrive gayly next door, remain for a half-hour of song

and depart lightsomely. It was while he was describing that toothache to the Principal that vandalism again occured. When he returned, far from happy, he found that, in spite of locked door and window, his near-Tiffany shade sat on the rug surmounted by "Travels in Arctic Lands" and the bronze ink-well, the latter, fortunately, empty. The silver-framed photograph lay on its face and the contents of the lower dresser drawer, or most of them, were lying about the floor. Cummings dropped into a chair, grabbed his neatly-arranged hair in both hands and raged.

Like most persons who appreciate a joke on another, Cummings hated ridicule when directed against himself. It was principally for this reason that for three days he kept the matter quiet. A lesser reason was that he didn't like to believe that anyone was smarter than Talbot Cummings and that he thought he could eventually outwit the perpetrator of the dastardly deeds. His suspicions had long since returned irrevocably to Jonesie. He recalled the incident of the composition and Jonesie's threats to get even. But there was no use charging that youth again with the crime until he had proof, and proof was not forthcoming. At first he sus-

pected Jonesie of having a duplicate key to the corridor door, but reflection told him that all the duplicate keys in the world wouldn't allow Jonesie or anyone else to enter the room and retire without disturbing the key that was on the inside or the chair that was under the knob. And after he had added a specially large and heavy bolt he was still more certain that the vandal did not come in that way. Neither did he enter by the window. He proved that by locking it and finding it still locked after the bed-clothes had transferred themselves to the window-seat. Nor was it possible that Jonesie came in by the communicating door, for there was the undisturbed bolt, a key-hole filled with sealing-wax and a piece of paper still reposing between door and frame, just where Cummings had craftily placed it. Cummings spent so much time trying to solve the mystery that studies suffered and he was spoken to harshly more than once. The thing even began to affect his appetite, and at last, when seven separate times he had found his study turned topsy-turvy, he offered an armistice.

"Come in!" called Jonesie.

Entered Cummings, smiling knowingly, and seated

himself with a fine nonchalance. Jonesie, looking up from Latin, eyed him with disfavor.

"What you grinning about?" he demanded coldly.

Cummings winked and leered. "You win," he announced cheerfully, and manged a deprecatory laugh. Jonesie frowned darkly.

"Win what?"

"You know. I don't know how you do it—That is, I'm not certain, but I have an idea. Anyhow, it's clever, Jonesie. You had me guessing at first, all right. But I guess we're quits now, eh?"

"Would you mind giving me a hint? I've got Latin and math to get and there isn't much time for conundrums, Cummings. If it's one of the 'What's-the-difference-between' kind, I never could guess those."

"Oh, don't keep it up. I tell you I give in, don't I? What more do you want?"

"Say, what are you gabbing about, anyway?" inquired Jonesie crossly. "If you've got something on your mind come out with it."

"You know plaguey well what I'm talking about," replied Cummings, losing his temper. "I came in here ready to call quits. If you won't have it, all

right. Then I'll go to Faculty. A joke's a joke, but you don't need to keep it up forever!"

"Of course not; that's what they call *monotony*," Jonesie agreed blandly. Cummings scowled.

"You think you're smart, don't you? Well, you won't when you get hauled up at the Office."

"What for?"

"What for! For—for making a beastly pig-pen of my study! For upsetting my things! You know what for!"

"Not *again?*" exclaimed Jonesie in shocked tones.

"Half a dozen times! More! I'm sick of it. A joke's a joke——"

"You said that before," said the other, sweetly. "Now look here, Cummings: you blamed me two or three days ago for 'pieing' your room. I stood for that, but I'm not going to have you keep it up all——"

"Then you quit——"

"—The year. If—if you annoy me any more with—with your unjust accusations I'll go straight to Faculty. It—it's getting *monotonous.*"

Cummings's jaw fell and for a moment speech deserted him. At last: "*You'll* go to Faculty! Ha, ha! Why, you—you little button-nosed——"

"Never mind my nose. At least I keep it out of other fellows' affairs! I don't——"

"You keep it out of my study then! Just once more——"

"Don't be an ass, Cummings," begged Jonesie. "How could I get into your old study if the door's locked? Use your bean."

"I don't *know* how you do it! I wish I did! But you *do* it! I'm sick of it. And you'll break something first thing you know! I—I ought to knock the stuffing out of you, Jonesie, that's what I ought to do. I've stood mor'n most fellows would stand."

"Try it and see what happens, old dear."

"Oh, yes, you'd run to Faculty with it!"

"Like a shot," agreed Jonesie.

"All right, two can do that. It'll be probation for you just as soon——"

"That doesn't frighten me. When a fellow's conscience is clear——"

"Yah!" Cummings made for the door. "We'll see! Just wait!"

"Right-o! But, I say, Cummings. If you want to know what I think, I think it's spooks!"

Cummings slammed the door behind him and

Jonesie looking past the green-shaded drop-light, fixed his gaze on a recently acquired article of adornment, a large, brighty-colored calendar, which hung on the knobless door, and winked gravely.

"Funny about Cummings's spooks, isn't it?" observed Jonesie later to Turner, of the Lower Middle.

"Haven't heard," replied Turner eagerly. "What is it?"

Jonesie seemed surprised at the other's ignorance and enlightened it. He really made a very interesting yarn of it and when he had finished Turner was grinning from ear to ear. "Fine!" he chortled. "Oh, corking! And, say, Jonesie." Turner's right eye closed slyly. "Of course *you* know nothing about it, eh?"

"Me? Give you my word, Tom, I haven't set foot in his room in weeks! Besides, how could I? How could any fellow, with his door locked and everything? It's spooks, that's what it is."

Turner was Randall's nearest approach to a town crier. If Jonesie didn't want the story to spread he shouldn't have told Turner. It was careless of him, for inside of two hours the mysterious happenings in Talbot Cummings's room were known

all over the school. Cummings attempted denial, but it was no use. Randall's had found a new sensation and refused to be deprived of it. Cummings had to tell his story over and over, until he was sick and tired of it. It wouldn't have been so bad had it been accepted seriously, but it wasn't. His audiences invariably became hilarious and offered all sorts of nonsensical advice, like putting sticky fly-paper on the floor, erecting barbed-wire entanglements or ringing burglar-alarms. The younger boys, long intimidated, fairly haunted Cummings and with solemn countenances begged to be told about the spooks. His room became a Mecca for the curious and he had no privacy. Cummings was most unhappy, so unhappy that when he awoke the following morning and, in spite of having laid awake and watchful until well after two, found his counterpane abloom like a flower garden with his neckties, he metaphorically threw up the sponge. Those ties had been neatly arranged in the top drawer of his dresser, and the top drawer was now not only tightly closed but the key was turned in the lock! It was too much! It was—yes, sir, it was spooky! Cummings dressed hurriedly and tumbled down to Mr. Mundy's study and in-

coherently told his tale. Mr. Mundy was young and a man of action. In four minutes he was at the scene of the crime.

Ten minutes later he owned to defeat. He had found the window secured, the door between the rooms showed that it had not been opened at least in months by the accumulation of dust and lint in the interstices, the transom was impossible and Cummings had shown him how the corridor door had been fastened: lock turned and key left crosswise, bolt shot and engaged, chair wedged under knob. Mr. Mundy frowned and shook his head. There was just one explanation. He offered it kindly. "What you've been doing, my boy, is walking in your sleep. Maybe you don't get enough exercise during the day. Then sleeping with everything shut up like this——"

"But I don't walk in my sleep in the daytime, do I?" asked Cummings wildly. Mr. Mundy looked blank.

"N-no, but are you—ahem—are you quite certain——"

"Yes, sir," declared Cummings bitterly. "It's *worse* in the daytime."

"Hum. And he denies it utterly?"

"Yes, he does, but I know it's him, Mr. Mundy!"

"*He,*" corrected the instructor from force of habit. "I'll have a talk with him. Stay here."

Jonesie opened promptly, the picture of smiling innocence. And he spoke *so* convincingly! "Mr. Mundy, I really think you'd ought to do something about him, sir," he said concernedly. "He comes in here and tells the strangest stories and accuses me of annoying him. He says I go into his room and disarrange his things when he's out. He even says I do it when he's in bed. He's threatened to lick me, sir." Cummings, listening beyond the door, shook a fist helplessly. "You know that isn't right, sir," pleaded Jonesie. "He says himself he locks the room up tight. I ask you, sir, how I could get in there if I wanted to."

"Quite so, Jones, quite so, but—ahem—hasn't there been some ill-feeling between you two recently?"

"Why, he came in here and swiped a composition of mine off the table and read it to the fellows and had a laugh on me, but that was days ago and I don't care anything about it *now,* sir. If

he'd just stop having these—these hallucinations of his——"

"Hallucinations, eh?" Mr. Mundy repressed a smile. "I wonder." He sauntered to the communicating door and studied it attentively. He even lifted the large and brilliant calendar and looked behind it, and Jonesie, watching politely and imperturbably, blinked twice. Then Mr. Mundy gazed at the place where the knob should have been.

"Where's the knob?"

"I don't know, sir. It's been gone a long while."

"Hm." The instructor seemed about to ask a second question, but changed his mind. Instead, he threw his weight against the door. It didn't even creak. He turned to Jonesie.

"When was the last time you were in Cummings's room?" he asked suddenly.

"About nine weeks ago, sir. It was before Christmas recess."

"That's the absolute truth, Jones?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" Jonesie looked slightly hurt.

"Very well. That's all. If I were you I'd—ahem—I'd find that knob, Jones. Or one like it."

The door closed behind the instructor and

Jonesie subsided in the nearest chair, grinning like the famous Cheshire Cat.

Next door Mr. Mundy spoke firmly but kindly to Cummings. "If I were you," he said, "I'd go in for some sort of regular exercise besides your gymnasium work. Be out of doors more, Cummings. You might take a good long walk every day; three or four miles. Aren't worrying about anything, are you?"

"I'm worrying about having my room upset every time I turn my back," said the boy excitedly. "That's what——"

"Yes, yes," soothed Mr. Mundy. "But I think if you'll follow my advice regarding the walks and being out of doors you'll find that—ahem—your worries will cease. About three miles to-day, to start with, eh? And drop in this evening and tell me where you went and what you saw." He nodded encouragingly and departed.

Oddly enough, Cummings did just what Jonesie had done a minute before. That is, he subsided into a chair. But he didn't grin. He groaned. *"Three miles!"* he muttered. *"Great Scott!"*

But he did them. He didn't dare not to. And when he stumbled back, at five, foot-sore and ach-

ing from the unaccustomed effort, he found his study sickeningly confused. "It's fine for *him*," he thought bitterly. "He knows I'm safe out of the way for an hour. Mundy makes me sick!"

Supper that evening was torture, for he was tired and discouraged to start with and everyone he met asked about his spooks. He lost his temper completely with Turner and that youth had the cheek to read him a lecture on manners He anticipated some satisfaction in reporting to Mr. Mundy that his walk had not prevented the "pieing" of his study, but the instructor told him that he mustn't expect his prescription to work so soon. "Keep on, Cummings," he said cheerfully. "It'll soon tell. Try four miles to-morrow."

But Cummings was through. He climbed wearily upstairs and knocked at Number 14. "When do you want to quit, Jonesie?" he asked humbly.

"I won't pretend to ignorance of your meaning," replied Jonesie grandly. "I've been thinking about your case, Cummings, and I've solved it." Cummings moistened his lips but said nothing. "It's your conscience that's at the bottom of all this, old man. I believe that if you clear your conscience you'll stop imagining things."

"Imagining!" gasped Cummings.

Jonesie nodded. "You have something on your conscience, haven't you? You've done something you're sorry for? Something you repent of, Cummings?"

Cummings nodded, all fight gone. "I guess so," he muttered. "I—I'm sorry, Jonesie. I apologize."

"For what?"

"You know. Reading that composition."

"Oh! Why, I'd most forgotten that. So many things have happened since to—to vary the *monotony,* Cummings. But it's decent of you to apologize, old man. And I accept it. I never hold grudges, Cummings. That's not my way. If I can't show fellows somehow that they have made a mistake, why, I forget it. So *that's* all right."

"And—and it won't happen again?" pleaded Cummings.

"Not if my theory is right, old dear, and I think it is. In fact I almost think I can promise, Cummings, that it won't happen again."

It didn't. Jonesie's theory was vindicated.

Three days later "Sparrow" Bowles returned from the infirmary, and one of the first things he did was to take exception to Jonesie's beautiful

calendar. But if he hoped to start something he was disappointed. "That's all right," said Jonesie, "take it down. I'm through with it, anyway." So "Sparrow" removed it, and, having done so, regarded the door closely.

"Someone," said "Sparrow," "has been monkeying with this panel. Looks to me like it had been out. That's funny!"

Jonesie yawned. "Maybe the heat's loosened it," he suggested.

A few days later "Sparrow" observed: "Hello, I didn't know you had one of these electric torches."

"There's a lot you don't know, son," said Jonesie; adding to himself: "You don't know what can be done with a fishing rod with a piece of wire on the end of it, for one thing!"

THE QUITTER

THEY were revising the line-up for the final game of the season, that with Fairfield, when Jack Groom entered: Coach Thornton, Payson Walsh, manager; Larry Logan, quarterback; and Jim Walsh, left guard. Had Tinker, the trainer, been on hand too, the Board of Football Strategy of Staunton School would have been, with Jack's advent, complete. "Tink's" absence, however, had been discounted: and the same was true of Jack, for none of those in the coach's study had expected the captain to hobble all that half-mile between campus and village. There were four simultaneous exclamations of surprise when he appeared in the doorway.

"Oh, Doc says I'm out of it for good," defended Jack. He lowered himself into a chair, leaned his crutches alongside and scowled malignantly at the bulky swathings of his right foot.

"Maybe, son, but you don't want to have trouble

with that ankle, even if you can't play," said Mr. Thornton.

"I've got all winter to coddle it," Jack growled. "Shove that footstool over, Larry, will you? Well, what have you decided?"

"There wasn't much to decide, Cap," replied the coach. "With you out of it——"

"Preston or Morely."

"Exactly. And it's Preston, to my mind." There was a suggestion of challenge in Mr. Thornton's voice. Jack glanced at the others. Logan nodded, and so did Payson Walsh, but his brother remained non-committal.

"Ted Morely played a pretty snappy game to-day after I came out," suggested Jack.

"Oh, Morely's all right," agreed the coach, "but in my opinion Preston's a better man to start the game Saturday. We've got to get the jump on Fairfield, Cap, and to do that we ought to start with the best we have. Morely's smart and fast and—and snappy, but I consider Preston more dependable."

"Sure," said the manager. "Ted's a quitter."

Jack turned to him, but Jim Walsh was quicker.

"Cut that, Pay," he growled. "You never saw Ted Morely quit in your life."

"Well, you know what I mean," his brother protested. "Maybe he isn't a quitter, exactly, but—he quits! Doesn't he, now? Didn't he lie down in the Fielding game? Oh, I know he did something to his shoulder, but he was all right the next morning. It couldn't have been much. I like Ted, but when it comes to picking a right half for Saturday——"

"The trouble is that he's always getting hurt," said Logan.

"He's all right now," Jack said. "He has had punk luck, I'll grant you, but being laid up a couple of times hasn't got anything to do with Saturday. And you say yourselves that he played a snappy game to-day."

"I don't believe it matters an awful lot," said the coach. "It isn't likely the chap who starts will finish, anyway. But you're captain, and if you say Morely——"

"I'm not captain any longer," returned Jack. "Larry had better take it on, hadn't he? As for using Ted, I haven't anything to say. Only you're wrong about him. He's played in hard luck, that's

all. I knew him back home. He didn't play football then, but he was always a mighty spunky chap, and I never saw anything that looked like quitting. He is a bit light, but he's a fighter, and he can do more damage in a broken field than anyone we have. I've heard fellows say, or intimate, just what Pay said a minute ago; that Ted's a quitter. It's too bad, for it's a rank injustice, and I'd like to see him have a chance to prove it. But I'm not going to insist on playing him. You're running this show, Coach, and after this minute I'm not going to have another word to say about it. After this Larry's captain. I'm out of it."

"Field captain, of course," said the coach. "You're still the real captain, Jack, and we want your advice and your help as much as ever."

"Nothing doing!" Jack shook his head. "You won't hear me open my mouth again, Thornton. I'm off. Anyone going up?"

"I'll go along, I guess," said Jim Walsh. "You don't need me any more, do you, Coach?"

"No, I guess not. We don't have to decide about Morely until the game starts, anyway, Cap. If you still think——"

"I've stopped thinking," answered Jack, smiling,

as he worked his crutches under his arm and, aided by Jim, swung himself up. "Good-night, everybody."

"Hard luck," said Payson Walsh as the departing couple passed down the short brick walk to the street and went off through the rustling leaves that lay thick on the sidewalk. "Poor Jack! I'll bet he's feeling perfectly rotten."

"I know he is," said Larry Logan. "When Jack doesn't laugh once in a quarter of an hour——" He shook his head eloquently.

"We'll miss him Saturday," mused the coach. "I don't mean any reflection on you, Logan."

"I know. A team always feels lost without its captain. It's going to make a difference in our chances of winning, too. I still think we can pull it out, but—we'll have to work harder to do it."

"Funny to have it happen in a game like to-day's," grumbled the manager. "Why, it was the easiest game of the season!"

"You never can tell about that," replied Logan. "You get hurt when you least expect it. Remember two years ago when Tommy Winship broke his arm in the gym? He didn't fall three feet! Well——"

He stretched and yawned widely. "Gee, I'm tired! It was too blamed hot to-day for football."

"Yes," the coach agreed, absently. He was making meaningless marks on the edge of the paper before him. After a moment: "I suppose it would be a decent thing to please Jack under the circumstances and start Morely instead of Preston," he said thoughtfully. "I don't believe it would matter much, anyway."

"Pleasing Jack isn't what we're here for," said Payson Walsh, frowning. "We want to win a week from to-day, Coach. That's our stunt. Ted Morely's a sort of protegé of Jack's, and Jack thinks Ted's been misjudged, and he wants to give the chap a chance to prove it. He said so himself. But we're not staging the contest for Morely's benefit. If he's got the reputation of being a quitter —and as a matter of fact he has, as you know, Larry—it's his own fault. It isn't up to us to worry. Preston's the man for the job and I say, use him."

The coach nodded. "You're probably right," he said.

Had Ted Morely known what was being said about him down in the village he would not have

sped his pen so calmly over the paper, but, as it was, he was at peace with the world. He was writing of the afternoon's game at length and with, perhaps, unnecessary detail, for his father and mother knew woefully little about football. Having reached the end of the third page, he laid down his pen and read over his effort.

"It was rotten luck for Jack, and everyone's awfully sorry for him. They say he's quite out of the Fairfield game. Isn't that the limit? I haven't seen him since they lugged him off the field, but I guess he's beastly cut up about it. I took his place after he was hurt and played all of the fourth quarter. You know I've been fighting Preston all Fall, and now it looks like I'd won. Anyway, if Jack doesn't play Saturday I'm bound to get in sooner or later, for Fairfield plays a stiff game and not many fellows last through. To-day we were 17 to their 7 when I went in and Thornton ran in a lot of subs and we only tried to hold the other fellow from scoring any more. You needn't worry about my shoulder because it's just as good as it ever was. I wouldn't have said anything about it if it had been serious——"

He scored that out heavily and wrote above it.

"It was only a wrench and nothing to bother about. I've been in mean luck this Fall about getting bunged up. You remember I had tonsilitis when we played Camden High and then there was the time I sort of fainted at practice one day, but that was only something I'd eaten, the doctor said, and then hurting that old shoulder took me out of the Fielding game. I'll bet you that if they let me play Saturday there won't be anything the matter with me, or if there is no one will know it! We want to win this year pretty bad and the school's made up its mind to do it, too. I wish you could see some of the meetings we've been having. Talk about enthusiasm, gee, no one's got anything on us. Well, I'll write again after the game and you'll know then how it comes out. If you want to know before that you will find it in the Reading paper, I guess. Now I must stop and go to bed. I've written a pretty long letter for me. Lots of love to you both."

He signed it "Your aff. son, Ted," folded it away into the envelope, wrote the address and leaned the letter against the drop-light so that he would see it and remember to borrow a stamp from his room-mate and post it the next morning. Then,

with a comfortable yawn, he arose and removed his jacket. In doing so he winced slightly, frowned and rubbed his left shoulder a moment before he began to wind the old-fashioned silver watch that had been his father's and had descended to him on his sixteenth birthday, nearly a year ago. When his room-mate came in Ted was fast asleep and dreaming brave dreams.

Toward Jack Groom, Ted entertained an admiration that was closely akin to hero worship. Jack was not quite two years older, but to Ted he seemed more than that, and with liking went a respectful awe that to-day, the Sunday following the next to the last game of the Staunton schedule, kept Ted from doing what he really wanted to do, which was cross the yard to Fenton Hall and call on the captain. He wanted to let Jack know that he was horribly sorry about the accident and very sympathetic, but he was very much afraid of being thought presumptuous: only to himself Ted called it "fresh." Ultimately he did go, but it was because Milton, Jack's room-mate, hailed him after dinner with: "O Morely! Jack wants to see you. He's over in the room. Run over now, will you?"

Jack was propped up on the window-seat when

Ted entered, his offending foot pillowed before him. Ted's condolences stumblingly uttered, Jack came to the reason for the summons. "I can't play Saturday, Ted," he announced, "and so I've dropped out of it entirely. Logan's taken my place. I haven't any more say about things. I wanted you to know that because it looks as if Preston would have the call over you. I think Thornton will start him Saturday. I'm sorry, Ted. I think you could play as good a game as Preston, maybe better, but Thornton thinks you're a bit light. Of course, you'll get in before the game's over. You can't help it, I guess. And, in any case, Thornton'll see that you get your letter. I just wanted you to understand that it isn't my doing, Ted."

"Of course," muttered the younger boy vaguely. "That's all right, Jack. I—Preston——" He paused and swallowed. "I guess he's better than I am, Jack."

"Piffle! Next year you'll put it all over him. Don't mind about Saturday, old man. You've got another year yet."

Which, reflected Ted, retracing his steps under the leafless maples, was true but not very consoling at the moment. He wished he had not written

home with so much assurance. Still, if anything happened to Preston early in the game—not that he wished Preston ill-luck, of course. That would be pretty low-down. But accidents did happen! However, he put that line of conjecture out of his mind presently and strove to find comfort in the patriotic reflection that if Preston was preferred by the coach it was with good reason and meant that Staunton's chances of winning would be bettered. And, after all, what everyone wanted, Ted amongst them, was a victory over Fairfield. By Monday afternoon he had learned to accept the disappointment with a fair degree of philosophy.

The coach's intentions were not apparent during practice, either that day or on any other of the remaining work days. Ted and Preston were used alternately at right half and no favoritism was discernible. Preston, thought Ted, was worried and nervous. The fight for supremacy was telling on him and Tuesday afternoon he called down the coaches' condemnation by twice "gumming up" plays. Ted knew that he was thinking too hard about Saturday's contest to do justice to himself. As for Ted, he had seldom played the position better. Certain that the struggle was over, the con-

sequent relief allowed him to put all his mind on his game, with the result that he went at it in a hammer-and-tongs style that was almost spectacular. He managed to forget very completely that Saturday would find him on the bench instead of on the field, and got a lot of joy and satisfaction from the moment. But after practice on Tuesday he got to thinking about Preston, and when Fate arranged a meeting on the gymnasium steps he yielded to an impulse. He and Preston were always extremely polite to each other, formally friendly, as became antagonists who thoroughly respected each other.

"I say, Preston," began Ted, "I—there's something you ought to know. I heard it by—by accident, but I know it's straight." Preston looked politely curious. "Thornton's decided on you to start the game," blurted Ted. "I thought you'd like to know it. Now you won't have to—to worry, you see."

"Why, thanks, Morely, but—you're not stringing me, are you? Where did you hear it?"

"I can't tell you that, but it's—official."

"Oh! Well, but—it's a bit tough on you, Morely. Maybe you're wrong. You'd better wait and see."

"I don't need to." Ted smiled. "I know. I'm telling you so you can—can buckle down to business, Preston. You see, I know what it is to have the other fellow on your mind all the time! One of us had to lose out, Preston, and it happens to be me. Thornton thinks I'm too light. I dare say he's right. Anyway, he's the doctor, and as long as we beat Fairfield I don't mind. Much," he added as a sop to Truth.

"Well, it's mighty decent of you," said Preston warmly. "You've certainly given me a dandy scrap, and I don't mind telling you that you've had me worried pretty often. I hope you get your letter."

"Thanks. Maybe I will. So long."

The last practice was on Wednesday and was largely signal work, although the kickers had a fairly stiff session later. On Thursday the school marched over to the field and cheered and sang and the first team substitutes went through a twenty-minute contest with the second eleven. Ted didn't see it, for he was sent back to the gymnasium with the first squad, but he could hear the onlookers cheering the disbanding second when the scrimmage was over. And a few minutes later, while he was tying his shoe-laces, the marching, enthusiastic

horde grouped in front of the gymnasium entrance and cheered the players individually, and the coaches and the trainer and everyone else. Ted listened rather anxiously for his own name. It came presently. He was somehow very glad of that. He would have felt horribly disappointed had they left him out.

Fairfield descended on the scene in force Saturday noon and the Campus and the village and the road between were gay with the flaunting blue of the enemy. The day was an Indian summer day, still, warm and hazy in the distances. Ted trotted with the rest to the field at a quarter to two and went through the warming up stunts. Then he donned a blanket and watched while the rival captains met in mid-field and a coin spun glittering in the sunlight. Fairfield had won the toss and had elected to give the ball to Staunton, thus upsetting Coach Thornton's prophecy.

"All right now," announced the latter. He referred to the little red book he carried in a vest pocket. "Aikens, Breadwell, Boyd, Morris, Walsh, Denton, Conley, Logan, Moore, Preston and Farnsworth. On the run, fellows!"

Presently a whistle piped, the new brown pigskin

arose high against the blue sky and the final test of the long season's work was begun. The cheering had stilled on both sides of the field and some two thousand pairs of eyes followed the long flight of the ball. Then a Fairfield half-back had it and was dodging back up the gridiron. Breadwell almost got him, but he slipped past. Then Larry Logan wrapped two sturdy arms about the runner's legs and brought him crashing to the yellowed turf. Fairfield came hard then and Ted watched anxiously as the Staunton line bent and buckled against the heavy assault. But the line didn't break much and presently the ball was in air again. Then came the first trial of the Staunton wide-open attack, and a mighty shout arose as Moore burst through outside right guard and reeled past two white lines. Again Moore got through, and then the Fairfield defense solved the play and shifted to meet it, and Farnsworth, faking a kick and then plunging at the Fairfield left, was spilled behind his line. A forward pass failed and again the ball flew through the air, propelled by Farnsworth's boot, and the teams raced down to the Blue's thirty-yard line. That quarter ended without anything approaching a score, the honors even. But Thorn-

ton's plan to "get the jump" on the enemy and score in the first few minutes of play had failed.

The second period was a repetition of the first, save that Fairfield had the ball once on Staunton's twenty-two yards on a fourth down and missed a goal from the field by a bare half-foot margin. Ted trotted back to the gymnasium with the others and sat around in an atmosphere of steam and liniment and excitement and listened to the babel of voices. Jack was in uniform but had not joined the players for a moment, and it was Larry Logan who fumed and implored and advised. Coach Thornton looked confident and had little to say until just before half-time was up. Then he made a quietly forceful appeal and, at the end, called for a cheer. Thirty-two voices answered thunderously.

Fairfield scored two minutes after the third period started. The kick-off was fumbled by Logan, and, although he fell on it, at his eighteen yards, Fairfield blocked Farnsworth's punt and an end broke through and captured the trickling pigskin a foot behind the goal line. Fairfield brought the ball out in triumph, and it was then that Ted saw that one brown-legged player was stretched on the turf. "Tink" was diving toward him with slop-

ping bucket. Ted's eyes sped from player to player of his side. Only Preston was missing along the goal line! Something pushed his heart into his throat, turned it over once and let it slip slowly back again. He watched "Tink's" sponge in fascination. Then they were lifting Preston to his feet. For an instant it seemed that he was as good as ever, but suddenly his head fell over sideways. They were carrying him off now, bringing him to the bench. Someone amongst the subs leaped forward with a blanket. The stand behind was cheering bravely for "Preston! Preston! Preston!" Thornton met the slowly-approaching group at the side line, looked, listened to a word from Tinker and whirled on his heel.

"Morely! Get in there! Hurry up!" he called.

Ted squirmed from his sweater and raced. Panting, he slipped between Breadwell and Moore under the cross-bar and waited. A hand waved downward, the ball flew toward them, there was a moment of suspense and a roar of relief arose from the Staunton stand. Fairfield had failed at the goal. Six points to nothing was the score, and virtually half the game remained to be played.

Larry Logan shot a dubious look at Ted as the

latter fell into place beside Moore when Fairfield had the ball again on her own thirty-four yards. But he managed a cheerful: "All right, Ted! Let's see what you can do! Hard, now!"

But it was Fairfield's policy to slow up now, and she halted in her signals and wasted all the time she could without risking a penalty. Staunton held gamely and then spoiled a forward pass and took the ball on downs. The wide-open attack was still working, for Fairfield's men were a bit heavier and a bit slower and Logan was getting a lot of jump into his plays. Ted got his chance and crashed through for a scant three yards, got it again and was downed almost in his tracks by an unguarded end. Then Moore slipped around right tackle and ran twelve yards before he was forced over the side line. Staunton got to the enemy's twenty-three before she was held, and then Farnsworth tried a place kick and missed the goal by five yards.

And so it went, Fairfield sparring for time, Staunton forcing the playing, smashing desperately, running hard, aching to score. Changes were made. Morris went out at center and young Joyce took his place. Greenough came in for Breadwell. With three minutes of the quarter left the ball was Staun-

ton's in mid-field. Loring had wasted a down on a weird trick play that had lost four yards and now Farnsworth was called on. It was the old fake kick and wide run, but it worked, just as it so often does, and the big full-back galloped over three white streaks before they stopped him. Then, with the line-up close to the side of the field, Logan called on Ted. Moore crossed over in front of him, Farnsworth ran with him. Larry hid the ball a moment and then, as Ted rushed past, thumped it against his stomach. The Fairfield line was wide open in the middle and Ted went through like a shot. After that he had to spin and feint and dodge, but he kept going forward, kept wresting himself from clutching hands, kept passing the lines underfoot. The goal came closer and closer and for a wonderful moment he thought he was going to make it. But the Fairfield quarter spoiled that. He refused to believe in Ted's move toward the side line and got him firmly about the knees and wouldn't be kicked loose. And then, when Ted toppled to earth, clutching the ball frenziedly, a pursuing end crashed down upon him and a million stars blazed before Ted's astonished eyes and he fainted.

When he came around, barely a half-minute later, they were pumping his arms and he had to gasp with the pain of it. Then came Tinker and the water pail and the big, dripping, smelly sponge, and Tinker's anxious: "Where 'd they get you, boy?"

Ted did a lot of thinking in something under a second. Too often already this season had he had to be led off the field. He dared "Tink's" searching eyes and gasped: "Nowhere . . . Tink. I'm . . . all right!"

"You're not! Don't be telling lies." Tinker's crafty fingers went exploring. Up one leg, down another, over the boy's chest—Ted never flinched. He smiled railingly.

"Let me up, you ninny," he expostulated. "I'm all right. That fellow knocked the breath out of me, that's all."

Tinker doubted and looked it. But he dropped the sponge back into the pail and stood up. "Come on, then," he commanded. "Let's see."

Ted raised himself with his right hand and sprang nimbly enough to his feet, laughing. Tinker grunted, shot a suspicious look, saw no evidences of injury and swooped down on his pail. "All right!" he said. "Go to it!"

It was Moore who gained the next two yards and Moore who lost them again. Farnsworth bucked through past guard for four. It was maddening to be on the eleven yards with only one down left and six to go. Larry hesitated and the enemy jeered. A forward pass was all that would answer, and Staunton's forwards had signally failed all the afternoon. But what must be must be and Larry gave the signals. It was Farnsworth who remonstrated. Larry listened to his whispers and looked doubtful and finally shook his head. But shaking his head was only camouflage, for the signals were changed. Ted's heart leaped as he heard them. Then the silence of the portentous instant before the impact, and the signals repeated, and Ted taking the ball on a longish pass from Joyce and springing away to the left, with Moore interfering. Then came the frenzied cry of *"In! In!"* and, sure enough, as Moore went down, a hole opened, and Ted, pivoting, turned toward the goal line. It was only a few yards distant, but the Blue's backs were flocking to its defense and Ted was already in the midst of them. Arms settled at his waist, but he tore away. Someone crashed into him from behind and he was flung forward, his feet

stumbling behind him. They got him then. A hand brushed past his face and thumped down on his left shoulder and Ted gasped and doubled up and went down, vainly, as it seemed, trying to push the pigskin forward as the trampled turf leaped up to meet him. And as he fell he found himself saying to himself in a darkness lurid with whirling stars and meteors: "I won't faint! I won't faint!"

He didn't, but he lay very still when they pulled the foe from him and he had to be fairly lifted to his feet. And when he was on them he could only lean against Farnsworth and whisper gaspingly: "Don't let go of me, please! Just a minute! Just a minute!" So Farnsworth, grinning happily, for the ball was over the line by three inches, held him up and no one paid much attention to the fact. Presently things stopped whirling madly around in Ted's world and he groped his way back to the gridiron and dazedly watched while Farnsworth, after much cogitation amidst a great silence, lifted the pigskin straight over the cross-bar!

The quarter ended a moment later and the teams changed places. Staunton fought for time now, as Fairfield had done before, but went to no undue lengths to secure it. She was a point to the good

and would have been satisfied had the game ended then and there, but she had also learned the joy of battle and was willing to fight on. Fairfield came back with a desperation that for the first few minutes lifted the home team from her feet. But she rallied on her thirty and took the ball away by a carefully measured two inches and started back again. She could not afford to risk anything now and so it was a case of hit the line and hold the ball. And she did hit it! Moore had to give up, but the eager substitute who took his place made good. Farnsworth still pegged away, as mighty as ever, although when play stopped for a moment he could hardly stand up and Tinker was watching him frowningly from the side of the field. Ted had more chances and played them through, gaining more often than not. But he, too, was almost gone it seemed, and Larry was considerate for what he had already done.

The shadows lengthened and the game drew to its end. Fairfield was still cheering on the stands, still hopeful on the field. A misjudged punt brought a groan of dismay from the Staunton adherents and gave the enemy her opportunity to pull the game from the fire. It was Stirling, the

SOMEWHERE IN THAT MÊLÉE WAS THE RUNNER WITH THE PRECIOUS BALL

substitute left half, who erred, and of a sudden the enemy was pounding at the Staunton gate. From the twenty-six yards to the fifteen she fought her way in the four downs. There, unwisely, perhaps, scorning a field goal, she raced against the clicking seconds of the timekeeper's watch and plunged on toward a touchdown. Two yards—three—one—and there were but four to go, with Staunton digging her cleats into the torn turf of the last defense.

The enemy staged a try-at-goal, but Staunton refused to believe in it, and, as it was proved, rightly. For the ball went back to a half instead of the kicker and he sped off toward the left and the line broke and followed him. His run started near the twenty yards and he ran in to the fifteen before he began to circle. By that time the interference was solid about him and when he turned in it seemed that sheer weight of numbers would carry the ball over. The Staunton defenders went down battling gamely, the rush slowed but kept moving. Somewhere in that mêleé was the runner with the precious ball hugged tightly to his body. They were pushing past the ten-yard line now. Cries of exhortation, of despair and of triumph

arose above the panting and gasping and the thud of bodies. To the eight yards—to the seven——.

A brown-legged player picked himself from the turf with distorted face and plunged at the struggling mass. Somehow he penetrated it and was swallowed from sight. And then, wonder of wonders, the forward movement stopped, the mass swayed, gave before the desperate force of the defenders and moved back. From somewhere a faint gasp of *"Down!"* was heard. But already the whistle had blown.

The ball was found just past the six yards. Above it lay a grim-faced Fairfield half-back and above him, one arm, the right, wrapped tenaciously about his knees, lay Ted. And, although they had to fairly pry that arm and its clutching fingers loose, Ted knew nothing about it, for he had fainted again!

The home team rushed once, kicked out of danger and the game was over and the crowds overflowed the field, Staunton cheering ecstatically and wildly as she sought to capture her players. But Ted, over by the bench, knew very little of that. He felt Tinker's tenderly cruel fingers exploring his left shoulder and he groaned. He didn't

mean to, but he couldn't help it. And he heard Thornton ask solicitously: "Break, Tink?"

"Sure. Shoulder blade. A nice clean break, too. He did it when they tackled him down near their goal that time. He wouldn't let on and he had me fooled till I noticed a few minutes ago that he wasn't using his left arm much!"

"Hm!" said the coach.

"And that ain't all of it either," continued the trainer, his fingers still at work. "It feels to me like he'd had trouble there before. There's a sort of lump—All right, lad, I won't hurt you any more. You're a plucky little divil! I'll say that for you!"

And last of all Ted heard Jack Groom's voice from a great distance: "And that's the fellow you said was a quitter!"

Then, following that beastly habit of his, Ted fainted again!

"PUFF"

TOM BURRILL drew up in the shade at the side of the road, jumped from the car with a wrench in his hand and, lifting the hood, began to inspect the spark plugs.

He was a healthy, well-built, intelligent-looking boy of seventeen, with a lean, sunburned face. Clear gray eyes, a straight nose, a mouth that showed a sense of humor and a chin that indicated determination were his most noticeable features. He was tall for his years and had the look of one who spends much time out of doors.

The automobile deserves quite as full a description as its owner. It was small, low hung and light in weight—more a cycle car than a full-grown runabout—and was painted a bright red, all except the wheels, which were painted black. Its name was "Puff." There was no doubt about the name, for it was conspicuously painted in black on the gasoline tank behind the seat.

Tom's father had proposed calling the car *"E Pluribus Unum,"* since it was decidedly one out of many! Tom had built it himself; he had got the parts at secondhand—here, there and anywhere. The small, two-cylinder, twelve-horse-power engine that supplied the motive power Tom had picked up for a song at a repair shop in Kingston. The body he had built himself, and the engine hood he had had made at the local stamping works. You would never have suspected that under the two coats of brilliant red paint the hood was nothing more than a fair quality of zinc!

The car was air-cooled and chain-driven, and when Tom drove it over rough roads it rattled like half a dozen dish pans. But for all that it could do its thirty miles an hour, and perhaps better were it permitted to! Tom had spent most of his spare time that spring in building the car; but he had had a great deal of pleasure, to say nothing of his final triumph when he made his first trip through Kingston, to the confusion of the scoffers who had predicted failure!

But Puff had its troubles, just as larger and more expensive cars have theirs, and so far that summer much of its life had been spent in the stable, under-

going repairs. If the truth were told, however, Tom got almost as much pleasure out of Puff in the stable as he did out of Puff on the road, for he was never happier than when he was tinkering with machinery.

This morning he had overhauled the little car with more than ordinary care, for he was to make the run to Bristol and back, a matter of forty-eight miles all told. The trip was in the nature of a supreme test of Puff's endurance. All had gone well until Kingston lay two miles behind. Then Puff had begun to skip and lose power, and Tom had at last been forced to investigate.

The investigation, however, was not very successful; both spark plugs were bright and appeared to be firing perfectly. With a puzzled shake of his head, Tom replaced them and began to survey the wiring. It was at this moment that a sound up the road toward home drew his attention. He had barely time to raise his head and look before a huge touring car raced past him in a cloud of dust.

Yet it did not travel so fast that Tom failed to identify the make. It was a Spalding of the latest model—a big, six-cylinder car painted battleship gray, with bright red wheels. In the big tonneau

sat a single passenger, a man in a light gray overcoat and a cloth cap. The chauffeur was in brown livery. All this Tom saw before the car was lost to sight round a bend in the road. It did not, he was sure, belong in Kingston, for there was only one six-cylinder automobile in the town, and that was a Wright. Probably the car belonged in Bristol, for the Spalding factory was in that city. It was doubtless returning from a trip to Kingston, he concluded.

He started his engine again and climbed back to the seat. Puff started off well, and Tom was congratulating himself on having unwittingly repaired the trouble, when again the engine began to miss fire. It seemed very puzzling. His errand made it necessary for him to reach Bristol before the bank closed at twelve, and so he did not dare to spend too much time on the road. As long as Puff made its twenty miles an hour—and it was doing that and more, as the small speedometer showed—he decided that he would keep on. After he had delivered the envelope that was in his pocket at the bank and thus done his father's errand, he would look for the trouble.

"If I can't find it," he said to himself with a

smile, "maybe I'll drop round to the Spalding factory and exchange Puff for one of those 'six-sixties'! Only," he added half aloud as he swung round the turn, "they'll have to give me something to boot!"

The next instant he was staring ahead with interest. Beyond, drawn up at the side of the road, stood the big car. The chauffeur was leaning under the raised hood and the passenger was watching from the car. As Tom approached he slowed Puff down a little. He would have been less than human had he not experienced an instant of mild satisfaction. Puff had cost him something like eighty dollars, whereas the big Spalding, as Tom well knew, was priced at nearly four thousand dollars; and certainly, as far as the quality of "get there" was concerned, the big car was at that moment inferior to the little one.

As Tom approached, he noticed that the man in the gray overcoat looked cross and irritated, and that the chauffeur was worried. It seemed rather ridiculous for him to offer assistance, he reflected, but, nevertheless, he stopped. "I don't suppose I can be of any help, sir?" he inquired.

The man in the car shook his head impatiently,

with only a glance toward him; but the chauffeur, casting a quick and wondering look over the small car and wiping his hands upon a bunch of waste, replied sarcastically, "Not unless you've got a spare cylinder."

"What!" cried the man in the car. "Cylinder gone?"

"Piston's broken, sir. Thought maybe it was only the valve was stuck or something, but I guess it's the piston, all right."

"But jumping cats!" snapped the man in the gray coat. "You can't mend a broken piston rod!"

"No sir."

"And she won't run?"

"No, sir, not to speak of. She's pushing the charge back into the carburetor. We might limp along about ten miles an hour, Mr. Fletcher, but I shouldn't like to say that we'd not spoil another cylinder."

"But I've got to get back by eleven! Can we get another car round here?"

"There's a garage at Kingston, sir. Maybe——"

"How far back is it?"

"A matter of three miles, I guess."

"About two and a half," Tom corrected.

The passenger looked at his watch and frowned impatiently.

"I suppose it would take half an hour to get it," he said. "It's 10.18 now and my train leaves at 11.04. There's less than an hour, and I've got to get that train to Chicago. Look here!" He swung round toward Tom. "Will that thing you've got there run?"

"Yes, sir," answered Tom a little coldly. He did not like to have Puff called a "thing"!

"Will, eh?" snapped the man. "Well, there's fifty dollars in it if you'll get me to Bristol in time for the 11.04 express. Can you do it?"

Tom shook his head. "No, sir. If it's 10.18 now, there's only forty-six minutes and the distance is twenty-two miles. This car can do thirty on good roads, but——"

"Tut! tut! tut! Any car that can do thirty can do thirty-five if you push it. I tell you I'll give you fifty dollars if you get me there. Isn't that enough?"

"Plenty, thanks," replied Tom quietly. "But I'm not running very well to-day. Something wrong with my plugs, I guess; or maybe it's the wiring. Anyway——"

But Mr. Fletcher was already climbing out of his car. "Dennis!" he said sharply. "Bring some spare spark plugs!"

He was across the road in a second. "Get your plugs out," he ordered Tom, "and see if mine will fit. Get a move on, if you want to earn that fifty."

Tom hesitated for an instant. Then he said, "I'll do the best I can, sir."

By the time the chauffeur had found the new plugs Tom had taken the old ones out. Fortunately, the new ones fitted and the chauffeur quickly screwed them in. As Tom connected the wires, Mr. Fletcher issued directions to the chauffeur.

"Get my bag, Dennis. Put it between my feet here. You stay with the car and I'll send out and have you towed home. Put it in the shop and tell Morrison to give you something to use while it's being fixed. Meet the 4.10 to-morrow afternoon. All right, son! Now let's see what you can do." He pulled his watch out again. "You've got forty-four minutes!"

Tom started the engine, sprang to the seat, threw in the clutch, changed to high speed and bounded gayly off. The seat was narrow and low, and

Mr. Fletcher, who was of ordinary height and stockily built, filled his half of it to overflowing.

"Most uncomfortable seat I was ever in!" he exclaimed. "What make of a car is this, for goodness' sake?"

"Burrill, two-twelve, Model 'A,'" replied Tom gravely, clinging to the wheel as the car swung round the next bend in the road.

"Never heard of it," said the other. "Won't it go any faster than this?"

The hand on the speedometer was hovering back and forth round thirty. Tom drew the throttle down another notch and the hand went to thirty-three. The new spark plugs had evidently done the work, for there was never a skip now. Puff was running as smoothly as a Spalding Six!

"That's better!" grunted the passenger, holding on tight to keep from being jounced out. "If the thing sticks together we may make it. How much do they get for these things?"

"It cost me about eighty dollars," answered Tom, tooting his horn frantically as he saw a wagon ahead.

"Oh, second-hand, eh?"

"Most of it, sir. I made it myself."

"Made it yourself!" There was both surprise and admiration in Mr. Fletcher's tone. "Well, you're a mechanic, my boy. I'll apologize for any disparaging remarks I may have made. Sorry if I hurt your feelings."

"That's all right," replied Tom, as he swung almost into the ditch to get round the wagon, the driver of which was fast asleep on the seat. "It isn't much of a car, but it does pretty well. And I haven't broken any pistons yet!"

"Hum!" said Mr. Fletcher. "Well, send her along, son. If she'll keep this up we may make it. By Jove, we've got to make it! I wouldn't miss that appointment in Chicago for a thousand dollars! Let her out another notch. You've got a straight road."

But Tom shook his head. "I'd rather not. We can make it this way if nothing happens."

Mr. Fletcher grunted. The little car was going at its best speed; to Tom, who was clutching the wheel with strained muscles and intently watching the road ahead, it seemed to leap past the fences as if it were alive.

"So you made this yourself?" Mr. Fletcher said

presently. "Must have been something of a job. I've made a few myself, but——"

There was a sharp *crack!* Mr. Fletcher's side of the car suddenly sank, and he grabbed wildly at Tom in an effort to keep his balance. As Tom set the emergency brake, the car swerved and came to a stop. Tom leaped out and viewed the damage.

"Spring's busted," he reported. "I always thought they were too light."

"Spring, eh? Well, she'll run, won't she?"

"Yes, sir, but it's going to be uncomfortable, because the body's right down on the axle on your side."

"H'm, I guess a little more discomfort won't matter! Let's get on, let's get on!"

They went on, with the speedometer wavering round thirty-three miles an hour. Twice Tom had to slow down: once when the road dipped and turned sharply under a railway bridge, and again when they passed through the little village of West Adams. At intervals Mr. Fletcher, carefully releasing his hold on the car, took out his watch and reported the time.

"Ten thirty-eight," he said, as they speeded up again beyond West Adams. "How much farther?"

"About twelve miles. We'll do it if——"

"We've got to do it!"

A few minutes later Mr. Fletcher sniffed the air. "She's heating up, isn't she? Got water in your radiator?"

"No, sir; she's air-cooled."

"Smells like it!"

A long hill rose in front, and Tom pulled down his throttle another notch or two. Puff took the hill flying, and Mr. Fletcher grunted in unwilling admiration.

"Lots of power! What's that?"

A dull pounding noise was coming from under the car.

"Flat tire," said Tom. "We'll have to run on the rim."

"Ten forty-seven!" Mr. Fletcher announced. "Can we do it?"

"If she'll hold together! It's only about six miles, I think."

"When you get this side of town, where the two roads branch at the powder factory, take the right. It's a poor road, but it's a mile shorter and goes straight to the station."

Bumpity-bump! went the body against the axle!

Thumpity-thump! went the wheel with the flat tire. *Honk! honk!* went the horn. The little car tore along. Five minutes later the smoke pall above Bristol was in sight. The road grew rougher and wagons began to dispute the way. At the powder factory Tom swung to the right on a road that was rutted by heavy teaming.

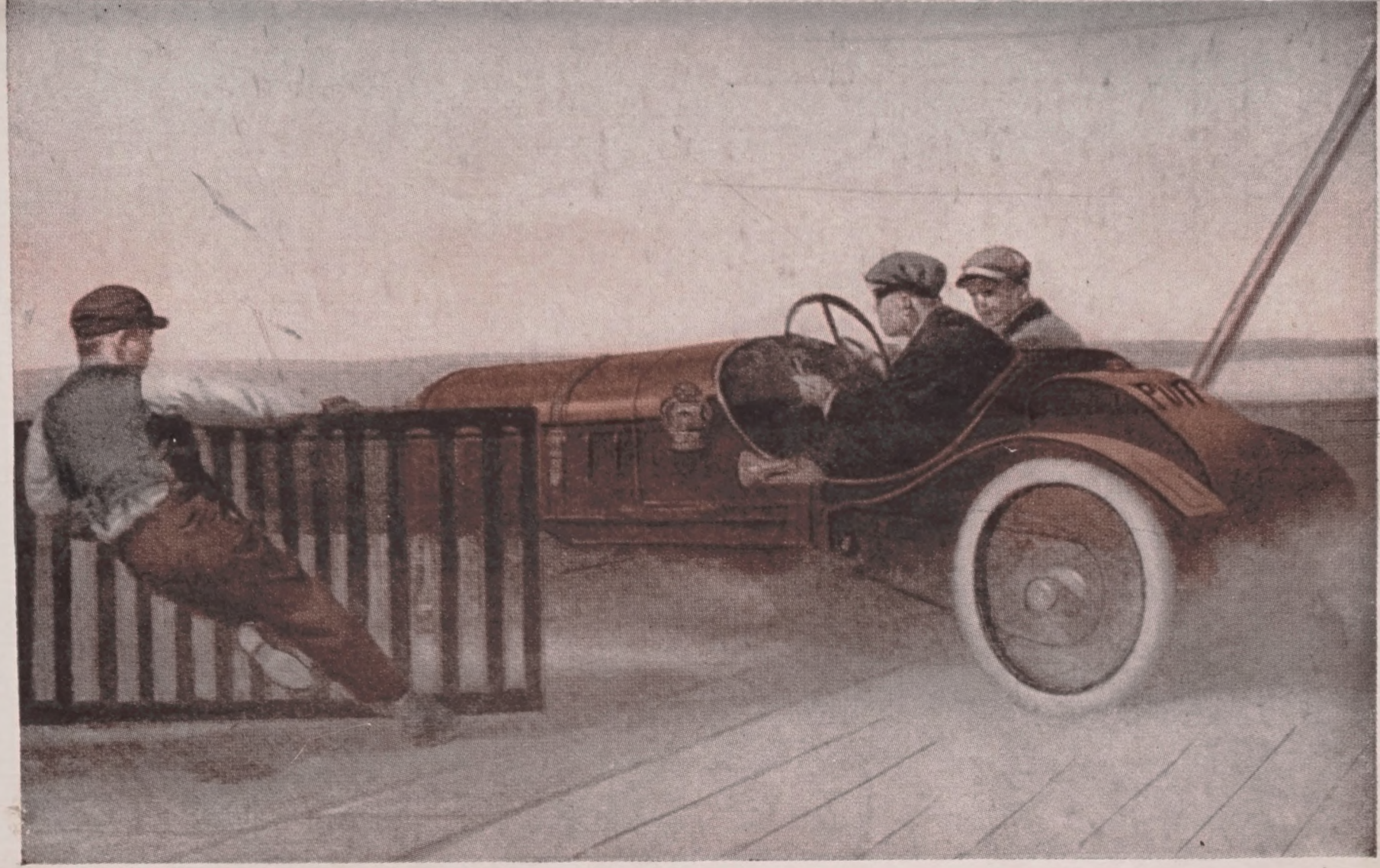
"Just fifty-seven!" shouted Mr. Fletcher above the noise.

Tom nodded. Ahead of them the city, with its tall chimneys belching smoke, was now in plain sight. Puff jumped and careened, but kept its pace. Three miles more and seven minutes left!

Suddenly an exclamation of dismay from his companion sent Tom's gaze traveling far up the road. A quarter of a mile ahead a drawbridge spanned a river, and approaching it from downsteam was a tugboat. Even as Tom looked little puffs of gray steam rose from the tug, and an instant later the whistle blasts from it reached him. She was signaling for the draw; the tender already had begun to swing the gates.

"That settles it!" groaned Mr. Fletcher.

Tom calculated the distance, pulled down the throttle, and Puff sprang madly forward.



THE BRIDGE TENDER HAD HALF CLOSED THE SECOND GATE

"Reach past me and blow the horn!" Tom gasped.

Mr. Fletcher obeyed. *Honk! honk! honk!* shrieked the little car. The bridge tender had closed one of the two gates on the farther side and was hurrying toward the other. *Honk! honk! honk!* Then he heard, paused, looked from car to tugboat and, raising a hand, warned them back.

But Tom never hesitated. On rushed the car. The bridge was only a hundred feet away now, and Mr. Fletcher shouting unintelligible words, was working the horn madly. The bridge tender had half closed the second gate, when he changed his mind and hastily swung it open. There was a roar of planks under flying wheels, a swerve, the sound of a rear hub glancing from the end of the closed gate, and they were over. Behind them a wrathful tender shook his fist in the air!

"Three minutes past!" gasped Mr. Fletcher.

But the station was in sight, beside the platform stood the long express. Still honking wildly, Puff dashed through the slow-moving traffic and pulled up with a jerk at the platform. Waving at the engineer, Mr. Fletcher tumbled out.

"Bag!" he cried.

Tom pushed it across with one foot.

"Thanks! I'll have to send—that fifty. What's —the name?"

"Tom Burrill, sir, but I don't want any money."

"All abo-o-oard!" called the conductor.

"Nonsense! Tom Burrill? Live in Kingston? You'll hear from me—day or two! By!"

Mr. Fletcher rushed away, and was half pushed up the steps of a parlor car as the train moved off. Ten minutes later, at the bank, Tom put a question to the man at the window:

"Is there a Mr. Fletcher who lives here in Bristol, sir?"

"Fletcher? Certainly. Mr. Henry L. Fletcher lives here."

"And—and what does he do, please?"

"Do? Why, makes automobiles, of course! haven't you ever heard of the Spalding car?"

"Oh!" murmured Tom.

"Made right here in Bristol. A fine car, my boy."

"Not bad," replied Tom carelessly as he turned away. "Weak in the cylinders, though."

Four days later at breakfast Tom received a

letter in an envelope that bore the words, "Spalding Automobile Company, Bristol."

The inclosure was brief. He read:

DEAR SIR: We are instructed by the President, Mr. Henry L. Fletcher, to deliver to you or your order one of our Model 14 Runabouts, fully equipped. The car is here at your disposal. Kindly call or send for it at your early convenience. Awaiting your instructions, we remain,

Respectfully yours,
SPALDING AUTOMOBILE COMPANY,
per W. W. MORRISON, Manager.

"And what," inquired Tom's father a little later, "will you call this new automobile of yours? E Pluribus Fletcher?"

Tom did not hesitate. "I guess," said he loyally, "I'll call it Puff the Second."

"PSYCHOLOGY STUFF"

JOE TALMADGE came to Hollins from some fresh-water college out in Wisconsin. Anyway, they called it a college, but Joe had hard work getting into the upper middle class at Hollins, and Hollins is only a prep school, so it seems that his college, which was called Eureka or Excelsior or something like that, couldn't have ranked with Yale or Princeton. His father had died the spring before. He had been in the lumber business in a place called Green Bay and had made a pile of money, I guess. They had opened an office or agency or something in Philadelphia a year or so before and when Mr. Talmadge died the other men in the company decided that Joe was to finish getting an education right away and take charge of the Philadelphia end of the business. It was Joe's idea to finish up somewhere in the East, because, as he said, folks back East were different and he'd ought to learn their ways. That's how he

came to duck his Excelsior place and come to Hollins.

The first time I saw him was the evening of the day before the Fall term began. They'd made me proctor on the third floor of Hyde Hall and after supper that night I was unpacking in number forty-three when I heard a beast of a rumpus down the corridor and hiked out to see what was doing. It seemed that they'd put Joe in thirty-seven with a fellow named Prentice, who hails from Detroit. Prentice was all right except that his dad had made money too quickly. He had invented a patent brake lining or something for automobiles and everyone wanted it and he had made a pile of money in about six years and it had sort of gone to Tom Prentice's head. He wasn't a bad sort, Tom wasn't, but he could be beastly offensive if he set out to. When I knocked at thirty-seven no one inside heard me because there was too much noise. So I just walked in. The study table was lying on its side and the gas drop light—we didn't have electricity in Hyde then—was dangling a couple of inches from the floor at the end of its green tube. Tom Prentice was lying on his neck on one of the beds with his heels near the ceiling and Joe was stand-

ing over him waiting for him to come back to earth. Joe didn't look mad, but he looked mighty earnest.

He was seventeen, but big for his years, wide-shouldered and powerful looking. He had a nice sort of face, with gray eyes and very dark hair and a good deal of sunburn. His hair needed trimming and some of it was dangling down over his forehead, making him look sort of desperate, and I wondered what would happen to me if I had to step in between them. But I didn't. Joe stopped knocking Tom around for a minute and I explained that I was proctor and accountable for the peace and quiet of that floor. By that time Tom was sitting on the bed looking dazed and holding one hand to his jaw. I never did find out what had actually started the riot, but it was something that Tom had said about the sovereign State of Wisconsin, I think. I persuaded them to shake hands and forget it and Tom said he hadn't meant whatever it was just the way Joe had taken it, and when I went out Joe was fussing around Tom with arnica and wet towels.

They got on all right together after that first show-down. Maybe Tom realized that he was no

match for Joe. Tom wasn't any frail lad, either. He weighed about a hundred and sixty and was eighteen years old and played left guard on the Eleven. It was Tom who induced Joe to go out for football. Joe had played a little out West, but had never taken it seriously, and didn't show any enthusiasm for it now, only Tom kept at him, I guess. Anyway, I saw Joe working with the dubs a day or two after the term began. They had him going through the motions at center on the fourth or fifth scrub. I remember saying to Larry Keets, who was assistant manager that Fall, that "that guy Talmadge was built for the part, all right." Keets looked across and grinned.

"Yeah, he's built for it, maybe, but he handles the ball like it was a basket of eggs. Morgan"—Morgan was our coach—"was eying him yesterday, but he's still where he is. Anyway, we've got centers and guards and tackles to burn. It's back field men we need, Zach, and a couple of good ends."

Which was all true. We'd lost seven out of the fifteen men who had played in the big game last Fall, and all but two were backs. Of the two, one was an end and the other was a guard. Coach Morgan and Truitt, our right tackle and captain,

were raking the whole school for halfback material and not having much success in finding any.

I ought to say here that Hollins had been having a run of perfectly rotten luck for four years. Enwright Academy was our big rival and Enwright had beaten us three times and played us to a scoreless tie once in those four years. It had got so that a win over the blue and gold was something mythical, like the dodo or the dope about Hercules and the Nemean lion. No one in school when I was there had ever seen Hollins beat Enwright at football and we'd got so that we'd stopped hoping, or at least expecting, anything like that to happen. And along about the middle of October, by which time we had been licked three times, we had resigned ourselves to the regular programme: mass meetings, secret practice, plenty of cheering, bluffing to the last minute and—defeat.

We played a ten game schedule that year. The week before the Enwright game we had Gloversville coming back for a return engagement, Gloversville being calculated to give us good practice and no risk of injuries to our players.

About the last week in October I got a surprise. I went down to the field one Thursday afternoon

with a couple of the fellows to watch practice. Morgan had started secret sessions, but to-day they had opened the gates. There had been several cuts in the squad by that time and only the first and second teams were left; perhaps thirty-four or five fellows in all. They were scrimmaging when we got there and the second was trying to get over the first's goal line from the fifteen yards. They made two tries, wide end runs both of them, and didn't gain an inch, but after each play I noticed that one of the second team men had to trot back about twenty yards to get into position again. Whoever he was, he had just romped through the first's line and was behind the goal posts each time. Then, when we had got over opposite the play, I saw that it was Joe Talmadge. On the next down the second's quarter fumbled and after the ball had rolled around awhile the second team's full-back fell on it. It seemed to me that almost any one of the first team forwards should have broken through and got that pigskin, but they didn't, and it dawned on me that the reason they didn't was just because the second's center had been too stiff for them. After the second had tried a place kick and failed, the ball went back to mid-field, and during the next

seven or eight minutes of that scrimmage I watched Joe closely. And what I saw made me wonder if Coach Morgan had lost his eyesight, for Joe simply played Pride to a standstill. Not once did the first make a gain anywhere near the middle of the second team's line, and when the second finally got the pigskin again, after Stringer had made a mess of a run around left end, it was always Joe who led the way through. He would just spin Pride around like a top, or push him back like he was a straw man, and romp past him. But why Morgan didn't see it was more than I could figure out, and that evening, after commons, I tackled Captain Truitt. Tru and I were pretty good friends, for I had got him into Arcanium the year before.

"Talmadge?" he said thoughtfully. "Yes, I know, Zach. He's been putting up a corking game on the second right along for two weeks, but when we try him on the first he falls down flat. We've had him over twice. The first time we thought it was stage fright, but he was just as bad the next. Sometimes fellows are like that. They'll work like Trojans for the scrubs and be no earthly good on the first. Coach hauled him over the coals last week about it and all Talmadge could say was that 'he

didn't know.' Too bad, for he'd come mighty near to making trouble for Enwright."

"It doesn't sound like sense to me," I said. "If he can play like a whirlwind on one team why can't he do it on another."

"Search me," said Tru, "but some fellows are like that. Coach talks of trying him again Saturday against Wooster High. I don't know if he will, though, for we can't afford to take any chances. I'd like mighty well," he added bitterly, "to win one more game this season."

"One!" said I. "Oh, run away, Tru! The trouble with you chaps is that you've lost faith in yourselves. You're so used to getting the short end of it that you can't believe in winning. Buck up!"

"That's a fact, old man! I believe you're dead right. We're so used to being rotten that we don't know how to be anything else. What we need is one of these psychology sharks to come around and sort of hypnotize us into a new state of mind. Short of that, Zach, we'll do the same old stunt again."

"Psychology, your grandmother! Use your beans! Why shouldn't we win from Enwright? What's to prevent? Why——"

"Nothing, except that they've got the best team they've had in three years and we've got a worse one than we had last year. And last year they beat us by seventeen——"

"Sure! I know! You needn't go into the sickening details. But it's idiotic to think that you're bound to be licked, Tru. I'm not much on the psychology stuff, but I do think that there's a whole lot in believing that you're going to get what you want. Why not try it?"

"Oh, I do. That is, I try to. I don't talk this way to the fellows, Zach. You're different. You don't talk. And it's a relief to be gloomy once in awhile. On the field I have to be 'Little Sunshine' until my mouth aches from grinning."

"Well, for the love of lemons don't quit yet, Tru. Keep a stiff upper lip and maybe you'll pull off a miracle."

Whether Joe Talmadge got onto the first or not was no affair of mine, but I sort of liked the chap, what little I'd seen of him, and, besides, it looked to me as if the team ought to go up against Enwright with the best players to be found. Anyway, I munched it over going across the yard, and when I got to the third floor of Hyde I stopped at thirty-

seven and knocked. Someone said "Come in," and I opened the door. Joe was alone. Tom, he said, hadn't come back from supper, and would I wait? I had meant to ask Tom if there wasn't some way of getting Joe to put up a fight when they got him on the first, thinking that maybe he could talk it over with his roommate and find out what the trouble was. I certainly hadn't intended talking to Joe himself about it, but that's just what I found myself doing a few minutes later. Joe was a nice sort and he kind of made you say what you had on your mind. Maybe he had what they call magnetism. Anyway, there I was pretty soon talking it over with him, he lolling back on the window seat, hugging his long legs and looking thoughtful.

"You've got me, Morris," he said finally. "They're dead right about it, too. Some way, when they stick me in there on the first I sort o' lose my pep. I don't know why. Say, do you believe in—in——"

He stopped and I said "Fairies?"

"No, but atmosphere."

"Sure, Talmadge! I'm a firm believer in it," said I earnestly, not knowing what he was driving at.

"Honest?" He seemed pleased and I was glad I'd said the right thing. "Well, sometimes I think it's atmosphere that does it."

"Does what?" I asked, puzzled.

"Why, makes me play so dog-gone punk on the first," he explained gravely. "I'll tell you, Morris," he dropped his knees and thrust his big hands into his trousers pockets, "when I'm playing on the second I—I kind of feel like I was doing something that wanted to be done. I feel like the fellows around me wanted to win the scrimmage. But when they put me over in the other line I don't get that—that feeling at all. I suppose that sounds like silly stuff to you, but——"

"Hold on!" I said. "It doesn't, Talmadge. I believe you've found the answer. I believe you've put your thumb right on the—the tack! That's just what you would feel on the first, I'll bet. Those chumps have been licked so often they don't believe in themselves any more."

"That it? Well, that's the way I feel, and I don't seem to be able to get rid of it. I guess that coach thinks I'm an awful dub, but I can't help it. I try hard enough, but the —whatdoyoucallit—incentive

isn't there. Or something. Atmosphere I've called it. Or feeling. Something."

We talked it over quite a bit. I thought he was right about the trouble, and I still think so. I got him finally to promise to make a good hard bid the next time. "Just try your best to forget the atmosphere," said I. "Play your own game, Talmadge. Make up your mind that, no matter whether the rest of the team want to win or get licked, you yourself are dead set on winning. Will you do it?"

"Sure! Much obliged. It's good of you to—to bother." He insisted on shaking hands. "If he lets me in Saturday I'll do the best I can. Maybe it won't be much, though. After all, I don't know an awful lot about football. Just the rudiments. But I'll see if I can't—" he hesitated, smiled and went on—"can't create my own atmosphere."

I had planned to go home Saturday after dinner, but I stayed around and saw the game and took the five-twelve instead. I wish I hadn't, for we got most unmercifully beaten by Wooster. To be sure, Wooster had every bit of luck there was, but even taking that into consideration our fellows played a pretty punk game. The big disappoint-

ment to me was Joe. Morgan put him in at the start and let him finish the quarter, but he didn't put up any sort of a fight. And I could see that he was trying, too. Wooster broke up our center time and again, and the only reason Morgan let Joe stay in was because the play was all in midfield and I guess he kept on hoping that Joe would find himself. I came across him between the halves. He had dressed and was looking on from the side line. When he saw me he smiled wryly and shook his head.

"I'm sorry," he said. "But it wasn't any use, Morris. I'm kiboshed, I guess. They smeared me for fair, didn't they?"

I nodded. "But what was the trouble?" I asked.

"I don't know. The same, I guess. I tried to make believe that the whole thing depended on me and that I was the main squeeze, but it didn't seem to work. Say, do the rest of those fellows really *want* to win, or—or what?"

"Why, yes, they do, of course," said I. "But—maybe they don't know it!"

Joe sighed. "Something's wrong with them. I had the impression all the time that I was taking a lot of trouble for nothing, that no one cared what

happened, and it balled me all up. I'm going to quit football, I guess. Anyhow, I ain't got time for it."

I said something polite and beat it back to the stand. It didn't seem to me to make much difference whether he quit or not.

Things ambled along toward the second Gloversville game. I noticed that Joe was still playing on the second, and gathered from something Tom said that he had wanted to quit and had been overruled by the coaches.

We licked Gloversville thirteen to six, in a glorified practice game in which every substitute had a chance to show his gait. And after that we settled down for the final humiliation of being whipped to a froth by Enwright the following Saturday. Honestly, you couldn't find ten fellows in school who would say that Hollins was going to win, and you couldn't have found one who believed it! I didn't. I'll say that frankly.

Three of the second team were taken over to the first, and Joe was one of them. Maybe Morgan thought he might need a third center if Enwright played the sort of game she was expected to. Any-

way, Joe was huddled up on the bench with the rest of the subs when the game started.

It was a cloudy, still November day, with a touch of frost in the air, and there was no choice between goals. We won the toss and gave the ball to Enwright. The visitors were a husky lot, all right. They'd won six out of nine games and hadn't any doubt about winning another to-day. They were a rangy, powerful bunch, and looked fast and keen. As to weight they had it over us by a few pounds in the average, but not enough to worry about. We weren't worrying about anything, for that matter. We had made up our minds to fight hard and die fighting. Only, we expected to die. And anybody knows that that's no way to go into a football game. We believed that Fate had everything all doped out for us, so what was the use of worrying? I heard afterwards that Morgan fairly insulted them in the dressing room before the game, but he didn't get any reaction. They refused to be insulted. They were dogged, but there wasn't enough vanity in the whole bunch to fit out a Pomeranian lap dog. Then they went out and trotted onto the gridiron, while we waved and cheered them nobly, prepared to die like heroes.

They had an awful surprise in the first ten minutes of that period. Enwright absolutely refused to play football. Whether she was a bit stale or what the trouble was I don't know, but she fumbled and ran wild and misjudged punts and acted like a bunch of grammar school kids. You could have heard their quarter raving at them as far away as the laboratory, I guess. The first thing anyone knew Hollins had pushed White over for a touchdown and Tru had kicked a pretty goal!

Oh boy! Maybe we didn't go crazy on the stand! Why, we hadn't done anything like that to Enwright in four years! We got cocky and crazy-headed and predicted a score something like twenty-eight to nothing! We ought to have known better, but we didn't. Enwright sort of pulled herself together after that and held us off until the quarter was up. But we were still hopeful and looked for more glory in the second period. The glory was there, too, but it went to Enwright. She came bravely out of her trance and pushed us straight down the field for a touchdown and then, when White misjudged a long corkscrew punt and had to fall on the ball on our twelve yards, she did it again in just three rushes. She missed both

goals, though, and we got some comfort from that. Twelve to seven wasn't so bad, after all. And the game wasn't half over yet.

But, although the visitors didn't score again in that quarter, they outplayed us badly. And they kept it up in the third period, too, after we had sung and cheered all during half-time. But they didn't score. They had three perfectly good chances, and each time some turn of the luck queered them. Of course, our fellows did their bit. They were giving their well-known imitation of Horatius keeping the bridge. But, shucks, if it hadn't been for a fumble on our three yards, a perfectly punk pass from center to fullback and holding in the line, Enwright would have scored three times in that quarter. The trouble with us was that we never forgot who we were up against. We were whatyoucallems—fatalists. When an Enwright runner was tackled he kept on running and made another yard, maybe two or three. When one of our fellows was tackled he quit cold. Same way in hitting the line. When one of our backs ran up against the defense he eased up. Even our punting showed it. We didn't mean to quit, but we were doing it. We oozed through the third quarter with

the score still twelve to seven, and we began to hope then that we could hold the score where it was. What happened after the whistle blew I got from Tru and Joe.

Coach Morgan called Joe from the bench. "Jones is very bad," he said in that quiet, crisp way of his, "and they're making too many gains at our center, Talmadge. It's too bad we haven't anyone to stiffen it, isn't it? If it was only the second team I'd chance putting you in."

Joe looked troubled. "I'll try my best, sir," he said doubtfully.

"We-ell, I don't know. They've got us beaten anyway, and——"

Joe flared up. "*They* have! Like fun they have! We've got ourselves beaten. There isn't a fellow out there that doesn't think he's done for right now. There isn't one of 'em that really *expects* to win. There isn't more than one or two that's *trying*. They're just dying game, that's all they're doing! Beaten! Yah, that Enwright bunch would quit cold if someone put up a real fight!"

"Think so?" asked the coach mildly. "I wonder. Too bad someone couldn't go out there and convince them of that, isn't it, Talmadge?"

"Yes, but what's the use? They won't believe it, Coach."

"They might—if it was put to them hard enough," the man mused.

Joe began to pull up his sweater sort of half-heartedly.

"If *you* think that way, Talmadge, you might get the others to. You might try it. It wouldn't do any harm. We're beaten anyway, and——"

"That ain't so!" cried Joe angrily. "You know it, too!"

"What good does my knowing it do?" asked Morgan gently.

Joe pulled his sweater over his head and flung it behind him.

"Jones?" he asked.

The coach nodded. "And tell Truitt I said I'd changed my plans. Tell him I've decided to win the game."

Joe grinned. Then he ran on just in time and pushed Jones out of the way.

It was Enwright's ball on her forty-six yards, second down and five to go when Joe arrived. Tru looked a bit puzzled at the message for a moment, but then he grasped the idea and it seemed to do

him a lot of good. "That's the stuff!" he cried hoarsely. "We've got orders from the coach to win this, fellows! What d'ye say now! Everyone into it hard! All we want's one score. Let's get it!"

Enwright tried out the new center and made only a yard. Joe jeered at them. "Come again!" he told them. "Always glad to see you!" They got three past left tackle and Joe was on Conners like a ton of bricks, bawling him out. "What do you think you're doing?" he demanded. "Trying to chuck this game away? Fight, you big baby! Don't let 'em walk over you! *Fight!*"

Conners was so surprised that he forgot to get mad until it was too late. Tru said that having Joe butt in and take things out of his hands like that sort of flabbergasted him, but he was so tired and used up he was glad to have someone else do the bossing. Enwright only needed another yard to make her distance and she tried to shove her way past Conners for it. But Conners was insulted and mad clean through now, and he wouldn't have it, and blamed if we didn't take the ball away from them in the middle of the field, and for the first time that day!

After that Joe created his own atmosphere, as he had put it to me, and it was a brand new atmosphere for the rest of the bunch. He kept dinning it into them that they were going to win, that Enwright was a lot of quitters and all tired out, anyway, that they only needed a touchdown and that they were on their way to it. And blessed if they didn't begin to believe it! And it wasn't long before Enwright was thinking there might be something in it, too! Tru said you could notice the difference five minutes after the last quarter began. They eased up and didn't round off their plays. Their quarter began to change signals, and once they went back and put their heads together. When they did that Joe gloated openly and began to show even more pep.

"Sure!" he cried, "Talk it over! Know you're beaten, don't you? If you've got anything left, show it! Time's getting short!"

It was, too. There was only about seven minutes left. We had taken the ball back to their twenty-eight and had to punt, and they had run it back to the thirty-six and were shy four yards on the third down. They got two of the four on a delayed pass that fooled every one on our team except Joe, it seemed, and then had to punt. Of course, all they

wanted now was to kill time, and they tried every means they knew. But White got away from our thirty-five with a run that landed the pigskin past the middle again and then Morgan sent Presson back into the line-up and Press ate up ten yards in three plunges. It looked like we had them going then, and we were cheering ourselves hoarse on the stand. Joe snarled and bullied, and praised, too, and in those last five minutes he had every fellow on the team working for him like dogs. And they all expected to win, too. That's the funny part of it. Dobbs told me afterwards that if we'd been beaten he would have cried like a kid. But we weren't. No, sir, we weren't. Not that year. We ate them up from their thirty-eight yards right down to their ten. They stiffened then and at first it was like chipping concrete to make gains. There was hardly more than a minute left. We could hear Joe barking and yelping. Even when he sounded the maddest you felt sure that he was going to get what he was after.

And Enwright knew it, too. Yes, sir, Enwright showed it right then. She wasn't cocky any longer. She was pegged out and nervous and discouraged. You could see it in the way the backs changed posi-

tions behind the forwards, not being sure where they'd better stay, and you could see it in the way the line started before the ball twice. We made a yard and a half on the first plunge and lost the half on the second, and it was nine to go on the third down.

We were all off the stand by that time, clustering along the side line and back of the goal, cheering and yelping at one moment and then being so still the quarter's voice sounded like claps of thunder. Our right end scampered off, Joe passed to the quarter, quarter faked a forward and dropped the ball to Maynard and Maynard shot straight into the center. Joe was clearing the hole out for him, and he did it to the king's taste. Right through and into the secondary defense plunged Joe, taking them with him as he went, while Maynard, head down, pigskin clutched to his tummy, followed after. They stopped them short of the last line, but not much short, and we still had another down.

The timekeeper was walking nearer and nearer with his eyes on his watch and we fellows looking on almost had heart failure. It seemed to us that our team had never taken longer to line up and that the quarter had never been so slow with his

signals. But he got them out finally and—Oh, well, you know what happened. It was Joe again, and Maynard again, and Enwright went down like ninepins and our whole team broke through her center and went tumbling, streaming over the goal line! And when the whistle blew Joe had to trot back from the other side of the end line, he had been going so hard!

That's how we broke the hoodoo. Tru failed at goal, but we had won, thirteen to twelve, anyway. They elected Joe captain a week later, and he would have been a corker if the war hadn't come along. He went over in the spring, and the next thing we heard he was top sergeant. I'm sorry for the Huns in front of Joe's platoon if he used that psychology stuff!

BILLY MAYES' GREAT DISCOVERY

CAPTAIN EZRA BLAKE, seated on the edge of the deck-house of the little schooner *Molly and Kate,* was trying to do two things at once. He was superintending the unloading of ballast by a crew of four men and a boy and he was answering the questions of Billy Mayes, who sat beside him. Billy was twelve and Captain Ezra was almost five times twelve, but they were great cronies. The *Molly and Kate* was tied up to Forster's Wharf only last evening, and already, this being a Saturday morning, Billy was on hand to hear what wonderful adventures had befallen his friend on the latest voyage. The *Molly and Kate* carried lumber to fascinating Southern ports like Charleston and Savannah and Jacksonville and even, less frequently, Havana, and never a voyage but what Captain Ezra returned with a new budget of marvelous tales for Billy's delight. Some day Billy was going to sail with the Captain

and see the astounding places and things with his own two very blue eyes: see Charleston and Cape Hatteras and the Sea Islands and Florida. But more especially he would visit Pirate Key, for it was on Pirate Key that the Captain met with his very startlingest adventures. Billy had never been able to find Pirate Key on any map, but, as the Captain explained, it wasn't very big and few mariners even knew of its existence. Somewhere between the Marquesas and the Dry Tortugas it lay, and beyond that the Captain declined to commit himself: which, under the circumstances, Billy considered quite proper, for it seemed that the natives of Pirate Key were a peculiarly sensitive people and much averse to visitors and publicity. Even the Captain, with his winning personality, had had much difficulty in becoming friends with the inhabitants of the island. The first time he had tried to land on it, many years ago, he and his crew had been fired on with poisoned arrows. Captain Ezra could still point out the dents made by the arrows on the old blue dory that trailed astern there. The Captain, with one mild gray eye on the crew, had just finished a soul-stirring account of the hurricane that had met them off

the South Carolina coast on their northward trip, and Billy was still glowing with pride at the thought of knowing so intimately a person of such nautical skill and personal bravery, for, although the Captain hadn't said so in so many words, it was very plain that only heroism and remarkable seamanship had brought the *Molly and Kate* safely through great peril, when "Long Joe" Bowen, shoveling sand nearby, was conquered by a perfectly terrible spasm of coughing and choking. Captain Ezra viewed him silently for a moment and then inquired mildly:

"Been an' swallered some o' that sand, Joe?"

"Long Joe" nodded and said "Yes, sir," in a very husky voice.

"Mm, well you want to be more careful," advised the Captain most sympathetically, " 'cause if you ain't I'm likely to have to swab out your throat for you, an' that's a remarkably painful operation, Joe."

There was no response to this, but Billy could see "Long Joe's" shoulders heaving and knew that he must already be in much pain. Billy, like his friend the Captain, had a very sympathetic nature. When the sufferer appeared to be easier Billy looked

up again at the Captain's seamed and ruddy countenance and asked:

"Did you get to Pirate Key this time, sir?"

"Pirate Key?" responded the Captain. "Oh, yes, we were there a couple o' days. Not on business, but you see I'd promised the King I'd drop in on him the next time I was down around there. Seein' as he leads a kind o' lonely life, an' him an' me bein' particular friends, as you might say, I didn't have the heart to say no to him."

"Was he quite well?" asked Billy politely.

"Pretty smart for an old fellow. You see, Billy, he's—let me see—why, he must be well over a hundred now."

"A hundred!" gasped the boy.

The Captain nodded gravely. "Them Pirate Key folks lives a long time. They don't go to school until they're twenty. If they did, you see, they'd forget all they'd learned afore they was what you might call middle-aged."

Billy pondered that. Not going to school until one was twenty had things to be said in its favor. Still, it was revolutionary, and he decided to put it aside for further consideration.

"And how was the Queen? And the Prince?" he asked interestedly.

"Well, the Queen was well, but the Prince had been an' ate something as didn't agree with him. The Royal Physician was some worried when I got there, but I give him a couple o' doses of kerosine oil an' it did him a power o' good."

"The—the physician?" asked Billy doubtfully.

"No, the Prince, o' course. There wasn't nothing the matter with the physician." The Captain sounded slightly vexed. "He'd been an' ate some —some—what's this now?—some hoki-moki fruit." He viewed Billy sternly. "The Prince had."

"Really?" asked Billy. "What—what is hoki-moki fruit like?"

"Well," replied the narrator, knocking the ashes from his pipe and thoughtfully scraping the bowl with his pocket knife, "it's a sort o' like a orange an' sort o' like a apple."

"Oh!"

"An' it's pizen if you eat it afore it's ripe. Don't never touch a hoki-moki fruit till it's purple, Billy."

Billy promised instantly. "Only," he added, "I might not know it, Captain Ezra, if I was to go

to Pirate Key. Is it round? Does it grow on trees?"

"More square than round, you might say. It grows in clusters as big as that water cask there. Hundreds of 'em together. An' they grow high because if they didn't the wild horses would eat 'em when they was green an' die. That's one o' the wonders o' Nature, Billy."

"Yes, sir. But I didn't know horses ate fruit."

"Ain't you ever see a horse eat a apple? Why, they're plumb fond o' apples. Bananas, too. An' watermelons. Guess the only kind o' fruit a horse won't eat is cocoanuts." The Captain filled his pipe leisurely and in silence. Then: "Another peculiar thing, Billy, is that you might call the affinity o' the hoki-moki tree an' them wild horses. They can't keep away from 'em, the horses can't. There's something about the—the tree itself that draws the horses: something in the wood, they say. You don't never find any bark on a hoki-moki tree low down because the wild horses keeps rubbin' themselves against it. Seems like they just can't resist the—the sub-tile influence. It's extraordinary."

Billy agreed emphatically that it was. "Are there

many wild horses on the key?" he inquired after a moment.

"Thousands. The natives catch 'em an' train 'em. The King has more'n three hundred horses in his private stable, an' the Queen she has about a hundred, an' the Prince he's got maybe thirty or forty, too." The Captain applied a lighted match to his pipe and puffed blue smōke clouds into the spring sunlight. "They kill 'em for their hides, too," he went on presently. "They make fine leather."

"I shouldn't think they'd need leather," said Billy, "being just savages."

"Savages!" The Captain viewed him reprovingly. "Don't you ever let 'em hear you say that, son! Benighted, in a manner o' speakin', they may be, but they ain't savages. As for leather, why, now, they make lots o' uses o' it: saddles an' harnesses an' travelin' bags——"

"Traveling bags!"

"—An' trunks." The captain paid no heed to the interruption. "An' here's another peculiar thing. You may be able to explain it, but I can't, an' I never heard anyone who could. Them hoki-moki trees has just as much affinity for a horse-hide as

they has for the horse himself. Lay a horse-hide saddle twenty feet away from a hoki-moki tree an' just as soon as you lets go of it it'll begin to move right over to the tree and try to rub itself against it! Now you explain that!"

"But I can't," said Billy, wide-eyed. "It—it's most—most extronry!"

"It surely is!" declared the Captain. "What you might call one o' the marvels o' Science. I ain't never—That the lot, Joe? Well, I guess it's most dinner time, ain't it? Talkin' always gives me a powerful appetite an' I'm plumb famished. Sing out to Steve to start that galley fire an' get a hustle on him!"

Billy's thoughts dwelt a good deal for the rest of that day on Captain Ezra's interesting discourse, and when he went to sleep it was to dream terribly complicated things about wild horses and hoki-moki trees and the fascinating inhabitants of Pirate Key who wore the scantiest attires but indulged themselves in traveling bags! Sunday was always a hard day to live through, for after church and Sunday school were past many empty hours stretched ahead. This Sunday, however, was not so bad, for Mr. Humbleton, the bank treasurer, came to call in the

afternoon and brought Arthur Humbleton with him. Arthur was fourteen and a youth of affairs and position in the community, as became the son of a bank treasurer. For one thing, Arthur was captain of the Broadport Junior Baseball Team. Billy and Arthur were graciously allowed to retire from the front parlor and the society of their elders and found sanctuary on the little side porch where the chill of an easterly April breeze failed to penetrate. Billy was glad of the opportunity to talk to Arthur, for he had a request to make, and after several false starts he managed to make it.

"I wish," he said, after swallowing hard a couple of times, "I wish you'd let me play on the nine this year, Arthur."

Arthur Humbleton observed him frowningly. Then he shook his head. "I don't see how I could, Billy," he answered. "The team's all made up, in the first place, and then you aren't much of a player. Maybe next year——"

"I can play in the outfield all right," defended Billy eagerly.

"Oh, most any fellow can catch a fly," replied the other carelessly. "There's more to baseball than

just that, Billy. You've got to know how to run the bases and bat and lots of things."

"I can run bases just as fast as——" Billy paused. He had been going to say "as you can," but diplomacy came to his aid. "As fast as Tom Wallace can," he substituted.

"Maybe, but you can't bat a little bit," responded Arthur triumphantly. "And you know you can't."

"If I had more practice, Arthur——"

"No, sir, you couldn't ever be a real corking batter." Arthur was kindly but firm. "A fellow has to have the batting eye. Of course I don't say that maybe if you worked awfully hard this year and practiced every day you mightn't be a lot better, but I don't believe you'll ever be a real star, Billy."

The subject, engrossing to both boys, continued for some time, and in the end it was agreed that Billy should become a sort of unofficial outfield substitute with the privilege of practicing with the nine sometimes and making himself useful chasing the long flies that infrequently went over Mr. Bannerman's garden fence. As Mr. Bannerman was aged and crabbed and disliked seeing small boys wallowing across his asparagus bed in search of baseballs, the position assigned to Billy promised as

much danger as honor. But he knew himself to be fast on his feet and knew Mr. Bannerman to be slow, and he accepted gratefully. Soon after that Arthur was summoned hurriedly by his father, so hurriedly that he left behind him an enticing blue paper-bound pamphlet entitled "How to Play Base Ball" which Billy discovered just before supper and which he surreptitiously studied later behind the shielding pages of "Travels in the Holy Land."

But he found it difficult to understand until he happened on a dozen pages at the end of the booklet devoted to advertisements of baseball goods. There were soul-stirring pictures and descriptions of mitts and gloves, bats and masks and balls. He admired and coveted, and mentally compared the prices set down against the articles with the contents of the little box in his top bureau drawer that was his bank. The comparison wasn't encouraging. Billy sighed. And just then his eyes fell on a word that challenged attention. "Westcott's Junior League Ball," he read. "Regulation size and weight, rubber center, all-wool yarn, double cover of best quality selected horsehide. Warranted to last a full game without losing elasticity or shape."

Billy read it twice. Then he became thoughtful.

After that he read the description of the baseball again and his eyes became big and round. Later, in bed, with the light from the electric lamp at the corner illuming the ceiling, he lay sleeping for a long hour, experiencing the triumph that thrills all great discoverers and inventors.

The next morning he surprised every member of the household by being downstairs in advance of breakfast *and with his shoes tied!* His mother viewed him anxiously and felt his face but was unable to detect anything abnormal save, perhaps, a certain intensity of gaze and impatience of delay. There was a full half-hour between breakfast and school and Billy made the most of it. Captain Ezra was smoking his pipe on the wharf when Billy arrived, breathless, on the scene.

"Well, well," exclaimed the Captain. "Ain't you round kind of early?"

But there was scant time for amenities and Billy plunged directly into his business. "Are you going down South again pretty soon, sir?" he inquired anxiously. The Captain allowed that he was; as soon, in fact, as the new cargo was aboard, which, if he wasn't saddled with the laziest crew on record, ought to be in about four days. "And are you going

to Pirate Key?" Billy continued. The Captain blinked.

"Well, I might," he replied after slight hesitation. "Why?"

"Because I want you to bring me a piece of that hoki-moki wood, sir, a piece big enough to make a bat. You see——"

"A bat? What sort of a bat?"

"Why, a baseball bat. Could you, do you think? It would have to be that long—" Billy stretched his arms—"and that big around—" Billy formed a circle with his small fingers—"and it oughtn't to have any knots in it. Is hoki-moki very knotty, Captain Ezra?"

"Knotty? N-no, I wouldn't call it that. I——" He coughed and cast a troubled gaze toward the lighthouse point. "What was it you wanted it for, now?"

"A baseball bat," answered Billy, almost impatiently. "I thought if you could get me a piece big enough I could get Jerry Williams, over at Morris's carpenter shop, to make it for me. Could you? Would it—would it be much trouble to you, sir?"

"Why, n-no, only—hm—you see I ain't plumb

sure of gettin' to Pirate Key this trip, Billy." Billy's face fell and Captain Ezra went on quickly. "But I ain't sayin' I won't, you know. Fact is, it's more'n likely I will. An' if I *do*——"

"Oh, will you please?" cried Billy, beaming. "How much would it cost, sir? I've only got twenty-two cents, but if you'd take that I'd pay you the rest when you came back." He dug into a pocket, but the Captain waved the suggestion aside.

"Shucks," he said, "a little piece o' wood ain't goin' to cost nothin'. Why, I guess I could bring off a whole tree if I wanted it. I guess there ain't anything on that there island I couldn't have for the askin', Billy, the King an' me bein' so friendly. Tell you what I'll do now. I'll get 'em to cut a piece o' that wood an' make the bat for you right there. How'll that be?"

Billy looked dubious. "Why, that's awfully kind, sir, but—but do you think they'd know how to make a baseball bat? Bats have to be made awf'ly partic'larly, Captain Ezra, or else they aren't much good."

"Don't you worry about that, son. They been makin' their own bats on Pirate Key for years, an' I guess there ain't no better ones to be had."

"Why, do they play baseball *there?*" gasped the boy.

"'Course they do! Leastways, they play what's pretty near like it. The—the general idea's similar. They're plumb crazy about it, too. They got a eight-club league down there——"

But at that moment the bell in the town hall clanged its first stroke and Billy fled.

During the four days that the *Molly and Kate* remained at Forster's Wharf, Billy and the Captain met twice and when the schooner finally sailed the Captain had full, detailed and most explicit instructions regarding that length of straight, well-seasoned hoki-moki wood that was to be brought back either in the rough or shaped into the Pirate Key idea of a baseball bat. After that there was nothing for Bill to do save await the return of the schooner.

April gave place to May and the Broadport Juniors began to play Saturday afternoon games on the back common and to practice diligently on other days after school was over. Billy served a rigorous apprenticeship in the outfield, chasing flies that went over the heads of the regular players and several times scrambling over Mr. Bannerman's fence and recovering the ball from under the rhu-

barb or from between the rows of early peas. So far fortune had attended him and he had invariably escaped with his life. Now and then he was allowed to take his turn with the batters and stand up at the plate while Waldo Hutchins pitched his famous "slow ones." Practice is supposed to make perfect, but Billy was still a long way from perfection as a batsman. Nor could either he or Arthur Humbleton observe any great amount of improvement. But Billy persisted, consoling himself with rosy dreams of the future. Almost any day now the *Molly and Kate* might return bearing Billy's Great Discovery.

Meanwhile the Juniors won from Scalfield Grammar School, were defeated by the West Side Reds and were annihilated by the Downerport Eagles. And then, as it seemed to Billy, just in the nick of time to prevent a similar fate at the hands of that especial rival, the Broadport White Sox, the *Molly and Kate* tied up again at Forster's Wharf!

That was an eventful day in Billy's life, eventful from the moment he heard the glad news to the moment that he was back at the house with the precious hoki-moki bat in his possession. He had scarcely heard Captain Ezra's detailed and interest-

ing account of the securing of the article. For once, anxious to put the bat to the test, Billy thought the Captain just the least bit loquacious! But he banished the thought almost instantly, blushing for its ungraciousness, and quite overwhelmed his benefactor with thanks ere he hurried away with the bat tightly clutched in hand and one jacket pocket bulging with a perfectly good "genuine horsehide" ball that had seen only two weeks' service in practice and had been acquired from Captain Humbleton for fifteen cents.

Subsiding, much out of breath, on the edge of the side porch, Billy once more examined his prize with eager eyes. As to shape it looked as fine as the best "wagon tongue" ever made. There was no doubt about it, those Pirate Key natives knew how to make a baseball bat! Billy was just a trifle disappointed about one thing, however, and that was the lack of novelty. To all appearance the bat was quite like any other bat except that the inscription "Genuine Hoki-Moki Wood" appeared half-way along its smooth length. The words were printed in uneven characters, and evidently with pen and ink, and the ink had run with the grain of the wood. The varnish was still new and just a bit sticky, but

that was to be expected since varnish always dried slowly near salt water. Hoki-moki wood was, contrary to Billy's preconceived idea, light instead of dark, and closely resembled ash. A surprising feature of the bat was the twine-wound handle. It seemed strange to Billy that the natives of Pirate Key should know of that refinement. His respect for them grew tremendously then and there.

Having examined the bat to his heart's content, he stood up and swung it experimentally. It proved the least bit heavier than he could have wished, but that wasn't anything to trouble about. He had frequently heard Jack Cantrell express a preference for a heavy bat, and Jack was the hard-hitter of the Broadport Juniors. Remained now the supreme test, and Billy approached it falteringly. Suppose it failed! Suppose Captain Ezra's tales of the peculiar properties of hoki-moki wood proved false! Billy felt that the disappointment would be more than he could bear! Nerving himself to the ordeal, he laid the bat at the edge of the porch, squeezed the horsehide ball from his pocket and deposited it with trembling fingers against the house. Seven feet separated ball and bat, and as he withdrew his fingers he gave a deep troubled sigh. For an instant

it seemed that the experiment was to fail, and Billy's heart sank sickeningly. But then, as he stepped back across the boards to the porch's edge the miracle happened. Slowly, irresolutely the ball moved, rolled a few inches, stopped, went on, gathered momentum and traveled straight along a board until it bumped companionably against the hoki-moki bat!

Billy shrieked his triumph and danced ecstatically on the mignonette bed. It was true! The Great Discovery was proved.

Again he tried the experiment and again the ball yielded to the magic influence of the bat as the needle of a compass yields to the influence of the North Pole. Thrice the experiment worked perfectly. A fourth time the ball, having been placed further to the left, collided with the handle of the bat, jumped it and rolled over the edge of the porch into the flower bed. Billy waited for it to rise up and come back again, but that effort appeared beyond it Considering that a distance of eighteen inches intervened between porch floor and flower bed, Billy felt that it would be asking too much of the ball. Anyway, it atoned a minute later by rolling nicely from house wall to bat with what

seemed greater alacrity. Billy was more than satisfied.

I feel that I ought to inform the reader of a fact that quite escaped Billy, which is that the outer edge of the side porch was fully an inch and a half lower than the inner, being so built that water would run off it. I doubt if Billy ever knew of this. Certainly the slope was not perceptible to an unsuspicious vision. I make no claim that the slope of the porch floor had anything to do with the remarkable behavior of the ball. I am willing to believe that the ball would have rolled across to the bat had the floor been perfectly level. I only mention the fact in the interest of truth.

Later Billy sought the back yard and tried throwing the ball in the air and hitting it with the bat. At first this experiment proved less successful than the other, but presently he found, to his great delight, that he could hit almost every time! To be sure, he didn't always hit just squarely, but he hit. That absorbing occupation came to an end when the ball went through a cellar window with a fine sound of breaking glass. Thereupon Billy recovered the ball and went innocently in to supper.

That night, for fear of burglary, Billy slept with the hoki-moki bat beside him under the covers.

The next day was Saturday and the day of the White Sox game. Billy spent most of the morning knocking the ball against the back yard fence and only desisted when Aunt Julia informed him from an upstairs window that she had a headache and would go crazy if he didn't stop making all that noise. Billy stopped and went and sat on the side porch, with his feet in the mignonette and the hoki-moki bat hugged to his triumphant breast, and dreamed dreams worthy of Cæsar or Napoleon.

The Broadport Juniors wanted to win to-day's game, wanted to win it more than they wanted to win any other contest in a long and comprehensive schedule. The White Sox team was comprised of boys who lived on the Hill. The Hill was the town's patrician quarter. Just about everyone who lived up there had an automobile and a chauffeur to drive it and wore their good clothes all the time. The juvenile residents of that favored locality were, in the estimate of the down-town boys, stuck-up and snobbish, and they had a fine opinion of their base-ball prowess. The worst of it was that their opinion was justified, for the White Sox—the down-town-

ers jeeringly called them the Silk Sox—usually beat almost every team they went up against! Last year the Juniors had played two contests with them and had been beaten decisively each time. And so Captain Arthur Humbleton and all the other boys of the Juniors and all their adherents—including mothers and brothers and sisters and an occasional father—were especially keen on a victory. And when, in the first of the sixth inning, the White Sox finally solved Waldo's delivery and made three hits and, aided by an infield error, sent four runs over the plate the Juniors' bright dream faded and despondency gloomed the countenance of Captain Humbleton and his doughty warriors. The White Sox had already held a one-run lead, the score at the start of the sixth having been 12 to 11, and now, with four more tallies added, they looked to have the contest safely on ice.

Billy, his precious bat held firmly between his knees, occupied a seat on the substitute's bench, a yellow-grained settee borrowed from the High School across the common. He had twice offered his services to Arthur and they had been twice refused, the second time with a scowl. Billy was absolutely certain that he could, if allowed to face

the opposing batter, who hadn't much but a fast ball to boast of, deliver wallops that would radically alter the history of the game. But the hoki-moki bat was no better than any little old sixty-cent stick so long as he was not allowed to use it. To his credit is the fact that he had determined, in case the White Sox still held the lead at the beginning of the ninth inning, to entrust the bat to others should Arthur still refuse his services. That was real self-denial, real patriotism. As much as Billy wanted to wield the wonderful hoki-moki bat himself victory for the team stood first.

The friends of the Juniors clapped and cheered as "Wink" Billings went to bat in the last of the sixth, and the one who cheered the loudest was Captain Ezra Blake. The Captain had come at Billy's earnest and repeated behest and had togged himself out wonderfully in honor of the occasion. The Captain did not, Billy suspected now, know a great deal about baseball, for he cheered just as loudly when a villainous White Sox rapped out a two-bagger as he did when one of the Juniors stole home from third. But it was very evident that the Captain's intentions were of the best.

The last of the sixth developed no runs for the

Juniors, nor did the seventh add to the score of either side. In the eighth the White Sox captain got to third with two down and tried to tally on a bunt past the pitcher's box. But shortstop ran in, scooped up the ball and nailed him a foot from the plate. The Juniors started their inning by a safe rap that placed Cantrell on first base. Myers sacrificed neatly and then the next man connected for a screeching liner that was too hot for the Sox second baseman and Cantrell scored the Juniors' twelfth tally. But the score was still four runs to the advantage of the White Sox when Stone hit into a double and ended the inning.

Captain Humbleton pretended a confidence he didn't feel and assured the team that all they had to do now was hold the Sox and then bat out a victory. It sounded easy, but Billy felt defeat impending. He tried to get a word with Arthur before that youth hurried off to his infield position, but failed. The White Sox started by putting their third baseman on first in consequence of Waldo Hutchins' inability to pitch strikes. Then a bunt was mishandled by the catcher and there were runners on first and second, and things looked very bad. The next player was thrown out, but the

others moved up a base apiece. The infield crept closer. The White Sox left fielder tried hard to slug, missed two and finally popped up a silly little foul that dropped comfortably in the catcher's mitt, and the Junior nine's adherents cheered loudly, Captain Ezra's voice dominating all like a fog siren. There was another period of doubt and anxiety when, after knocking the ball everywhere save between the foul lines, the Sox first baseman finally whaled out a long, arching fly. The bases emptied and the runners scuttled home, but Leo Smith arose to the occasion like a veteran—which he was not—and pulled down the ball.

"Four to tie 'em and five to win!" shouted Arthur as he trotted in to the bench. "Come on now, fellows! Let's get this! We can—— What is it, Billy? Don't bother me now!"

"I've got to, Arthur," said Billy firmly, a tight clutch on the captain's arm. "You've got to listen a minute. If you want to win this you must let me bat, Arthur. I can't help hitting with this bat, honest, and——"

"You're up, Waldo! Work him for a base. Get it somehow!" Arthur tugged impatiently, but Billy held like glue. "You see, it's a hoki-moki wood bat,

Arthur, and hoki-moki wood has a—a infinity for horsehide. All you got to do is just swing the bat and the ball comes right up and hits it. It's the greatest discovery of——"

"What are you talking about?" demanded the captain. "Let's see your old bat. 'Hoki-Moki Wood,' eh?" he jeered. "Where'd you get this contraption?"

And, still holding him firmly, Billy told him, and in spite of his expression of incredulity Arthur was secretly a little bit impressed. "Oh, shucks," he said, "I don't believe it, Billy! It ain't possible! 'Course, you might have luck——" He paused and frowned intently and then, with a short laugh, added: "Maybe I'll give you a chance, Billy. We'll see."

Billy had to be content with that. Meanwhile Waldo Hutchins had waited and walked. An attempted sacrifice, however, failed to work and Waldo was cut off at second. The runner was safe on first. With one gone the audience began to disperse slowly. Then the Juniors' right fielder landed squarely and rapped past third and hope crept back into the breasts of his team-mates. The departing onlookers paused in their flight. The Sox

second baseman let the throw from the pitcher pass unchallenged over his head and the runners advanced to second and third. The cheering grew frantic. The coachers shouted and danced. "Slim" Gaynor did his best but only laid the ball down in front of the plate and was tagged out before he had taken two strides toward his base. Two on, now, and two gone!

Billy, his heart racing and jumping, watched Arthur anxiously. But Joe Ware was allowed to take his turn. Joe was an uncertain batter. The White Sox pitcher tempted him with a low one and with one on the outside, but Joe refused them. Then came a fast one that went as a strike. Then one that hit the dirt just back of the plate. The pitcher frowned and would have sent the next offering in the groove had not the catcher signalled for a pass. Joe walked to first, filling the sacks, and cheers filled the air. Arthur himself followed Joe Ware, and the bunt he trickled along the first base line was a veritable marvel, for it sent a tally across, moved runners from first and second and left Arthur himself safe on his bag!

But three runs were still needed to tie and four to win, and there were two gone. Billy arose, pale

but resolved on sacrifice. He meant to offer the precious hoki-moki bat to Steve Sawyer, next up, but as he moved toward the plate Arthur, dusting himself on first, saw him and recalled that half promise. And perhaps he had what he would have called a "hunch." At all events his voice reached Billy just as he was about to present the bat to Steve's notice:

"All right, Billy! Hit it out! Let Billy bat, Steve!"

And so Billy, with a fast-beating heart, went on to the plate and faced his fate. Surprise and condemnation floated from the bench in mutters. The Sox pitcher observed Billy's small form with a puzzled frown. Then, noting the boy's evident nervousness, he laughed in derision. "See who's here, Jim!" he called to his catcher. "Home-Run Baker, isn't it?"

"No, it's Tris Speaker! Be good to him, Tom!"

"All right! Try this one, kid!" The pitcher wound up. Billy pushed his bat around over his shoulder. On bases the three runners danced and shouted. The coachers yelled incessantly. The infield jabbered. But Billy didn't hear a sound. Now the pitcher's arm was shooting forward. The ball

was singing its way toward him. He tried to watch it and couldn't. But he swung the hoki-moki bat around just as hard as he knew how, putting every ounce of his strength into it, and something happened. There was a resounding blow, electric tingles shot up Billy's arms, he staggered and then, first.

Far into right field sped the ball, just inside the base line. It raced the runners. Billy raced too. Pandemonium assailed his ears. As he reached the first bag he sent a final look after the ball and his heart leaped with joy. Straight behind Mr. Bannerman's garden fence it fell, right amongst the early peas and bush limas!

"Take your time, Billy!" shouted the coach at first. "It's a home run, kid!"

They never did find that ball, for Mr. Bannerman appeared on the scene most inopportunely, but it didn't matter and no one cared. The Juniors had won, 17 to 16! The hoki-moki bat had proved itself! And Billy Mayes was a hero!

There were unbelievers who denied to Billy's famous bat any special virtue, but Billy knew what he knew and had seen what he had seen, and his

faith was unshakable. But, and here is the sorry part of my tale, it was several years before Billy made another home run, for, although he became a regular member of the team and, as time passed, became a fairly dependable hitter, the hoki-moki bat had lost its cunning. It was not the bat's fault, however. It was due to the fact that, owing to the war, baseballs were no longed covered with horsehide!

THE TWO-MILER

WE were sure of winning that spring. John Blake, the manager of the team, said that if we did not win he should walk home when school closed. And as John lives in the western part of Ohio and is a man of his word, you can see that we were pretty cocksure.

We met Maynard College and Chamberlain College every June in what we at Preston called the "Tri-Track," which was a quick way of saying Triangular Track Meet. The year before, Maynard had beaten us by five and a half points. Chamberlain usually did not produce a strong team, although it had a way now and then of upsetting our calculations in an irritating manner.

We had been hard at work all the spring, and when the Saturday of the "Tri-Track" came we had seventeen men ready to do their best. The meet that year was at Chamberlain, and in consequence we put Chamberlain down for twenty

points, five more than she had ever won. There were one hundred and seventeen points in the thirteen events; to win first place in any event counted five, second place three and third place one.

As I say, we allowed Chamberlain twenty points, mostly seconds and thirds, although we did think that her man Cutler would capture first in the high jump. Then we put ourselves down for seven firsts. That made thirty-five points. We felt likewise sure of five seconds. That gave us fifteen points more, making fifty in all—more than enough to win. We conceded the rest to Maynard.

Of those seven events in which we expected firsts, only one seemed in the least doubtful; that was the two-mile race.

Carl Atherton, the captain of the team, had run the distance the year before in 10 minutes, 41 4-5 seconds, and had cut that down a second this spring in practice. But all the year we had been hearing a good deal about a new runner at Maynard named Beckner, who was said to have done the two miles in forty "flat." We felt willing, however, to trust Carl for the two miles.

John Blake decided that for once the whole team should go to Chamberlain. Usually our funds were

low, and only the men who were absolutely necessary were taken; but this year the subscriptions had been more liberal.

Bobby Hart was almost as much pleased as anyone at John's decision. Bobby had worked hard during the two years he had been in school, and deserved to get into a real race. He was not a great runner, but there is plenty of room on the track in the "distance" runs.

"I'm going to try for third in the mile," Bobby confided to me on Friday night. "I think I can do better than I ever have done."

"Yes, but I'm afraid you can't get third. First will go either to Carl or to Dick Bannet, and Maynard's sure to have a man close to them. I shouldn't wonder if Carl let Bannet have the mile and saved himself for the two."

"Well, anyway, I'll have the fun of trying," answered Bobby.

We went over to Chamberlain Saturday morning, and nearly the whole school went with us.

Bobby was in great spirits. He kept us laughing all the way over, and I could not help thinking what a difference there was between him and Carl Atherton. There was Bobby, as happy as a clam because

they had entered him for the mile and the two mile with no chance in the world of his winning better than third, and small hope of that; and there was Carl, happy, too, perhaps, but not showing it a bit, just sitting down at the end of the car talking to the trainer or reading a magazine, yet knowing all the time that he was sure of one cup, if not two. I could not help thinking that of the two perhaps Bobby would have made the better captain, if getting close to the fellows and heartening them up had anything to do with it.

We had luncheon at twelve o'clock, and at half-past one we piled into a coach and drove out to the field. The old village was much decorated, and the crimson of Preston was more plentiful than the Maynard blue. Of course the orange and gray of Chamberlain was everywhere.

We went into our dressing tent, put on our running clothes, and then went out and limbered up a bit.

At two o'clock the half mile was started, and we were pretty well pleased with ourselves when it was over. Maynard got third place, but the one point for Maynard did not look important against eight that we won.

Then came the trials for the hundred yards; two of our men qualified. We did not expect much from the sprints, and we did not get much. In the finals we took third place; Maynard won first and Chamberlain second. That started the cheering, for the orange and gray was pretty well represented on the stands, where Maynard and Preston had each only a handful of fellows. When they called us for the trials of the high hurdles, I did not have any trouble in winning from the two Chamberlain runners and the one Maynard man opposed to me. Then came the mile run.

Each school was allowed three starters; our entries were Carl Atherton, Dick Bannet and Bobby Hart. I heard the trainer giving them their instructions.

"This is Bannet's race if he can get it," he said. "But if Bannet can't win it, you must, Atherton. Hart, here, will start in and make the pace for you two, and at the end of the third lap you must draw up to the front. Save yourself for the two miles if you can, Atherton; but if you have to win this, do it. We can't take any chances. And you see if you can't take third place, Hart."

The nine runners did some pretty maneuvering

for the pole. When they went down the back stretch on the first lap, Bobby was making pace and Carl and Bannet were running fourth and fifth. That was the order for two laps. Then a Maynard chap named Green sprinted and took the lead. Bannet pushed up to third place.

Bobby held on for a while, then dropped back. He had just about used himself up. Beckner, the Maynard "crack," was running strongly in sixth place, and Carl was watching him closely at every turn.

When the last lap began only five men were left in the running—Green, Bannet, Fuller of Chamberlain, Carl and Beckner.

That was a pretty race; but it did not come out right for us. When the home stretch began, Fuller passed Bannet and Beckner got away from Carl. Then it was Fuller, Bannet and Beckner all the way to within twenty feet of the tape, with a couple of thousand spectators yelling like mad, and crimson and blue and orange flags waving.

Carl was trying hard to come forward, but he had waited too long and was out of it; just as much out of it as Bobby, who was jogging doggedly along half a lap behind. Twenty feet from the

finish Fuller spurted again and left two yards between him and the two others, who were fighting hard for second place.

"Come on, Dick!" we shrieked. "Come on! Come on!"

But Bannet could not do any more, and Beckner drew slowly away from him in the last half dozen strides. Bannet was used up when we caught him. And Fuller, too, was pretty tired. Only Beckner seemed fresh, and we knew then that he could have had first place if he had wanted it, and that he was saving himself for the two miles.

Things did not look so bright for us after that race. And after the next one, the finals in the one-hundred-and-twenty-yard hurdles, they looked worse; for all I could do was to get second by a hair's breadth; Maynard took first by several yards and Chamberlain third.

I was pretty well cut up over that, but there was still the two-hundred-and-twenty, and I vowed that I would do better in that. There was need of improvement, for we had thirteen points to Maynard's fourteen, with Chamberlain not far behind with nine. Things were not happening at all as we had figured them.

We had counted on eight points in the quarter-mile race, but all we got was three, for almost at the start Carstein of Chamberlain left everyone behind and won by fully thirty yards! That was the trouble with Chamberlain; you never could tell what mischief it would cause.

They called us out for the two-hundred-and-twenty-yard hurdle race. The Maynard man and I were nip and tuck at the second hurdle. I was a little quicker on the cinders than he, but he hurdled a good three inches lower than I, and that made things even. But at the fourth hurdle he got down too low and went over the bar. That put him out of pace a little, and I ran for all I was worth. I tipped the next hurdle myself, but not enough to throw me out.

At the seventh, I think it was, I was running even with the chap at the far side of the track and the Maynard fellow was behind. After that I put every ounce into beating the unknown—for there was no time to see who he was—and we had a battle royal. We came over the last hurdle right together, and only my speed on the ground beat him, and then by very little. Maynard finished a close third. And when I turned round and looked at the chap

I'd beaten, I found it was one of our own men. Bert Poole, who had never won a place before in his life!

We felt better after that, for those eight points put us ahead; but when presently Maynard won six points in the furlong dash and Chamberlain got the remaining three, we began to worry again. The results from the field events then began to come in, and added to our anxiety. Chamberlain had taken first in the high jump, as we expected, but Maynard had left us only third place. In the broad jump Maynard had won first place and third, and given us second. In the pole vault that troublesome Chamberlain had again taken first; Maynard had taken second and Preston third. In the shot put we had first and second, and Maynard had taken third. In the hammer throw Maynard had beaten us for first, we had taken second and Chamberlain third. When we had finished figuring we could hardly believe our eyes. The score stood:

Preston 40
Maynard 40
Chamberlain 28

The two-mile run, the last event, would decide the meet. And there was Beckner.

Of course we had not lost faith in Carl, but big, strong Beckner was clearly the freshest man on the field, and he would take a lot of beating. We had to have first place to win the meet. Second and third would not be enough, unless Fuller of Chamberlain got first. In that case the championship would go to the school that took second. We did not know whether Fuller was going to run or not, and we were pretty anxious to find out. Only Bobby seemed cheerful.

"We can beat them," he said. "Why, Carl can make circles round Beckner, and as for Fuller, that mile run used him all up."

"Maybe you will do something yourself, Bobby," said I.

"I shouldn't mind trying, but I guess they're not going to let me enter. I didn't show up very well in the mile; you can't go in and set the pace and have anything left for the end. I came in fifth, though." Bobby really looked pleased with himself.

"All out for the two-mile run!" called the clerk

of the course, and we went down to the start. John Blake was looking blue.

"It's a long way out to Ohio," he said ruefully. "And the roads are dusty, too."

"Fuller's going to run, isn't he?" I asked.

"Yes, and I don't know whether that makes it better for us or worse."

"Answer to your names!" called the clerk.

There were seven entries there: Carl and Bannet of our school, Beckner, Green and another Maynard runner, and Fuller and one other Chamberlain fellow.

"On your marks!" called the starter.

"Hold on, please," said our coach. "We have another man coming. Where's Hart?"

"Here," said Bobby, stepping out from the group beside the track.

"Get in there," said the trainer.

So Bobby, much pleased, took his place in the second line.

"Get ready!" said the starter.

"Set!" Then the pistol popped and they were off.

For the first mile and a half a two-mile race is generally rather uninteresting; but when the meet

depends on it, that is different. We turned and watched the runners jog round the turn and come along the back stretch.

When they had covered a quarter of the distance, Fuller was no longer dangerous. He was running in short strides and had dropped back to seventh place. At the end of the first mile the runners were strung out all round the track. Green was making the pace. Behind Green was Beckner, running with a fine long stride, and almost treading on Beckner's heels was Carl. Carl was not quite so pretty a runner to watch as the man in front of him.

Ten or twelve yards behind Carl ran Bannet; Bobby was following close. A third Maynard runner and Fuller were disputing sixth place. A long way behind them the last man, a Chamberlain chap, was lagging along. And that was still the order when the sixth lap began.

Beckner alone seemed untired. Carl's cheeks were white, and had two spots of crimson in them. Bannet was looking pretty well used up, but Bobby seemed not yet fagged and hung on to Bannet closely. He had never tried himself to any extent in the two

miles, but I thought that he was doing better than he had done in the mile.

Getting tired of making pace Green swung aside and let Beckner take the lead. Green fell in behind Carl, who was still treading in Beckner's tracks. Then the distance between the first group and the second began to open; Bannet was tiring. For a while Bobby regulated his speed by Bannet's, but soon he went round outside Bannet and passed him. That seemed to do Bannet good, for he spurted and kept close behind Bobby all round the track. The third Maynard man and Fuller were out of it for good by this time, and the eighth man had left the track.

There were only two laps left now, and the shouting was pretty continuous. Up at the head Beckner seemed to want Carl to take the lead, but Carl refused. That cheered us considerably, for it seemed to show that Beckner was weakening. Finally Green went to Beckner's rescue; but he almost pumped himself out in doing it, and only set the pace for a few hundred feet, making it so slow that Bobby and Bannet closed up half the distance between them and Carl. Then Green fell out again

and Beckner was once more ahead, but Carl was holding on grimly.

So it was when they turned into the home stretch. The shouting was tremendous now, for the spectators had left the stands and lined up along the track.

"Last lap! Last lap!" shouted the judges.

We shouted to Carl to keep it up! And the Chamberlain people, who liked us better than they liked Maynard, shouted the same thing. Even Bobby and Bannet were applauded, and I shouted to Bobby to go on and win.

On the turn Bannet stumbled and half fell, and lost several yards; that seemed to take the heart out of him. When the runners turned into the back stretch, Bobby was all alone a dozen yards behind Beckner, Carl and Green.

About the middle of the stretch Beckner started to draw away from Carl; but he only opened up about three yards before Carl was after him. That put Green out of it. We saw him wabble once and then throw up his arms and go over on the turf.

"Bobby's going to get third place!" cried John. And, sure enough, there was Bobby still running, and running strong.

But our eyes were on Carl and Beckner. They were having it out, and as the turn began Carl crept up to the blue runner and tried to edge past; but he couldn't quite do it, and Beckner held the lead by a few feet until they were in the straightaway and headed for the finish. Then Carl actually got in front. A lot of us had gone halfway down the track to meet them and were yelling ourselves hoarse.

"Come on, Carl! Come on! You can do it!"

The Maynard fellows were shouting to Beckner at the top of their lungs. Carl was just about holding his lead, when suddenly he staggered, got one foot on the raised board that runs along the inside of the track, and fell on the cinders. He was up in a second and running again, but he had lost three or four yards, was limping and was plainly exhausted. And Beckner, none too fresh himself, came on down the home stretch all alone, wabbling a bit, but apparently an easy winner.

"Look at *Bobby!*" cried John. "Oh, *look* at Bobby!"

How he ever got there I don't know, but there was that blessed Bobby coming along only a few yards behind Beckner and gaining on him at every

stride. Now he had passed Carl; now he was almost up to the Maynard man; and we were racing alongside, leaping and shouting, while twenty yards ahead at the finish the judges were leaning forward with excited faces and their fingers on the "stops."

Stride by stride Bobby overhauled Beckner. Now he could have touched him with his hand. Now he was running even. Now—

"Preston!" we cried. *"Preston! Preston!"*

And then there was the finish—Bobby flying down the turn and Beckner falling into the arms of his fellows.

"Who won?" I shouted, dancing about in the crowd.

"Hart, by two feet!" said some one.

And John and I grabbed each other and danced.

"Hurray!" shouted John. "I don't have to walk home!"

"Did you hear the time?" cried Poole, hitting me on the back. "Ten minutes, thirty-six and four-fifths seconds! It breaks the record!"

We did an unusual thing that Spring. We elected a track-team captain who was not a senior. His name was Robert Hart.

THE END