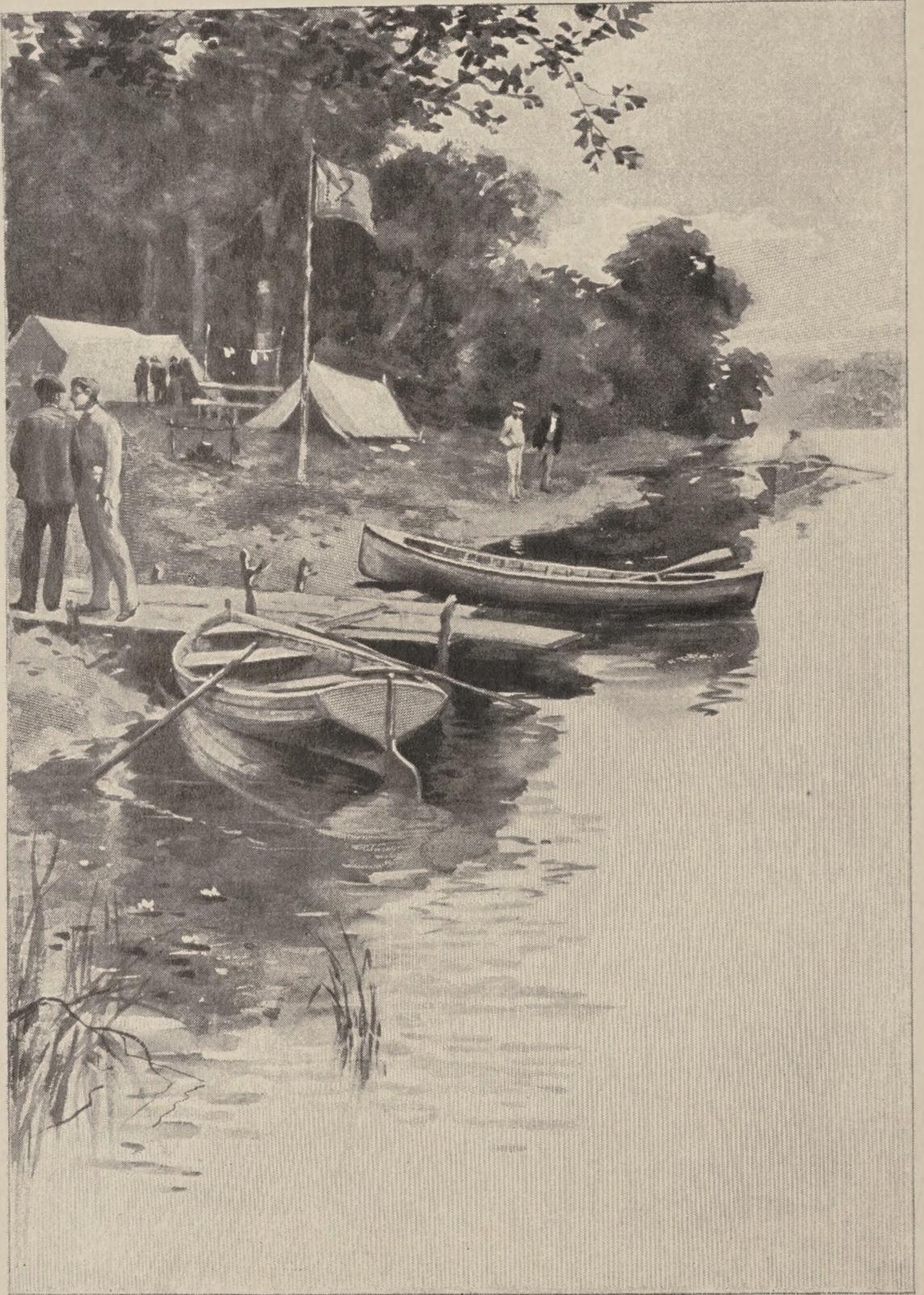


THE
LAKERIM ATHLETIC CLUB



THE CAMP OF THE DOZEN

THE LAKERIM ATHLETIC CLUB

BY
RUPERT HUGHES

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY C. M. RELYEA



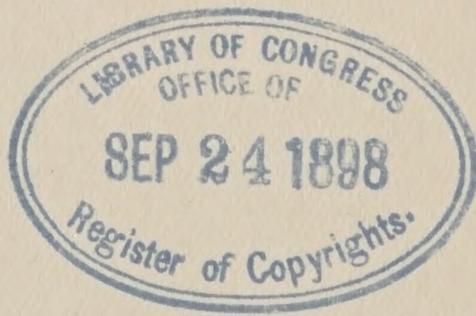
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THE DEVINE PRESS.

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1898.

TO MY BONNY

Mother

WHOSE DEVOTION HAS SAVED MY LIFE
MANY'S THE TIME ;
WHOSE COMRADERY MADE MY BOYHOOD
ONE GOLDEN MEMORY

— 58850
80.00 per

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

THE CAMP OF THE DOZEN	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	PAGE
THE DOZEN	5
DIAGRAM OF THE FIELD AND THE POSITIONS OF THE DOZEN	11
LAKERIM SLIPS THROUGH THE CADET INTERFERENCE AND TACKLES LOW AND HARD, RARELY LOSING A MAN OR AN INCH	21
JUMBO MAKING THE GOAL.....	45
HE WENT SKATING BACKWARD, DRAGGING THE HEAVY GIRL AFTER HIM	49
REDDY'S FORCES MAKING AN ATTACK UPON THE FORT COM- MANDED BY HEADY	65
REDDY'S WAR-MAP.....	75
REDDY AND HEADY AT THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF.....	81
BOBBLES LEAVES THE CONSPIRATORS BEHIND.....	99
THE GALE THREATENED EVERY MOMENT TO TAKE THE MAST RIGHT OUT OF HER.....	107
A CRITICAL MOMENT FOR THE LAKERIM BICYCLE-POLOISTS...	123
THE FELLOW LEAPED UP FROM A FENCE-CORNER TO HEAD HIM OFF	133
TWO-MILE BICYCLE RACE—PUTTING THE SHOT—ONE-MILE RUN	147
ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY YARD HURDLE.....	155

	PAGE
RUNNING HIGH JUMP—POLE VAULT—ONE HUNDRED YARD DASH	159
HE DROPPED QUICKLY FORWARD, WITH ONE HAND ON THE BACK OF EACH OF THE HORSES	167
THERE WAS NOTHING TO DO BUT GIVE A BACKWARD LEAP AFTER IT	185
THE BOAT RACE	201
THE CANOE RACE	225
PRETTY WINS THE GAME OF TENNIS AGAINST HALL	243
HISTORY CHALLENGES CAMPBELL	267
PLAN OF THE LAKERIM ATHLETIC CLUB GROUNDS	278
THE CLUB-HOUSE IN ALL ITS BEAUTY	283

THE LAKERIM ATHLETIC
CLUB

THE LAKERIM ATHLETIC CLUB

I

TWELVE of the boyishest boys that ever ornamented a dog's tail with a tin can sprawled under a tree on the edge of a lake, and sulked.

Finally, one of them whined peevishly:

“Well, fellows, we might as well go and jump in the lake.”

“And say, ‘Here goes nothin’!’” groaned another.

Now, when one boy is gathered together you expect just so much trouble—so many panes of glass to be replaced, so many neighbors to patch up peace with. When you see twelve boys' heads together you feel like calling out the fire department and the militia.

But here are twelve of the most harmless-looking young gentlemen outside of a waxworks show. What can have punctured the tire of the round world for them? Listen.

“To think that those all-fired Greenville cadets should simply beat the life out of us like that!”

“Say, were we trying to play foot-ball—or marbles?”

“We could n’t beat the Greenville School for Girls, to say nothing of their Military Academy!”

So they played tennis with the blues, till one boy spoke up and changed the game. They called him “Tug.” And Tug said:

“You fellows talk like a lot of cry-babies. Just because you got licked once, do you think the world’s coming to an end? Brace up!”

“It’s all very well for you to talk, Tug, but you did n’t play against those blamed Greenvillains. You were in luck to get a sprained ankle just before the game, I can tell you. They gave me worse than that before I got through!” yowled one who looked like a leopard when he went swimming, he had so many black-and-blue spots on him. But Tug persisted:

“You fellows deserved to get whipped.”

“Why?” they all yelled, sitting up in anger and surprise.

“Because you did n’t practise. You’ve got as good stuff in you as those cadets. But they spent their spare time working together, and every man watched his diet and made foot-ball his business. There was no fairy-story work about that game; they went in to win, and they did it.”

“Oh, it’s all very easy for you to sit up and talk!” said a lanky boy called “Punk,” who had been captain of the defeated team; “but you’d talk out of the other side of your mouth if you had had the running of the team.”

“Is that so?” answered Tug. “Well, I’ll just bet I

could fix up an eleven here that would lick the boots off 'em!"

"Well, why don't you?" said the old captain, derisively.

"I 'm not the captain."

"Well, you can have my job right now."

"I 'll take it!—that is, no, of course I don't want to shove myself in!"

"Go on! You 're all right! Take a shy at it," they all voted; and one cried: "Hooray for the new captain!"

A still, small voice came from beneath a pug-nose bent under a pair of eye-glasses that gave him a wise look. It was from the bookworm of the crowd, and he said:

"That reminds me of what they used to say: 'The King is dead! Long live the King!'"

"Dry up, Hist'ry, and give Tug a chance."

"Well, fellows, it takes a lot of nerve to grab Punk's place away from him like this."

"You 're quite welcome, I 'm sure; and I wish you luck," said Punk, with a fairly good grace.

"Put her there, Punk; you 're a white man!" Tug had to exclaim; and the two captains shook hands, without any of that silly jealousy that often mars athletics.

"When shall we begin practice? Monday? Tomorrow?"

"Now!" cried Tug. "Every minute is a minute, and we've got fifteen of 'em before supper-time"; and he leaped to his feet. "Hist'ry, you might be thinking up a good challenge to send them. We lost the game on our home

grounds; we 've got to win it on theirs. Come ahead, boys!"

Tug's enthusiasm was as contagious as the mumps. In a moment he had his ten followers trailing out after him for a long run at a carefully regulated pace that began very slow, worked up to a good quick trot and a short spurt, and slowed down again to a jog.

An odd-looking dozen they make—an odds-and-ends dozen, you might say, except that, next to bullying your smaller and putting tacks on bicycle-paths, punning is the worst habit you can get into.

I won't give you the whole history of each of these fellows now—or ever; but some sort of a catalogue will be handy, if you are going far in their company.

I believe their fathers and mothers nicknamed them "Robert Williams" and "Clement Robinson" and "Thorn-dyke Pendleton" and such ridiculous things; but their real names were, of course, just what their chums chose to call them.

First came the new captain, Tug. His father, when he was angry, called him, "You-Clement-Robinson-come-here!" Every pound of flesh on him had to turn into muscle or get off. He was not a witty boy. He took everything earnestly, seriously, and ambitiously, his lessons as well as his games. He thought hard, and fought hard, and wrought hard. Such as he are the salt of the earth; not the sugar, nor the pepper, nor the spice, but the salt. He was a born captain of men.

Close in the wake of him came Punk, the ex-captain,



"JUMBO."



"SAWED-OFF."



"PUNK."



"B. J."



"TUG."



"HIST'RY."



THE TWINS.



"SLEEPY."



"QUIZ."



"PRETTY."



"BOBBLES."

known to his teachers as Richard Malcolm. He was a fine fellow to obey and execute orders, but no man to invent them or see them obeyed. He was in the right place now. After him lumbered a boy so very tall that they called him "Sawed-Off"—his nickname was Thorndyke Pendleton. He managed not only to bruise Punk's heels, but also to bark the shins of the boy behind. And this was his particular chum—so tiny a rat that they called him "Jumbo." The girls called him Billee Douglas. This minnow and this whale were the best friends of all the Dozen."

After them came various boys of various sorts and sizes. One of them was dubbed "B. J.," because that stands for bridge-jumper, and he had once dived off a railroad trestle about 'steen feet high, and had come up unconscious, with mud oozing from his mouth and nose. They fished him out with a boat-hook, and his father, who was Henry Perkins, Sr., emptied him as if he were a hot-water bag, and afterward rolled him and kneaded him back to life and, let us hope, to more common sense.

In his footprints jogged a brick-top named "Reddy," and another one usually known as "Reddy's Brother," but also named "Heady"—as like a pair of twins as ever puzzled strangers. In the family Bible they were written down, on the same day, as Ralph and Rolf Phillips. Then struggled along a lazy beggar named "Sleepy," sometimes called Charles Croft, by mistake; a living interrogation-point called "Quiz"—if you asked him he would say his real name was Clarence Randolph; but don't believe every-

thing people tell you; a fellow named "Bobbles," alias Robert Williams; and one called "Pretty" (pronounced "Poorty")—he had once been christened Edward Parker, but he had lived it down. And the twelfth was "Hist'ry."

In good season Tug brought them back to the tree, and all of them felt like dropping flat on the ground; but the captain forbade such rashness.

"It 's against all the rules of training," he said. "If we had a nice gymnasium we could take a cold shower-bath or a plunge, and rub down well. But it 's too late even to go swimming. We 'd better be pegging for home."

"Those blamed Greenville fellows have a gymnasium that is a beauty," complained Bobbles. "How can we expect to win without any advantages?"

"It is n't so much advantages as grit that counts," said Tug. "If we 'll buckle to it we can— Here, you, Sleepy, get up from there! We 're going home now."

Sleepy had come in last of all, and had dropped to the ground like a bag of beans.

"Aw, let a fellow alone," he mumbled. "I 've got a right to rest, I guess."

"Well," said Tug, bluntly, "you 've got a right to get off the team, too, *I* guess. If you are going to balk at the rules, and run a risk of catching cold and growing weaker instead of stronger after exercise, it 's time we knew it. There are plenty of other fellows in the High School just aching for a chance to play in your place."

"Who 's balkin'?" grumbled Sleepy, getting to his feet as quickly as if the grass had caught fire.

“Come along, then, fellows, and Hist’ry can read us his challenge as we go.”

Then they set out at a brisk walk, all trying to read over History’s shoulder at the same time, and all getting in the way of all.

This is what History read. (History’s school-books had “Willis Campbell” written in them, though I can’t imagine why.) He knew many big words by name, but his spelling was a bit shaky.

*The Managers and Members of the
Greenville Military Academy
Football Association.*

Gentlemen:

Whereas your magnificent aggergation of physical and mental champeens have administered a crushing defeat to the Lakerims, we the undersigned respectably request the honor of an oportunity of retreaving our lost laurels—

“What’s ‘laurels’?” said Quiz, who was eternally asking questions.

“Why, laurels,” said History, “are things the Greeks used to wear in their hair. They grow on a tree, and—”

“Go on with the letter!” said ten voices at once, and the explanation was postponed.

—retreaving our lost laurels. We will play you on your own arena—or any place you may dessicate. We would respectably sudjest two (2) weeks from tomorrow (Saturday) as a suitable date.

Yours very trueely,

The Lakerim High School Football Association.

“That ’s great!” said Sawed-Off, envying History his education.

“But you ’d better send a dictionary with it,” put in Jumbo.

“I presume they will comprehend it,” answered History, scornfully.

And it seems that they did comprehend it, for an acceptance came promptly, proposing that three fourths of the gate-receipts should go to the winner and one fourth to the loser. This was satisfactory.

The fateful Saturday saw the Lakerim team bundling into an omnibus bound for the neighboring town of Greenville. Everybody else that could get away from the village of Lakerim followed after, on bicycles and tandems, and in carriages, buckboards, wagons—almost everything but sleighs and flying-machines. The team was not sorry that most of the Lakerim beauties were in the crowd, and Pretty, who was a great ladies’ man, wanted to get out and ride in one of the carryalls; but his jealous rivals held him back. When they arrived at Greenville, and saw the good, well-fenced athletic field, with the pretty grand stand, and the crowds of Greenville fathers and mothers and sweethearts covered with the Academy colors, Lakerim grew sick at heart, for our boys had no distinctive colors. They had neat uniforms, but these had no particular meaning.

But Tug did n’t believe in coddling a useless regret, so he braced up, and said in a stout voice:

“Boys, we have n’t any colors of our own, but we ’ll

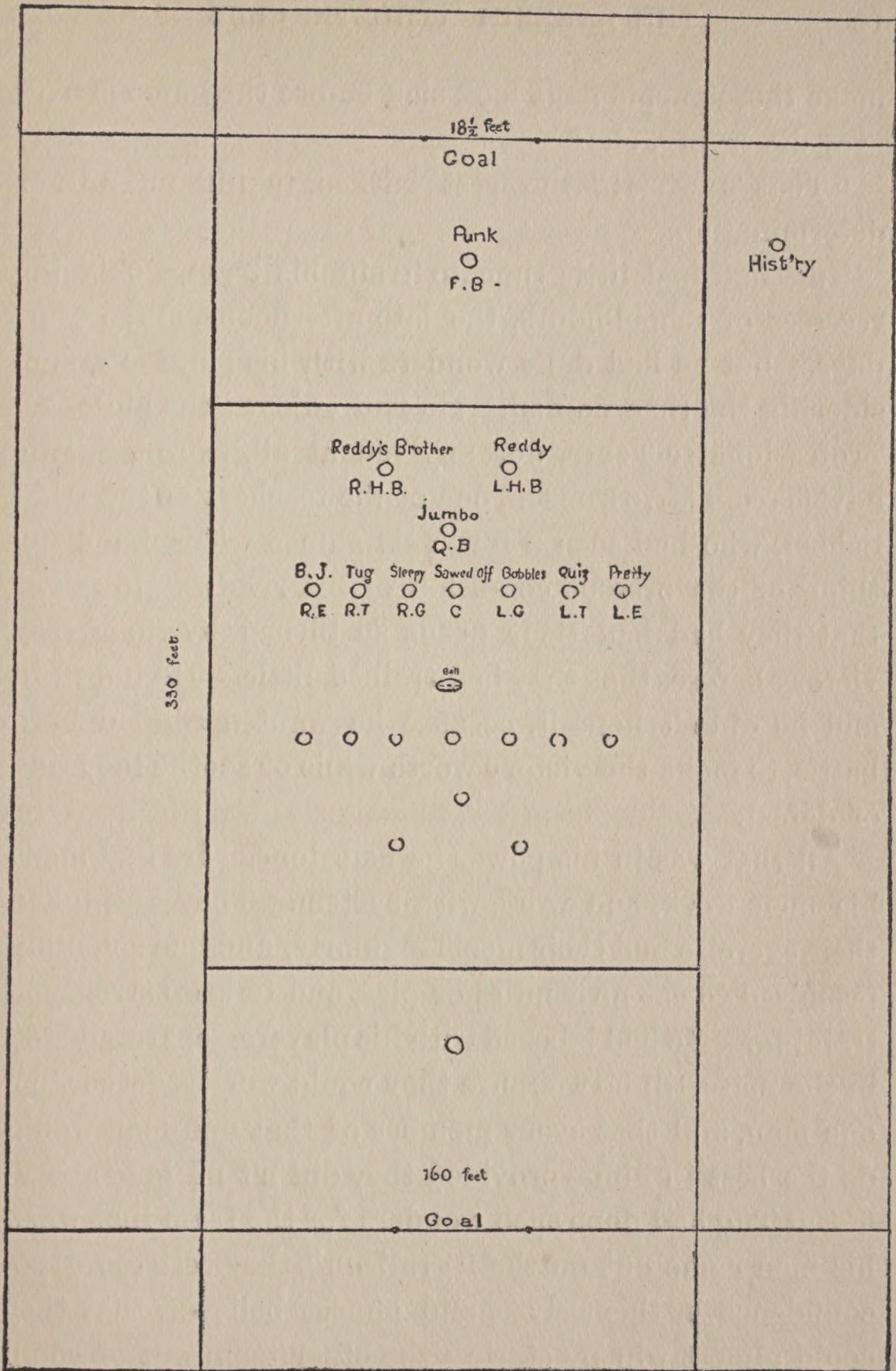


DIAGRAM OF THE FIELD AND THE POSITIONS OF THE DOZEN

make those purple flags look sick before the game is over—or die trying, eh?"

"That 's what!" the rest barked, taking on a new determination.

Tug had had little time to train his team,—only the recesses of school-hours, the late afternoons, and Saturdays,—but he had done wonders with his materials, considering the time he had. He had enjoyed the aid of no professional coaches, nor any aid at all, except a little advice from Mr. Bronson, one of the teachers of the High School, who had seen a few Yale games. Tug knew nothing of the present condition of his rivals. He hoped that they had had their heads so turned by their easy victory before, that they had trained little. He hoped it, and he did n't hope it, because he wanted a good hard battle, to make the victory worth while or soothe the sting of defeat.

All that was in his power he had done. He had made his men work, and work with system. They had taken their exercise and their meals regularly, and had solemnly promised to eat no candies or pies, and to keep strictly in training. He had labored with his players, separately and in the mass, till he was sure they could work together like one man, and that every member of that one man would do the best in him—provided they did n't all get rattled.

But Tug had done such wonders for the team that when his men came out on the "gridiron" they felt too great confidence in themselves, and almost believed that they could almost win by staring the other team out of coun-

tenance, as they say one can stare an angry bull into subjection by the power of his eye—though I advise you to practise it first through a telescope.

After a little preliminary warming up, in which the men practised falling on the ball and passing it, and got the general lay of the land, time was called. The captains met, and tossed up a very important penny. Tug won, and chose the northern goal because the wind was in his favor. It might change before the second half, and be in his favor again. At any rate, Tug was always cautious, and believed that a wind in your favor is worth two in the almanac.

How they lined up is shown by the diagram on page 11.

The foot-ball was put in the exact center of the field, where it looked as interesting as if it were an egg the roc had laid there. The Lakerim line drew back ten yards, and waited. After a while of breathless pause, the Greenville boys dashed forward. There was the sudden thump of the kick-off, and the ball went up in the air as if it slid on the grooves of a rainbow. It soared slowly up and came leisurely down. Beneath it was a pretty struggle. Tug's men blocked the onset as well as could be expected; but two or three hungry wolves got through the hedge, and came leaping toward Punk, who, as full-back, waited with open arms and mouth for the ball. It seemed that it never would come down; but at last it did. He made a clean catch of it, but preferred a run to a return kick.

Hugging the ball to him as if it were a very precious

and very breakable baby, he jumped away from the leap of the first cadet tackler, and dug out for the far-off goal. The second tackler he knocked aside with one quick, open-handed, straight-from-the-shoulder lunge. Then he was up with his own line, and here—thanks to Tug's especial study of the art of protection, or "interference," as they call it oftener—he ran on unhindered by the Greenvillers, who were bunted and shunted off like waves from a sharp prow. But just as Punk was getting well past the center line and invading Greenville's territory, Nesbitt, their captain, darted around behind Punk's body-guard, and came down on his back like a grizzly bear. Punk went to ground instanter; but he could hear the wild applause of the Lakerim faction of the spectators over his great run.

There was a quick line-up. Sawed-Off snapped the ball back to Jumbo, and he shot it left to Reddy, who dashed toward the right end. All the Lakerims went the same way, and all the Greenvilles rushed over to stop the run. But as Reddy passed his brother he slipped the ball back to him; and before the helpless cadets could stop themselves, they saw Heady scooting unobstructed round the left end and far down the field. They had n't expected the old "criss-cross" so early in the game, and they were disgusted.

The Greenville full-back was waiting for Heady, however, and he wrapped his arms lovingly about him, as if he had come to stay. Heady was pulled down to his knees, but, like every wise player, he tugged and hunched

forward for every precious inch he could make before he was held fast.

On the next line-up the goal was only twelve yards away. The Greenvilles expected another end-run, and were not braced for the shock that split their line when the ball went back to the hands of Punk, who came plunging like a tomahawk straight through a suitable hole prepared by Sawed-Off and Bobbles, between the center and the right-guard of the enemy.

There was no stopping him for eight yards, and, to the complete chagrin of all Greenville, the very same man went through the very same place the very same way for four yards more. When Punk picked himself up he was on the right side of the enemy's goal-line.

The Lakerimmers in the audience could hardly believe that their team had scored a touch-down so soon, and each one of them acted like a grasshopper on a griddle till Punk kicked a perfect goal. Then each one acted like two grasshoppers on a griddle. Score: Lakerims—6; Greenvilles—0.

"They 're too easy," said Punk.

"Wait," said Tug.

Nothing succeeds like success, they say; but sometimes nothing is so demoralizing. The poor Lakerims were so overcome with the change in their condition, from defeated and despised villagers to irresistible victors, that they felt as if they were ready to meet the All-America team.

But the blood of the amazed cadets was up now; and when they had the kick-off again, Punk, who was a whit

rattled at being suddenly hailed and hugged as a hero, made a fumbling catch, tried for a kick, and punted a sickly one that went up almost straight and came down in his own territory.

The man that caught it was downed by Tug at once ; but the first plunge of the Greenvilles bowled Sawed-Off over like a king-pin, and went through the Lakerim line like an elephant for fifteen yards. It might have been going yet, had not Tug thrown himself flat on his back and helped to pull the whole pile down on himself like a house of cards—though it felt like almost anything else.

When the Lakerims picked themselves piecemeal out of the scrambled legs, they were as much confused as if they had got the wrong pieces. The next time Greenville bucked the line, they went over like straw men. The third time, they simply hung on the cadet rushers as if they were a big turtle, and rode!—rode under their own goal-posts, too, and later saw the ball nicely kicked through for a goal. Score : Greenville—6 ; Lakerim—6.

The next kick-off fell to Tug's men, and it was a miserable fluke. It went barely the necessary ten yards, and fell into the clutch of a cadet who took it on the run and forgot how to stop till he reached Tug's 25-yard line. Here one of the Greenville half-backs returned the compliment of the criss-cross, while the Lakerims looked over their left shoulders like helpless dolts and watched Punk slam him to the ground on the 10-yard line. They lined up again ; just as a formality, it seemed, for they were too polite—or something—to prevent a cadet from cutting

through between Sleepy and Sawed-Off for six yards more. Here they managed to gain strength enough from despair to hold Greenville fast for three downs. But when they got the ball, Jumbo was so nervous that he threw it wildly to the all-too-zealous Reddy, who fumbled it and was swept off his feet before he could blurt out "Down!" and shoved back over his own goal-line for a safety. Score: Greenville—8; Lakerim—6.

It was a disconsolate lot of Lakerims that hobbled out now to the 25-yard line, and they got little encouragement from the kick-out, which went off on the bias and out of bounds to the left. It was brought back for another try. This time Punk punted it out of bounds to the right. This gave the ball to Greenville again at Lakerim's 25-yard line. After a run past Pretty for eight yards, Tug thought he foresaw a try for a goal from the field, so he made a furious dash for his rival, Captain Nesbitt, who was coolly dropping the ball for his kick; but the cadet opposite Tug, a brawny left-tackle, struck him a blinding blow in the face and throttled him. Of course the umpire did not see this, and Tug simply swallowed the foul in patience. He was above retaliation, and, later, when Sleepy was about to complain of a foul blow given him, Tug silenced him with a blunt "Don't be a cry-baby! Take your punishment, and pay it back—after the game, if you want to. Don't risk any foul plays. We can't afford it."

Tug was too much dazed to watch Nesbitt's drop-kick, but he knew from the wild derisive yells of the Greenville

rooters—a suggestive word sometimes—that the cadets had scored again.

“Thirteen to six!” he groaned; “that ’s an unlucky number—for us.”

But he went doggedly to his place, muttered a few sharp words to his men, and saw with delight that the kick-off was a good long one. This time the cadet full-back answered with a long punt. Punk had passed from the stupor of triumph to the stupor of dismal failure, and he brought himself out of this now into a healthy state of cool resolve. He caught the cadet punt fairly, and sent it back with his compliments. The wind was in his favor and helped his inferior strength. But the Greenville man was determined to win the honors of the battle, and there ensued one of the prettiest sights imaginable: a duel between two full-backs, the ball soaring in graceful curves to and fro like a carrier-pigeon, and the twenty anxious men darting here and there beneath. The Greenvilles’ captain, seeing that he was rather losing than gaining advantage, ordered his full-back to bring up the ball on a run, and he came tearing in breathlessly.

Just as Sawed-Off fell on him he passed the ball back to Nesbitt, and Nesbitt went down the field like a comet, with Lakerim men for a tail. Jumbo dashed across to head him off—the ant would waylay a camel! He tripped and fell just before he reached his prey, but reached out and clutched Nesbitt’s flying ankles and brought the proud captain down with a bloody nose. But the umpire called it a foul,—properly enough, since the tackle was below

the knees,—and gave Greenville fifteen yards. This was a hard blow to Tug, but it was nothing to the blow he got when a Greenville “revolving tandem” beat him to the ground and went through him and his men for a touch-down. The touch-down was far to the side, however, and though Nesbitt made a noble effort, the wind carried the ball away from the posts, and he failed of goal. Score: Greenville—17; Lakerim—6.

There followed some hard mass-plays on both sides, with little gain to either. And then time was up, for the faculties of the two schools wisely forbade the boys to play more than 25-minute halves.

When the Lakerims gathered at their quarters they were a blue lot. They had no trainers to rub them down with alcohol and tone them up with advice. But Tug arose, and waving a towel instead of a manuscript, made the following oration:

“Men, we have n’t done ourselves justice. We can take the starch out of these cadets if we try hard enough. But you—we—got the big head after that first touch-down and played like crazy men. Now, all you ’ve got to do is to be steady and cautious. Don’t lose any good chances, but don’t take any big risks. And two things we can do, and have got to do. We can hold that line if we do our best, and we can buck it if we do our best. Boys,—er—men,—we ’ve *got* to win this game, and we ’re *going* to win it.”

They cheered him gaily, and came back to the struggle, rested, refreshed, and heartened.

This time the kick-off is Lakerim's. The ball shoots like an arrow on a clean long arc.

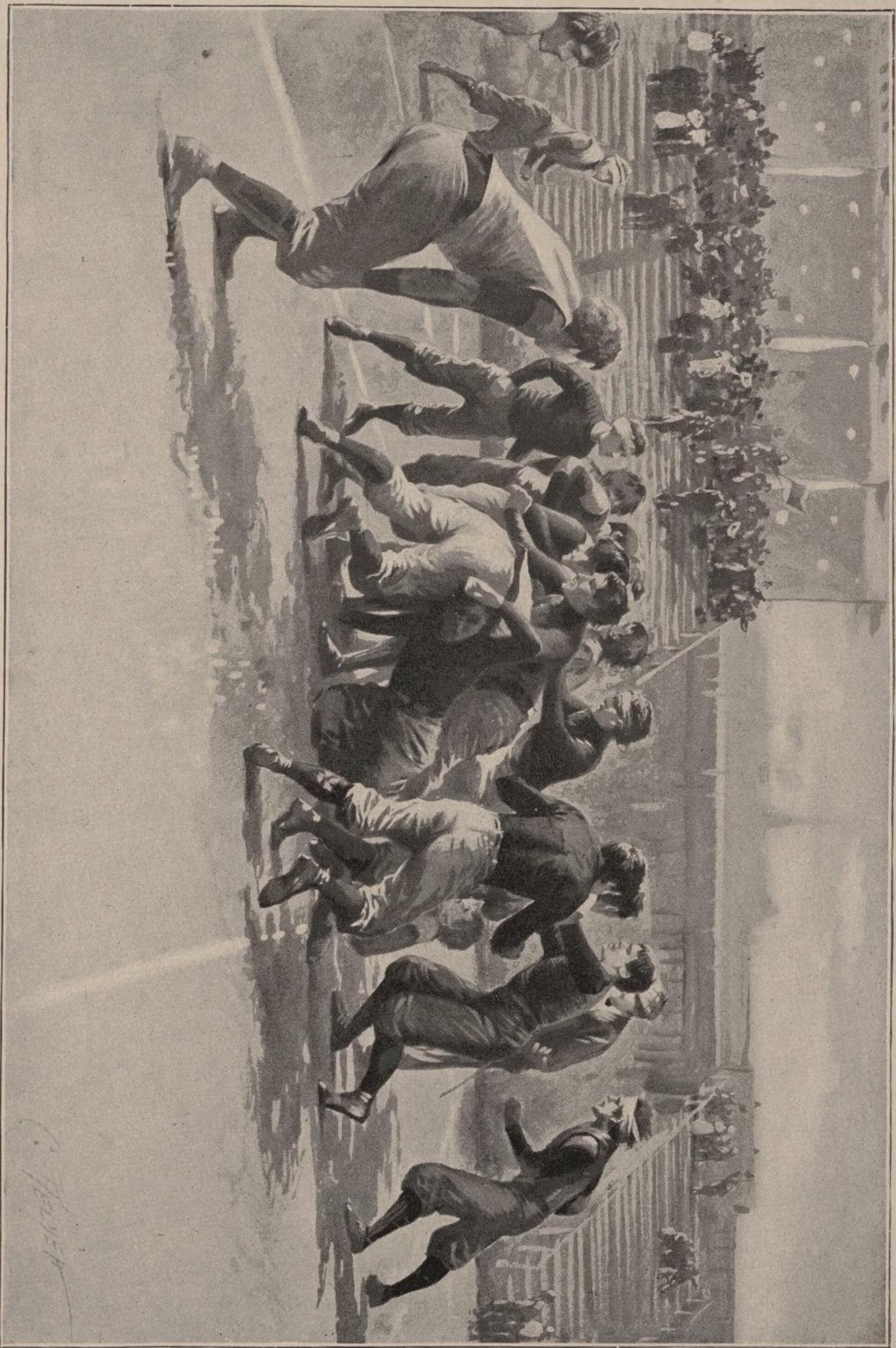
The Greenvilles are upset by their long lead, and do not expect the vim they find in the Lakerim dash. Their full-back is brought to earth, almost in his tracks, by Tug, who has slashed through interference like a sword. The cadets now try a run round the end, but their runner can go only sidewise and is soon pushed out of bounds. Second down—five yards to gain. A wedge fails to split Tug and B. J. Third down—five yards to gain. A line-up, a snap-back, a toss to the left half-back, Tug is boosted over the shoulders of the crouching left-tackle, and slaps the half-back to turf before he can move.

Lakerim's ball. "8-17-33-9!" A wedge between Greenville's left-guard and the left-tackle that had "slugged" Tug. No gain. Second down—five yards to gain. A different signal for the same wedge on Greenville's left-tackle and -guard. Third down—five yards to gain. Same wedge, same place. Through the exhausted Greenville men the plow makes a furrow of ten yards.

Line-up again. Tug gives the old signal, "8-17-33-9." It sounds familiar. Nesbitt cries, "Brace that left-tackle!" but he did not catch a slight difference in Tug's intonation, and has the pleasure of seeing Reddy going like a firebrand in a cyclone round the unguarded right end.

He is stopped thirty yards from home. Tug sends another wedge into the exhausted left-tackle, and says, as they pick themselves up some yards farther down the field:

"LAKERIM SLIPS THROUGH THE CADET INTERFERENCE AND TACKLES LOW AND HARD, RARELY LOSING A MAN OR AN INCH."



“You *will* throttle me, will you?”

He goes on bucking the line—vainly sometimes, oftener with success—till his stout-hearted rams have butted their way across the line again, and seen another goal nicely kicked. Score: Greenville—17; Lakerim—12.

This success is meat and drink to the Lakerim lads, and when they get the ball after the next kick-off they follow Tug into the line with resistless force, hurling their own bodies like sledge-hammers against their rivals till they have pounded them back again to their 25-yard line.

The ball is lost at times, but not through fumbles; and everywhere Greenville tests the line she finds a wall piled up suddenly there in waves of stone. Lakerim slips through the cadet interference and tackles low and hard, rarely losing a man or an inch. Lakerim's own interference is as hard to pierce as a Greek phalanx.

“Now you 're playing foot-ball,” says Tug.

Once inside Greenville's 25-yard line, Punk begs for a chance to try a goal from the field, but Tug refuses.

“If you should make it, we'd only tie the score; and the wind 's against you. No, sir; we 've got 'em on the run, and I would n't give 'em the ball for a thousand dollars!”

There was a long, tough fight in front of that beautiful goal. Once or twice Tug's men lost the ball on downs, but Greenville was afraid to give it up with a kick, and could not break the line; so the ball came back. Many, many were the bruises, and twice there was a pause for an injured player. Both times it was Tug, but he would

not be dragged out of the game. He shook off his pain and daze, and always bucked the line; till finally, like a tidal wave, his men broke over the Greenville reef into the lagoon beyond the goal. Punk's toe was true again, and the score was: Lakerim—18; Greenville—17.

The Lakerims were, after all, only half-trained High School boys, and they could n't stand everything. So they let up a little, and, before long, realized that Greenville was awake and desperate now, and that she was backing them toward their own goal, spasmodically but surely. In vain Tug coached and inspired his men. In vain they welled up against Greenville wedges. In vain they tried the Greenville line and the ends of the line. Tug felt that the timekeeper was his only salvation now, and hoped only to hold Greenville where she was. But back he was forced—back, always back, till finally the goal-posts were just over the heads of the twins.

“Hold hard, boys! We've *got* to hold 'em,” he pleaded; and he whispered to B. J., “I'm going through that line, or die!”

First down—no gain. That's good. Do it again. Second down—three yards gained.

If they make that two yards now, Lakerim is done for.

Nesbitt has his men well up. The ball is to go to the full-back for a last assault on the enemy's left; but just as the full-back catches the leathern prize, there is a rip and a swish and a swoop, and Tug is through the line and on him, the dumfounded cadet has fallen over backward

and dropped the ball, Tug has shot past and scooped it up, and is off for the far-away, far-away goal! He is all out of breath; but there is no one in front of him, and he gasps and runs like a hunted animal. There is a wild mob after him, and his heart acts as if it would bounce out of his mouth, and his parched lungs feel that all the air is withdrawn from the world; but still he runs, and finally, when everything has grown dazzlingly, blindingly scarlet before him, he bumps into something hard, and knows it is a goal-post, and drops to the ground stunned, gasping, utterly beaten out. And he is crying a little, perhaps; but heroes can afford to cry.

Of course Punk could n't miss the goal after that, and time was up that minute; so the score stood, 24 to 17.

There is no use telling anything more about the blissful crowd that went back to Lakerim, the fireworks, and all that.

When the team was riding home that night, in moonlight as pure as their own happiness, every boy had an arm or two around some other boy.

Again Bobbles piped up: "If we only had a gymnasium, and a field and colors—"

"And the earth with a fence around it," grunted Sawed-Off.

But Bobbles went on: "Now, I've been thinking—"

"You'll hurt yourself some of these days," said Jumbo.

"I've been thinking," Bobbles persisted, "of a way we can get all these things. My scheme is this: We

made \$44.50 as our share of the gate-receipts. Well, now, we 'll salt that away and—”

“Lakerim! All out!” called the driver of their omnibus.

“I 'll tell you about it later,” said Bobbles, as eleven tired sleepyheads separated to go home to their well-earned pillows and sweet dreams.

II

ALL correct history-books will tell you that a watched pot has never been known to boil; but they are strangely silent as to whether or no a watched lake ever puts on ice.

So, when the calendar got well on into December, the Dozen, as they were known to local fame, stood gazing long and hard at the lake. They were waiting for the water to freeze.

Thirteen is an unlucky number when Jack Frost is the thirteenth. And here he certainly was. He kept out of sight himself, but he dabbed red paint on the noses of the Twelve, and drove tacks into their finger-tips and toes, and ran his cold hands up and down their backbones as if they were washboards.

Still they stood, weeping with the chill, and shivering and sniveling and sniffing and shuffling to keep cold. But the ripples on the lake danced even more than they did—as if, indeed, old Daddy Winter had found a sign “No Thoroughfare” when he came that way.

“I say, let’s go in swimmin’,” spoke up the tiny Jumbo.

“We might as well have rollers put on our skates,” the

huge Sawed-Off spoke down. "This lake 's forgot how to freeze."

But, much as they poked sarcasm at it, it only laughed back with blue eyes and giggling ripples. It simply would not be bullied into becoming a skating-rink for anybody. So these bodies must e'en wait. So they waited.

At length, being sensible boys, they gave up longing for what they could not get, and turned to gloating over what they had. And their memories were cheery as a camp-fire.

After the glorious victory won over the foot-ball team of the Greenville Military Academy, they had adopted Punk's suggestion and definitely organized themselves into a club, which they called after their native city. If the lake grew famous only through the town of Lakerim, the town of Lakerim grew famous chiefly through the wonderful High School athletes, who were organized, as the circus-posters would say, into the only and original consolidated and accumulated aggregation of unprecedented luminaries of the athletic and gymnastic arena; imported and domesticated at enormous expense, and traveling in their own gorgeous argosy of palatial private cars! Any individual marvel is alone worth the price of admission! Don't forget the name!

THE LAKERIM ATHLETIC CLUB!

Come one, come all! Admission only twenty-five cents. Old folks half-price! Peanuts and lemonade for sale at reduced rates. Avoid all servile imitators!

After defeating Greenville, it had been necessary, of course, to play a rubber; so the Greenvilles came over to Lakerim like lions seeking whom they might devour, and went back like lambs fleeing lest they get devoured. Then the Lakerims fell into the habit of winning games from almost all the teams they played with. As Tug put it, "They had hit their gait." And they came out at the end of the season with a score of six games won to two lost, a neat percentage of seventy-five.

"How is the treasury this cold day?" the living interrogation-mark inquired.

"Well," said Punk, taking a paper out of his pocket, "I've been making out a statement for the next club-meeting."

"Let's have it now," some one suggested; and as everybody agreed, and there was nothing else to do, the Lakerim Athletic Club met in solemn conclave right where it stood in the snow; for the club, as a club, had no roof to shelter it from the wintry blast.

"Ahem!" coughed President Tug, with so much dignity that the lake almost froze up with a snap. "The club will please come to order."

Coming to order consisted in ceasing to stamp half-frozen feet and trying to keep the chattering teeth from making rattle-bones out of themselves.

"We will dispense with the minutes of the previous meeting," the President began, "and permit the Secretary to postpone writing the minutes of this till he gets

home." Which was a good thing, still the Secretary's fingers felt more like breaking off than holding a pencil.

"Shall we hear the report of the Treasurer?"

Every member meant to say, "Aye"; but he was so cold that he voted several times with an "Aye—aye—aye!" like story-book sailors.

"The T-t-reasurerrrr has the f-floor," said the President.

Every one looked down and grinned, for the floor was snow-white and came up to the Treasurer's ankles.

"Mr. President," said Punk, "I beg to make the following statement of moneys collected and held by me in the club's name in the Lakerim Savings-Bank."

You must admit that Punk's language was very fine (it ought to be; for, just between you and me and the lamp-post, he got it out of a book). This was his statement—punctuation-marks made by the cold omitted:

First game of the year, Lakerim <i>vs.</i> Greenville, played at Lakerim, no charge for admission	\$0.00
Second game, Lakerim <i>vs.</i> Greenville, played at Greenville. Our share of the gate-receipts, $\frac{3}{4}$	44.50
Third game, Lakerim <i>vs.</i> Greenville, played at Lakerim Fair Grounds. Our share, $\frac{3}{4}$	18.39
Fourth game, played with Brownsville School for Boys. Our share, $\frac{3}{4}$	39.15
Fifth game, played with Troy Latin School. Our share, $\frac{1}{4}$.	26.56
Sixth game, played with Charleston Preparatory School. Our share, $\frac{3}{4}$	31.20
Seventh game, played with Kingston Academy. Our share, $\frac{1}{4}$	9.00
Eighth game, played with Charleston Preparatory School. Our share, $\frac{3}{4}$	33.32
Total	\$202.12

This was not so bad ; and as they—and their parents—had agreed that every man was to pay his own expenses, every cent of this was to go to bringing that club-house somewhere nearer than Spain. But none of the boys had much idea of the size of the contract they had taken.

By the time the Treasurer's report was read and approved, however, everybody was so cold that everybody moved to ad-d-d-j-j-jourrrn, and everybody s-s-s-second-deded the m-m-motion, and so it was carried without much trouble, and every mother's son skedaddled for home and fireside.

That night the mercury crawled far down the thermometer in a vain attempt to keep warm, and the lake gave up the fight and put on a thin mask of ice. In a few days this was thick enough to bear tons of weight, and the boys got out their well-rusted skates and well-seasoned hockey-clubs, and proceeded to crack one another's shins and sit all over themselves to their hearts' content. But hard as they fell, the lake always seemed to say, like B. J.'s heroes, in a hollow voice :

“I can stand it if you can.”

In time shin-bones learned to quit aching and keep out of the way, and in time the boys were all skating with last winter's skill and handling their shinny-clubs with some show of reason and agility.

Little Jumbo was by far the best skater of the lot. Sawed-Off said he ought to be, because he had less distance to fall than any one else.

However that may be, Jumbo seemed absolutely fearless and perfectly at home on his steel soles. He was an

adept at fancy work, and could do "Mohawks" and "Maltese crosses" and "figure 8's" and "grape-vines" and "Philadelphias," and about everything you could think of. He wrote his curves with the ease and grace of a teacher of penmanship, and could work out his Latin exercises with his skates—almost.

It so fell about—speaking of skating, that is a very fit expression—it so fell about, I say, that Jumbo had visited in Canada the winter before, and had fallen deeply in love with the game of hockey as it is played up there. When he heard how it was being taken up in many American cities, he proposed that the Lakerims give it the final honor of their high and mighty attention.

"Aw!" growled Sleepy, who objected to everything on principle, "what do you want to borrow anything from the Canucks for?"

"Yes," said Tug, who was very patriotic, "I think we 've got enough games of our own, without being snobs."

"Snobs nothin'," said Jumbo. "The only sensible and really patriotic way to act is to study other nations, and if they have anything better than we have, to borrow it and improve on it."

"Jumbo's right," Sawed-Off said, looking round to see if anybody wanted to fight the two of them. "If you're going to be so blamed exclusive, you'd better drop football and tennis and rowing and skating, and about everything else—"

"Except base-ball," drawled Sleepy.

“Yes, that ’s our own, right enough; but we can’t play it all the year round.”

After some wrangling they finally voted to take up the new game; and there was nothing to do but elect Jumbo teacher, trainer, coacher, captain, and general cook and bottle-washer.

Jumbo then delivered a scholarly lecture on the game. He said: “Canadian hockey takes seven men on a side. Each side has a goal at the end of a field that can be any length you want, but must n’t be less than a hundred and twenty feet. The goal is two posts, and they ’re four feet high and six feet apart, and they have no cross-bar. They have an imaginary one, though, across the top; and to score a goal you ’ve got to shoot the puck under it.”

“The puck! What ’s a puck?” they all cried.

History scornfully answered: “Why, don’t you know?—Puck is a character in one of Shakspeare’s plays—‘The Merry Wives of Mr. Winder,’ I think.”

Jumbo only grinned at the Knowing One, and took out of his pocket a disk of solid vulcanized rubber, three inches in diameter and an inch thick.

“What ’s that?” said History, still beaming with pride.

“That ’s a puck,” said Jumbo; and History’s face fell half-way to the ground. “I got it in Canada. They use it instead of a ball or a block.”

“Or a tin can,” added Sleepy.

“Does n’t seem to me you could knock it very far,” said Pretty.

"You can't, and you don't want to. The game is to carry it and coax it along with your hockey-stick."

"Don't you ever knock it?" said Quiz.

"Well, not exactly. But sometimes you lift it."

"What 's lifting it?" said Quiz.

"Well, it takes a knack to do that. You give your club a kind of a sort of a twist, and a lift, and the puck goes flying through the air. Some experts can send it sixty feet at a lift."

"Well, what if it hits you?" said Pretty, thinking of his fine teeth.

"Well, you 'll wish it had n't," said Jumbo, thinking of a certain gap in his ivories.

"That does n't sound very promising," said Pretty.

"Every game we play is risky. You can break bones in all of 'em—lawn-tennis included. But you 'll have no fun and accomplish nothing in this world if you 're always stopping to think of your bones."

"It takes seven men, you say?" was Bobbles' way of returning to the muttons.

"Yes; first there 's the 'goal-keeper,' who never leaves his goal, but stands inside and stops the puck with his stick, his skate, his hand, or his whole body. In front of him is another defender called the 'point.' In front of him a fellow called the 'cover-point'; he attacks and defends, both. And in front of him are four 'forwards,' who attack."

"How do they attack?" said Quiz. "With their clubs?"

"No; you must n't lift your club above your shoulder, and you don't lift it at all except when you want to check a man."

"What is it to check a man?" said Quiz.

"When you scrape the puck away from his club with your own. Then there's the body-check, where you bunt him with your shoulder, and stop him."

"But what if he's skating pretty hard?" said Sleepy, anxiously.

"Well, you get a kind of a jolt," said Jumbo, meaningly.

"And do you sit down hard?" Sleepy persisted.

"If the ice does n't rise up and hit you first," answered Jumbo, in a matter-of-fact way.

"Um-m!" pondered Sleepy; "I guess I don't care much about that game."

"No," said Tug, scornfully. "It might keep you up."

Sleepy only yawned for reply, and dawdled off home.

"You see," Jumbo began again, "the game is one that takes a skater who is sure-footed, and not afraid. And it takes a good dodger to juke it."

"'Juke' it!" yelled Quiz. "What does that beautiful word mean?"

"Why," exclaimed History, superciliously, "did n't you ever read about the Juke of York, with twenty thousand men, who marched up the hill—"

"And took the elevator down again?" Jumbo finished for him. "Well, this is another kind of a Juke. This consists in carrying the ball right through the enemy,

dodging this way and that, and bringing it 'way down toward the goal."

"It 's like the great run you made through the line in that third Greenville foot-ball game," said Tug.

"Well, something," Jumbo admitted, with a blush; and Sawed-Off blushed, too, with equal pride.

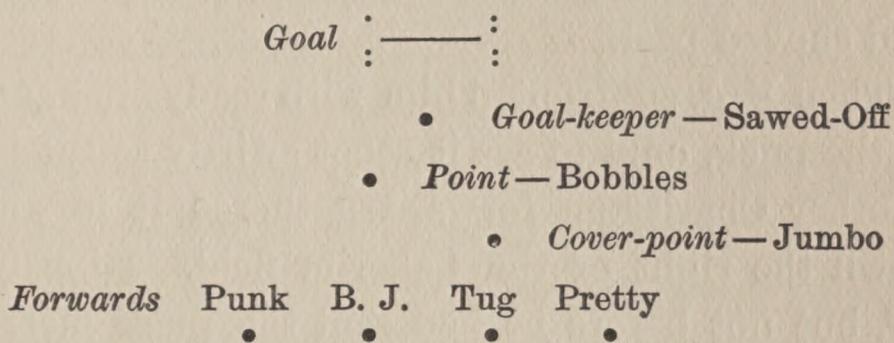
"Hockey is a good deal like foot-ball, anyway," Jumbo went on. "Off-side playing is watched closer, though, and punished more. Every player who is ahead of the man with the puck is off-side till some one of the opponents touches the puck. All he can do is to wait for his own man to come up with him, or for one of the other side to get it. So the forwards usually play pretty well spread out in a line, and pass the puck sidewise to one another to keep it out of the way of the enemy. You can't pass it forward to your own men—only at right angles to the side-line, or backward. And you can't score, as you can in foot-ball, by taking it over the goal-line—it 's got to go through the posts. And—and—I guess that 's enough to begin practising on."

Ten of the fellows followed Jumbo to a clear space on the lake. Sleepy was dozing on his way home, and History had sat on his spectacles and broken them so often that his parents forbade his skating.

The ten survivors were not much interested in the game till they had got the hang of it pretty well. Then they were all enthusiasts, and before long Jumbo was ready to choose his men. And "We are Seven" was one of their mottos, and "All for Lakerim" was their other.

One good-looking morning a crowd of young fellows from the Preparatory School at Charleston-on-the-Lake came skating that way to mop up the ice with anything they could find at Lakerim. They brought hockey-clubs for mop-sticks; and after some banter an informal game was set going.

A narrow inlet of the lake made a good hockey-rink; and the positions of the Lakerims were these:



In just the same arrangement inverted, the Charleston seven faced them.

This was the formal arrangement, though in reality the boys were rarely just so placed. B. J. usually played back a little to return the puck to the forwards, or, as they say, to "feed it in." And the rest scurried hither and thither, according to the change of each moment.

A referee was selected and sides were chosen by toss. The referee skated to the center of the field and put the puck on the ice. Tug and one of the Charleston forwards took positions to "face it off." They put their clubs down against either side of the puck, and stood as taut as a main-sheet in a good wind, and waited for the referee's

whistle. After they had paused with eyes staring at the puck till they began to think that he had forgotten them altogether or had evaporated, the shrill signal came, and the game was on.

Tug and his rival jabbed and scraped at the puck till it finally came out of the scrimmage between Tug's heels, for his opponent was the more skilful of the two. Tug had a mighty ado to disentangle himself from the persistent puck; but finally the Charleston man poked it out and shoved past.

Then B. J. confronted him with ready stick, and swiped at the puck, only to see it scoot swiftly to the left, where another Charleston forward gathered it in and dashed down the right of the Lakerim field. Him Jumbo cut off, but not before he had sent the puck merrily to his left, where a third forward got it. He shot down the left of the field until Bobbles headed him off. And just as Bobbles called the puck his own, it was clear across the ice and on the stick of another Charleston forward who had an unobstructed field at the right. He dashed for the posts, and when he was near enough gave a quick, twisting lift and shot the puck straight for a goal.

But Sawed-Off was waiting with a wild glare, and he caught the puck with his left hand, flung it down, and with a quick blow of the club knocked it spinning side-wise.

All the Lakerims were of course off-side, and must wait till the dashing Charlestonian started back for another try at goal. Then they took him in hand, and there was

a charming scrimmage. Four or five of the players came together at that point at the same time, and promptly lifted their feet in air and sat down to think it over. Some one of them was sitting on the puck, and all were jabbed and prodded unmercifully till they scrambled to their feet and restored the long-lost puck to the light of day.

After some lively give and take, Jumbo scooped it and passed it across to Bobbles; but he was n't looking for it, and a Charlestonian swept it away and brought it to Sawed-Off's door again.

Lakerim was quite bewildered at the swift changes of the game as handled by trained players. The puck was here, there, and everywhere at the same time.

"Now you see it, and now you don't," gasped Pretty.

Sawed-Off filled enough of the goal-space to block the second attempt at goal. He simply moved his big body, and though the puck stung, it dropped to the ice, and he shot it far to the right. But a Charleston forward was playing well over and waiting for it. He had it back in the center instanter, and there was a fierce mix-up in front of goal. The Lakerims could not get the puck away from Charleston, however, and the third quick shot for goal found a cranny, somewhere where Sawed-Off was not, and the scoring had begun.

"Boys," said Jumbo, "it 's team work that counts in this game, not grand-stand plays. Keep your eye on the puck, and always be ready to get it on a pass, or to pass it when it is in danger. Let every man know where every other man is."

After the second face-off, the Lakerims, by concerted action among the forwards, managed to get the puck down into Charleston, but only for a moment now and then. After zigzagging it back and forth for some time, a Charlestonian suddenly gave it a beautiful lift. It flew high in the air, and came down on the edge, and rolled at Bobbles, who stopped it with his skate.

He made that fatal mistake, however, a slow start; and before he could recover any of the ground gained through the lift, two of the Charleston forwards were on him. As the first of them went by, he gave a fierce blow at the puck with his club. It came down hard on Bobbles' right hand, and he dropped his stick with a loud "Ouch!" Before he could recover it, the puck was in the elbow of a Charleston club, and jogging gaily down the ice.

Sawed-Off grew impatient at all this, deserted his sentry-post, and started forward to stop the advance. But the Charleston man simply gave a sudden swerve to the right, and then one to the left, and lo! he was past Sawed-Off, and through the goal-posts before you could say, "The sea ceaseth, and it sufficeth it." Score: Charleston—2; Lakerim—0.

Then Jumbo skated toward Sawed-Off, and from his little height looked up at his gigantic chum, and threatened to put a head on him if he left the goal-posts again.

Sawed-Off looked down at Jack the Giant-Killer, and meekly promised to resist all temptations.

At the third face-off Tug carried away the honors and the puck, and by a quick pass to Pretty saw it advanced

well into Charleston territory. Pretty disappeared into a wild scrimmage, and the puck came out in the enemy's charge. Tug met the onrushing player with a vigorous body-check that nearly shook his teeth loose.

But more to Tug's delight, it shook the puck loose, and he took the little misplaced discus under his own wing. He dodged one Charlestonian, but saw himself about to fall prey to another, and passed the puck across to B. J., who took it forward until the opposing cover-point fell foul of him, when he sent it to Punk, who got past the Charleston point, but lost it there to the enemy. Jumbo came up with a bird-like swoop, however, and picked it out of the tangle of clubs and feet, and shot it between the legs of the goal-keeper for a goal. Score: Charleston—2; Lakerim—1.

The game went on, with changes as sudden and complete as those of a twirled kaleidoscope; but when the twenty minutes of the first half were over, the foreigners had coined another goal. Score: Charleston—3; Lakerim—1.

Friends furnished overcoats, and the players gathered round a fire on shore. There was only one fire, so Jumbo invited his visitors to join them, and borrowed some wraps, overcoats, and girls' cloaks. He had no chance to coach his men, except indirectly, and, as it were, over the shoulders of the enemy.

"You fellows are the right stuff," he said hospitably. "We don't know the game very well here. I don't mean to say you could n't beat us even if we did; but we might

make it more interesting for you. Your team-play is simply great. I wish our boys would work together better. They are too blamed anxious to do it all by their lonesomes. We 've got some good material, though, don't you think?"

"Well, there are no flies on *you*," their captain said to Jumbo. "I wish you 'd come over to Charleston to school. We 'd make a star player out of you in no time."

Jumbo was sorry now that he had spoken, and he blushed modestly and guessed he 'd just as soon stay at home. And when the ten-minute rest was up, he went among his men, with words of suggestion and encouragement.

Charleston began the next half with a speedily gained goal due to a combination of mischances that left Lakerim badly muddled. Jumbo only set his teeth hard, and decided that if the game were to be kept from going from the very bad of 4 to 1 to something still worse, it was time to begin. He hung about all the scrimmages, waiting for a chance at the puck; but he was always checked or off-side at the critical moment, till the battle was worked far into his own country, and close to his goal.

Then he saw his chance, and pulled the puck away from an opponent, and set sail for foreign parts. He had all the Charleston forwards but one in front of him. And people still talk of the beautiful way he juked it through the swarm of his enemies. A corkscrew could n't have gone through them better. He gave a sudden leap to the right to avoid this forward, and a jump to the left to pass

that one, and a sudden stop and swish round the last one. He led the cover-point a fine chase, and suddenly dug his skate into the ice, stopped short, and let the fellow pass him like a cannon-ball. Then he came full tilt on the Charleston point, who waited, expecting to check him.

But just as a sloop would save herself from collision with a man-of-war, he suddenly luffed up, and was alongside when he should have been across the bows, and was astern when he should have been sinking.

The Charleston goal-keeper alone opposed him. Jumbo gave the puck a good high lift. It struck the man in the mouth, and brought out a growl of pain. When it dropped to the ground, and before the keeper could shove it aside, Jumbo shot it past his right toe for goal. Score: Charleston—4; Lakerim—2.

For the next attack he sent his forwards along in open order, with special instructions to be quick in passing the puck from one to the other. He followed right at their heels as feeder, and after some close calls saw Pretty send the puck between the goal-posts. Score: Charleston—4; Lakerim—3.

Then, try as they would, they could n't hold the Charllestons. Jumbo fought so hard that he was twice caught playing off-side, and had the misery of giving the enemy the puck and a line-up at that point, with the Lakerims put five feet back. And much as Sawed-Off tried literally to fill his place, the puck got past him, and the Charllestons were again two goals ahead, the score being 5 to 3.

Then Jumbo saw a Charleston forward preparing to lift

the puck past his forwards, and he bent his knees and waited till it flew over his head; then he straightened his wiry little legs and shot up in the air after it. His left hand struck it and brought it down. Jumbo sprawled on the ice when he lit, but knocked the puck to Tug, who had hurried back to him, and watched it go zigzagging down the ice for another goal at Pretty's hands.

Now the referee announced that there was only a little time left, and Jumbo saw that his one hope lay in tying the score. This would compel a lengthening of the time.

He outlined his plan of action as they went for the next face-off. He spoke to his best men, and bided his time. At length the opportunity came, Tug got the puck, and Jumbo, who was just behind him, gave him the word. Tug gave the puck a magnificent lift down the field, but well to one side where there were no Charleston men. Jumbo dashed forward like a bullet, and reached the puck before any of the opposing men could get there. Tug followed at his very heels, and when Jumbo gave another fine lift over Charleston heads to the other side, he was up and away and had the puck before the enemy got near it. When they dashed for him, he drove the puck for a beautiful pass across again to Jumbo, who made goal with it, and tied the score just as the referee opened his mouth to shout, "Time!"

It was now necessary to play a supplement, and give the game to the team that made the first goal. By various passes, exciting to watch, but tedious to tell, the now hopeful and determined Lakerims managed to work the



JUMBO MAKING THE GOAL.

puck Charleston way, and finally Jumbo got it near one of the banks of the lake (these were the only side-lines they had).

He dodged here and there to get through the Charleston forwards, but his way was blocked everywhere, till a sudden idea struck him. He dashed straight at the Charlestonian who guarded the edge, and just as he reached him, shot the puck hard to the right and went round to the left. The Charlestonian looked aghast at seeing the puck go one way and the player another; but when he saw the puck strike a shelving bank of stone and carom off behind him into the loving clutches of Jumbo, he looked aghaster. He recognized that Jumbo had brought a trick of the rinks outdoors, and a moment later he recognized a Jumbo-esque lift on the puck going through his own goal. And he recognized the end of the game, and the voices of Lakerim people cheering the victors, who were even more surprised than their victims.

By this time the Charlestonians were so sick of hockey and the ice in general that they had no heart to limp home on skates. So they arranged for a return game in the rink in their city, hired a Lakerim carryall, and went away ignominiously on wheels.

As they disappeared, History, who knew about as much Latin as a drug-clerk, went out on the scene of victory, waved Jumbo's shinny-club in air, and cried:

"In hockey signo vinces!"

Whereupon Pretty very properly pushed his feet out from under him, and when he hit the ice he saw more stars than his astronomy text-book ever dreamed of.

The fellows that had not played now felt strong enough to skate a little, and came out on the ice with girls from the crowd of spectators. They chose, of course, the rosiest-cheeked—and, I must admit, rosiest-nosed—maids, and went gliding in couples as if the ice were as good as any ball-room floor, as indeed it was. So they glided—or should I say “glode”?—and filled their lungs with a wholesome air, and their muscles with a wholesome weariness.

But Heady, as he went to ask his particular fancy to glide with him, was pounced on by a great, overgrown fat girl who had never learned to skate.

“Oh, hello!” she cried. “I ’m going to let you teach me.”

“Thanks,” said Heady; “but I—”

“Oh, you two boys skate so well that my father told me I must be sure to get you to teach me.”

Heady did n’t just see what her father had to say about it, but he could n’t skate around her, and he was afraid to try breaking away from her clutches, lest she should fall on him; so he surrendered as gracefully as possible, and led her out on the ice, expecting to hear it crack under them.

“Which of the twins are you?” she asked.

Heady wished he had been the other; but he did n’t say so. He found, to his glad disappointment, that she was quick to learn, and very light on her feet for all her weight, and had a better balance than many a thinner person. She was much like a top, in fact, and they were soon spinning about right merrily.



“HE WENT SKATING BACKWARD, DRAGGING THE HEAVY GIRL
AFTER HIM.”

At length they encountered the weary but high-hearted Jumbo, who had not stopped to rest, but was giving one of his men a few points he had picked up from studying Charleston methods.

As soon as she saw him, the fat girl halloed to him, and left Heady completely in the lurch while she showered congratulations on the hero of the day; which did n't please Heady altogether.

"One of the twins has just taught me how to skate, and you must skate with me," she cried.

"I'm afraid I'm too tired," said Jumbo, appalled at the thought of dragging such a weight around the lake.

"Oh, that does n't matter," the girl exclaimed; "it 'll do you good."

She was dragging Jumbo along as a captive, when he thought of a way of escape, and said: "I'll tell you, let's skate for home. You live on the other side of town, too, and I know a short cut around that little point."

The girl gaily agreed, and they struck out together—the tugboat towing the ocean liner. When they rounded the wooded point, they found the ice quite deserted. The neck of land hid all the crowd they had left behind. But he knew the way, and she had no fears. So, tired as he was, he went skating backward, dragging the heavy girl after him. He was too dead tired to look round much, and the girl was too busy enjoying the speed and ease of her glide to notice where they went.

But suddenly there was a loud rattle and clatter and boom, and the ice crashed under and all around them.

The fat girl flung her arms about Jumbo's neck ; and hard as he strove to tread water and find support, she bore him down ; and the ice splintered and sank with him as he grasped at it.

The bitter-cold water sent a chill through his flesh, but he felt the cold clear to the marrow of his bones when his wild eyes saw not a living soul or a possible rescuer on the whole surface of the lake. And then his head went under, and the water filled the mouth of the terrified girl as she tried to scream for help.

III

WHEN Jumbo's head sank beneath the water it did not take him more than twenty minutes to realize that unless he could free himself from the girl's despairing clutches, he would be what the poets call "a goner." He gave a desperate wrench, and tore her arms from about his neck, and thrust her away from him. Then he came to the surface, feeling fully fifteen times lighter, and proceeded to scramble for safety. But just as he found a piece of ice strong enough to clamber on, he bethought him of the cowardice of leaving the girl to drown. Without hesitation he dropped back in the water, and in a stroke or two he had swum round behind her. He put his two hands under her arms, and set to treading water violently.

By desperate efforts he managed to keep her head up, though his own sank frequently. He screamed for help until he dared not spend any more of his precious breath, and then fought silently and furiously for life.

For whole long minutes he trampled the water under him as if he were climbing some hateful stairway whose

steps slid always away beneath him. No one was to be seen anywhere within the rim of the great wheel of the horizon, and at length he was too tired and too weak to struggle any more. He gave up the fight and resigned himself to die, like a man—like a man who gives his life pluckily, trying to save a woman's. He stopped his frantic treading, and let himself sink away as if to sleep. And the water closed triumphantly over his head.

ARTEMUS WARD told once of a man that was put in a dungeon for life. After staying there sixteen weary years a bright idea struck him. He raised the window and got out. Now, Jumbo had skated backward until he was near the shore and right over a long sand-bar. He had trodden water with bent knees, and the fat girl had doubled herself up in a terrified way that had made it all the harder for Jumbo to keep her afloat, heavy as she was. Now, when he yielded to his fate like a philosopher and a hero, and let himself sink, he was surprised to find how soon his feet touched bottom. Instinctively he straightened his knees, and stood upright! And found his head above water! Consequently he was safe. He could n't tell whether he was more delighted or disgusted.

When he had straightened the hysterical girl to her feet he climbed on the ice, and dragged her on it, where it was extra strong. She wanted to stop and have a good cry, but he grabbed her by the hand and started for home on a dead run, hauling her after him. He left her in front of her own gate, when he saw some one coming from the

house, and started for his own home and fireside. He was so tired when he got there that he never knew precisely what they did to him.

Then began a procession of doctors and apothecaries' boys, friends and nurses, cold baths and hot baths and medicines, till the two in their separate homes almost wished themselves in the lake again.

But they came out of the ordeal without pneumonia, or any of the other things everybody predicted, and took up life again, as before. Only thereafter, the girl, whose name, it is time to tell, was Carrie Shields, appropriated Jumbo for her very own; and he decided that if the girl was worth risking life for, she must be a pretty fine girl. Besides, he felt very much at home in her company, because her size reminded him of the size of his sworn chum, Sawed-Off.

IV

JUST as Jumbo was restored to his friends, several cases of diphtheria made their appearance in the High School, and the School Board decided it prudent to discontinue the sessions and grant a vacation of at least a week. Fond as I am of these twelve young gentlemen, I cannot so stretch the truth as to say that any of them were sorry for the vacation, except possibly History, who shone chiefly in the school-room. The rest of them would probably have given three cheers if the school-house had burned down.

Saturday morning the Dozen drifted together, and began to wonder what they were going to do with all of their spare time.

"I move we go strawberry-picking," said Sawed-Off.

Pretty, who was always scheming to bring girls into the pastimes of the Twelve, proposed a moonlight sleigh-ride.

"But we can't stay sleigh-riding for a week," said Punk.

"We might begin with a snow fort."

"Oh, we don't want any of those baby sports," said B. J. "I'd just as lief skip rope."

"Baby sports, eh?" said Reddy. "Well, if you 'd hear my father argue with my uncle about Fort Donelson and Vicksburg, you would n't think taking a fort was any child's play."

"You see my—our dad," said Heady, "was a Union man, and my—our uncle was a Johnny Reb."

Then Tug broke in: "Well, if we could have something like a real battle—"

"Why not?" said Reddy and his brother with one voice. "Dad and uncle could coach us."

"The two sides ought to be evenly matched," said Punk. "How would it do to have the twins command opposite sides as rival captains?"

"Great scheme!" the rest shouted, and the twins were elected on the spot.

After a deal of talking and wrangling, it was decided that they should go about the matter in an elaborate manner that would make the battle one worth remembering. They tossed up a penny, and it decided that Heady should command the fort and build it wherever he pleased, and take two days for building it; that the war should open Wednesday morning, and that if the fort were not captured by Saturday noon, Heady should be granted the victory.

It was decided that the twins should be called generals, and that each of the remaining ten should be a colonel, and should have the power to enlist no more than ten men from the rest of the school to serve under him. They had no difficulty in recruiting men from the school, and

two armies were soon in the field, forty privates on one side and sixty on the other. This made quite a lively battle out of it, and one such as had never been seen in Lakerim before.

Reddy was to have six colonels, and his brother only four; but the brother was to have the first choice. He chose Tug; then Reddy chose Punk. Then his brother chose Bobbles, and Reddy chose Jumbo. Sawed-Off being picked out next, Reddy took B. J. Heady chose Quiz, and Reddy, Pretty. This left Sleepy and History to Reddy, but he chose Sleepy as the lesser of two evils, and offered to present History to the other side. Heady said that History had good hands for making snowballs, and accepted him.

A wail went up from Jumbo and Sawed-Off, who did not want to be on opposite sides; they threatened not to fight at all, or to fight then and there. Heady declined to have Sawed-Off outside the fort, for fear he would reach over the walls and capture it alone; so a compromise was finally made after a terrible dispute, and Heady traded Tug for Jumbo.

Now there was another quarrel about the choice of flags; both of the Generals wanted the American flag, and neither would take any other; so History finally suggested that they use two Revolutionary emblems, one with a pine-tree and one with a rattlesnake. Heady chose the former as appropriate for a fort, and girl friends were only too glad to make the two standards.

The roster of officers then was as follows :

<i>General Reddy.</i>	<i>General Heady.</i>
Brigadier Tug.	Colonel Bobbles.
Colonel Punk.	“ Sawed-Off.
“ B. J.	“ Jumbo.
“ Pretty.	“ Quiz.
“ Sleepy.	History, Orderly.

Colonel Tug commanded two regiments of ten men each ; for, while Reddy presented his brother with History, he did not present him with the ten men. So Tug was really a brigadier-general, and History was not even a corporal. But Heady made him his orderly, and he was not enough interested in what he called their “childishness” to be dissatisfied.

Early the next morning, Heady and Bobbles sneaked off into the woods to find a good place for a fort. An ideal spot was at length discovered. Back of a thick grove was a ravine, through which ran a little brook. The bank of this was steep and gullied. A rail fence ran along the top of the crest ; beyond this was a steep mound known as the Hawk’s Nest. It ended at a long cliff that went almost straight down to the lake below. This height, indeed, was much like the half of a gigantic chocolate-drop cut in two from top to bottom.

Heady and Bobbles went home in a roundabout way, and told no one of their discovery.

Monday morning, after breakfast, the army that was to build and defend Fort Lakerim formed in line and marched in good order in a direction directly opposite to

their real destination. Reddy was too busy collecting his men and whipping them into shape to pay any heed for the moment to the movements of Heady. By the time he got round to it, the army of defense had disappeared to the westward.

Heady led his fearless men by a long *détour* round to the chosen battle-ground. Both he and Reddy had almost questioned the lives out of their uncle and father, and had learned many things of value. When Heady entered the grove in front of the Hawk's Nest, he scattered through the woods a few men for picket duty. He led the rest of his forces across the little brook, which was frozen, up the gully, and through the fence. And now he set about the task of building the fort.

WHILE it is not now considered a good plan to build a star-shaped fort, Heady realized that a battle with snow-balls is very different from a war with artillery and other deadly weapons. So he built his fort in the shape of half a star; in front of it he threw up three redans, A, B, and C, and he reinforced the rail fence in certain spots with a light wall of snow. The walls of the fort and the redans were made as high as was convenient for throwing. They were packed hard with spades, and at night water was brought from the brook by a bucket brigade, and poured over them, so that on Wednesday morning they were frozen into a very respectable kind of masonry.

Realizing that one of the advantages of a snow battle is in having unlimited ammunition all about your feet, Heady had his men roll what snow was left on the mound,

after the building of the fortifications, into the fort, where it was piled into an enormous pyramid. In this way he proved himself a good general, according to two great principles of war, which are : first, to provide and protect your own supplies ; and, second, to hinder the enemy in the matter of his. .

The ground was too hard for digging trenches ; the mound, in fact, was no more than rock with a thin covering of turf. To allow the walls of the fort to be as high as possible, Heady built a platform of stones, picked up off the field, all around their inside. In this way it was possible to make them higher than the heads of any attacking party.

There was in the fort a gate taken bodily from a rail fence some distance away, and protected with sharp branches and sticks until it was a regular chevaux-de-frise. About the front of the fort Heady intended to build an abatis of logs and sharp-pointed brush ; but fearing that the enemy might find it of more use than hindrance, he decided not to build it.

Inside the fort he had a number of huge snowballs, and provided for them little inclined railroads of saplings, on which they could be rolled up to the walls and tipped over upon the heads of the enemy. He had a number of men at work making great heaps of hand-balls, which he stored in pyramids in the redans and in the fort. And he provided himself with a number of ice-cream scoops, which could be dug into the snow pyramids, bringing out just a good handful, which, with one quick pat, could be made into a ball of fine possibilities.

The three redans were so placed as to command the approach to the mound, and they were too far from the fort to be of use as counter-forts for the enemy if they were captured.

Monday evening Heady led his weary men home by the same roundabout way, and dismissed them for the night. Tuesday morning early they met, formed in line, and returned to the field secretly. By Tuesday night everything was ready for a stubborn defense.

Reddy was so busy drilling his men that he did not feel able to send out any scouts upon a reconnoissance until Tuesday afternoon. These men followed the footprints of Heady's army, and after a long, roundabout chase finally came upon the picket-line in the woods, but were driven away before they could make any discoveries of value, or get even a glimpse of the fort.

Reddy instructed his men in marching and counter-marching, training them principally in open-order drill, teaching them to assemble upon their colonel at the command, and rally quickly about him at the signal. The movements by the right and left flank, "column left" and "right," "to the rear—march!" and "fours right" and "left," were about all the movements necessary. The men were trained to do all these in double, as well as in quick, time.

He gave his men good practice, too, in throwing at a mark, and taught them to answer promptly and in unison to the three commands, "Load!" (which meant make a snowball), "Ready!" and "Fire!" Each man was directed to provide himself with a lunch-pouch, a canteen of

cold tea, and a large bag, like a newsboy's, for ammunition.

Reddy thought he would telegraph for one or two baseball-pitching machines, and use them as artillery; and his brother agreed to this when they talked it over at home on Monday night, and decided that he would have a couple himself. But the father and the uncle objected, and the plan was dropped.

Early Wednesday morning Heady's men entered their fort, and erected in the center of the parapet the flag of the pine-tree. They brought their lunches along. Their war-cry was, "'Rah, 'rah, 'rah!—Steady!" Reddy's battle-cry was, "Hurrah, hurrah!—Ready!"

At eleven o'clock Reddy's scouts were halted by Heady's picket-line in the woods. The advance-guard came up; there was a short skirmish, and the pickets fell back. A brief stand was made at the brook, and then Heady withdrew his men behind the rail fence, or the "outworks," as he called it.

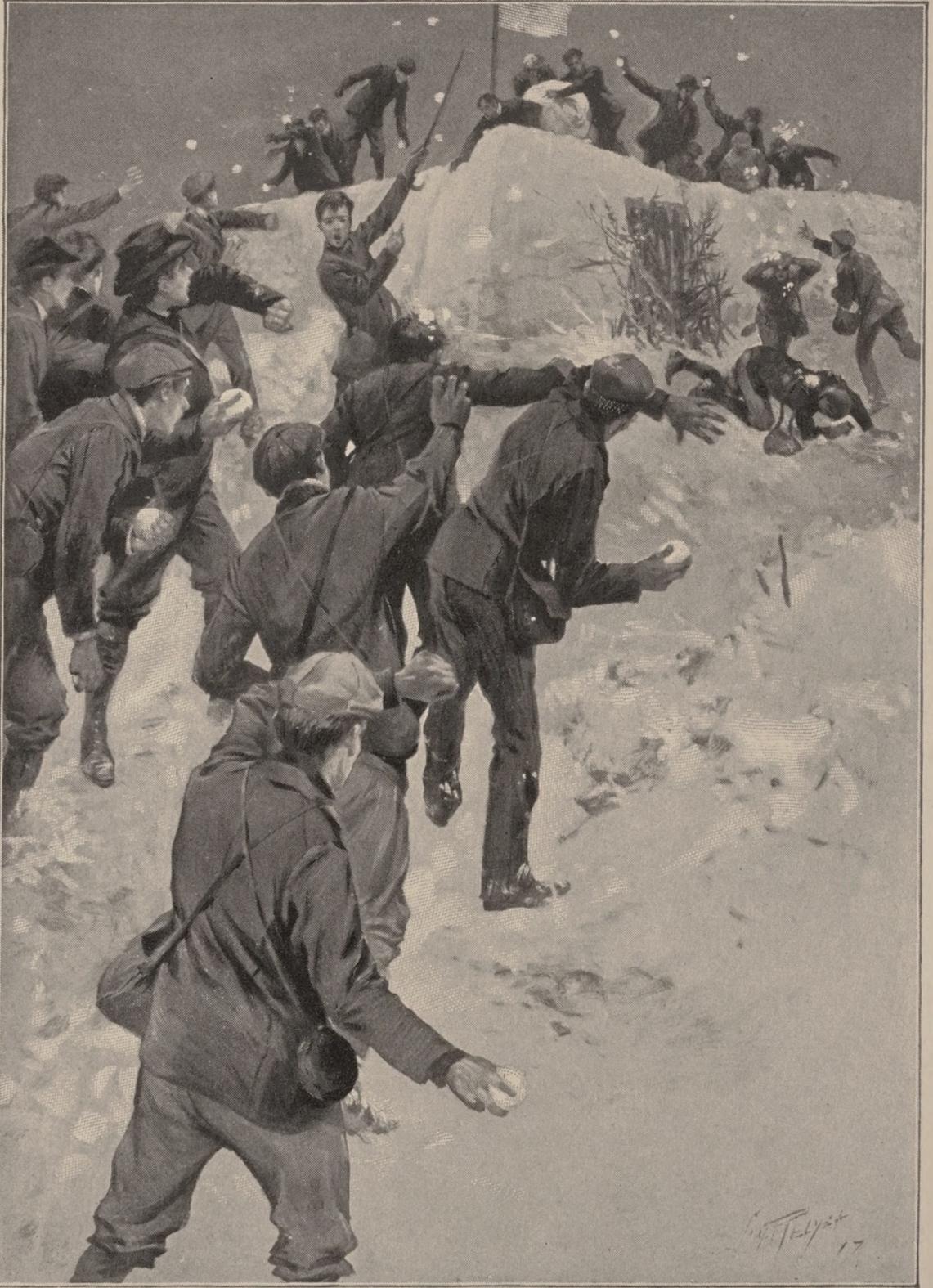
Reddy made charge after charge up to the rail fence; but Heady had drilled his men to throw hard and straight till the snowballs in their bags were exhausted, and then to drop back and refill them while the reserve men in the rear rushed forward with fresh ammunition. So he resisted every charge.

Reddy sent his men up, all along the line, only to see them driven back. He concentrated his attack on various spots, but owing to the difficulty of throwing when the men were crowded together, he found that this only gave the enemy a target they could not miss.

It was a steep climb up the embankment, and the men had to retire and rest long between charges, for there was nothing for them to lie down behind. But at length, at about five o'clock, he led a furious assault in person. He found the enemy's available ammunition almost exhausted; he called up his reserves, and these were too much for Heady's men. They did great execution with their last few snowballs, but could not stand the pelting of Reddy's soldiers, and finally, in spite of Heady's exhortations, broke and sought refuge in the redans.

By the time Reddy's men had clambered over the fence, Heady's men had climbed the gullies and were safely ensconced behind snow fortifications, which, Reddy saw, it was of no use to attack with weary troops. So he sent forward Colonel Sleepy with a flag of truce and a proposal for an armistice. He could not have chosen a more convincing man to carry a message asking for a rest, and the opposing General rejoiced the Colonel's heart by agreeing to the armistice.

The two armies marched home in good order, all except a few unhappy wretches who were left as sentinels to protect the fort until ten o'clock. They did n't particularly enjoy the prospect, but being threatened with court-martial, decided to stay. It was well they did, for two of the privates of Reddy's army, without asking Reddy's permission, sneaked back after dark, intending to punch a few holes in the fort and pitch the great pyramid of ammunition over the precipice. But they were captured by the sentinels, who felt inclined to hang the spies on one



W. T. Reddy
17

REDDY'S FORCES MAKING AN ATTACK UPON THE FORT COMMANDED BY HEADY.

of the pine-trees, but decided to kick them down-hill instead. And the two guerrillas limped home—"foiled again," as one of B. J.'s heroes would have said.

Thursday morning a big crowd of townspeople came to see the famous battle; they stood just outside the woods on the other side of the brook, and watched with great interest and in perfect safety a first attempt Reddy's men made to climb the ravine and gain a foothold at the top. But the bullets from the redans fell in a merciless shower, and one particularly promising assault was met with a gigantic snowball that came crashing down, caught Colonel Punk's regiment on the flank, and bowled it over like a house of cards. The regiment picked itself up at the bottom of the gully, and retired to get the snow out of the back of its neck.

Hard was the battle before those redans, and many a noble scramble up ended only in an ignoble tumble down. The mortality was frightful, and the tearing of clothes and the bruising of hands sickening to see. At half-past five the defenders proposed an armistice for the night; but Reddy was so furious over his failure to gain ground all day that he refused to respect any flag of truce, and used language very unbecoming in a correspondence between two famous generals. He wrote on a piece of paper torn from a composition-book:

"My terms are unconditional surrender. I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes me all night."

History told Heady at the council of war that he did n't believe those words were entirely original with Reddy.

He thought that General Jackson had sent them to General Braddock at the battle of Gettysburg. But Heady said he did n't care where Reddy got the words ; he would treat them with scorn if they had been written by George Washington.

Indeed, he stepped on the angle of the central redan and hurled a loud defiance at Reddy. He borrowed most of it from one of the recitations he frequently delivered Friday afternoons,—“My voice is still for war,”—but it was none the less effective for its familiarity. But when the audience broke out in applause, it reminded him of his usual stage-fright, and he dropped out of view in great embarrassment.

There are many different kinds of fear, however, and his was for anything but battle. He told his undaunted men that they were to sup on the remnants of their mid-day rations, and they acquiesced with good grace, though they wished they had eaten less voraciously at one o'clock, and had not thrown so many crumbs over the cliff.

The moon was well up that night before the sun was well down, and the battle was soon resumed.

After one or two futile assaults, Reddy concentrated on the redan on his extreme left (A). In the darkness he was able to send a strong detachment by a roundabout route up to a height where he could make a flank attack on the redan, which, of course, offered the defenders no protection except from the front. The soldiers in redan A were taken completely by surprise, and their commander, Colonel Quiz, could not hold them. They retreated pell-mell to the second redan, where their horrified General

rebuked them in strong language. They were so piqued by this that, when he ordered a charge to recapture the redan, they answered with a cheer, and managed to drive the men whom Reddy had sent up under Colonel Punk out of the redan. But at this very moment reinforcements came, and an assault was made which Heady's men could not resist. They were driven out again, and withdrew stubbornly to the central redan.

Heady saw with chagrin that Reddy had turned his flank, and that he could not long hold his position. But he contested every inch of the ground until he saw himself in danger of being surrounded and cut off from his fort. Then only he gave the command for a general retreat. All the ammunition of redans A and B had been exhausted. When he called in the troops in redan C, Colonel Sawed-Off, who was in command there, neglected to bring away a goodly store of snowballs, which fell into the enemy's hands.

After his brother's army had retreated in good order to the fort, however, Reddy found himself at the top of the hill without ammunition. What missiles had fallen into his hands were not enough to supply his men; and finding that the builders of the fort had swept the mound so clean of snow that he could forage no ammunition there, he was unable to press his advantage, much as he desired to make a quick assault on the fort at a time when the enemy were in confusion and could hardly be suitably assigned to their posts to protect the walls. The redans were made of snow frozen too hard to yield to the fingers

of his men, and he was forced to propose a cessation of hostilities till the next day.

You, with all your generalship, have doubtless noted a very foolish blunder on Reddy's part. When he flanked redan A, he should, of course, have swooped down on the unprotected fort at once. The capture would have been easy. But Reddy's motto was that of General Grant, to find the enemy and fight him. It simply never occurred to him that he could take the fort with one rush. But the greatest of generals have made blunders as bad as that of these two warriors.

Even the scientific General Robert E. Lee left Richmond so unguarded once, in the first year of the Civil War, that General McClellan could have taken it at a dash, if he had known; and for a worse bit of bungling, look at the story of Bunker Hill, where the British marched up the hill three times, and then ran down again, when, if they had only gone up the other side of it, the colonial trenches would have been useless. So don't judge Reddy harshly.

Had Heady known how nearly unarmed the assaulting troops were, he would have made a furious sortie from the fort, with the pouches of his men reloaded from the reserve supply inside; but the moonlight was too indistinct for him to make out the condition of the opposing hosts, and his men were so cold, hungry, and tired that he accepted the armistice without parley.

When Reddy went home that night, his father, who had been coaching him, said:

“My boy, I have been watching the battle from a distance to-day, and while your men fight like wildcats, you make one grand mistake. It is the way of these modern soldiers, however. All they seem to think about nowadays is to protect their own men. They think more about that than about harming the enemy. Now, General Grant won the Civil War the only way it could be won—by treating his men as if they were machines, and not sparing them at any place where they could accomplish anything. Now, you fight in open order.”

“But, dad, if I have my men closed up, they can be hit twice as easily; it would be next to impossible to miss them,” said Reddy.

“That is just it, my boy; but don’t you see that your brother fights with his men as close together as they can stand?”

“It ’s easy for him to do that,” said Reddy, “because he is protected by walls.”

“Yes; but don’t you see that when you charge on him in open order, he has about three men to fight each one of yours? When we charged in the war, whenever a man dropped in the line we were ordered to close up. They could shoot more of us, but when we reached their walls we were a solid line, man to man; and while they had their walls, we had the impetus of our run, and then it was something like an even battle.”

Reddy took these words to heart.

The long day’s fighting had so exhausted officers and men that almost all of them overslept the next morn-

ing; and while Reddy was up bright and early, he could not get his men into line before half-past one Friday afternoon. Heady's forces made no better showing.

When Reddy's army moved out to take its place just inside the captured redans, it brought along several wheelbarrows full of snowballs, and a number of spades. Reddy detailed some men to chip the redans with the spades; to make balls of ice out of the frozen part, and ordinary ammunition out of the softer snow inside. To fight with these ice-balls was hardly fair; but while one or two of Heady's men were scratched with them, they shot them back with interest, and, being protected by the walls, inflicted so much damage on Reddy's men that Reddy soon gave orders to use no more of such boomerangs on the enemy.

After some cautious feeling of the way and several attempts to draw out a heavy fire from the fort on a few skirmishers, Reddy saw that his brother had provided too much ammunition to be much weakened by such maneuvers.

The commander of the fort viewed with grief the demolition of the redans he had built with so much pains, and sent out a strong force under the command of Jumbo and Sawed-Off. But Reddy had a presence of mind like Hannibal's, and ordered his right wing to fall back. This deluded the two colonels into thinking they were winning an easy victory, when, to their amazement and horror, they saw Reddy's left wing sweeping round to cut them off at the rear.

Colonel Sawed-Off gave the quick command, "To the rear—march! Double-time!" but met the brunt of the onset before he could get inside the walls.

He saw Jumbo slip and fall, and three of the enemy pounce on him to drag him away. Sawed-Off leaped for them, sent them sprawling, and, laying hold of Jumbo, fought his way single-handed through the enemy with his right fist, and managed to drag his chum inside the gate of the fort just before it closed with a snap.

Half of the two companies that had made the brilliant attack were left as prisoners in the enemy's hands. The defenders' forces were thus reduced to thirty privates.

Heady now felt justified in ordering two or three of his most accurate sharpshooters to keep their eye on General Reddy, and to pick him off, if possible. In consequence, when General Reddy led a fiery charge against the fort, a snowball took him in the left eye; and before he could see what had struck him, another snowball closed his right optic, and he fell over backward, and was dragged to safety by his panic-stricken followers.

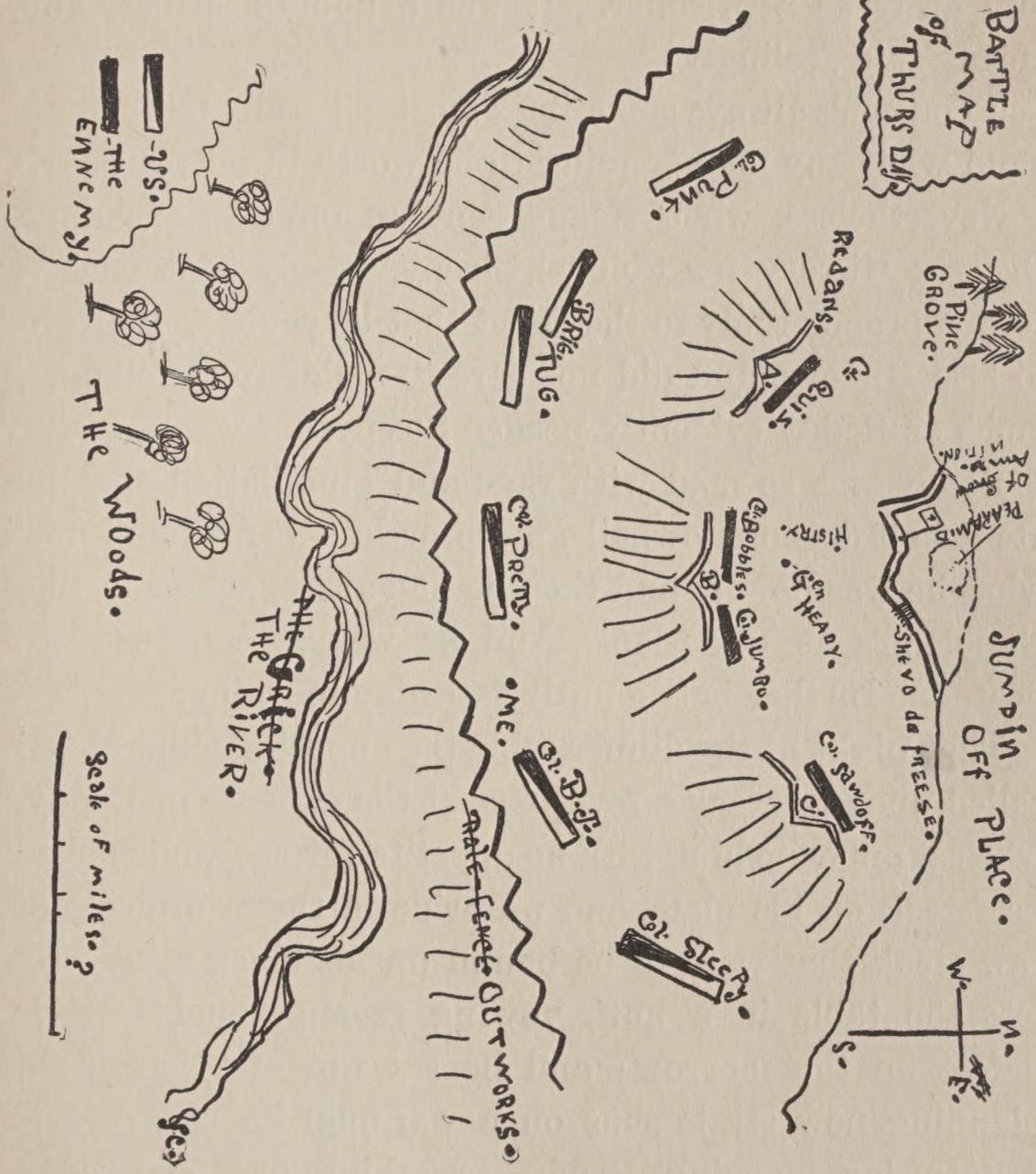
This infuriated him so much that as soon as he could see daylight again, he said a few fiery words to his men, and ordered a grand movement on the works. He was speechless with rage when he had the same eye-closing operation worked on him again, and found himself blinded at the very foot of the enemy's walls. Worse yet, when he came to his senses back in the redan, they told him that one of his men had perished nobly on the field of honor.

Colonel Sleepy had brought his men up to the right angle of the fort, and was too lazy to retreat, preferring to stay there and fight his way over the walls; but just as he had some chance of scaling them, a gigantic snowball loomed up and fell on him. When the two of them struck ground it was hard to tell which was which. There was not much of Sleepy to be seen but a hand and a nose and a foot or two. His men fled in terror, and a mere corporal's guard rushed quickly out of the fort, and rolled him inside the walls. There they picked him out of the snowball, discovered they had captured a colonel, and informed him that he was a prisoner. They prepared to tie his hands and feet, but when he told them he was perfectly willing to remain quiet just as he was, they knew him well enough to believe him, and accepted his parole. And he began to take more pleasure than ever out of the battle, being now only a spectator, and from a choice position.

Reddy's army was sadly demoralized. The colonels could not get the men to keep a good line when they moved on the works, or to keep that line closed up.

Brigadier-General Tug now led a vicious assault on the left salient of the fort; but being repulsed there, swung round to the right and made a quick lunge to the center. Some of his shots struck the flagpole, which was only a fishing-rod in times of peace, and the pine-tree standard broke and toppled outside. There was great dismay inside the fort, and greater surprise when who should leap over the walls but Orderly History—the despised History!

BATTLE
of MAP
THURS DAY



REDDY'S WAR-MAP.

He caught up the flagstaff, and handed it to a soldier on the wall just before Tug's men leaped on him and hustled him away as a prisoner. It was a noble sacrifice, and Heady said feelingly :

“You can't always sometimes most generally tell beforehand what any man's going to be worth in battle !”

Nevertheless, when Reddy sent an offer to exchange Orderly History for Colonel Sleepy, Heady sent back a contemptuous reply to the effect that he could well afford to lose History, and did not care to make any exchange, much as Reddy evidently needed Sleepy.

Reddy was so mad with rage and humiliation that he ate a half-dozen snowballs, more or less, before he knew what he was doing ; and then he had a stomach-ache, like Napoleon's at Waterloo. And he weakly consented to postpone further battle until Saturday morning.

That night at the dinner-table the opposing general felt called upon to crack a few jokes at the expense of Reddy, who sat opposite him, with no appetite for the well-cooked beefsteak on his plate, and no pride in the two pieces of raw steak that were to be bound on his black eyes. He left the table in a huff, vowing revenge and terrible defeat on the morrow ; and he sat up late that night planning new stratagems on a war-map he had drawn.

Saturday morning Reddy, breathing fire, ordered a determined charge to be made on the left salient of Heady's fort, and, to make sure of success, sent into it every available man. But the fort was so high that though his men fought their way through a rain of mis-

siles, they could not climb the walls and get inside. So Reddy ordered a leisurely retreat, that he might prepare for a bit of grand tactics.

As Reddy's army returned to its base, he was horrified to see that his brother had made another sortie. The fort's ammunition was getting low, and the sight of several wheelbarrows full of snowballs in Reddy's right redan was too tempting to resist. He had sent Jumbo and Sawed-Off out again with a picked body of intrepid warriors. They made a sharp dash for the redan, and, while six of them trundled the barrows speedily back to the fort, the rest covered them, and resisted what little attack Reddy could organize in time.

Reddy now brought into play plan No. 1. He called his colonels together and gave them a few brief instructions, which they doled out to their men. And now his army moved out in two long lines. It went as far as was safe, quite deliberately; then, on entering the zone of fire, broke into double-time. Reddy's brother noticed that the first line was only lightly armed, soon spent its ammunition, and then ran low to the ground. Observing this curious action, he suspected some dark plot, and ordered his men to hold their fire.

Reddy's first line reached the fort untouched, dropped to its knees, and bent its backs turtle-fashion. On this platform the second line leaped, and delivered a furious volley right in the faces of the defenders. This was answered by a return volley of equal force. But in the teeth of this, Reddy's men began to scale the walls.

Now Heady gave a command with a wild yell, and four huge, waiting snowballs were sent flying up the sapling tracks. They smote Reddy's line irresistibly, and bowled the enemy over like ninepins, carrying them clear to the ground, and almost breaking the backs of the turtles below.

Reddy reorganized his lines, and called another council of war. There was a furious debate. Time was getting short, and every plan he could devise seemed to be met with superior skill by his brother. After dropping many schemes, he said:

"Men, the only way that fort can be taken is by an attack from the rear and the front at the same time."

"But no one can climb that cliff at the back, especially in winter," said Brigadier Tug.

"Well, I'm going to try it," cried General Reddy, and he called for volunteers. Almost every one responded zealously, eager to risk anything for victory. Out of these Reddy picked a handful of brave spirits. Under cover of an assault all along the line, they stole away down the gully, and around to a place about half-way up the precipice.

Here he led his men inch by inch. They dared not speak aloud, and hardly dared to fall, for fear the noise would alarm the enemy at the top. They hardly dared to fall for another reason, and that was because of the dizzy height. But this latter reason was not so strong in their hearts as the former.

So they climbed, seizing a root here, digging a foothold

there with a knife, stepping across great gaps their legs could barely span, climbing on hands and knees, brushing snow away from some sharp, cold rock, gripping it fiercely, and drawing themselves up on it with terrible effort. Thus they climbed and climbed, and many a time Reddy slipped and fell backward, to be caught and saved by the men behind him just before his weight pushed them all over.

The men carried pouches full of snowballs swung at their backs, and these were an added hindrance; but they were necessary. At the place where they had begun the climb, Reddy had left a man, another was stationed half-way to the redans, and behind one of the redans was waiting a third. This was to be the telegraph-line. After an agony of climbing, Reddy found himself almost at the top of the cliff, and on a little ledge where he could gather his regiment, and where he could hear the voices of the men in the fort. Heady had no thought of danger from the seemingly impregnable rear, and would not waste a sentinel on it. This was just the mistake made by the French at Quebec.

Reddy now took out a pocket-mirror and flashed a heliographic signal to the next station, and this signal was passed along to the redan where the regiment under Brigadier Tug was waiting. Tug immediately gave a loud command, and with a wild cry the whole long line of his troops charged fiercely upon the fort.

The turtleback was worked again, and the defenders had no more huge snowballs to meet it with. But they

took the shock bravely, none the less, and there was a pretty hand-to-hand combat there at the edge of the walls.

In the midst of their defense, however, they heard a mad yell behind them, and could not resist the temptation to turn, and could not control the panic they felt on seeing General Reddy and a regiment of the enemy appearing at a place where they had thought none but birds or moles could arrive. Instinctively, many of them whirled about to meet this attack, and on the instant many of Tug's men were over the walls. General Reddy leaped upon General Heady, and cried:

“We 're in! Now surrender!”

But Heady was not born with red hair for nothing, and he howled:

“Surrender nothin'! You 're in, but we 'll put you out again!”

He yelled to his men to oust the invaders, and there ensued a general wrestling-match.

Reddy and Heady were of the sort of brothers that are always fighting, in spite of their affection, and it was no new thing to see them wrestling desperately; so the army returned to its task, keeping out those that were out, and trying to throw out the intruders. Reddy flung his brother to the ground, but his brother rolled him over. Then he was himself whirled under. So they wrestled on the hard, snowy ground, trampled on by their own men, and lost sight of in a wholesale scrimmage.

At length they had struggled to the very rim of the



REDDY AND HEADY AT THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF.

cliff, and Heady managed by a sudden wriggle to throw Reddy over the edge, where he hung, clinging for dear life to his brother's coat.

Heady was as wild as any wildcat, and he gasped:

"Surrender, or I 'll drop you over the cliff!"

But Reddy was one of those that die rather than surrender, and he only muttered:

"If I go, you go with me!"

Then the mad little fools began to struggle again on the very brink of the precipice; and, finally, Reddy was dragging Heady over inch by inch, and could gain no foothold himself. Then a sudden wave of the battle going on above them brushed them off like flies.

V

AFTER the two commanders had been swept over the edge of the precipice, the soldiers whom they had so ably generalled fought on furiously for the citadel. Only about half of General Reddy's attacking forces had been able to get in, and they were having a very hard time of it staying in, when suddenly Colonel Sawed-Off observed in dismay that his doughty General had disappeared. The rest of the defenders observed it at the same time, and a panic followed.

But just at this very moment the attacking army discovered that its noble leader had also turned up missing, and it was smitten with equal confusion. The bravest army becomes a mob without a leader; every hero turns coward, and gets in the way of every other hero turned coward.

So now a curious thing befell these two mighty hosts. The defenders of the fort, thinking their General slain or dragged off to perish in a dungeon, began to plead for mercy. At the same time the attacking party, without pausing to study what kind of evaporation could have

carried off their leader, began also to plead for mercy, and to scramble for home and safety.

With both parties trying to surrender, naturally neither succeeded, and the battle ended in as perfect a draw as ever was drawn.

The deep wonderment at the disappearance of the Generals now found time to assert itself. Jumbo, having scoured the hillside, the retreating enemy, the trees, the clouds, and the blue sky with a piercing gaze, at length glanced idly over the cliff, not that he expected to see anything there, but because there was no place else to look. He was so astounded at what he saw that he would probably have jumped overboard had the ever-present Sawed-Off not caught him by the arm.

Those of you who have lived long enough and traveled far enough may at some place have seen that wonderful sight: a hat-rack with an overcoat hung on it. If you can remember how that coat looked, you will have a fairly good picture of the heroic appearance of these two famous Generals.

When the twins were pushed over the edge of the cliff, Reddy went first, pulling Heady after him. They shot down at a sickening velocity, and seemed to be "checked through" for the rocks at the foot of the cliff. After scorching down the air thus for a few minutes,—as it seemed to them,—Reddy struck the top branches of an old tree growing in a gash in the cliff. They broke the force of his fall, but he could not stop till Heady, who was following after like a dutiful brother, came crashing

after him. Their four arms caught over a stout lower bough, and there they hung like two Kilkenny cats over a clothes-line.

They were brought up with a suddenness that nearly shook their eyebrows loose, and there they stuck. And since their arms were strong, and he and Reddy had a good grip on each other when they fell, they were safe for the moment.

And there they hung, too scared to speak or cry out, unable to see above, and afraid to look below, and wondered how long they could hang.

When Tug and Jumbo saw their two Generals waving in air o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave, it did not take them long to determine what steps were necessary for relief. The twins were caught in a place where the cliff was so sheer that it was impossible for them to gain a footing or to climb back to safety as Reddy had climbed up to the fort. Plainly, the only way to save them was to rope them in.

While the rest of the fellows were shouting encouragement to the exhausted Generals below, Tug and Quiz, who were both good runners, set off for a neighboring farm-house at the top of their speed. There they did not stop to say, "By your leave, madam!" but cut down two or three clothes-lines, while the farmer's wife tried in vain to "sick" a large but sleepy dog on them.

Then they decided that the clothes-lines would be too weak, and went to the old-fashioned well and cut loose the cable, dragged it up dripping, and started back for

the fort. They would have run as fast as they could, anyway; but the fact that the farmer and his two sons came after them with pitchforks made them run even faster than they could. They finally reached the fort, panting and exhausted, and while the rest of the boys took care of the farmers, hastened to turn over the rope to the rescuers.

This was tied under the arms of Bobbles, who had insisted upon the privilege of making the descent. The huge Sawed-Off appointed himself anchor, and a line of other men formed behind him to steady the rope. Bobbles was let down as rapidly as possible, and soon appeared, like a rescuer from the skies, at the side of the twins.

Each wanted him to take the other up first, and they came near letting go and resuming the battle; but Bobbles snatched Reddy out of the fray. The first ascent was made without difficulty, and Bobbles was lowered away again. He got a good grip upon the absolutely exhausted Heady, and signaled for the men above to heave away. They were brought up with a jerk and a long pull and a strong pull and a pull all together; then the rope began to creak ominously, and in one place a sharp rock caught it and began to gnaw it.

Desperately Bobbles watched that rope, and begged it to hold out. Desperately he clung to the jaded Heady. Seeing the sure failure of the cable, Tug dropped down to the first ledge and tried to ease it where it was fraying. Even the rotten old rope seemed to grit its own

strands together, and it managed to eke its strength out until it had its double burden over the ledge. Then it parted with a thump, and all its work would have been in vain, and the two would have gone over backward, had not Tug steadied them and saved their balance.

The terror of the ordeal sent the three boys home very faint and badly bruised. Neither Reddy nor Heady had won the battle,—I mean, both had won it,—so honors were even, and peace was declared.

And thus ended one of the greatest battles of modern times!

VI

THEN came more snow, and the hill of the Hawk's Nest was once more white and slippery. Now that it had been brought into such prominence, it suddenly dawned upon all Lakerim that it was as magnificent a spot for the peaceful delights of coasting as for the grim game of war.

Sleepy and Quiz were struck with an idea—a thing that occurred to them about once a year. They decided to introduce into the benighted town of Lakerim the foreign luxury of the toboggan. They determined to make this toboggan themselves.

About this time they read one of those beautiful articles that teach boys how to make things at home. As usual with these articles, it required only the skill of a regular mechanic and twice as much money as the article would cost at any store.

But Sleepy and Quiz were undeterred. At a lumberyard they found, and purchased at great expense, a long, broad plank. After trying to smooth it for themselves, and succeeding only in dulling the blades of the plane of an indignant carpenter, and gouging the board almost

beyond recognition, they concluded to have this done by the carpenter. After an experiment or two they also had a blacksmith make them a couple of flat iron runners.

It only remained to curl up the head of the toboggan. This was a very simple thing to do—according to the article, which said that all you had to do was to steam it.

Quiz and Sleepy knew very little about steaming lumber, and after much pondering, decided that it consisted in pouring boiling water on the wood. So one bitter-cold night they brought the board out to Sleepy's kitchen door, and poured upon it three kettlefuls of boiling water. It froze almost as soon as it struck. Then they got down on their knees, and pulled and tugged at the refractory plank, which showed about as much inclination to curl as Sleepy's hair did. Pull and wrench as they would, the board clung to its beautiful flatness.

At length Quiz looked at Sleepy and said:

"I don't think much of tobogganing."

And Sleepy looked at Quiz and said:

"It 's all out of style, anyway."

So they bade each other good night and went home to bed.

And that was the end of tobogganing at Lakerim.

THE rest of the boys never knew what a surprise they missed when this great Toboggan Trust went bankrupt. They found compensation, however, in the old-time coasting of their fathers. But their acquaintance with the Hawk's Nest left them dissatisfied with the hills that had in previous winters given them so much delight.

Coasting-tracks that had been thought steep and long now looked tame and puny.

Finally, Bobbles, who was the best coaster of the Dozen, got them together, and led them out to the Hawk's Nest, dragging their twelve sleds after them. They trudged through the thickets, floundered through the snow-drifts, and made a careful survey of the whole territory.

Bobbles planned a course to perfect which required just a half-day's work, and they fell to it with a will. It was necessary to take out a section of the rail fence, and hide the rails where the farmers could not find them and put them back, clear away the brush and undergrowth, move a few sharp rocks out of the path, and build a bridge or two of stone and snow. When this was done there was a right royal hippodrome. It started from the fort, and included all sorts of tests of sledding skill, from long inclines to sudden descents, from great arcs to sharp swerves, from heavy tracks of sodden snow to the glassy channel of the little brook. There were ravines to cross on narrow tracks; there were hurdles to jump, and little unbridged gaps to overleap; there was even one hill to climb with the impetus gained before; there was a loop to make around a little knoll, and then, at the last, a giddy declivity that shot down for a long run out on the lake. As the hawk, whose nest gave his name to the promontory, would have swooped from the beginning of the course to the end thereof, it would have been a good half-mile. With all the turns and windings and doublings back upon the path, it was three times the distance.

The Dozen were rapturous over their new course, and believed that nothing in the world had ever been so fine. They felt no envy for the joys of bird-life or the speed of express-trains, and spent on the course all the time they could get, legitimately or otherwise, from school hours. It was even so dear to them that they did not begrudge the long, long climb they had to pay in advance for the short luxury of the descent; this is the final test of a coasting-place.

Sledding with these boys was something more than starting off, trusting to reach the bottom and letting the sled do the rest. Some had as fine and scientific theories about the building and the best lines of a sled as any Herreshoff about the lines of a yacht. They would not leave the matter to the choice of their parents, and take any sled they happened to find in their stockings Christmas morning. They argued over their pet models, and rode hobbies in sled-manufacture with more ardor than they ever discussed the Magna Charta or the Emancipation Proclamation. At the stores they drove the dealers almost crazy with their fine points on sled-architecture, and had out everything on runners in the town for inspection.

The most scientific of them all was Bobbles. Coasting with him was a serious business—an art. His sled was a beautiful sylph!—long and slim, yet stout and low. It was not painted with the disgraceful curlicues and hideous scenery usually put on sleds. The natural grain of the wood was just varnished and left in its own beauty. The only painting on it was the name, and this was in small

letters on the inside of one of the runners, where it would not be seen. That name was "Betsy."

There was only one girl in town that had that name, and it may have been only a coincidence, for Bobbles had not told her that it was on the sled, and he was always very much flustered and embarrassed in her presence. He was more at ease with any of the girls than with her.

And yet he always chose her as his partner when his own sled carried double; and when he steered the long bob-sled full of girls and boys down the hill, he always made her sit next to him, and advised her to hold on to him very tight.

But after a number of mishaps on the Hawk's Nest course the girls began to fight shy of the place, and left the boys to contests of skill and speed among themselves. Bobbles almost always won when there was no accident, and he was generally looked on as the champion coaster of Lakerim.

When, then, as a final wind-up of the season of snow, he proposed a grand race, they insisted that it should be a handicap, and that he should be the scratch man. He modestly said that he knew they could beat him, but he made no objections to the outrageous handicap imposed upon him. The order in which they were placed at the start was this:

At the scratch stood the champion, Bobbles, with "Betsy." Five yards down the course stood Tug, with a good low sled; and five yards farther was Punk, also well equipped. At the 15-yard line Jumbo and Sawed-Off

waited for the signal. They did not belong in the same class, but refused to be separated. At the 25-yard line B. J. stood, as nervous as one of the desperados in his dime novels, when the all-powerful hero has a bead on him. His noble steed was named the "Red Rover," and it was as black as one of the "low, rakish crafts" his pet pirates sailed in. Two and one half yards farther down, Pretty was waiting, with a gorgeously painted sled covered with flowers and bluebirds.

At the 35-yard mark Reddy and Heady were stationed, with sleds that could not be told apart. At forty yards was Quiz. Almost invisible in the distance was Sleepy, leaning against a tree with a heavy wooden contrivance at his feet. Its runners were all rusty, and he had hired a small boy to tote it up the hill for him. He paid the boy with a knife,—when he got to the top of the hill,—and then the boy discovered that one of its blades was broken. Quite invisible from the starting-point was History, with fifty yards to his advantage. His sled was a high, rickety affair with wickerwork runners.

The regulations of the course could be summarized something like this:

Each man was to stand as far back from his starting-point as he wished. At the first shot of a pistol he was to run forward, and at the second plump himself on his sled at the mark. Two shots in quick succession were to mean a false start, and a return for a re-trial. Inspectors were placed at each of the starting-points, except History's, which was out of sight around the cliff.

At the first shot Bobbles, who stood far back of the scratch-line, dashed forward so zealously that he failed to discover a stone in the way, and tripped. Two shots rang out, and brought back the contestants, much to Sleepy's disgust, and to the entire indifference of History, who was too much absorbed in thinking about some puzzling big words to notice the recall. He sat himself down cross-legged on the back of his sled, and went serenely on his way.

On the second start the men got off beautifully. Bobbles made a long, swift run, and flung himself and his sled to the ground with a beautiful impetus. For a few yards from the starting-point the grade was easy. Then the track ran out on a ridge where one of the redans had been. It dropped suddenly down the ravine.

There Bobbles flew past a pair of heels which he recognized as Sleepy's, for that wide-awake knight had drifted head foremost into a deep snowbank. Perhaps he thought it looked like a feather-bed. When he extricated himself, he resumed his place on his sled, and struggled on at the tail of the procession.

Bobbles saw Sleepy's plight without regret, and, like the Count of Monte Cristo, simply murmured: "One!"

Tug and Punk had passed Jumbo and Sawed-Off, and when Bobbles shot over one of the snow arches that bridged the deep ditch, he came up with the misfit chums. These two had cooked up a scheme to prevent Bobbles' winning the race. They tried an old jockey trick, and with Jumbo a little ahead, and Sawed-Off just at his side,

Bobbles found himself tightly boxed, and unable to pass either. He expressed his opinion of such a maneuver in very vigorous language; but the two conspirators simply laughed at him and guyed him. These "Three Musketees" jogged along together thus at a fine rate until they passed Pretty, whose sled was too handsome to go very fast. Bobbles gave him only a glance, and put him in the catalogue of defeated competitors, with the one word, "Two!"

A sharp swish round a sharp curve unhorsed Punk, who had been going beautifully; and he barely managed to roll out of the way before they ran him down. His empty sled bounded along like a runaway till it banged into a boulder, and lost one runner.

And Punk made Three.

The course now entered the glassy surface of the brook, and the sleds bowled along like a winter wind. To make sure that the cage in which they kept Bobbles should not be broken, Sawed-Off reached out one of his long arms, and hung on to Jumbo's sled.

Bobbles howled, "Foul!" "Murder!" and "Police!" in furious rage; but the trio were hid in the channel of the brook from the sight of any of the judges; and Sawed-Off and Jumbo almost fell off their sleds with snickering.

A little farther on, the brook grew very shallow, and went over a bed of stones, so that the race-course had to make a quick turn to the right. The turn was too quick for B. J. He was pretending he was a noble Western

scout, with a beautiful white lady, whom he had rescued from the Indians, seated behind him on a swift mustang. This distracted his attention, and he found himself and his mustang jolting and scraping among the jagged stones. When he came to himself, and got back to the course, one runner—I should say, one leg of his bronco—was broken, and he could only yell his encouragement to the three boon companions, Jumbo and Sawed-Off and the captive Bobbles.

“Four!” said Bobbles.

Looking past the legs of Jumbo, Bobbles descried Quiz loping along ahead. Quiz was asking himself how long he could keep up his splendid speed, when he saw ahead of him a gap in the road. He tried to leap it, but was lying too far back on his sled, and slammed against the opposite edge, and fell backward. He had read of a boy that lay flat on the railroad-track while an express-train passed harmlessly above him. So he remained where he lay, and saw the three sleds leap over him and take the ditch beautifully.

Bobbles' toe almost took off Quiz' nose, but he only looked down at his prostrate rival, and mentally cut another notch on an imaginary stick.

The Fifth man was out of the way.

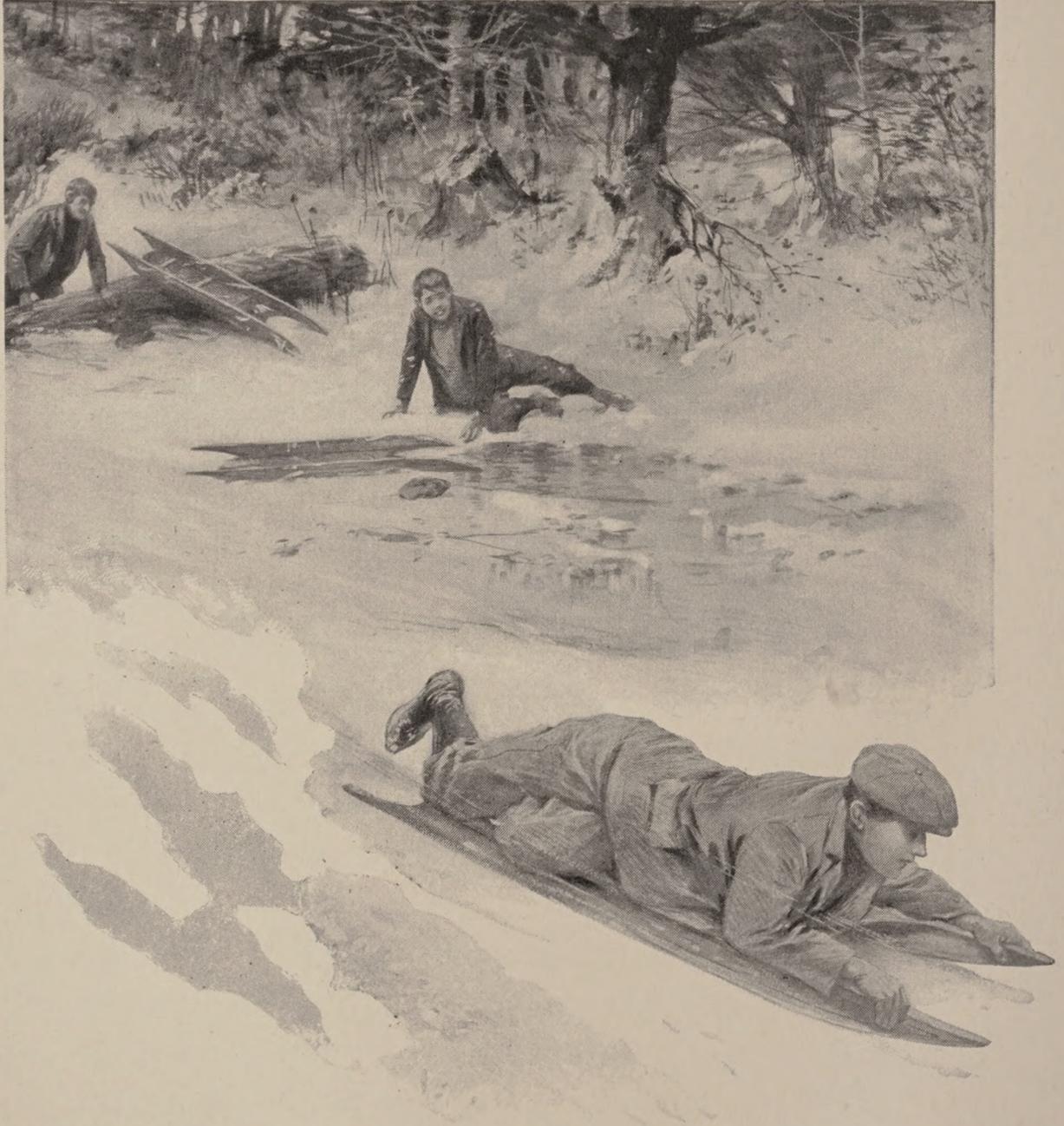
Bobbles ran along with his unwelcome escorts, and thought he never should shake loose from them. Just as he had determined on the desperate ruse of applying the brake,—that is, dragging his heel along the snow,—and letting the two rivals get on ahead, so that he could extricate

himself and try to pass them on the outside, a log hove in sight. Sawed-Off balked at this hurdle, his runners jabbed into it, and he floundered off to one side. Jumbo lifted the head of his sled just at the right moment, and bounded over, with Bobbles at his heels. Instead of going on with the race, however, Jumbo ran himself into a buffer of a snow-drift, and went back to see what was the matter with Sawed-Off.

Bobbles, finding that his bitter foes were thus dispersed, found himself at Sixes and Sevens.

This left four more men to beat, and a glance at the surrounding country showed him that he was coming into the last quarter of the track. Now that he was free from the hindrance of Jumbo, he sailed along at his old speed. The course soon returned to the brook for a stretch of about a hundred yards. Just before he turned into it he saw Tug's hind foot disappearing around the curve. When he came out on the ice there was as pretty a contest as a body could wish to see.

Bobbles gained slowly but surely upon the fleeting Tug, and when they had reached the loop he was within a yard or two of Tug's heels. This annoying little distance he cut down as they swept round the circle, until at the end of the loop he was almost alongside. Then he bethought him of the trick of the chariot-drivers, and seeing a chance to make a slight gain, tried to cut inside Tug's course; but, by a slight miscalculation, he drove the prow of his sled into his rival's rudder, and swung him off his path until the enraged Tug could only save himself from jam-



BOBBLES LEAVES THE CONSPIRATORS BEHIND.

ming into an oak-tree by going clear round the loop once more.

Tug was furious over his misfortune, but he was not a cry-baby, and would not report the foul to the judges.

Bobbles could not stop to think how far he had driven the Eighth man aside, for the next curve brought on his horizon the twins. They were going it neck and neck, each one trying to kick the other off his sled, and the other challenging each to get off and fight. They were too much engaged in these brotherly exchanges of courtesy to pay much heed to their coasting, and when they reached the hill they had very little impetus to take them up it.

Their sleds slackened up on the ascent, and, with what B. J. would have called "one fell swoop," Bobbles was upon them.

But Bobbles' delight over this sudden gain was diminished when his own fiery charger began to slow up. All the terrific speed he had gathered on the preceding mile was lost in a sudden inclination of his steed to turn into a snail. It began to look as if he would never reach the top of the hill, and he wiggled and squirmed despairingly. The ardor of his flight barely managed to live until he had crept to the last inch of the ascent, and there it flickered out. He was, however, so well up that the ends of his runners stuck out beyond the edge, and by sliding his weight forward he was able to bend the sled over and resume the race.

Reddy and Heady were stalled hopelessly just six inches from the beginning of the long stretch down to the lake.

They slid off their sleds into each other's arms, and proceeded to pommel and kick until both had just breath enough to exclaim :

“'Nough !”

But to Bobbles, speeding onward, they were only Nine and Ten.

All of his rivals were left in the lurch save History, and Bobbles looked in contempt at the puny rival ahead.

But History was going down the long steep of the home stretch, and could see the girls waiting anxiously in the distance. He was the most surprised of them all that he was in the lead. He gave one glance back at Bobbles rushing down upon him, and shifted his position to as good an imitation of Bobbles as he could make. His sleigh leaped forward with a gain of speed that scared him half to death. But as it would have been more risky to drop off than to stick on, he had nothing to do but to fight it out.

Meanwhile Bobbles was making a beautiful race. He lay out on his left side with the left leg curled up under him, and his right thrown out at the back as a rudder. His left arm stretched out along the left runner of his coaster. His speed grew with the steepness—or should I say “stepth” ?—of the mountain-side, and he flew along as swift as a gull in the wind. There was no resisting his skill and his speed, and he was soon almost neck and neck with History, for whom Nature and the law of gravity were doing more than their share.

Fly as he would, wriggle as he would, however, Bobbles

could not push past his despised rival. The shore of the lake and the finishing-line were only a few seconds away, and Bobbles grew sick at heart to think that he should be beaten or tied by—History above all! It would have been hard enough if it had been Tug or Jumbo—but History!

There seemed to be no escaping this humiliation, however, until History thought he had an inspiration. He determined to win the victory and cover himself with glory. He had never won an athletic prize. Now was his chance. He had a pair of skates slung round his shoulders, and his bulging pockets were filled with heavy school-books. These he quickly threw off into the snow, and flung after them even his spectacles, and dashed on, now unable to see ten feet before him.

But History had never been a very brilliant student in physics, and his idea was his own undoing. For, by lightening his weight, he had also by just that much taken off the hold of his friend Gravity. Bobbles, being thus the gainer in comparative weight, had now the superior inertia.

The law of gravity carried him just a little faster than History, and to his complete delight he found himself creeping past his despised and feared rival. History was a whole length to the rear when the race-course ran out on the lake. His sled struck a bump and slipped off to the left, and went out upon the lake far from the finishing-line. And when it finally stopped and he waited blindly for the expected ovation, he heard far off to one side the cheers that greeted Bobbles as he darted across the line

and won almost without competitors. For the others had either been compelled to take a second start, or had drifted in long after Bobbles.

There was unlimited hilarity when Bobbles was presented with the prize. Since everybody had expected him to win, and had prophesied his victory, everybody could tell everybody else, "I told you so." Accordingly, everybody was happy.

But the very happiest of all was the girl Betsy, and Bobbles was so glad that she was so glad, that when no one was looking he lifted up the winning sled and showed her her name on the runner, and told her she was his mascot, and had really won the race.

After the first joy of winning, Bobbles noted that Tug was a very bad second in the race. He began to think things over, and suddenly walked up to his disgruntled rival, stuck out the silver loving-cup they had given him for a prize, and said: "This belongs to you by rights, Tug. I guess I fouled you."

Immediately Tug's anger vanished, and he said: "Get out, Bobbles! You had me beaten anyway. You were right on my heels. I'll punch your head if you say anything more."

So Bobbles said nothing more.

WHEN Lakerim had beaten the proud students of the Charleston Academy so handily at hockey, they had promised to go over to Charleston and give their victims

a chance to return the compliment. They were particularly anxious to do this because Charleston was city enough to support an inclosed skating-rink of artificial ice. This made it possible to charge an admission fee, and as the Lakerim Athletic Club was out for money to build its club-house, it seized the first opportunity to descend like wolves upon the fold of the Charleston Academy.

The first opportunity came on Washington's Birthday, which was a holiday. The Dozen very wisely thought that the most patriotic thing any good American could do to celebrate the memory of that glorious victor was to win some battle from some enemy.

The morning of the 22d of February found them ready for the journey. Several of the boys had built a large ice-boat, and had stepped into it a mast from a sloop owned by Bobbles' father—and lent to the club by Bobbles while his father was out of town. This gave them a mainsail that was too big even for the big ice-boat, and caused its capsizing many a time.

But the Dozen scorned such light things as bumped heads and ripped clothes, and scorned even to reef in the sail as it needed.

The wind was light the morning these hardy mariners sailed, and they reached Charleston barely in time to keep a large and excited audience from demanding their money back.

You have already read one long account of the way the

Lakerims played hockey, and you need not fear another. It must suffice to say that practice had improved their team-play, as well as their individual skill, until they had no need to rely on luck for a victory.

They won an exciting game by a score of 6 to 3, and started home with seventy-eight dollars and seventy-six cents as their share of the gate-receipts.

When they came out of the rink, the afternoon was well advanced toward night, and a light snow was sifting down. The weather looked ominous, and a mean wind was running amuck through the streets of Charleston. The boys buttoned their overcoats tightly round their magnificent chests, and set out for the wharf at a brisk trot.

There they found the ice-boat creaking under the wind and complaining to be off and home again. By the time they had made sail and worked well out into the lake, the snow was falling fast and thick, and the wind was whipping it so hard that the flakes stung like needles of ice.

The wind swept the floor of the lake clean, but drove the snow in drifts against the banks. And B. J. was the skipper.

The whirling snow hid the banks of the lake, and the black sky had never a star to guide the confused mariners. Things were beginning to look dark for the men, and they had long ceased whistling to keep up their courage. The wind was doing whistling enough for all of them, and its tune was not encouraging.



"THE GALE THREATENED EVERY MOMENT TO TAKE THE MAST
RIGHT OUT OF HER."

“Brrr!” said Tug. “If we don’t get somewhere pretty soon, we’re goners. Where are we, anyway, Captain?”

B. J. was more aware of their danger than they, for he had completely lost his bearings. He took the compliment without any pleasure, and said as bravely as he could, “We should be passing Buzzard’s Rock about now.”

Buzzard’s Rock was a little point of stone that stuck up in the middle of the lake, and had barely soil enough to hold the roots of a dead tree. It was the home of the ancient buzzard who gave the place its name.

“If we get lost out here,” said Bobbles, “there’ll be nothing to do but freeze; and it won’t take much longer to do that.”

B. J. ordered his crew to make another attempt to reef sail; but the deck was so slippery, their speed was so dizzy, and their hands and arms were so numb with chill, that they had to give it up, though the gale threatened every moment to take the mast right out of her.

All B. J. could do was to stick to the tiller, and hope to reach home before they froze, or the mast broke and left them out in a blizzard.

One or two of the boys had already announced that they were no longer cold, but were very sleepy; and knowing what that meant, the rest of the boys were pounding them and pleading with them to keep them awake. Bobbles had just started to sing, with the idea that he might cheer up their flagging hearts, when out of the blackness ahead there loomed a deeper blackness.

With a terrible crash and jar, the ice-boat struck and broke up, and the mast and sail went by the board.

The shock was enough to waken the sleepest of them from his lethargy; and when they had picked themselves up, doubly aching with cold and bruises, they made out the gnarled trunk of a dead tree.

And Bobbles gave a ghostly cry: "Buzzard's Rock!"

VII

IF a great detective had seen seven boys huddling together on the windward shore of a bleak rock in the middle of a lake and in the middle of the night and in the middle of a wild snow-storm and wind-storm and in the middle of the wreck of an ice-boat, it is "dollars to crullers," as B. J. said, that that great detective would come to the conclusion, after he had thought the matter over, that those seven boys were not out there on a picnic.

To get at the real dialect spoken by those frigid young gentlemen it would be necessary to multiply all the consonants by five and divide the vowels by two. Or, as an organist might say, you must pull out the tremolo stop.

But B. J. felt almost warm as he thought of some of his pet heroes, and murmured blissfully to himself: "Wrecked on a desert isle!"

"T-t-t-to-morrow morning," chattered Pretty, "there 'll be just seven icic—sick icicles left for our fathers and mothers to cry over!"

"When a ship is in distress," said B. J., "she always sends up rockets. Now if we only had some rockets—"

“Yes,” said Jumbo, scornfully; “or a Pullman palace-car to ride home in—”

“Or if this Buzzard’s Rock here were only our new club-house, with a beautiful grate fire and all the comforts of home!” Sawed-Off added.

A more miserable crowd of young men was never seen on sea or land than this champion crew of hockey-players stranded on a lake in a snow-storm. At length Tug spoke up and said:

“Well, instead of freezing here like a pack of fools, we might as well go round on the lee side of this rock and freeze comfortably.”

Tug, however, who always preferred to do the hardest thing possible, did not go round on the ice, but clambered over the rock. Then he stumbled into a snow-drift that covered him up to his neck. He was too tired to climb out immediately. After resting there for a moment, he cried out delightedly:

“Geewhilikins, fellows! It’s almost warm in here!”

From this accident he took an inspiration. Under his orders the comrades soon found the sail, which had blown against the ancient tree, and dragged it round to the lee of the rock. They found that the wind was mainly to blame for the cold, and that the quiet air was not altogether unbearable.

Seeing that the rocks had obligingly split the ice-boat into kindling-wood, they made kindling-wood of it, and managed, after using up all of their matches, to get a fire going. This they replenished with brush and boughs

broken from the old tree. Then they dug with their hands a sort of oven in the great snow-drift, and spreading the sail inside for a combined sheet and comfort, crawled in feet first, so that their heads should be in the air; and drew the canvas as closely around them as they could.

The snow and the sail and the warmth of their young blood, and the fact that they were packed together like sardines, made them feel almost as cozy as if they had been at home. And so they fell asleep.

There were some fathers and mothers in Lakerim that did not sleep easily that night. There was nothing to do, however, but wait and worry until the morning.

The first streaks of dawn wakened the Seven Sleepers to the fact that they were still alive. They crawled out of their warm bunk, clamped on the skates that had borne them to victory in the hockey game, and made ready to set out for home.

Bobbles said that if his father came back to Lakerim and found the sail of his sloop not only borrowed but left behind on a deserted island, there would be trouble for at least one member of the Lakerim Athletic Club.

So they decided, after much grumbling, that it would be necessary to take the sail along, as well as the mast from which they had stripped it. The burden was not so unwelcome when they were once more in the hands of the wind; for they found that by spreading out in line and taking the heavy mast over their fourteen shoulders and letting part of the sail hang down behind, the wind

carried them along at a booming speed, without effort of their own.

Thus they got home in time to break all records for buckwheat cakes. And the next day the Charlestonians sent them one hundred and forty-seven dollars as their share of the receipts.

That storm was the last gasp of winter. By noon the sun had gained a glorious victory and was melting all the snow that had been so liberally piled up. Every day thereafter he strengthened his grip on the earth; and Spring came skipping in across the soggy ground.

VIII

MUDDY roads and cold spring winds had no terrors for one or two of the Lakerim bicycle maniacs. Quiz and Punk were the most rabid of these, and they hardly waited for the snow to leave the ground before they had their wheels out. During the winter, indeed, they had kept up practice in the empty loft of a huge barn, where they had tried every kind of caper and dido imaginable.

Quiz was by all odds the best wheelman at Lakerim. He was light and lithe, and his thin legs were like steel. When he was in racing trim and curved far over the handle-bars, he was more like a human interrogation-point than ever.

You will never get me to tell all the amazing things he could do with a bicycle. Without letting it fall, and without touching the ground, he could climb through it in almost every conceivable way except possibly through the spokes. He could sit it almost anywhere or anyhow. He could ride it backward—and even forward! He could whirl the front wheel around as he rode, or ride with it in air like a rearing horse.

Fat old men who tried in vain to conquer a bicycle looked upon Quiz as nothing short of a wizard. They picked themselves up out of the gutters and bramble-bushes, and from under the hoofs of horses they had tried to avoid with the usual result of making directly for them, and they decided that the bicycle was nothing but a boomerang—an infernal machine. Then they watched Quiz juggling with it as if it were a toy, and they could only think of lion-tamers and “bronco-busters.”

About this time the Lakerim Athletic Club began to wonder how it could earn more money. It was too early for track athletics, or for any of the summer games. Quiz suggested a bicycle race, but Sleepy grunted that no one would pay money for the privilege of sitting out on an open grand stand and shivering, for the best bicycle-riders in the world. Some indoor amusement must be provided, if people were to be separated from their money. After considering many schemes, and finding that they were all of the church-sociable order, Quiz jumped as if some one had run a pin into him.

“I ’ll tell you what—” he began.

“Well, what?” asked the others.

“Let ’s get up a bicycle-polo game and challenge the Charleston Academy.”

“But none of us can play bicycle polo,” commented Sleepy.

“Punk and I can,” Quiz answered. “We have been practising all winter, and I ’m sure we can give a couple of those Charlestonians a lively evening!”

“Well, where do the rest of us come in?” said Tug.

“Oh, you may come in at the front door—if you have the price,” said Quiz, coolly.

At Charleston the inclosed ice-rink that had seen the hockey contest had now been turned into a roller-skating rink, and the smooth floor of this was selected for the bicycle-polo game.

The prowess of the Lakerim athletes had grown into sudden prominence among the neighboring cities. This fact, and the fact that bicycle polo was a novelty, brought out so large a crowd of Charlestonians that Quiz and Punk both vowed they would win the greater part of the receipts, or perish nobly in the attempt.

Some genius had discovered that if he would give the wheel of his bicycle a sudden jerk, it would propel a polo-ball in any direction desired. The game of polo for bicycles was the result—a game in which an expert rider could take a very lively part, and yet be saved by his skill from anything worse than a collision that might buckle his wheel or take out a few spokes. These are damages that can be repaired without great expense, though they necessitate having extra bicycles for the luckless players. Rough riding and intentional jostling are, of course, forbidden by the rules.

The goals are two small boxes placed at each end of the rink. In the front of each box is an open space through which the polo-ball, if driven correctly, enters and rings a small bell. It is against the rules to drive the ball with hand or foot or anything but the wheel.

Shortly before the beginning of the game, Punk and Quiz rode into the rink and circled it several times to get the "lay of the land."

Punk was goal-keeper for Lakerim, and Quiz was out-rider or forward. The Charleston forward was named Boggs, and the goal-keeper's name it was called Haddock.

The four men mounted their wheels and rode about as cautiously as they could until the referee gave the command to play. The polo-ball was placed in the center of the rink, and at the command, Punk, who had won the toss, made a dash for the ball and gave it a smart shot, intending to send it a little to the right of the opposing forward.

With a quick dart, however, Boggs got his front wheel far enough up to return it with interest. It scattered past Quiz, who had followed closely after it, and fell prey to Punk, who sent it back to the left near Quiz.

Quiz and Boggs each made beautifully short turns, and went for the ball, neck and neck. They reached it at the same time, and struck at it again, the result being that they sprawled in opposite directions, while the ball went joyously on until Haddock fed it back to Boggs, who had remounted instantly.

Boggs got it safely past Quiz, and bowled it along merrily toward Punk. Punk watched it coming as he had watched many a base-ball sailing straight across the plate.

As the boys said, Punk had a "good eye," and just at the proper time he swung his front wheel, caught the polo-ball, and batted it back the way it had come.

Here Quiz took it and sent it farther on its way rejoicing, and followed it wildly.

Haddock stopped it with his rear wheel just before it made the goal. He was so placed, however, that he could not get back to it with his front wheel; but he held himself steady until Quiz was alongside. After some wobbling, both had to ride away and leave the polo-ball on the threshold of the goal. Boggs was the first one to reach it, and he coaxed it swiftly down the rink.

Punk went out to meet him. With a neat turn, Boggs evaded him completely, and with a sharp jerk of his front wheel sent the ball tinkling into the goal—which caused several hundred Charlestonians to behave in a most undignified manner.

Score: Charleston—one goal; Lakerim—none.

Once more the ball was put in the center, and once more it was harried back and forth, this side and that, in a way much pleasanter to see than to read about. It was not long before Punk had let the ball pass him for two more goals, thanks to his slowness in covering ground. And Quiz realized with bitterness that if the day were to be saved, he must play for two men.

Now, there was in the audience a Lakerim girl who was attending a seminary in Charleston. During the summer vacations it was always she that occupied the seat of honor on Quiz' tandem. She was very pretty, but was very plump and very lazy, too; yet Quiz, who was forever complaining of any shirking on the part of the boy who rode tandem with him, seemed to be perfectly contented

to do the work when this girl, Cecily Brown, was in front of him. And she seemed perfectly willing to have him do it.

On the front fork she planted her two little feet, which she thought too dainty to spoil by hard work, and coasted—always coasted, whether the road went up hill or down.

Cecily had seemed to be very proud of Quiz when he rode into the ring, and bowed and smiled to him ostentatiously. But he noted, to his bitter chagrin, that she was now showing greater pride in the achievements of the Charlestonians, and applauding their good plays enthusiastically.

Quiz set his teeth hard, and determined to win back her pride to Lakerim. A few of the Dozen had come over to see to their share of the cheering, and they yelled encouragement to him with the same ardor, whichever way the game went. That was some help.

Quiz went in to win with such a dash that before many minutes he had jammed the ball into the goal at the cost of four spokes for Boggs, and for himself a twisted front wheel that looked like a wilted collar.

He and Boggs were supplied at once with fresh bicycles, however, and the game went madly on. Quiz spared himself no struggle to keep the ball in Charleston territory. He would not risk anything more on Punk's slowness. By the fire and fury of his speed, and the skill with which he held his wheel still, or backed it, or used it for a buffer or a bat, he managed to keep both Boggs and Haddock flying.

Twice or thrice he came as close to scoring goals as the striking of the box, but he was able to get at the ball again only after a beautiful display of skill, in which he nursed the ball along the side wall, twisting his wheel in front of it or behind it according as he wished to ward off Charleston or to propel the ball. So he worked it far around the circle behind the box before he had the chance he wished and found Boggs and Haddock so placed that they could not check him in a straight drive for the goal, and the bell jangled in a key new to the town of Charleston.

The score stood: Charleston—3; Lakerim—2.

There was a fine scramble and scurry now, as Charleston realized the mettle of its opponent. In spite of their most violent parrying, however, Quiz, with the aid of luck and a courage that hesitated at no risk where there was a chance of driving the ball, banged the ball home for a tie.

He looked up among the audience now, and saw that the fair and fickle Cecily was in a sad plight. Not knowing which side was going to win, she had no resource but to keep silent.

As the first part of the game ended with the score at a tie, her misery lasted long. She would have found some comfort in the company of Quiz, but that dignified young gentleman kept far from the sound of her voice or the beckoning of her eye.

The next half opened with both sides refreshed. Quiz had had a chance to preach a little sermon to Punk about

the evil effects that always followed when a young man of his age wandered far from home. Punk took the hint, and the next half he hung about the goal-box as if he were a watch-dog and the goal-box a casket of jewels and the audience a band of thieves. Owing to this caution, Charleston failed to score in spite of frequent brilliant dashes.

Boggs and Haddock had also had a conversation in the intermission, and determined, if the worst came, to make use of a bold play that depended for its success entirely upon its audacity. The goal-keeper suddenly left his goal entirely uncovered and dashed down the field, zigzagging the ball into Boggs' hands and receiving it back in a way that made the lone, lorn Quiz dizzy to behold and helpless to prevent. Whenever he darted to one side, the ball was sure to be on the other. By the time he got back the ball had exchanged places with him.

The four players soon found themselves tied in a true-lovers' knot back of the goal-boxes. They fell off and remounted, or hopped off their low seats and hopped back again like so many frogs. The audience, being unable to tell which from t' other, applauded indiscriminately, sure that whichever set got the applause deserved it.

At length the two Charlestonians managed to get out of the scrimmage with the ball in their possession. They worked it around to the right and drove it toward the goal, while Punk nearly snapped his pedals off trying to beat the ball to the box.

By a hair's-breadth he did it. He gave a desperate



A CRITICAL MOMENT FOR THE LAKERIM BICYCLE-POLOISTS

slash that tumbled him off the wheel and over the box, which rang up a goal that had n't been earned. But he had started the ball mightily on a bee-line for the unprotected Charleston goal.

Just as the Charlestonians realized the outcome of their rashness, and put out for home and fireside from the right side, Quiz shot out from the left. Boggs was ahead of him, and the way they annihilated space was a caution to humming-birds. Neither could gain an inch on the other, though both gained on the flying ball.

Quiz saw that Boggs would succeed in heading it off, and knowing that time was about to be called, he flung prudence to the wind, and when Boggs landed in front of the goal just in time to stop the ball, Quiz swept alongside.

The ball bounded off Boggs' front wheel, struck the front wheel of Quiz, and stopped. Quiz went on until he struck the rear wheel of Boggs, against which his front one smashed to flinders. As he fell, however, Quiz gave a desperate lurch that made a very bucking bronco out of his bicycle. He smote the ball with his *rear* wheel and sent it under the pedals of Boggs' wreck and "slammed it home" for the winning goal. The bell was a knell to Charleston's hopes, for time was soon up.

Even the hostile audience lost their heads at the splendor of Quiz' achievement; and many of the spectators broke over the low barrier. Among them was Cecily Brown, who had ruined her gloves applauding her hero's courage. Seeing that he would not come to her, she meekly came to him.

Quiz took home two battered wheels by train that night, but he was so proud and happy that he had to ride out on the rear platform, where his joy could extend far back to the horizon. In his left pocket he carried one hundred and twenty-five dollars, the Lakerims' share of the receipts. Besides that money he felt that he had won something still more precious—the admiration of Cecily Brown.

IX

IN a few days after this victory the newspapers were full of a great test of the value of the bicycle in war, to be made by General Miles.

He was going to have a message carried from Chicago to Boston by relays. The time scheduled would require the utmost exertion of every rider. Most of the participants were to be men of mature strength, well-known speed and endurance. The Lakerims' motto was, "Try everything; fear nothing," and the Dozen had the—the "impudence," some called it, to make application for permission to carry the packet part way.

They were accorded the privilege of carrying it only through the county of which Lakerim was the county-seat. Much blame was cast upon the executive committee that intrusted so important a matter to young boys; but the lack of a large bicycle club near the town made it hard to find better material.

After much deliberation it was determined that the whole matter should be intrusted to Punk and Quiz.

The clerk of the Weather Bureau seems to have been down on the scheme, for during the week of the great

relay the weather was rainy and sleety and cold and windy and foggy and everything else that anybody could imagine and nobody desire.

From the very beginning the relay riders sent up one wail. The telegraphic reports were full of dismal accounts of obstacles—of spring floods, broken bridges, and general unpleasantness—that kept half of the relay riders behind their schedule, and put the crack riders to their utmost to make up what had been lost before. As for doing what they had all hoped to do,—to complete the distance in twenty hours less than the schedule,—that seemed quite hopeless.

As the packet came nearer and nearer to Lakerim, State by State, Quiz and Punk grew more serious. The eyes of the whole country would be upon them. Being merely boys, they would be picked out for especial ridicule if they caused any loss of time.

The day before the packet was expected they went out to their respective posts. Punk had the farther to go, and he was to carry it over a fairly decent stretch of country that extended from the city of Charleston half-way to the town of Lakerim.

Quiz was to take the message from him and carry it into Lakerim, where the fastest rider of the State was to take it over a magnificent level road to the borders of the next State.

The day on which the packet was expected, the clouds seemed to be broken to pieces under the flails of the lightning.

By an almost superhuman effort, the rider just preced-

ing Punk managed to get the packet to him only fifteen minutes late. He had made up thirty.

There was some delay and fumbling on the part of Punk when he took the packet, and he got a bad start. Then he disappeared into the fog of the early afternoon. Punk's ride was uneventful, except that he set himself too slow a pace and hung on to it doggedly, fearing to take time even to look at his watch.

At the station where he was to deliver up his trust, Quiz was waiting and ready an hour before the time. Though it was not yet dark, he had his lantern well filled, his wick well trimmed, his match-box well provided, and the lantern lighted and turned low. His wheel had been polished and dusted and oiled, the chain graphited, the bearings inspected, the handle-bars lowered so that he could bend over and offer the least possible resistance to the wind. His watch had been carefully regulated and set. He was clad as warmly and as lightly as could be. In his pockets were the only weights he permitted himself—a few sizable cobblestones which he meant to throw at any dog that might harass him.

At first he hoped that the message might come to him ahead of time. As the minutes dragged on with no sign of Punk on the horizon, he began to despair. As the hour of the schedule came, he grew more solemn. Fifteen minutes went by, then twenty, then thirty, and he was as restless as a caged panther.

At last he caught sight of a little speck in the distance. It grew slowly into the semblance of a bicyclist.

It was Punk, exhausted, and ignorant of the thirty-five minutes' handicap he had given Quiz.

Quiz went out to meet him, and rode alongside, taking the precious parcel as they went. He flung it over his shoulder and darted away, leaving Punk to fall off into a convenient soft spot and regain his breath at his leisure.

Punk was alarmed at the speed with which Quiz began his relay, for a long, steep hill confronted him. He yelled out a word advising him to go slow at first and save himself; but Quiz knew that hills have both ups and downs, and he knew that, especially in relay-racing over rough country, it is best to apply the strength where it will give the best results.

So he pumped and drove his pedals round and round, as if he were on some heavy treadmill. He strove till every muscle in his legs was an ache and every breath like a knife in his lungs. It seemed that the hill was never to end. But, wavering and beaten out, he finally made the crest in wonderful time, and giving himself a good start over it, set his weary feet one behind the other on the frame and let the wheel do the rest. His speed grew and grew till he was a regular comet. He flew into ruts that threatened to fling him, struck rocks that tried to give him headers, and swept around curves that promised to lay his careening wheel on its side. But his courage did not fail, and he made no appeal to the brake.

The descent was as short and swift and refreshing as the ascent had been long and tedious and wearing. And

when his wheel bounded out upon the plain at the foot of the great hill with the speed of an express-train, he had gained fourteen minutes clear on the schedule.

Now the fog and drizzle, under the spite of a sudden squall, turned to a vicious storm of wind and rain. The long slants of water lashed his face and hands as if they had been the knots of a cat-o'-nine-tails, and the wind made onsets upon him as if it were a giant trying to shoulder him from his wheel. Still he pushed on, and his pluck outrode the wrath of the storm.

Then he longed for even the blustering companionship of wind and rain in the dismal solitude of a deep woods. They held a twilight even through the noon of bright days, and now, in an hour when the open prairies were without the glimmer of sun or star, the forest seemed a ghostly jungle, filled with a blackness like night, and with horrible possibilities from hobgoblins, human and otherwise.

But the courage and determination of Quiz were greater even than the vague terror he had of the gloomy cañon where night seemed to be as thick and impenetrable as granite. He rode into many a pool and many a deep bog that oozed out beneath his wheel and brought him down. But he floundered out and shook off the mire and groped his way along on the turf by the rail fence until he could find a spot dry enough to ride on.

The merry eye of his lantern saved him from a grievous collision with a great tree that had fallen across the road in the storm, and he had to clamber through its

branches as if his wheel were a flying-machine instead of a bicycle.

As he neared the edge of the wood his blood suddenly froze, for out of the darkness came, without warning, the gruff yell of a tramp. The fellow, seeing that Quiz was not going to stop, leaped up from a fence-corner to head him off, and made a fierce grab for him.

But Quiz escaped him by the skin of his teeth, and escaped also the club the tramp sent hurtling after him. Quiz was rejoicing at his escape when his heart fell again as it dawned upon him that the road curved round upon itself, and that a run of a few yards through a neck of the woods would place the tramp right in his way. The tramp seemed to know this, too, for as Quiz came around the bend he saw himself confronted. But he was taking all chances desperately this night, and at the risk of any villainy he determined to do the only thing that could save him from the footpad. He thrust his right hand into his pocket and drew out one of the jagged stones he had stored up against canine attack. He had not expected to use it against so mean or so dangerous a cur as now threatened him in this lonely place.

With a cry of warning he rode full tilt at the tramp. Just as the man reached out to drag him from his wheel the boy let fly the stone. It caught the tramp fair in the face, and sent him over backward. While Quiz' right hand was doing such execution, the left hand was pilot, and with a sudden swerve it carried Quiz around and beyond the tramp. And he flew on his way rejoicing.



“THE FELLOW LEAPED UP FROM A FENCE-CORNER TO HEAD HIM OFF.”

At the next obstacle that caused him to dismount, he took a look at his watch by the light of his lantern, and reckoned that he had made up almost all of the time Punk had lost.

It would not be enough merely to deliver the package without delay. Lakerim must make up something on the loss of those older riders who had gone before, and give in the packet ahead of time. He fairly hurled himself into his seat and struck out with new strength. Then the road grew rough, and he caught in a deep, hard rut that threw him to the ground.

When he rose he found that his handle-bars had been twisted to one side. Rather than stop to take out his tool-bag and repair the injury, Quiz resolved to ride with them as they were. It was no easy matter to keep his calculations correct on the bias, but the road was kind to him now, and the handle-bars stuck fast in their position. He could have ridden swiftly without touching his handle-bars at all, and so, resting none of his weight upon them, he made fine progress.

Soon he found himself nearing Lakerim, and he thought he could make out against the sky the nob of the Hawk's Nest. The thought of home was spurs to his steed. Then, suddenly, at an easy bump in the road his lantern joggled out.

Quiz thought, however, that he knew the road well enough to make it safe for him to wheel on without delaying to revive "the light that failed." He found his way in the double dark as well as a blind man on a familiar path.

Hope was burning now more brightly than the lantern had burned before. It illuminated his task, and he felt that he had saved the day for Lakerim. A little chuckle of pride and joy ended when he heard a sharp explosion as of a pistol. The chuckle was changed to a dismal:

“Punctured!”

Still Quiz went on without slackening speed. The puncture might ruin both front tire and front wheel-rim, but nothing should give him pause.

He urged his trembling wheel on until he felt himself near the banks of the creek that meandered round the Hawk's Nest. Here he heard an angry roar instead of the gentle ripple he was used to. He knew that it was the time of spring freshets, and that the brook had doubled its width when he had ridden to his relay station the day before. But now a sudden flash of lightning that ripped the heavens barely saved him from pushing headlong into the wreck of the little wooden bridge that had carried the road across the harmless brook for years.

The snows melting in the far-away mountains, and the rains that had opened the flood-gates of the skies, had made a torrent of this peaceful stream. At the very brink of it Quiz leaped from his wheel.

And Lakerim only a mile away!

There was nothing to do now but take the railroad-bridge, which crossed the brook on a high trestle a furlong away. Through the meadow he hastened, carrying his wheel on his shoulder and running as best he could.

He climbed the embankment that led to the single

track, and started across, rolling his wheel along on the ties. When he left the solid earth and picked his way across the gaps in the trestle, it was a fearsome sight to look down at the boiling rapids far below. Still he screwed his courage to the sticking-point, and picked his way, measuring each step until he was well in the middle of the trestle.

His eyes had been busy with the gloom, trying to find a foothold for his feet. Suddenly they were attracted by a light appearing ahead in the dark. It seemed that a star had bloomed, then it blossomed to a planet, and from that quickly to a moon. And then he knew it to be the dragon's eye of the 11:30 express sweeping down upon him! The trestle carried only a single track, and there was not room for him and his wheel at the outside edges of it.

X

THERE are far better places for a boy to be at midnight than the middle of a lofty railroad-trestle; especially when a lightning express, at full speed, is about to dispute possession with him.

The sight of the headlight that startled Quiz was followed at once by the increasing roar of the train as it swept upon him. After an instant of bewilderment he looked about for means of escape. "Maud S.," were she alive and trotting, could not have reached the end of the bridge in time to save herself, and for this boy, dismounted and trundling a bicycle with one tire punctured, there could be no escape that way. One glance at the turbid stream below showed that if he made a leap for life he would lose what he leaped for.

On the first impulse, Quiz was about to throw his wheel overboard and shift for himself. But the thought of the packet slung round his shoulders, and of his responsibility for its delivery in good time, dismissed that impulse.

There was but one thing to do—but one chance to take; and as he had been taking desperate chances from the beginning of his ride, he felt that he must take this one

also. He stepped to the edge of the trestle, and knelt just outside the rails. Taking his bicycle by the cross-bar, he lowered it carefully over the side. It was a light racing-wheel, and its weight did not drag him after it. Grasping one of the ties with his left hand, he cowered in a heap. He dared not look down at the rushing brook, for it made him dizzy. One glance at the express-train looming upon him like a fiery dragon was all he could endure. He closed his eyes; huddled himself together; waited.

Now he felt the fierce glare of the headlight upon him. Now there was a sharp shriek from the whistle. It almost sent him over into the stream. The fireman had seen him and had whistled: "Down brakes!" The engineer reversed the lever, and there was a great hissing of steam, a jangling of bell, and a grinding of wheels on sand. But no power could have stopped the train in time.

Then on Quiz' ears the roar grew to a clatter of thunderbolts; the steam enveloped him; the scream of the brakes upon the wheels deafened him, and a sudden gale of wind almost swept him from the trestle.

But he hung to the wet ties, and hung to his bicycle.

And—after one dreadful moment—the express had shot past him, and he was safe! He lost no time in wondering what the crew of the train would think when they brought the express to a halt and came back to search for him. But he gathered himself together at once, more frightened after the danger was past, than in

its face; and set off along the track as fast as his trembling legs could carry him.

Near the end of the trestle, a road crossed the railway and ran down a hill into the town of Lakerim. Here Quiz bounded upon his wheel and coasted, caught the pedals at the very beginning of the level, and struck out for Lakerim.

At the outskirts of the town several of the Dozen met him and rode in with him, cheering him and marveling at his progress with lantern out, front tire punctured, and handle-bars askew. But Quiz had no breath to waste in answering idle questions. He bent far over and pumped away at the pedals with every pound of steam he could command.

And so he reached the square, where the next relay began. Here the champion of the State awaited him and honored him for his noble work with the two words:

“Good boy!”

Well might he squander that much praise, for Quiz had made up all the time that was lost before him, and had brought in the packet five minutes ahead of his schedule. The next rider had no such obstacles before him, but a hard, level pike clear to the edge of the State, which promised still more gains upon the time-table.

Quiz, having surrendered the packet, fell from his wheel into the arms of his friends—and also into the arms of several reporters, who demanded what breath he had left to reply to their questions. They telegraphed all over the continent long stories of his magnificent ride.

And Quiz woke up the next morning to find himself famous for at least a day.

THE next morning he also woke up to find himself summoned to an important meeting of the Lakerim Athletic Club. The Dozen met by appointment in the office of Mr. Clinton Mills, a young lawyer who had just "hung out his shingle," and had more time to spare than he knew what to do with. He had taken a great interest in the doings of the Dozen, and had invited them to talk over their club-house scheme.

When the meeting had been called to order by President Tug, and Mr. Mills had taken the floor of his own office, he said:

"Boys,—I mean Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Lakerim Athletic Club,—ahem! ahum! Your President has been kind enough to permit me to interfere in your affairs. I understand you are looking forward to having a club-house of your own. As I understand it, you are trying to earn money enough by your games to build this. I do not know whether or not you have thought how expensive a proper club-house will be; how much the land will cost, and all the gymnastic and other furnishings. I don't know whether you have thought how long a time it is going to take you to earn all this money.

"But if you have thought, you must know that it will be at least three years before you will have money enough laid up to start work."

At this point twelve faces lengthened dismally, and

twenty-four eyes looked at one another in dismay. The boys had never stopped to think all these things through.

“Besides, fellows—er—gentlemen,” Mr. Mills went on, “when you have all your money together it takes a great amount of time to have plans drawn up and contracts let and building under way. And then it takes months and months to get the work done. Now, I suppose you have all been taught that running into debt is a very wrong and unwise thing to do?”

Twelve heads nodded solemnly.

“On the contrary,” Mr. Mills said, with equal solemnity, “it may sometimes be bad policy and very unwise not to run into debt. It all depends upon the reason for your borrowing. If you borrow something to spend on things you do not need, you are doing a thing both foolish and wicked. It is doubly hard to be deprived of necessities in the future to pay for needless luxuries of the past, and you will soon believe that all money borrowed foolishly is paid twice.

“But debts wisely contracted are the foundation of all wealth. Ninety per cent. of the business of the world is done on a credit basis, and only ten per cent. on a cash basis. Now, there is a way for this club to start the building of its club-house immediately, and to build a house costing thousands of dollars, in spite of the fact that you have in your treasury only—how much is there in your treasury?”

“Five hundred and fifty-two dollars,” said Punk.

“You have earned, then, about five hundred and fifty

dollars in five months. A completely equipped club-house will cost you something like thirty-five hundred dollars, and take months to build. Now, the thing I would advise you to do, gentlemen, is this: Make some arrangement with your architects and builders by which they will take liens and mortgages on your building for security. What money you have can go as a first payment for land, and you can start work at once. By very active exertions you ought to have your club-house under roof before the first snow flies. I shall be very glad if the club will accept my services to draw up all the legal papers free of charge, and to do anything else I can."

When Mr. Mills sat down, History proposed a vote of thanks; but Jumbo leaped up and moved three cheers, which the whole club seconded, and thirDED, with yells. When order was restored it was soon voted to place the legal affairs of the club in the hands of Mr. Mills, who was to act as trustee, since all the boys were minors and could not own property.

Sawed-Off rose to say that, as his father was an architect, he felt sure he could get the plans drawn up for nothing, or next to nothing, and Jumbo suggested that his father, having a lumber-yard, would undoubtedly sell the club timber at the lowest possible rate. Other boys had fathers in other businesses where discounts would be of advantage, and Mr. Mills capped the climax of enthusiasm by remarking that the city was not using a certain tract of land on which had stood a school-house, now discarded for a newer and better building in another part of

the town, and he thought it not impossible that the city officials could be persuaded to deed this to the club for its purposes. Or perhaps the Business Men's Association, seeing the advantage to the town of having such a clubhouse, would buy the site from the city.

With this, the meeting broke up in high glee. Every member promised to do what he could, and at once.

A few days later another meeting was called to consider an invitation from the Greenville Academy to take part in a tournament of field and track athletics. Charleston and Greenville had been defeated so often by the Dozen that they were in favor of admitting Lakerim to the Tri-State Interscholastic League. But the rest of the academies objected to admitting a mere high school into their circle.

The field-day of the League was not far off, and every academy was holding preliminary trials for the selection of a team to represent it.

Greenville was courteous enough to invite the poor frozen-out Lakerim Club to join them in a special tourney. For the Dozen to contest with a whole academy looked rash, but they had a mettle for everything in the line of sport; and they were not yet ready to take in any other Lakerim boys. So they determined to make what showing they could.

Every moment of liberty they could take from their school-hours they spent in practice. The runners raced to school with an eagerness and a speed that might have led their teachers to think they were just a little bit fonder

of their studies than they actually were. They raced home from school with a delight that did not exaggerate their gladness to be out.

The jumpers bounced around town like kangaroos. The hurdlers had many a bruise from trying to leap fences that were too high. The walkers went about the streets like badly jointed puppets. The hammer-throwers broke more than one fence, and bruised more than one shin. The shot-putters displaced all the big boulders in town. The bicyclists made the staid villagers "humph" themselves, as Mr. Kipling says, at all the street-crossings.

The Dozen ran, jumped, threw, and whizzed till long after dark, and dieted so strictly that the town of Lakerim never saw so few pies consumed.

On a fine spring Saturday, behold a merry crew from Lakerim threatening the peace of the town of Greenville. The quarter-mile track in the Academy grounds was rolled and sprinkled. The grand stand was gay with ribbons and flags, to which were attached beaming men and women, boys and girls. Inside the quarter-circle there were all sorts of traps and contrivances, not to mention umpires and referees, feeling almost as big as their badges.

Most important of all was a human calliope, who announced the results of the contests in a voice that began like a trumpet and ended like a kazoo.

The first affair was the Mile Walk. Next to the motion of a one-legged hen or a dog with a sore foot, a walking-match is probably the most ungraceful thing ever seen on earth. So the Greenville people put it first, that they

might have it over with. There were three Greenville men and three Lakerim men entered for the walk, and the only good thing that can be said of it was that it was awkward enough to be funny. Otherwise the four laps would have put the audience to sleep or driven them home. Around the track the six hunched and crawled, doing more work for less speed than anything but a man on a treadmill.

A long-legged Greenville man, who struggled along as if he were lifting his feet out of soft tar at every step, got away with the rest from the start. Punk labored after him, but lost ground constantly, and in the last quarter had the pleasure of seeing another Greenville man crawl past him for second place.

This gave Greenville eight points to Lakerim's one; the first man scoring, of course, five points, the second man three, and the last man one point, throughout the contests.

The second event of the Greenville program—which, for several reasons, was not according to the usual order—was the Mile Run. Reddy and Heady had entered for it, and also Tug. The twins got away together, and, their caps being soon blown off, they looked like the flaming brands of one of the ancient torch-races. Tug followed close after them, and three Greenville men were bunched at his heels. Greenville allowed the twins to set the pace for the first lap, and then one of their three shook himself out and came to the fore. This sprint was too much for Tug, who had trained for the Quarter-mile



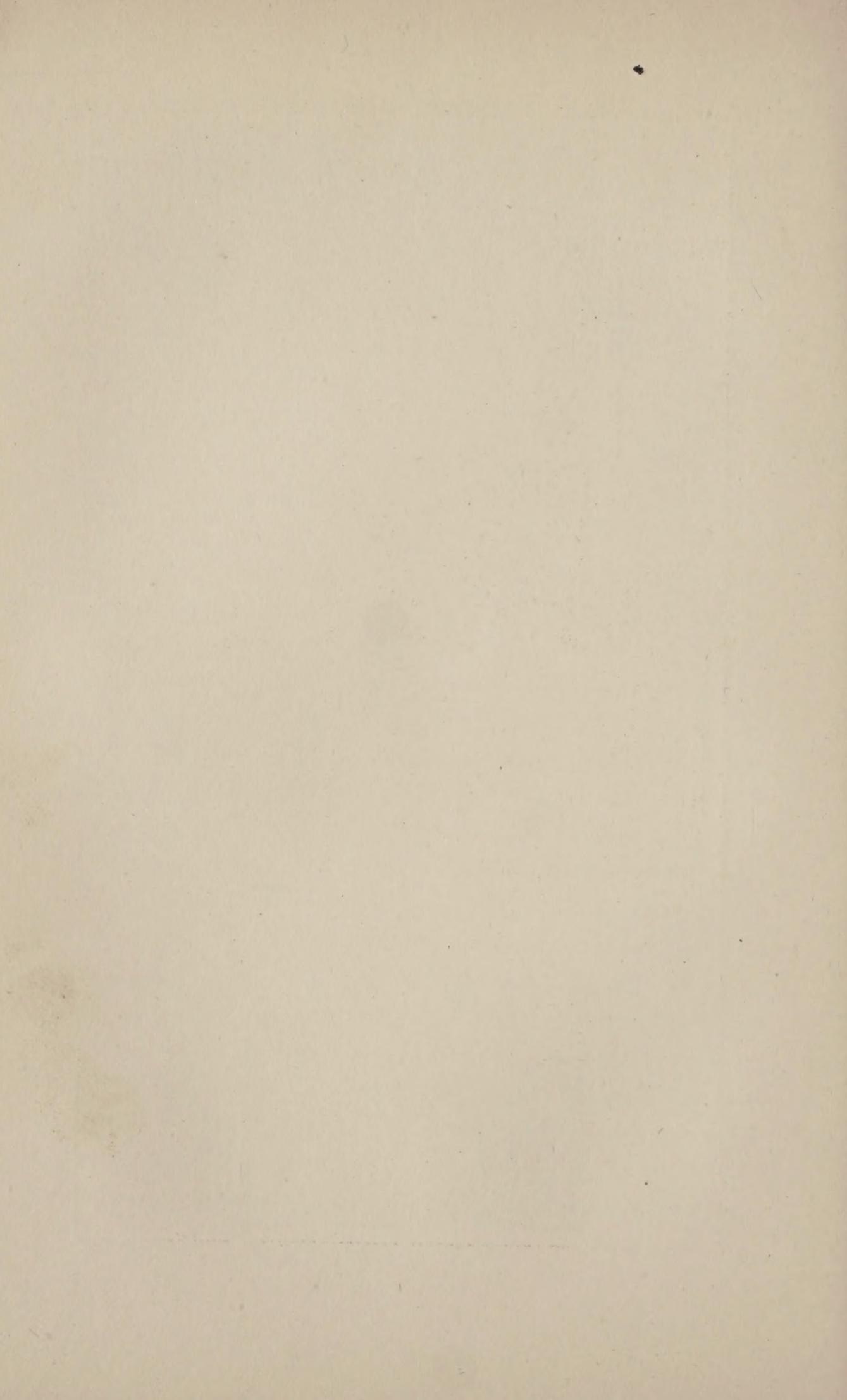
TWO-MILE BICYCLE RACE.



PUTTING THE SHOT.



ONE-MILE RUN.



Run, and who felt it wisest to drop out and save himself for that event.

Reddy and Heady alternately pushed ahead of Greenville, and alternately fell back. After see-sawing thus into the home stretch they went at the track, hammer and tongs, but the Greenville man drew ahead of both with ease, and the only thing for them to do was to fight it out between themselves for second place; for they had the other Greenvillians well distanced. The Greenville champion reached the wire first without difficulty, and after him Reddy and Heady flew, each vowing that the other should not beat him. Which one won is doubtful, for human eye could not see the difference between their noses. But there was no need of a decision, for whichever was second, the other was third. Score: Greenville—13; Lakerim—5.

And now came a 100-yard Dash. There were no preliminary heats to be run off, and all depended on this one fraction of a minute. Lakerim had its hopes bent upon Pretty, and he crouched over the line like a lynx; but his ears were so quick that he heard the shot before it was fired. He gave a great lunge and was down the track like the wind. He did not heed the yells that greeted his mistake, but flew on till Sawed-Off ran out and headed him off at the 50-yard mark. But he had spent his first strength, and when the pistol was actually fired, he was late in that all-important thing, the start.

It was beautiful to see him running. Wavering neither

to the right nor to the left, he sped like an arrow straight for the bull's-eye.

The Greenville sprinter, however, had too good a start, and bravely as Pretty gained on him, it was a Greenville breast that carried away the string. Bobbles was a poor third, and Lakerim had to content itself with four points where it had felt sure it would win at least first place. Score: Greenville—18; Lakerim—9.

"They 've got us beaten," said Sleepy, dolefully.

"Never say die," said Tug, grimly.

"They 're easy," said Miggs of Greenville, Class of '00.

"Too easy to make it interesting," said Boggs of Greenville, '01.

The fourth contest was a Half-mile Run. Sawed-Off, who was the best all-round athlete of the Dozen, could run like a stag, for all his height and weight, and was the chief hope of Lakerim. Just to prove his right to a position in an athletic club, the diminutive History had actually entered the race, to the secret amusement of the Twelve, and the open merriment of the audience when he took his place at the starting-point, and assumed a violent posture that made him look like a pocket-athlete.

"He 's slower than molasses in January," said Jumbo to Quiz.

"Still, I don't know," said Quiz. "He may get around once while the others are making it twice, and come in to the home stretch with the best of 'em."

He was more of a prophet than he knew. For History, having read somewhere of the wisdom of starting

slowly on a long run, began at a gait just about fifty per cent. lower than that of the other runners. Furthermore, he lost his spectacles, and had to grope around in the dust for them; and after that a shoe-lace broke, and he must needs halt, make a knot in it, and tie it up again. He was almost run over by the five sprinters, who had circled the course once and caught up with him when he was not half-way around his first lap.

History had a vague idea of making a bold dash when he had finished the first lap, and he set off again after the disappearing runners at an easy jog. Then a sharp stitch in the side caused him some trouble, and he rested a moment. To his intense surprise, when he looked round before starting away again, he saw a Greenville man leading a thin line of runners straight for him to the home stretch. It dawned upon History that he would have to be an express-train to get within the possibility of winning the race.

Then a great idea came to him. In his Latin class he had been much impressed with the story of Nisus and Euryalus as Vergil tells it. He saw Sawed-Off laboring along close after the Greenville man, but too far behind to stand much chance of winning the first place. History had an inspiration, as he called it, for proving that American friendship is as strong as Greek.

Just as the Greenville man reached his side, History pretended to slip; he lurched over against Sawed-Off's victorious rival, and brought him to the ground, falling heavily with him. The Greenville man was as wrathful

as he was amazed, and kicked out wildly, landing one foot in History's stomach, and scraping off those all-important spectacles with the other.

A yell of rage went up from the Greenville audience at the downfall of their champion. They were not near enough to see that it was all a contemptible trick, or History might not have got off with so little damage as the loss of breath and spectacles.

When Sawed-Off reached the scene of the downfall, he was too magnanimous to go on and take the prize that was now so easily in his grasp. He stopped and helped the disgusted Greenviller to his feet. The other contestants also stopped as they came up, and the race was evidently to be run over. As History saw the outcome of his plot he began to see how despicable such tactics are, and how little profit they bring. So he went back to his books, a sadder and a wiser boy.

The fifth contest was a Two-mile Bicycle Race. When Quiz seated himself upon his wheel, which Tug held for him, Lakerim thought of his fame and plucked up a little courage. Then the Greenville bicyclist took his place, and he was so much longer of leg, and rode a wheel so much larger, and towered over Quiz so threateningly, and had such a record of victories, that Lakerim's heart fell again. Punk was the only other representative of the Dozen.

At the signal the five men rode out quite leisurely. The champion Greenville bicyclist soon turned into the pole and took the lead. He set a pace meant to be heart-

breaking, but Quiz hung to him like a tender. He spurted awhile; but Quiz always held his position just at his back, and after him came Punk.

So they went around the track four times, until the first mile was done. And then the Greenville man was tired of being pace-maker, and slowed up to let Lakerim take the lead. But the two from Lakerim slackened their speed and declined to move up ahead. The Greenville wheelman tried to force them to pass him, but they modeled their speed on his, and for two laps more the bicyclists fairly crawled around the track until the audience roared in disgust.

Now the Greenville rider felt that he had regained his breath, he put "spurs to his steed." With increasing velocity he wheeled away until all the seventh lap was passed, and half of the next one. And then—there is no telling exactly how he did it—Quiz was suddenly out from his place and alongside his rival—was ahead of him and, swerving to the inner side of the track, had taken the pole!

The Greenviller accepted the challenge, and came alongside in his turn, and away they flew like two stormy petrels skimming the sea. Around the curve they churned at a fearful slant. Neck and neck they dashed toward the wire, evenly placed, as if their wheels were locked side by side. But somewhere in his lungs and legs Quiz found a pound of reserve strength; and with a furious heart he drove it hard into his pedals, and crossed the wire half a foot in the lead!

Several yards later Punk crossed the wire, and the Lakerimmers let loose the cheers that they had packed away in their breasts. The score looked much better for them now as 21 to 15.

It looked better still when the tedious Broad Jump, after many narrow escapes, went to B. J., who, on his third trial, managed to leap one eighth of an inch farther than the best distance the Greenville men could make.

Lakerim won the third prize also, thanks to the violent efforts of Punk. Score: Greenville—24; Lakerim—21.

The seventh event was the 120-yard Hurdle. Pretty and Jumbo were Lakerim's only entries in this event, and long practice had trained them just to take the cream off a hurdle, as it were, without touching it. But there was one Greenville man who had the same art. At the snap of the pistol Pretty and he got away together. The first yards before the first hurdle they ran at exactly even speed, and over the obstacle they went as one. Then Pretty proved best on the recovery, and reached the next hurdle first and took it alone. The third and the others also were his, and he soared over them like a greyhound on the hunt.

But the last obstacle he misjudged, and struck it with his toe, not hard enough to overturn it, yet hard enough to disconcert him, and to retard him for that fatal fraction of a second which means everything in a short dash; and when he entered the clear space he found the Greenville man at his side. Then there was a struggle that stirred the heart. Shoulder to shoulder the two boys



ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY YARD HURDLE.

sped, and when both made a desperate leap at the line, each faction of the spectators thought its man had won.

All Greenville howled with delight, and all Lakerim yelled in triumph. Those of the audience that were not partisans of either side found themselves screaming for both. No one had noted that Jumbo was the next man home; but every one crowded about the judges, gesticulating and demanding a decision for the favored man.

The decision was a victory for the Lakerim contingent; and when the judges, after consultation, unanimously agreed that Pretty had been a hair's-breadth ahead of his rival, their joy knew no restraint. Elderly citizens slapped one another on the shoulder, and grew purple in the face, and the white-haired banker winked at the gray-bearded principal of the High School. The mothers of Lakerim were waving their handkerchiefs, and the girls were screaming almost as loud as the boys.

27 to 27!

There is a beautiful balance about such a score that appeals to every artistic mind.

But hope received a shock when the next contest, also a Hurdle Race, of 220 yards, gave Greenville eight points to Lakerim's one; for Bobbles could not make better than third place, and neither Reddy nor Heady could beat out the other Greenville man.

With the score at 35 to 28 it was evident that the contest was to be again a stern-chase, which, as every one knows, is a long chase.

In the Pole Vault B. J. showed a knack for playing

monkey on a stick to such an extent that the Greenville ape could not squeeze himself over the cross-bar where B. J. left it, though twice he broke a bar in the attempt.

Punk proved the importance of winning even third place, and in his steady, cautious way added one point to the Lakerim count.

The score now stood, 38 to 34.

And Lakerim looked to Sawed-Off and his strong triiceps for further gain.

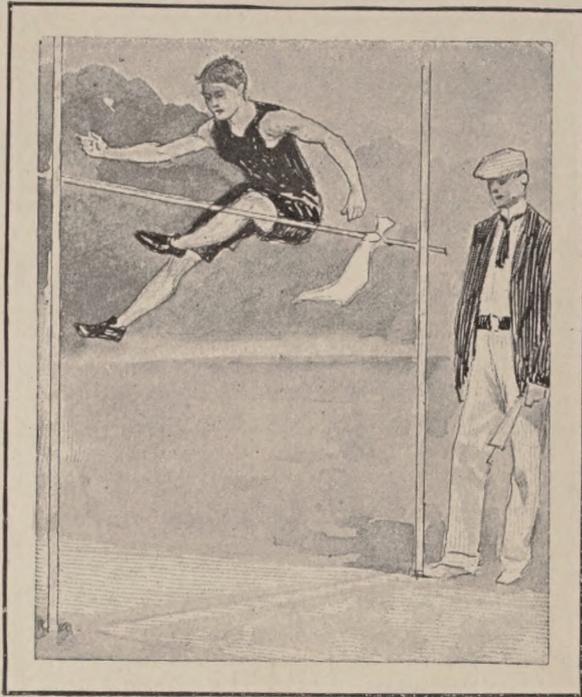
In putting the shot straight from the shoulder the boy shoved the heavy cannon-ball out into space with a vim that should have driven it into the middle of next week. It hardly went that far, but, on the last put, it thudded the ground at a point out of all reach by Greenville muscles.

One of the Academy men was a bad second, and Tug was a fair third.

When Lakerim saw the Greenville score once more within sight, it sent up three whole-souled cheers for Sawed-Off. Score: Greenville—41; Lakerim—40.

The High Jump was unfortunately placed too close to the Pole Vault, but since the Dozen had to appear in more than a proper number of events, to eke out their small numbers in the face of the larger numbers the Academy had to offer, there was nothing to do but set the weary but plucky B. J. to work again.

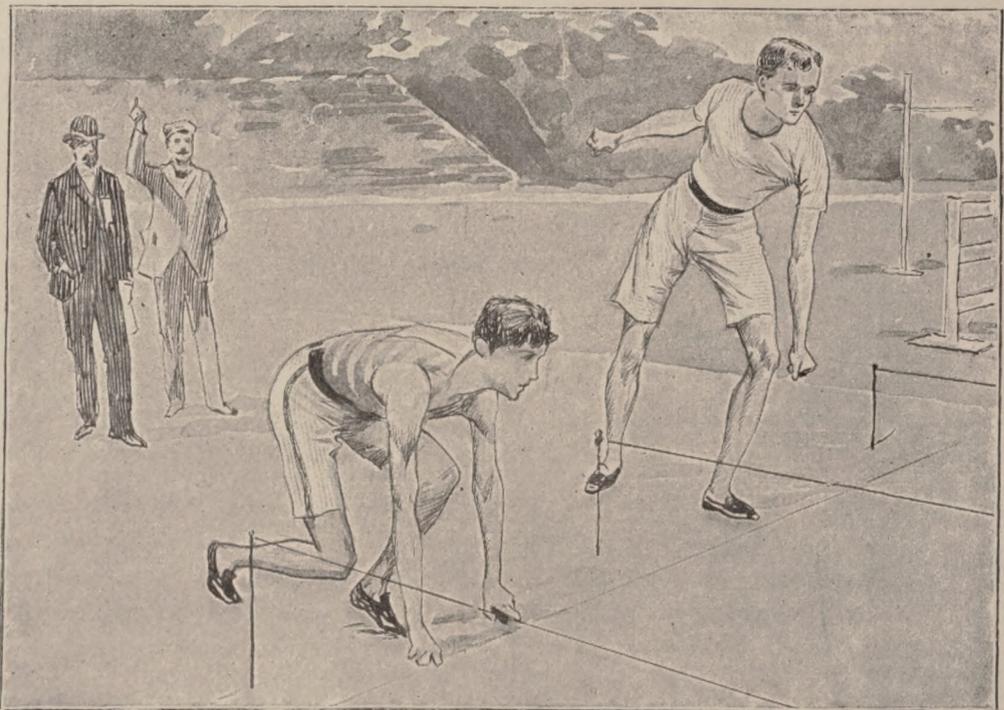
Leap as he would, he could not wriggle over the mark reached by Greenville, and after three vain trials had to rest content with second place. And there was no Lakerim man to take the third. Score: 47 to 43.



RUNNING HIGH JUMP.



POLE VAULT.



ONE HUNDRED YARD DASH.

But in the 440-yard Run Tug acquitted himself nobly, and took his place among the ranks of 5-point winners.

Sleepy, realizing that he was of little value in a spurt, set the pace at a high rate, which left all but two of the contestants behind, so that when Tug and the Greenville man passed him on the home stretch he won third place at an easy trot. The score now stood, 50 to 49.

In the 220-yard Dash Pretty's rival had his revenge, and beat the Lakerim men handily; but since Jumbo was a good third, his victory was not fatal to Lakerim hopes. The Dozen still saw in the score of 55 to 53 some reason to believe that the steady Sawed-Off could win the day.

While Pretty was meeting defeat upon the track, Sawed-Off was bringing dismay to the hearts of all the Academy hammer-throwers. Sawed-Off had taken a hint from a Western school-boy, who had seen fit to make a variation on the old style of hammer; instead of the stiff rod he used a flexible wire for a handle, and got much advantage from it. He whirled this about his head with terrific force, and sent the hammer flying out into space in a beautiful arc. Beginning gradually, he passed the successive marks of the Greenville men, until one superb throw caused the man who ran out with the tape-measure to look twice and gasp with astonishment, for Sawed-Off's throw had hurled the hammer 155 feet $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches, which broke all the records of the League by a score of feet. There was nothing further to say, except to grumble at the hammer.

Sawed-Off maintained that his hammer came within

the rules, and was a proper improvement on the rigid handles previously used. The judges could find nothing in the laws against it, but there was so much grumbling in Greenville that Sawed-Off seized the hammer used by their champion, and, ordering the crowd to flee for their lives, waved it about his head and sent it into space from the catapult of his whole body.

It went so much farther than the best Greenville record that there was no more wrangling.

But Punk, in whom Lakerim had placed hope for at least third place, had failed to equal even his practice record, and Lakerim's heart sank at the score—59 to 58.

Then they were beaten after all!

But suddenly one of the judges remembered that the postponed Half-mile race had not yet been run over. Sawed-Off was the only man Lakerim could count on for a good place in this event. For Tug, in leaping high in air to celebrate Sawed-Off's great hammer-throwing, had come down with his ankle awry, and strained it so badly that he must needs be helped off the field.

Here Lakerim was in a fine plight with its first runner worn out and its second disabled. Sawed-Off, however, insisted on going into the race, and while Jumbo was diplomatically engaging the judges in a discussion that delayed the start to the last possible moment, Sawed-Off was screwing his courage to the sticking-point.

The Greenville man, who had shown himself Sawed-Off's superior in the first trial, had run recently in the 220-yard Dash, and he was too short-winded to be at his

best. Sawed-Off, on the other hand, was one of those natural athletes that thrive on exercise and grow stronger after a hard struggle. He set so tight a pace that the Greenville man was dizzy before the first lap was over, and in the last quarter was so breathless that he fell out in spite of the wild encouragement and protests of his coaches. While Bobbles was winning an exciting race for second position with a Greenville man, Sawed-Off crossed the line at a walk.

And the final score stood, Lakerim—66 ; Greenville—60.

It will need no affidavit from me to convince you that the Lakerim Athletic Club felt itself inhumanly happy at the discomfiture of its rivals. Home the Dozen went in the Lakerim carryall, their voices reduced to mere husks from their much yelling, and their muscles almost wearier with cavortings than with athletic labors.

Sawed-Off was placed upon the seat with the driver—the nearest thing to a throne the boys could find.

So home they drove, the two horses tugging and straining at the bits in their eagerness to be in their stalls again, and the driver too sleepy to give them proper attention. The carryall took several curves on two side-wheels.

Of course the crisis came just at the top of a steep hill. A sudden bolt of the horses snapped the lines out of the hand of the driver, and he wakened from a doze to see his uncheckable steeds taking the long hill down which Jumbo had coasted into fame at a furious gait, that meant a certain smash-up if they could not be checked before a

sharp turn at the foot of the incline. Immediately the cowardly driver yelled to the Dozen to save themselves, and jumped.

The boys in the carryall, hearing the driver's cry of terror, craned their necks to see the danger that threatened them. Sawed-Off's quick backward glance showed him that the driver, as he struck, must have broken some bones, if not his neck.

The boy found himself alone on the driver's box, the reins dangling out of reach, and eleven of his friends dependent upon him for their safety, perhaps for their lives.

XI

AS the rickety old carryall jounced and rattled down the hill, Sleepy, learning from the excited words of the boy seated farthest forward that the lines were lost and the horses running away, woke up for once in his life and made a violent effort to open the door at the back. But the driver had fastened its strap to the front, and the door could not be opened.

Glancing back into the swarming mass of boyhood inside the carryall, Sawed-Off, left alone on the front seat, saw that his eleven chums were caged like rats, and that if he did not stop the horses, the Lakerim Athletic Club would be extinguished in one grand smash-up at the bottom of the long hill.

Only a moment he hesitated, his heart pounding him like a door-knocker. Then a great calm came over him. He let himself down till one dangling foot touched the whiffletree; then making sure it was firmly placed on the tongue of the carryall, he dropped quickly forward, with one hand on the back of each of the horses.

At this new weight the beasts were the more terrified, and jerked the pole to and fro like the mast of a ship in

a storm. But Sawed-Off placed one foot cautiously in front of the other and crept along until he reached almost the end of the pole, and there dropped astride it. This sudden jolt nearly brought the horses to their knees, but fortunately for all concerned, the horses included, they did not stumble.

Now Sawed-Off reaches a hand to each of the bits, and now the two arms that have broken the record of three States for throwing the hammer and putting a cannon-ball are bringing down those two wildly resisting heads. Gripping the pole beneath his thighs so that he cannot slip off, Sawed-Off exerts his biceps with irresistible force, and his voice with soothing gentleness.

And now the heads are down, and turned in close together, and the gallop is a gentle trot; and now it is a peaceful walk, and now the horses are at a standstill.

When the carryall is finally stopped, Tug throws his weight against the door and breaks the strap. He runs to the head of the horses and stands there while Sawed-Off disengages himself. Punk leads three of the boys back to pick up the driver, and down the hill they tote him, groaning with a broken arm. They place him on board the ship he had deserted, and Sawed-Off takes up the lines—the tiller, I should say—and pilots the old boat safely into the town of Lakerim.

BEFORE the athletes had got the lameness of the field-day out of their joints there was a huge stir in the town. Mr. Mills, the attorney-at-law,—a large name to stand for so

“HE DROPPED QUICKLY FORWARD, WITH ONE HAND ON THE BACK OF EACH OF THE HORSES.”



small a practice,—had let no flower-beds grow under his feet, but had talked with all the influential citizens of Lakerim, and had convinced most of them that a good athletic club-house for the boys of the town would be an excellent investment, and would doubtless persuade many people to immigrate there in preference to other towns, where their boys might not be so well taken off their hands.

The mayor did not see the way clear for the city to donate the tract of land Mr. Mills wanted, although he thought it could be sold or leased at a reasonable figure.

The Business Men's Association did not feel able to purchase the land from the city, and it looked as if, after all, the club would have to wait three years.

Then a happy idea struck Mr. Mills, and he persuaded the Business Men's Association to lease this land from the city for ninety-nine years, pay down the rental for the first year, and guarantee the club's payment for the future.

As Sawed-Off had predicted, his father willingly consented to draw the design for a suitable club-house free of charge. A contractor was found who gladly undertook to rush the building through, and who promised to cut his commissions to the lowest point, provided the man who sold the timber and stone would sell at cost. The money in the treasury had to be devoted to a first payment, and suddenly Punk's beautiful bank-account had vanished in air, and all he had left was a receipt from the contractor; and even that was marked "on account."

The city took upon itself the cost of tearing down the

old school-house ; what building-materials were of any use were sold to the club at a ridiculously low figure. The club felt that things were under way at last, and turned its whole mind to base-ball.

The opponents in their first important game were doubly opponents because they were among the two or three members of the Interscholastic League most opposed to admitting Lakerim. The Twelve went to Kingston with fire in their eye, as they said, and the first few innings were an education to their ungenerous rivals.

Lakerim won the toss and chose to bat first. While the Kingston nine was distributing itself over the field, Sleepy chose a good club and sauntered leisurely up to the home plate.

Sleepy might have been the captain of the team as well as first on its batting list ; but when the office was proffered him he declined, saying that it meant too much trouble. So Tug was made captain. Sleepy also refused to accept an in-field position because the players were kept too busy inside the diamond. He chose the left field, whither usually the ball came straight to hand without being run for, and stuck fast in the palms once it was caught.

So now the sleepy Sleepy provoked many protests from the crowd in the grand stand by his leisurely methods. But in spite of their yells he proceeded without haste to dust off the home plate ; then he cast his eyes about the field, tried the heft of his bat, tapped it on the plate a few times, and finally settled himself into a position where he could reach the ball with the least difficulty.

The first missile thrown by the pitcher was an out-shoot. It seemed to Sleepy that it was just a little farther away than he wanted it, though the umpire called it a strike. The next ball was an in-shoot at the same level. Sleepy was too lazy to wince when it came swerving in at him, and he was too cautious to strike at it, because it was too close to the handle.

“Strike two!” yelled the umpire, and the Kingston crowd laughed merrily at the stolid youth at the bat. And one boy howled, “Get on to the cigar-store Indian!”

The pitcher, thinking he had an easy prey in front of him, did not deign to put a curve on the next ball, but sent it straight across the plate. The umpire had his mouth open to yell, “Striker out!” but the words did not pass his mustache, for somehow the ball had found Sleepy’s bat waiting for it and was now making a bee-line for an unguarded spot in right field, while Sleepy was loping away toward first base at a rate that was not faster than was necessary to take advantage of the clean base-hit.

The Kingston pitcher was so surprised at this that he gave Tug his base on balls, which compelled Sleepy to move on to second base. It made the pitcher nervous to see the deliberateness with which Sleepy plodded his way homeward.

When Pretty came up to the bat, Tug played so far off first base that he had to dive for it once or twice when the pitcher tried to catch him napping. But Sleepy would take no chances, and kept only as far from second

base as the second baseman himself. His lack of daring made Tug furious, and he waved to him to play farther away. But Sleepy only glanced back at him and grinned. And so, when Pretty popped up a little fly that landed snugly in the second baseman's hands, Sleepy reached the bag in time to be safe, while a quick throw beat Tug back to first.

With two men out, B. J. swaggered up to the plate and smote the first ball pitched a fierce blow that seemed to drive it right through the pitcher. The Kingston second baseman took it neatly on a pick-up, and hoping to catch Sleepy out, passed it to the short-stop, who had run to second base. But Sleepy's caution again saved him, and the delay in trying to put him out gave B. J. time to reach first base safely.

Punk now appeared, and sent out a graceful fly that came to the center-fielder. If the ball had been a little pet bird, it could hardly have flown straighter to him, and he gave it a smile of welcome.

But, in base-ball, the easiest thing is the hardest thing, and the fly was too easy for the center-fielder to hold. He caught it in his hands, and made a motion to throw it in, when, to his amazement, he found that he was throwing only the ghost of the ball, and that the real globule lay on the ground at his feet. At this unexpected result there was a perfect stampede among the three Lakerim base-runners.

Sleepy made a lively run for third base, and, judging by the eye and attitude of the baseman that the ball was

right after him, he made a leaping slide for the bag, and caught it just in time to be told by the umpire to stay where he was.

This he was glad enough to do, and he lay on his face till the latest possible moment. Jumbo came to bat, and sent a hot grounder between first and second base, and got to first before it could be fielded in, while Sleepy walked home with a grin. And the first run was scored by the laziest man on the team.

Now Sawed-Off arrived at the plate and saw his beloved Jumbo dancing about first base, and looking very homesick; so he drove a vicious bee-liner just over the head of the pitcher, who dodged it, and still higher over the head of the second baseman, who leaped for it in vain; and its force was not spent till it had passed the leap of the right-fielder and gone scooting out toward the fence. Sawed-Off's beautiful drive accomplished its errand; if it had gone a little farther to the left or right, it would have been a home run, but Sawed-Off could only make second, though he brought in three other men—B. J., Punk, and Jumbo.

His virtue had to be its own and only reward, however, for when Heady came to the bat he struck out, and the inning ended with four runs in Lakerim's favor, and Sawed-Off left on base.

When Reddy saw his brother strike out he reproached him for it in vigorous terms. At the beginning of the next inning Heady had a chance to heap coals of fire on his head by saying nothing, for Reddy also struck out.

But Heady preferred to return Reddy's compliments with some plain expressions of his own.

When the Kingston team came in to bat, the Lakerim men took the following positions :

The twins, of course, were the battery—Heady the catcher and Reddy the pitcher; the elongated Sawed-Off was the first baseman; Captain Tug found second base a central place for his supervision, and the steady-going Punk was an excellent third baseman; Jumbo had to be short-stop that he might assist his best friend, Sawed-Off; B. J. was in right-field, and the pretty work of the center field suited Pretty finely. Sleepy, as you have before heard, was left-fielder; Bobbles and Quiz were substitutes, and History was the scorer.

Reddy was such a swift little pitcher that while his curves were never very great, and he could not write his autograph in the air with a base-ball, his speed was enough to make even an older player nervous. But it was not so much the velocity his boyish arm could put in the base-ball as the confusing way he delivered it.

The batsman found himself staring at a little red-headed spider seemingly trying to tie himself into a Gordian knot; then the first thing the batter knew the ball was past him and the umpire was coolly granting another strike.

It took Reddy a few throws to get himself down to his true gait. The first Kingston batsman got a base on balls, but he starved to death on first base, for the next three never touched the ball except for an occasional foul tip.

When the Lakerims realized that the first inning was over, and the score was 4 to 0 in their favor, they could hardly believe their senses; but they came galloping in, and Heady, as I have said, opened the inning by striking out. But Sleepy, reappearing at the plate, was delighted to find that four wild pitches of the Kingston man gave him first base without the usual amount of labor. Tug, as third batsman, brought Sleepy home and earned a run before the three men were out. The fact that the Kingston team could squeeze only one run into their half elated the Lakerims so much that they forgot to bat in the third inning, and made no runs in their half, and forgot to field in the Kingston half, and let in two runs. They were only boys after all, and success turned their heads.

The fourth inning found the Kingston team so well rallied that Lakerim could not score. But the Dozen—or rather the Three Fourths of a Dozen—were also so steadied by Captain Tug's good counsel that they put out Kingston in one-two-three order, on a fly to Punk, a strike-out to Reddy, and a beautiful pick-up and assist by Jumbo to Sawed-Off.

The fifth inning found Lakerim so steadied that it made two runs before the fatal third goose-egg, and when Kingston had its fifth turn at the bat, it was only an almost impossible catch muffed by B. J. on a backward run that sent one Kingston man home.

The score of 8 to 4 was not good enough for Lakerim, and the Kingston team found itself at the second half of

the sixth inning with the mountain of 10 to 4 to climb. The game was plainly Lakerim's if nothing happened to rattle the men. But they were in just such a state of confidence that any slight surprise might take them off their feet. And the surprise came.

A Kingston man had reached first base. His successor at the bat knocked a very slow grounder to short-stop. The first Kingston man reached second base before the impatient Jumbo could pick up the ball. After making a feint at second and discovering that he was too late, Jumbo made a furious effort to catch the man at first base. But he threw far to one side, and when Sawed-Off made a lunge for it he missed it, and the ball flew to the right fence. Sawed-Off ran his level best after it, but when he had it in his fingers he saw the first Kingston man making tracks for the home plate. With all the power of his mighty right arm he hurled the ball at Heady, who had flung down his mask and was wildly beckoning for it.

Heady would have had to be about thirteen feet tall to stop Sawed-Off's throw. The ball landed in the midst of a crowd of Kingston people, who blocked Punk as he ran madly for it. He bunted a few of them off their feet, but the second Kingston man had crossed the home plate before he could deliver the ball to Heady.

This little flurry had completely wrecked the discipline of the Lakerim team. Jumbo and Sawed-Off and Heady were smarting under the thought of their responsibility, and they fairly shivered with excitement. The Kingston

captain came next to the bat. Reddy had caught the contagion of nervousness from his brother, and when he would have thrown his puzzling drop-shoot the ball slipped in his fingers and came so slowly to the plate that a blind man could hardly have missed it. The Kingston captain easily knocked it clean over the right-field fence.

This fence was so near the first base that knocking the ball over it counted only for two bases and not for a home run. So the Kingston captain sat down on second base and guyed Tug, while a small boy who had watched the game through a knot-hole, and wished himself small enough to crawl through it, marched into the gate with the ball as proudly as if he were paying his admission with a nugget from the Klondike.

The next man at the bat smacked a low ball to Punk on third base, and got his base safely because Punk feared to risk a throw that might advance the Kingston captain to third.

While the man on first base was doing all he could to occupy Reddy's attention, the Kingston captain thought he saw a chance to steal third by a bold dash. Tug, who was playing far off second base, gave a yell to Reddy, who whirled about and threw the ball sharply to Punk on third base. The Kingston captain stopped himself before Punk could touch him, and turning, made an effort to regain second base; but before he had gone far he found Tug confronting him with the ball, and he made for third again. The ball beat him there also, and when he whirled back he found Tug closing in on him. His

runs backward and forward grew shorter and shorter. Now he made a desperate charge for second base and ran full tilt at Tug. Tug jumped aside, and in doing so fumbled the ball Punk threw to him. After juggling it a fatal second he flung it hard to Jumbo, who had run round to replace him at second; but the throw was wild and went past Jumbo and down the field gaily to Pretty.

The Kingston captain recovered himself before he had reached second base, and sped toward third. Feeling in his bones the condition of the Lakerim team, he did not stop there, but struck out for home, cutting a wide swath round the foul-line.

When Pretty reached the ball he made the mistake of throwing it only to second instead of straight for home. Tug, noting that the Kingston man from first base was already past him and nearing third, hoped to throw the captain out at home, and hurled the ball furiously at Heady. To his utter horror, the ball slipped out at the side of his hand and went out between third and left field. Sleepy, seeing that it was too late for haste on his part, walked slowly to the ball and tossed it to the pitcher, while the Kingstonians barked the Academy yell like a pack of beagles.

Reddy determined to strike the next man out. He threw a curve that the Kingston captain recognized, and knocked high in the air. It came down on the border-line between right and center field.

B. J. and Pretty both made for it; hearing a warning yell from Tug, and not distinguishing which one he des-

ignated, each stopped short, and looked at the other. Then both made another dive for the ball, and only succeeded in running into each other, while the ball fell at their feet. Then both of them reached for it at the same time, and so hampered each other that the Kingston man made second base on what should never have given him even first. Then Reddy pitched wildly, and though Heady made two or three beautiful stops with one hand, one crazy ball went past him to the back-stop, and the Kingston man made third.

Rather than risk a base-hit, Reddy now intentionally gave the next batter his base on balls, whereupon Heady waxed furious and walked down toward the pitcher's box. Reddy met him half-way, and the two had an interesting conference, in which each laid the blame on the other. It looked as if there would be the usual display of brotherly love, but Tug separated them, and then the game went on.

The next batter sent a furious grounder into the right field. It brought home the man on third base, and landed the batter safely on first. But the man who was forced to second ran into the ball as it crossed the base-line, and was declared out. As Jumbo remarked indignantly, the Kingston men had to put themselves out.

The man on first base made a splendid run for second after the ball had left Reddy's hands for the next pitch. Heady caught it, tore off his mask, stepped away from the batter, and attempted that hardest of base-ball throws, a put-out from home to second. This throw was the wild-

est of all that wild inning, and the base-runner came home on it. Eight of the Lakerim men were beginning to tear their hair in hopeless grief, and wondering when the end of that dismal inning would come. Only one of the Nine was calm, and that was Sleepy. Calm was a habit of his. He suffered from chronic calm.

When the next Kingston batter whirled high in the air a long, soaring fly, Sleepy gaged it perfectly, and jogged toward it with the utmost ease, arriving at just the right spot at just the right moment, and gathered it in with an easy little scoop that brought a long sigh of relief from Lakerim.

The next ball struck—for the Kingston team had found Reddy out completely—was a straight, hard drive over Tug's head, but he leaped in air, and, stretching up both his hands, caught it. He looked like an exclamation-point as he poised over second base, and an exclamation-point was needed to express the delight felt by the Dozen. Score, 10 to 10.

"I thought that we were banished for life," said B. J., quoting from his favorite novels.

When Tug came in he had a serious look on his face. He went to Reddy and Heady, and told them that they would better rest and give the second battery a chance. The twins objected violently, and said that they had been to blame for none of the runs, while the other men had played a wretched game.

"I admit," said Tug, "you fellows made no breaks, while the rest of us did; but because the rest of the play-

ers are a lot of butter-fingers is all the more reason why the battery should be reliable. And you must admit, Reddy, that they are on to your curves, and simply knocked you out of the box this last inning."

Still the twins resisted; but Tug was thinking of the interests of the team as a whole, and for its sake he would not flatter any one of its members. So the twins finally yielded as gracefully as they could.

The panicky feeling of the sixth inning extended to the batting of the seventh, and Lakerim could not get a man beyond second base. When the Kingstons came to the bat they found a new battery, of which Bobbles was the catcher. B. J. had been called in from the field to pitch, and so Quiz had been called from the bench to take his place.

B. J. suffered from stage-fright, and though he clenched his teeth and exerted his resistless will to the utmost, as all good handbooks advise, he was batted for a three-base hit and one two-base hit and two one-base hits, out of which finally only two runs were made. It is only just to Reddy and Heady to say that they were sorry to see the rival battery being lambasticated so viciously.

The eighth inning opened with Lakerim's beautiful lead cut down not only to nothing, but even below nothing; the Dozen found themselves two runs to the bad, with a score of 10 to 12. They were used to uphill work, however, and settled down to do business in a businesslike manner.

Sleepy got first base this time by being hit by a pitched

ball, and though the ball hurt he was glad enough of the black-and-blue badge of courage for the sake of the position it gave him on first base. Thanks to carefully placed batting, his refusal to take any risks in base-running did not leave him stranded, but brought him comfortably home for the only run Lakerim could make that inning. But though Lakerim made only one run, it held Kingston down to the same number, and there was at least no gain.

The all-important ninth inning found the score 11 to 13. Three runs were necessary for a victory, and to the tremendous delight of Lakerim those three runs were fairly earned by good clean batting and base-running that was daring without foolishness.

But, through no fault of theirs, the Kingston team managed to eke out one run and tie the game. At least one extra inning was necessary. The score was amateurishly large, but it was early in the season, and, after all, many a professional game has footed up a bigger total on an off day.

The tenth inning opened with grim determination in eighteen hearts. Punk came to the bat and vowed that he would knock the hide off the ball and bring in one or more home runs with one blow; but he struck so hard that he struck out, and though he threw his bat to the ground in violent wrath, his energy was useless. He was done.

Then Jumbo appeared. He was so stubby that the pitcher had great difficulty in giving a ball that was high enough without being over his head, and low enough without skimming the ground. Jumbo persevered in wait-

ing, and, by an appearance of great willingness to strike, reached the haven of first base on four balls. Sawed-Off came to the bat and smote with all his might, but the only sphere he injured was the atmosphere—he did nothing to the ball; and though on his last chance, after two strikes and no balls, he nearly broke himself in two with the fury of his effort, he managed only to scratch out a measly little fly that flew just back of the short-stop's head. Jumbo managed to scud to second base without being caught, and Sawed-Off got safely to first.

Bobbles was next at bat, and it was his first chance with the stick. He, too, brandished his bat so fiercely that he took little aim. After knocking a series of fouls that made an errand boy of the catcher, Bobbles dealt the air such a swashing slash that he thought the ball must surely disappear over the farthest fence, but found that he had scraped off a little punt that buzzed at his very feet. Yet it served its turn, and while the catcher was looking over his head for the sure foul and the pitcher was trying to gather himself together and chase the ball which was spinning like a top, the three men managed to secure themselves on their respective bases by the most ardent running.

And now came Sleepy to the bat—Sleepy, of all men, at a time when a manufacturer of home runs was so badly needed! While the other members of the team were having a chills-and-fever of suspense, Sleepy strolled up to the home plate, and went through his old performance of dusting it with his cap and rapping the plate three times.

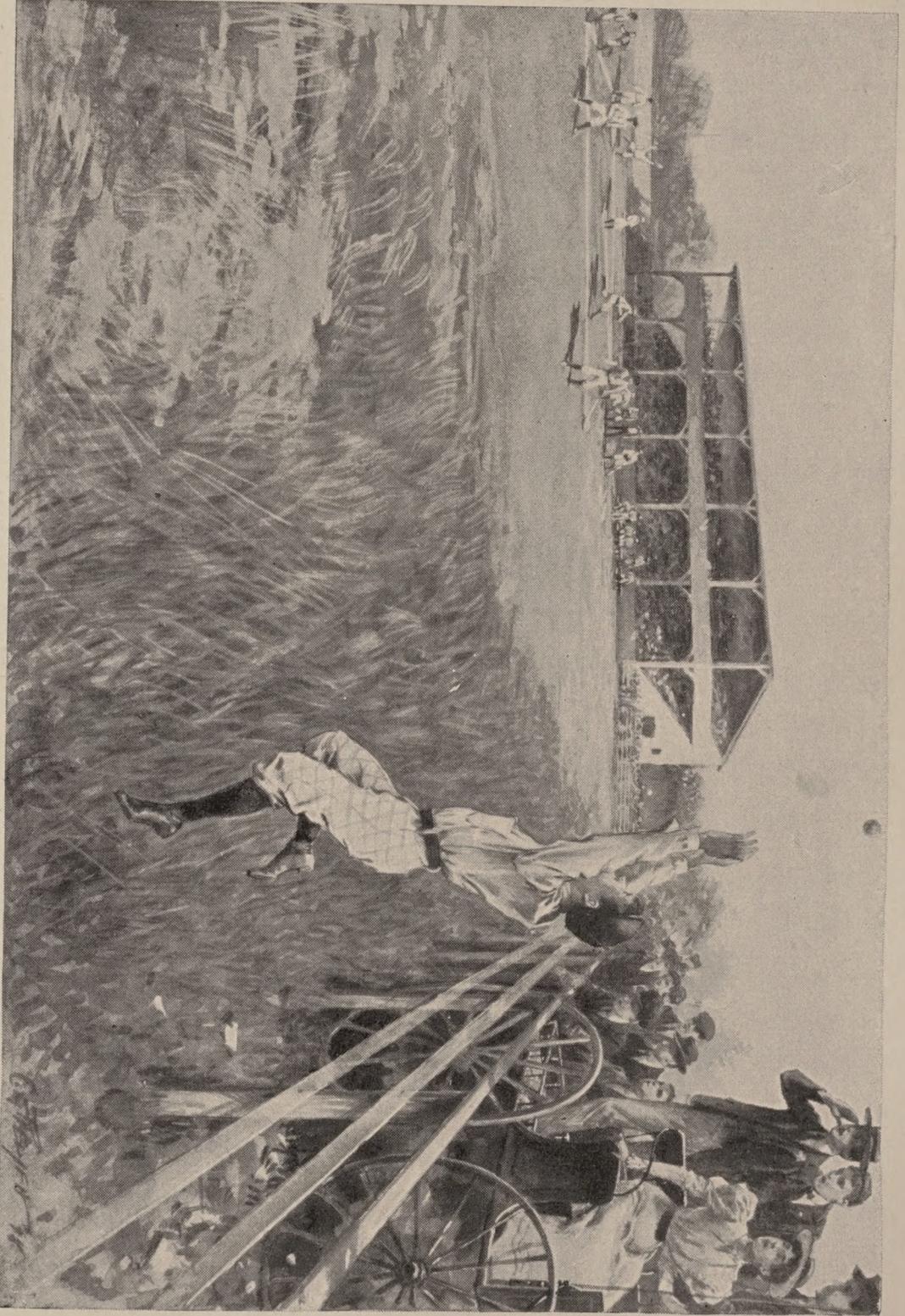
Then he settled in his place as if he had come to stay a week, and looked expectantly at the pitcher.

The fishy calm of Sleepy came nearer to rattling the pitcher than all the yelling and prancing of the other players. Sleepy waited patiently until he was quite ready. At length he saw what he thought was just the right ball. It curved outward just before it reached him, and reckoning that it would meet his bat just at the end, he swung his club up into position, firmly but easily. He rather let the ball strike the bat than the bat the ball, and a crack as of a pistol announced the fly of a long liner over the head of the right field. Jumbo came home safely with Sawed-Off at his heels, and Sleepy, thinking he had done his share, made no effort to reach second base, and was left there with Bobbles on third base, when Tug sent a grounder to the Kingston short-stop.

It was now Kingston's last chance to win the game; and another panic such as that of the sixth inning would give it to them without a doubt. Still, two runs were two runs, and Lakerim hurried out to its position hopefully. Hope, to be sure, seemed to be shattered when Tug let a hard drive pass through his fingers—Tug, the captain, Tug, of all men!

The next man at the bat died on first, but he advanced the Kingston man one base, to second. A short bunt to the short-stop put a Kingston man on first base, but was not a strong enough hit to carry the other man to third. B. J. made the effort of his life at this moment and struck the next man out. But the man after him caught the

“THERE WAS NOTHING TO DO BUT GIVE A BACKWARD LEAP AFTER IT.”



ball fairly and planted it where it would do Kingston most good, and just short of the reach of Quiz, who made a beautiful run for it and picked it up on the first bound.

With three men on bases and two men out, it was a moment that tested the nerves of all the Lakerim men—of all but Sleepy, who was trusting to luck to get the third man out and give Lakerim the game without further play. A ten-inning game was just one degree longer than he had any desire for. So far was he, indeed, from the intense excitement of the other eight that he had left his regular position, and sauntered across to a buckboard that had drawn up close to the foul-line near the fence.

He was there talking to a girl he knew, and she had just thrown him a chocolate cream, when he heard a loud yell from the crowd, and turning saw the ball coming toward him. The Kingston captain had lined it out. He had caught the ball nicely in the center and put every ounce of muscle into the stroke. The fly went high over the third base, and it was hard to tell whether it was a fair or a foul fly. The umpire ran forward to the plate and looked down the line, hoping to decide where it fell. Three Kingston base-runners, knowing that if it were fair their side was out anyway, made the best of their way for home, hoping that the fly would not be caught.

And no one had any idea that it would be caught, for the place of its destination was evidently beyond the reach of any left-fielder.

But it was Sleepy's nature to be in the wrong place, and it was Sleepy's luck at this moment to be in the wrong place at the right time. He would never have run for the fly had he been in his usual position, for he would have thought it only a useless effort; but now that he chanced to be where he was, he trotted into a proper position and watched for it as it wavered on its path, following every swerve of the ball with a cautious movement to the right or the left, backward or forward. Still, it was a most whimsical fly, and just as it came whizzing to earth he found himself too far under it.

There was nothing to do but give a backward leap after it. He made the trial, and though his right hand fell short, his left clutched the ball and held it—held it even though it brought him to the ground. He picked himself up, and thinking of the dinner that was waiting for him, and not heeding the applause showered upon his superb feat by even the Kingstonians, sauntered for home munching the chocolate cream he had kept in his cheek.

The Lakerim men crowded around and hugged him and wrung his hand, and even the Kingston captain slapped him on the back and called him a great player.

Sleepy thought they were all making a most unnecessary fuss.

Jumbo grinned and said to him: "You sleepy rabbit, the ball just hit you in the hand, and you were too lazy to drop it."

As the Dozen huddled together in the car that bore

him homeward with their victory, Sleepy, with his head comfortably settled in the plush, drawled :

“The Kingston captain said that his Academy could not very well oppose our admission to the League any longer now, after this game.”

And he added, as he fell into a doze: “I hope we can bring the Troy Latin School around too, and then—”

XII

NO one will ever know just what Sleepy was going to say about the Troy Latin School, for he dropped off in a doze in the midst of his sentence as suddenly as a small boy walking along a sidewalk disappears down a coal-hole left open by mistake.

It is probable, however, that Sleepy was going to say that since the Dozen had trounced the Kingston men in base-ball, the number of academies that opposed the admission of Lakerim into the Interscholastic League would be so much reduced that if the Troy Latin School could be also taught to know its betters, the League would have to take in the High School in self-defense.

You must not think, from reading the different chapters of this history, that the Dozen had any wonderful fairy-story charm for winning all the games they played in. Far from it! They were beaten often, and sometimes very badly. Sometimes they got that disease which is something like the mumps—that disease called the “swelled head.” When they caught this they were pretty sure to have the swelling reduced by the clever work of their opponents. On the other hand, when the

Dozen was at its best, and played its part in a business-like way, every man working for the club first and himself and his own glory next, it was pretty certain to come out in the lead. The fellows learned from bitter experience that "grand-stand playing," or jealousy of one another, generally brought disaster on the whole Twelve. And so their games were an education to them.

The reason I like to describe at length only the games they won is that it seems so much wiser and pleasanter to dwell on the good qualities of our friends. Every one has faults,—it is no great honor to have many of them,—and so it takes no great wisdom to pick out the flaws in the people we know; sometimes it takes pretty sharp eyes to find their good points.

But this is n't getting on with the story.

The Lakerim base-ball nine played a number of rattling good games that brought a deal of money into the treasury, though not enough to bring the wealth of the Twelve back to the high-water mark they had reached before they paid the first money down to the contractors. After they had got themselves well in hand for base-ball, they found that the games they played were about practice enough, and some of them spent their leisure time rowing on the lake or on the little river that dawdled along half a mile from the town.

Before a great while eight of the men showed they would be promising material for a crew, and it was decided that, as they were trying all the other sports, they might as well include rowing; so they did.

Punk was the likeliest oarsman of the lot; there was something about the terrible earnestness and the grim steadiness of rowing that appealed to him and made him a better man than other fellows more brilliant and more lively could have been. The Dozen had an old eight-oared barge that had come down to them some way or other, and in this they practised ardently. They felt that if they could only have a new boat, built on the latest lines, they could at least stand a fair chance with the Troy Latin School, which, for all its haughtiness, did not boast a particularly expert crew. But racing-shells cost money, and Punk saw no way to buy one unless the funds in the treasury could be suddenly increased.

One day, after school, he was setting forth his woes to the girl who stood next to the Dozen in his heart. As you might expect, such a slow-going fellow would pick out the liveliest girl in town for his best friend. Suddenly he looked round, and she had utterly disappeared. After a moment's wonderment, he sauntered on home, and thought nothing more about her mysterious disappearance; but the next day he learned that she had been concocting a scheme to earn the club some ready cash.

Her plan was not very original, and not very new, but she made up for this in the energy she showed in carrying it out. There was to be a great and glorious "social," not given in a church, but in the High School. The twelve best girls of the Dozen were to furnish ice-cream and cake at the highest cost they dared.

These twelve girls were to take care of the business

arrangements, sell all the tickets they could, and collect all the money they could, and turn over the profits to the club. In fact, the girls called themselves the "Lakerim Athletic Annex."

The boys of the club were to furnish the entertainment that was to draw the people out.

Thanks to the earnest efforts of the Annex, the club found a great audience gathered in the school-house. The expenses were almost nothing, and the sandwiches were all eaten, and well paid for. The ice-cream and cakes sold as if they were hot, and the lemonade-cooler had to be filled and refilled with water many times after the lemons were all gone.

The entertainment furnished by the Athletic Club proved very conclusively that the boys were better fitted for the athletic field than for the platform. They were all very red and dressed up and nervous, and their knees shook like the rattle-bones of a minstrel show.

President Tug opened the ceremonies with a speech. He exhibited as much dignity as a boy can who has so many lumps in his throat that he thinks he is swallowing a pump-chain. Tug explained the nature of the club (which everybody knew), and its ambitions (which everybody knew). He ended with a fine appeal for help, that brought forth a generous response—of applause.

Then Reddy and Heady came in like the Siamese twins, and sang "Ship Ahoy!" At the end of the duet Reddy's voice broke, and Heady got off the key. So, in the midst of much hand-clapping, and some laughter that

could n't be helped, they hurried off the platform and out into the school yard, where each one blamed the other in such a loud tone that their new duet was heard inside, and seriously interfered with B. J.'s recitation, "I stood on the bridge at midnight." The audience, remembering the exploit of bridge-jumping that gave B. J. his title, listened to his solemn speech with a broad grin on its face.

Jumbo now appeared, and did some wonderful feats with Indian clubs. He brandished them as lightly as toothpicks in all sorts of curves and didos, and they flashed here, there, and everywhere like solid gold; but when one of them slipped and flew through the air, and, after just skipping the Principal's head, banged against one of the pillars, the gold proved to be only gilt paper pasted on.

Next Pretty appeared, and sang a tenor solo in an uncertain voice that shot up when it should have gone down, and slid down when it should have soared to the top notes. But he got an encore, and sang again; yet I must say that his appearance was much more agreeable than his voice.

After him Sawed-Off gave an exhibition of weight-lifting. The ease with which he held big masses of iron out straight, or "curled" them, or shoved them up toward the ceiling, led one of the boys who was not a member of the club to remark quite audibly that the dumb-bell was hollow and weighed about half a pound. Just as he had finished this speech the dumb-bell slipped

and struck the floor with a crash, breaking one of the boards of the platform into smithereens. The visitor watched the rest of the exhibition silently, and Sawed-Off's goose-egg biceps won a loud recall.

Quiz was next, and delivered "Spartacus to the Gladiators" in a squeaky voice.

Punk recited a long oration of Daniel Webster's, and Bobbles addressed the audience as "Friends, Romans, countrymen!" Which flattered them vastly.

History read an essay called "Night Brings Out the Stars." And since he brought in all the big words he could weave in, Jumbo whispered to Sawed-Off:

"Night ought to bring out a dictionary, too."

By the time History had finished reading his long, high-flown sentences the audience was getting restless; and when Sleepy appeared for the final number, and with his crooked base-ball fingers played "Home, Sweet Home," with variations,—accent on the variations,—the people were very glad to take the hint. They went home convinced that the Dozen must be pretty fine athletes since they were such poor entertainers; but as they did not take their money back with them, the Twelve made no complaint.

With the money gained from the "blow-out," as they called it, they were able to get a good racing-shell at a bargain, and it was shipped to them immediately. When it was out of its wrappings and floating gracefully on the river, Punk gazed on it lovingly, and patted its smooth cedar sides as if it were a more beauti-

ful steed than any of the Thousand and One Arabian Nightmares.

At the first sight of the new shell, the Twelve decided to send a red-hot challenge to the Troy Latin School. After a period of waiting that tried their patience sorely, the challenge was begrudgingly accepted. Troy thought Lakerim would be a good thing to practise on.

Meanwhile the training of the crew was going on vigorously under Punk's management. The fellows dieted wisely, and not too well, and before long got the hang of things so that they rowed in fairly good form. Each man learned to fasten his eyes on the neck of the man in front of him, and to keep time with him exactly, with no glances to this side or that, and no attempt to do all the rowing for himself. The eight learned to catch the water together; to throw the greater part of their effort into the earlier part of the stroke, and then to "pull it through"; to feather the oars without splashing, to get them out without clipping, and to drop them back into the water with just the proper "ker-chug!" or "rotten egg," as it is poetically called.

Punk studied every man, and coached or argued with or trained him until he learned to use his arms as if they were straps, and bring the oar back to his breast without swinging the body off from the straight line, not to dip too deep, and yet to cover his oar well, and, above all, not to let himself get rattled and out of time with the seven others.

Punk studied even the little eddies that each oar sent

back, and by the depth of these and their neatness and the number of their bubbles learned to pick out the shirkers from the workers, and to tell just how each man was rowing, as if each eddy were an autograph writ in water.

Punk himself looked to be, as he was, just the ideal oarsman. His arms were long and big-boned; his back was a chart of anatomy; his hips were wide, and his loins full of strength, and his legs had neither too much nor too little sinew. His lungs were a magnificent pair of stout bellows, and his heart was steady as an eight-day clock. So he was made the Captain and the Stroke.

B. J. was Number One in the bow, and Bobbles was Number Two, and the Third man was Quiz, whose bicycle had given him good legs; Sawed-Off, being the heaviest, was put in the center, and next were Reddy and Heady; and the Seventh man—the all-important Seventh man who must watch the Stroke and pass on to the rest all of his motions—was Tug, of course.

History, being the smallest of the Twelve, was made Coxswain. They wanted him to leave his glasses off so as to reduce his weight; but the first time he tried it he nearly steered them aground, so they decided they must carry those additional ounces of cargo.

Jumbo was broken-hearted at being separated from Sawed-Off, and Sawed-Off wanted to quit the crew, but after much argument the sworn chums were appeased. Jumbo consented to stay ashore and help them with his good wishes and advice. Sleepy tried hard to make the

crew, because he said rowing just suited him; all you had to do was to get into the swing, and row on in your sleep. But somehow Punk could n't see it quite in that light. Pretty had the build of an oarsman, but did not enjoy the hard, steady grind of it; so there was no change made in the eight as Punk first picked them out.

As the all-eventful day of the race drew near, the beloved boat was packed on a train as anxiously as if its shell were that of an egg, and Punk stayed by to guard it. The morning of the race the boys arrived at Troy. (It was not Troy, New York, nor the Troy Homer and Vergil told about; you 'll find it on the map near Lakerim.)

The boat was carefully taken to the water's edge and placed, bottom up, on sawhorses; then Punk went over it, touching up its coat here and there, and readjusting the outriggers and all the parts of the boat with an eye like a microscope.

The fellows took a trial spin over the course and back, in the bracing air of the river and the morning. They paddled easily but scientifically as long as they were under the eyes of the Trojans; but when they were out of sight around the one bend on the course, Punk told Coxswain History to yell, "Hit her up!" and they ran up the stroke to a fierce sweep that sent the shell singing through the water.

After a good light lunch and a brisk walk, they came back to their quarters and rested while the crowd began to gather along both sides of the river. There were tugs

and excursion-steamers, and a ferry-boat, and a house-boat or two, and innumerable skiffs huddling together and hunting out the best positions, until the quiet old river wondered if the world were coming to an end, or if all these people were celebrating its birthday—it had had so many birthdays that it had no idea what one this would be. But though it had long since got into the habit of reckoning a thousand years as one year, this was the first birthday party it had had since the warriors of two tribes of Indians fought in birch-bark canoes upon its placid breast.

Along the side of the river ran a railroad, whose loud whistle often reminded the old stream of the war-cries of the lost children of the forest. This railroad was to send a special train along to follow the race, and some of its cars were made gorgeous with the banners of the Trojan tribe; but Lakerim men were proud to see that others of these cars were still more beautiful with the ribbons and flags of their own town.

Soon after the judges' boat had taken its place, and all the preliminaries were settled, the Troy Latin School crew issued from its boat-house, carrying a long paper shell, placed it delicately on the stream, stepped into it gingerly, and rowed into position with an easy grace that showed great confidence. Cheers and shrieking whistles greeted them in huge force; but when the Lakerim eight swung gently into position, though there were not so many voices to whoop it up, the enthusiasm of the cheers more than atoned for their lack of volume.

Then followed a deep silence, while the sixteen oarsmen slipped out of their sweaters and bent forward like drawn bows, waiting for the pistol-shot that was to set these steel springs into a frenzy of action.

“Attention!”

“Ready!”

“Bang!”

On the instant sixteen stout lads lifted themselves from the sliding-seats, and flung their bodies backward with a lunge that fairly lifted the two shells out of the water. Thirty-two biceps swelled big as they pulled oars home to chests in a clean, steady line. Sixteen oars flashed through the air like homing pigeons, buried themselves again beneath the water, and dug viciously at it again and again, and ceaselessly.

Punk was so methodical and steady himself that his main idea had been to make clocks out of his men, with oars for pendulums. He knew that in rowing, above all sports, the ideal for the oarsmen to strive toward is to make themselves as nearly as possible only perfect parts of a soulless machine; each must run smoothly, and swing in perfect alignment.

In his determined efforts to train his men out of all semblance to excitable individuals, he had given little attention to teaching them a brilliant start. He knew that a fine beginning might, after all, prove to be only the sputter of a man whose strength went out in a flash instead of burning in steady blaze.

After the first three or four violent strokes, as Punk



THE BOAT RACE.

looked out of the tail of his eye he could barely see the stern of the Troy boat; and he knew that they led him by nearly half a length.

History, the coxswain, was mightily excited at the seeming superiority of the rivals; but Punk calmed him with the two words, "Hold it," and he set a stroke of thirty-six to the minute, long, dogged, telling; and the hysterical cheers of the Troy faction, and the toot of their whistles, found his ears almost deaf to the uproar.

All he listened for was the little chunk of the oars when they fell into the water as one, and the little purl of the eddies, and the tinkle of the drops as they fell from the flashing blades. So long as the noise of the oars was not a boisterous splashing, and so long as the boat throbbed regularly on an even keel as it bounded forward, he knew they were all right.

But out of the tail of his eye he watched the tail of the Troy boat. When he lost sight of it he quickened the stroke, and when it reappeared he lowered the stroke; he made no effort to gain.

The Troy men, however, were working like Trojans, and rowing themselves out in their efforts to shake off this despised Lakerim eight. But bend as they would, and dig as they would, and grunt as they would, they could not effect any permanent change in their positions. It was almost as if the Lakerim boat had grappled them, and they felt, as they toiled, that they were pulling it as well as their own shell.

When they had thus sped well along their course,—

speeding, however, was not the word the spectators would have given it; it looked like crawling to those on the train,—Punk felt that he was pretty well acquainted with the stuff the Troy men had in them. He gave the sign to History, and made eight hearts glad by the quickening of the stroke. Each of the seven men behind him saw the back that was his master move to and fro a little quicker and a little quicker, till they were all fairly humming. Troy responded to the spurt vigorously, and there was a pretty test. But they could not keep the pace Punk set them, and the Lakerim boat moved along their side with stubborn persistence until the Trojan stroke-oar could just barely see out of the tail of his eye the tail of the Lakerim boat. Then he lost it from view, and to save him could not find it again.

Slowly, slowly, Lakerim pulled away till the oarsmen in the Trojan bow lost sight of the boat; till the amazed Troy folk on the train that puffed alongside saw daylight between the bow of their own boat and the stern of the Lakerim shell; till the inch grew to a foot, and the foot to a yard, and the yard to a boat-length, and the boat-length to a yard of boat-lengths. And there Punk held her.

The Troy School men spurted and spurted until their tongues almost hung out of their mouths—till there was no more spurt in their nerves. They rowed out of line, “out of the boat,” as they say, each man for himself; they splashed and caught crabs and lost the stroke generally, until the distracted coxswain, after yelling in vain

at each of the stampeded crew, was forced to slow down the stroke and get them together again.

Punk's men might have had the same panic under the same circumstances; but now they were far in the lead, and the stampede in the Troy shell gave them three more lengths to add to their three. They could see for themselves the disastrous effects that came about when each man thought to save the day for himself, and slipped his cog. So they rowed merrily along, tired and panting, but rejoicing.

And now the flags they had passed told them they were nearing home, and they were already planning what celebration they should give to their victory. Even Punk—the sedate, mechanical Punk—forgot his solemnity, and grinned at History like the Cheshire cat.

And then—

And then—

A little rip, and a sudden snap, and a loud crash! His oar had broken! His good spruce oar had played the traitor and failed him just in the moment of his victory! Instinctively, for a moment, he continued the motions of rowing with the fragment he held in his hand; then, in stupefaction, he dropped it, and saw the two parts of the blade drifting away from him. History's eyes were almost popping out of his head.

And now Punk has ceased to bend to and fro; and Tug, who has seen the whole catastrophe, almost stops rowing; and the rest slow down their stroke and merely paddle.

For a moment only, Punk sits bewildered; then, with a cry, "Row, all!" and with a swift command to History, "Hit her up!" he rises in his place, brushes the little coxswain to one side, and places one foot on the keel-piece of the shell, and, bracing himself, leaps head first into the water! The boat gives a lurch, then steadies herself, as the seven oarsmen understand, and take up their task where it had broken off. The loss of the best oarsman in the shell is a grievous loss; and he is captain too! But if he were only to be a "passenger," his room was better than his company.

A tremendous shout broke from the throats of all the spectators, even from the friends of the Troy faction, at the plucky act of the Lakerim captain. The Troy coxswain, however, saw the accident with delight, and saw in it a hope to win the race. For he thought it better to beat seven men than to be beaten by eight.

In the trouble that fell upon the Lakerim crew the Troy shell recovered much of the intervening distance, and hardly two lengths remained to Lakerim when the seven men got back into the old swing. It was all a question of distance and time. The boys rejoiced that they were so near home, and determined to fight the battle to the end of their strength.

The Troy boat came loping along with a spurt. Then the Lakerim men got themselves well under way, and the Troy superiority was not so marked. The Trojans gained, gained, of course—but slowly, however surely. The lungs and legs of the Lakerim seven ached like mad.

But though Punk was absent from them in the flesh, he was with them in spirit, and they kept their heads and coöperated with one another magnificently. Even if they lost, they would lose in good form.

And now the interval that had widened between them and the Troy boat was closing. Once more the bow and the stern are even, and the Troy eight moves along the Lakerim seven, notch by notch, man by man. But History calls out desperately to each boy by name for one last effort, and they all bend to the oars like fiends. Tug and the others pry upon the water until their boat answers in leaps like a hound. The oar-blades clench the stream as the teeth of the oarsmen clench. Then, with one last heave that seems to drain their strength down to their very toes, they lift her across the line into victory—half a length ahead.

The Lakerim seven did not faint,—a winning crew never does,—but they were as near swooning like heroines in old-fashioned novels as modern heroes ever were. They were not, however, half over their weakness before they began to worry about their captain, who had, as they say, “fallen outside of the breastworks.” The last they had seen of him was when his head disappeared in the crowd of boats following in the wake of the race. They felt sure that he had been picked up at once.

But Punk had not fared so well as they thought. The winter chill of the river had not yet yielded to the mild persuasion of the spring; and when he rose to the surface after the shock of the dive he felt almost half frozen

with the cold, and he choked as he came up and swallowed a stomachful of water, and barely saved himself from being beaten over the head by the Trojan oars; for he was so bewildered that he struck out in the wrong direction.

He kept himself afloat, however, till the leading tug came along. But the tug was under some headway, and since he tried to get by on his right, and it tried to pass him on its left, he was again almost run under, and hardly saved himself by a great fling to the left, just as the tug swept by. The current of the river was so strong that he went swishing past out of reach of the boat-hooks and hands held out to save him.

Then the suction of the screw began to pull at him and to drag him toward the whirling blades.

XIII

THOUGH the hands that were dragging Punk through the water toward the stern of the boat were invisible, they seemed no less real and merciless, and they haled him toward where the screw-propeller was viciously slashing the river, as a lamb is compelled toward the shears. The seething and the swirling of the water turned up by the screw deafened and distracted Punk, but he gave at the critical moment a desperate lunge and leap that carried him away from this danger to the next.

For by the time he had got his head again he was on the point of being run down by a sneaking little naphtha-launch. Then there followed one of those scenes that occur when you run into a man on the street and try to dodge past him: when you duck to the right he does the same; when you bounce to the left there he is; then each of you stands still for a moment and glares hard at the other fellow, and thinks hard what a fool he is anyway; then you both give a sudden bolt to one side—the same side, of course; and so on, until one or the other of you slips past by accident.

This was Punk's predicament with the launch, only it was a matter of life and death with him. As he swam to pass it on the left side the man at the wheel turned the nose of the launch in the same direction; then Punk whirled about in the water and swam the other way, and the pilot tried to pass on that side. There was not much time for this hide-and-seek, but there was enough of it to rob Punk of his last drop of self-confidence before the launch slid by him safely.

So eager was he to be out of those dangerous waters that he seized hold of the first skiff that passed him, and scrambled in for dear life, without stopping to knock, almost spilling into the water the oarsman and the pretty girl he had with him. The young couple, however, accepted his apologies, and told him to make himself at home. So there he sat, dripping and shivering, till he was restored to his friends, not much the worse for wear; and he lived to row many another race for the Lakerim Athletic Club.

Through June and July the base-ball nine and the oarsmen were busy winning games and money and glory for the club. In August they thought it was time for a vacation, and a proposition for a club camp on one of the islets in the lake was heartily agreed to.

So the top of one fine morning found them rowing and sailing away from Lakerim to a little isle which they named anew, calling it the Dozen. The dozen *what* they did not trouble to explain; but the island is known to this day, to everybody that knows it at all, as the

Island of the Dozen. On it they planted a flagstaff bearing a flag on which were twelve stars, arranged like this:



Some of the Twelve crossed the lake, as I have said, in rowboats, and some in a sail-boat; and you might have noted that the sail of this boat was the one that had saved the hockey-players from freezing to death that cold night on Buzzard's Rock.

But B. J. rode in no rowboat, nor in any sail-boat; he alone of all the Twelve paddled his own canoe. He had made it himself, with infinite pains and almost infinite mistakes; but when it was at length completed it proved to be worth the while.

B. J. made more mistakes than ever when he tried to learn to ride in it; but as he practised in his bathing-trunks, there was little damage done, and at length he handled it as safely as if it were a flat-bottomed scow.

So much in love was B. J. with his canoe and all the outfit he had collected that he thought he would camp on his lawn at home. One night about dark he took his

canoe and lantern out in the yard, made a bed of two blankets in the canoe, put a canoe-tent over it, and lay down in the cockpit to sleep. His father and mother objected to this at first, but he finally won them over to the scheme. Then, when he had got through persuading them, and had begun his first night outdoors, he wished they had not yielded so easily.

Because, in the first place, the family watch-dog came snapping and growling around, and refused to recognize B. J.'s voice, or to go away until B. J. had risen from his warm blankets and introduced himself to the dog. Then the animal insisted on getting into the canoe with him; and at last B. J. had to take him back to his kennel and chain him up.

And then he wished he had n't, for now he was very lonely and very much afraid. He had won his title B. J. by his once famous adventure at bridge-jumping, and he was as plucky in some ways as any boy could be—too plucky for his own good sometimes; but his specialty in pluck was not staying alone outdoors at night.

And now that the dog was safely chained up, B. J. was sure that all the whitecaps in the United States, and all the bandits in Italy, and all the highwaymen of old England were hunting him. What they would have done with him when they got him, is a mystery that did not trouble B. J. so much as it would other people who realize that professional robbers are usually after something more valuable than the pleasure of scaring small boys to death.

To B. J., however, each creak of the tree over him was the footstep of a desperado; the rustling of the wind at his tent was the fingers of a brigand; and the breeze itself was the breath of a cutthroat. When the moon came out it relieved him a little; but at best it looked rather distant to be of much service, and he kept his little pocket-knife tightly clasped in his hand.

Then, too, the canoe felt no bigger than a shoe-box, and as hard as a sidewalk. His bones ached and his muscles were cramped, and he was in as much distress bodily as mentally. But after lying awake preparing to repel boarders most of the night, it seemed that he had hardly dropped off to sleep when the sun came prying under his eyelids and would not let him snooze. So, drowsy as he was, he had to leave his cozy bunk. And now that he was up hours before the earliest riser in his family, he was lonely indeed; and the morning wind was very chilly; and the grass was very wet; and oh, but he was hungry!

He could not understand why his family should be so lazy as to lie abed after five o'clock in the morning, and it seemed a year before he dared move about the house, and two years before they were ready for breakfast.

That night he left his canoe and his canoe-tent in the barn, and slept in the great soft bed he had so despised the night before.

But by the time the Dozen were ready to go a-camping he was once more eager for outdoor life, and he paddled to the island with complete delight.

WHEN the Twelve left Lakerim they paid a last visit to the club-house. The foundations had all been laid, and the carpenters were now putting up the framework of what was to be the club's future home; and their last memory of it was as of a skeleton standing in his bare bones.

ONCE the camp was chosen and the tents pitched, each of the Twelve went about the occupation that suited him best.

History had brought so many books that they threatened to capsize the rowboat he was in; and now he fell to reading all the Waverley Novels, in what he called "their chronological sequence."

Sleepy found a soft moss bank overlooking the lake, where he could throw out his fish-line, and lie there, and let the hooks do all the rest. When any fish came his way they usually had to catch themselves, and wake him up by their tugging, before he would bring them ashore.

Tug and Punk set about exploring the Island of the Dozen, and clearing away the underbrush from the camp and from the paths they laid out.

Sawed-Off and Jumbo were the cooks of the camp, and nothing more can be said in praise of the digestions of the Twelve than that they survived the fearful and wonderful dishes these two chums concocted.

Bobbles and Pretty usually went sailing; and one time when Bobbles was taking in the jib because the breeze was too strong for it, and they were going with

lee rail awash, Pretty grew lazy and fastened the main-sheet to a cleat. Accordingly, the first little squall took them over, and Pretty found himself floundering in the water. His only regret, however, was that his ducking proved that the colors in his favorite necktie would run.

Quiz went about looking for trouble, and finally disturbed a large black snake that was minding its own business and merely wished to be let alone; and Quiz had a lively time before he cleared the island of what seemed to be its only snake. It was a shame to kill the original owner of the island; but there has never been much good feeling between men and snakes since a snake started the trouble.

Reddy and Heady spent a good deal of their time rowing a two-oared boat; or, I should say, they spent most of their time quarreling as to the direction in which they wanted to row. The consequence was that when one pulled straight forward the other backed water, and a large part of their time was consumed in describing beautiful circles.

As for B. J., he passed most of his days in his canoe, or out of it—capsizing it, and climbing into it, now paddling lazily, and now working up a great speed.

One afternoon, History, having finished "Ivanhoe," felt in an adventurous frame of mind, and decided that he would honor B. J.'s canoe by taking it out for a little spin.

"Better put on your bathing-suit," said B. J.

"Oh, no," said History; "I'm not afraid of such a little thing as that!"

"Canoes are like bicycles," said Sawed-Off, who was scrubbing a saucepan with sand and water. "You can do anything when you know how, but you can do nothing when you don't."

And Jumbo, who was paring the potatoes for supper, looked up and added:

"Canoes are like bronchos before they are 'busted,' History, and B. J.'s canoe will throw you six ways for Sunday."

"Ah-h, that 's all nonsense," History replied scornfully. "It 's simply a question of keeping your equilibrium. If you don't lose that you 're all right."

As neither Jumbo nor Sawed-Off was quite sure what an equilibrium was, they did not tell him that it is an easy thing to lose. They decided that the canoe would convince History of its bad temper in short order, and no further objections were made, excepting that B. J. stood by to see that History did not put his feet through the side.

Jumbo and Sawed-Off went out on the little pier Tug and Punk had built, and held the canoe until History was seated comfortably; and then Sawed-Off gave the boat one tremendous shove, and it slipped far out over the water.

History gave just one wild dig with the paddle, and then his feet flew up to where his head should have been, and his head flew down to where his feet should not have been—in the water. The canoe turned completely over, and floated gaily away on the waves he kicked up

with his tremendous splashing. He tried to yell for help, but swallowed so much water that it sounded as if he were merely gargling his throat. Then he sank from view entirely.

Now the boys on shore realized that they should never have let him try the canoe at all, for they knew that he could not swim. But by the time he had come up again, and cast one pleading look ashore, and then sunk, B. J. had whipped off his coat and dived from the pier. He swam under water, and as he rose came up just alongside History.

B. J. was the best of the Twelve at swimming, and was almost as much at home in the water as a mud-hen. Then, too, he had practised swimming with all his clothing on and heavy shoes on his feet. So now, with nothing on his feet but light rubber-soled boating-shoes, and unhampered by his coat, he lost no time in avoiding History's arms, which flew around like a spider's legs.

He simply thrust the fingers of one hand into History's long hair, and with the other hand struck out for shore. The boys had often poked fun at History's Samsonian locks, and, when they had nothing else to do, they were always taking up a subscription to pay the price of a hair-cut for him; but after that day he was doubly convinced that the barber-chair was no place for him. He was too much scared to feel any pain at having his hair used for a handle, and did not know how uncomfortable he really felt until he found himself on shore, with the other boys rolling him over and over, and wav-

ing his arms up and down to get his lungs going again, according to the rules for rescuing the drowning. But when he once more realized who and where he was, it gave him most pain of all to lean against a tree and see B. J. swimming easily and swiftly out to his canoe, to see him right the canoe and empty it, to see him climb into it as if he were mounting a pony, and bring it ashore as safely as if it were a ferry-boat.

Then Tug remarked: "Down in the Louisiana swamps the foresters stand in their canoes and chop down trees."

And History gave him just one look—the sort of stare a fat man who has fallen off his bicycle as fast as he could get on it bestows on the athlete that rides on a single wheel.

Camping life on the Island of the Dozen brought few adventures besides what the Dozen brought upon themselves, or what their imagination afforded them. There were no Indians and no wild beasts for them to guard against at night when they gathered around the snapping camp-fire and tried to keep awake long enough to get sleepy; but every day meant twenty-four hours of bliss.

And one day a party of girls came over with their mothers from Lakerim, and brought along not only their own bright selves, but great packages of fresh fruit and dainties, which tasted marvelously fine to palates that were growing just a bit weary of the limited range of Sawed-Off's and Jumbo's cookery. It is doubtful which

the doughty campers were gladder to see: their mothers and best girls, or the fried chicken and raspberry preserves. Each of the Dozen led his best girl and his mother, or her mother, whichever came along, all over the island to show them the wonders of the camp.

B. J.'s chief friend was most interested in his canoe. She could swim almost as well as he, and dived from heights that had daunted many of the Dozen; and now, when she stepped into his canoe and paddled gracefully about in it, History's eyes stood out till they almost pushed his glasses off.

Visitors, however, were not frequent at the camp. An occasional fisherman came, only to be told to move on, as they caught their own fish. But the Twelve had to depend chiefly on themselves for their entertainment, till one day a party of canoeists from Charleston appeared in the harbor, and the Dozen hastened to extend a hearty welcome.

After Sawed-Off and Jumbo had worked off on the visitors some of their most dangerous experiments at cooking, in true Samaritan spirit they brought out the dainties left in their larder since the visit of the Lakerim girls.

While they were all resting from the effects of their nuncheon, the Charlestonians were talking of the prowess of their best canoeist. After they had bragged for some time of the wonderful things he could do, Reddy and Heady lost their tempers at the same moment, and blurted out hotly:

"I'll bet B. J. could do him up with one hand tied behind him!"

"Oh, go on!" B. J. objected modestly. "I'm a hayseed at canoeing."

But the mischief was done now, and nothing could undo it but a test of skill.

B. J., however, was too shy of his abilities to consent to a duel in canoeing, and in order to end the embarrassment one of the Charlestonians finally suggested that they have a tug of war. Since the Lakerims had no war canoe, and the Charlestonians would not permit them to use one of the rowboats, it was at length agreed that four of the Lakerims should make use of one of the Charlestonian canoes, four of the visitors to use another.

A long rope was tied completely around both canoes, just under the gunwale, that the strain might be evenly distributed. Then the four stoutest Charlestonians seated themselves in one canoe, and Tug, Punk, B. J., and Sawed-Off, the strongest oarsmen in the Lakerims, took their place in the other. Each of the eight men had a single paddle, and the boats were placed about twenty feet apart. When all were ready, and keyed to the highest pitch, History, who was chosen to be referee, gave the word: "Go!"

Almost before the word was out of his mouth the eight began to paddle most violently. They smote and splashed and grunted and shoved against the water in a fashion that looked from shore to be idiotic, since the two canoes seemed to be immovably anchored. Still they rolled and swayed and turned and wobbled; but it was a full minute

before the center knot in the rope could be seen to move in favor of either side. Then, gradually, centimeter by centimeter, it edged toward the Charleston territory. At the end of the three minutes that had been decided upon for the heat the Lakerim boat was disgracefully taken in tow. So much for the first heat.

While the contestants were resting, one of the Charlestonians gave an exhibition of his skill in a sailing-canoe. His boat was a dream of beauty, with shining nickel fittings, and a glistening coat of varnish, and sails as white as Pretty's duck trousers. The crew of the boat was a fellow of exquisite skill, who seated himself on a sliding-seat far out over the water, and managed his center-board, his tiller, and his sail as if he were six-handed. He had a stick toggled to the rudder-yoke at one end, and at the other to the collar of the deck-tiller. Thus he pulled or pushed as he pleased, so that it served the purpose of two rudder-lines. And the sheets he managed, when necessary, with his toe, by means of a cam-cleat provided with a long lever. It was the neatest and completest outfit B. J. had ever seen, and he determined to have a sailing-canoe even better the next year.

After this exhibition was over the tug of war commenced again, the fours exchanging boats. It was soon proved, however, that Charleston's success had depended, not upon the boat, but upon the superior weight and strength of its four; and the Lakerim quartet, already weakened by the discouragement of the first failure, was pulled all over the place without difficulty.

The Dozen smarted under this defeat, and crowded

around B. J., demanding that for the honor of Lakerim he should race the crack paddler of Charleston. At length he consented.

Before the two had embarked, however, one of the Charleston men spoke up and said:

“Why not make it a hurry-scurry race? It will be twice as interesting to watch.”

“What ’s a hurry-scurry race?” said Quiz.

“Well,” answered the Charlestonian, “you run twenty-five yards, then swim twenty-five yards, then climb into your canoe and row twenty-five, then capsize, climb into it again, and paddle twenty-five yards more; and that ’s the race.”

B. J. thought that it promised very little glory for him; but since it would doubtless offer great amusement to the crowd, he let his objections take a back seat, and agreed. Twenty-five yards on shore were paced off from the water’s edge, and the starter was placed there. About twenty-five yards out in the water a canoeist, who was to be the judge of the finish, was stationed. Twenty-five yards farther out a second canoeist took his stand and dropped anchor.

The Charleston canoeist borrowed a bathing-suit; and B. J., who lived in his, waited impatiently, pawing the ground and champing the bit at the starting-point. He was not a very good runner, and he was anxious to have the first part of the race over. When the Charleston man was ready, little time was lost in getting the men away.

The Charleston man was long-legged, and ran like a deer, while B. J. ran every which way. When he had finally reached the water's edge he saw the Charlestonian already swimming; so he dashed blindly and fiercely in, like a retriever after a wounded duck. But his left foot slipped on a smooth stone, and his right foot caught on a jagged rock that cut him sore. Yet he flung himself into the water as soon as he was waist-deep, and struck out with great, long-handed strokes that lifted his shoulders clean into the daylight. His arms flashed like spruce oars, and he seemed to lay hold of the water and pull and push it back past him. His arms rose without a splash and entered neatly. He fairly hurled himself along.

But though he went like a frightened water-fowl, with arms flying like wings, he was still swimming when his Charleston rival had clambered into his canoe—which the judge held ready—and was paddling vigorously away.

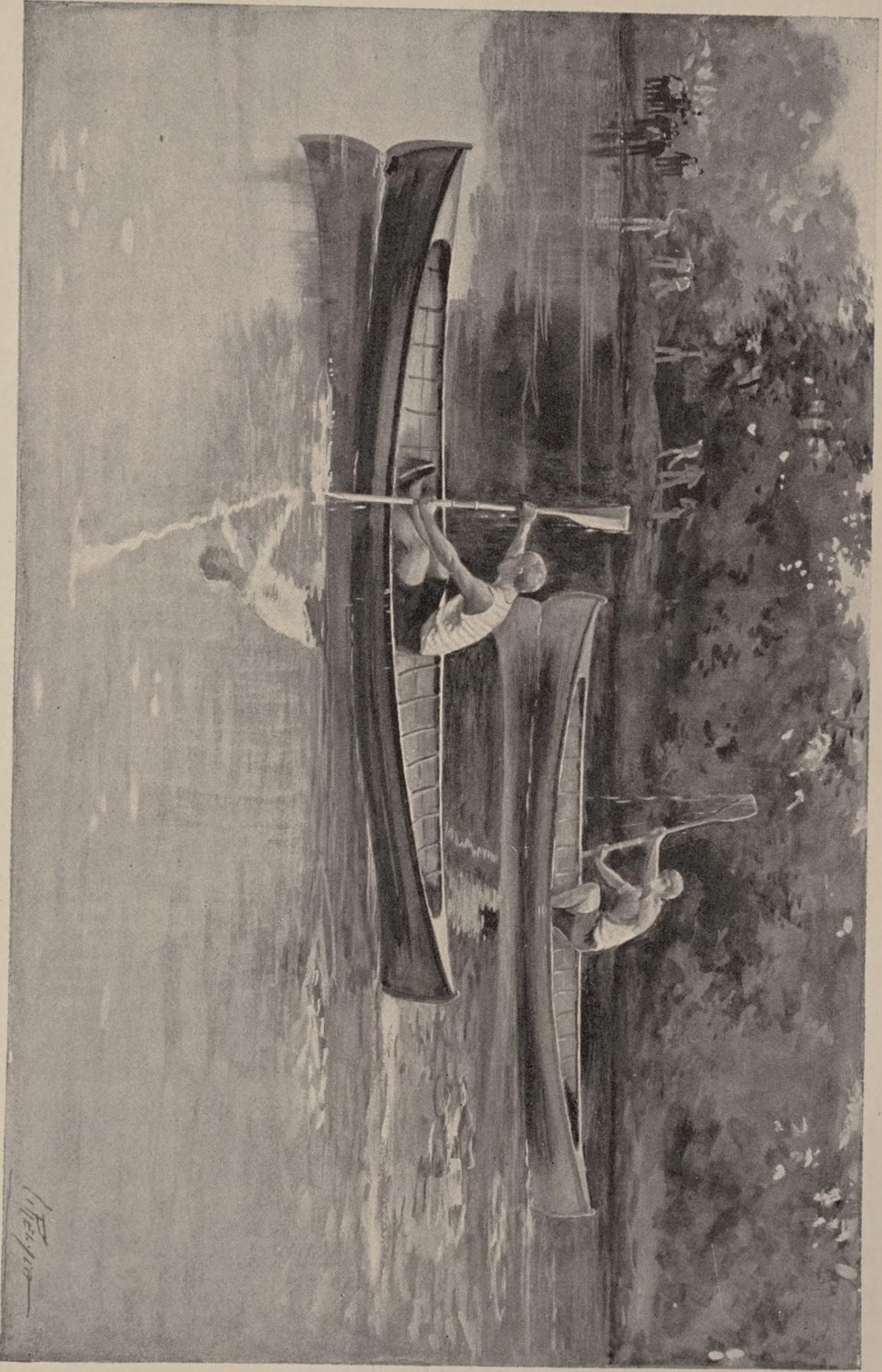
When B. J. was in his canoe and after him, there was a striking contrast in the methods of the two oarsmen. Each used a double-bladed paddle, but the Charleston canoeist knelt on his right knee and paddled in the orthodox fashion. He had a good, long, sweeping stroke, with a sideways body roll on the right side of the boat; but his stroke on the other side was hampered and shortened by his left knee, and he could not turn far in that direction. His whole body was exposed like a sail to the wind, and as the wind was offshore it helped him along beautifully. It did not promise so well, however, for the

return, when it would be a head wind. The boat was unsteady, too, and a large part of his thought and energy was devoted to keeping his balance. Still he rowed as his father had rowed before him, and he was a graceful sight to see.

B. J. did not appeal to the artistic sense so strongly, but he rowed a stroke which would appeal more directly to the modern scientific mind—a distinctly American stroke. He sat on the bottom of the canoe, on a cushion. His legs were under the crosspiece, which his body almost touched. Under the thwart his knees were raised, so that his thighs pressed upward. His feet rested on a light foot-brace on each side of the canoe. Since he sat so low, resistance to the wind was almost ruled out of the question. No motion and no power were lost by unsteadiness of the canoe.

B. J. could have extended his stroke backward on either side almost as far as the other canoeist could on the right side; but he believed that the paddle, when carried too far back, lifted water and wasted the paddler's energy. His stroke was an arm-and-shoulder stroke, nearly straight forward and backward, and the boat was steady as a church. He gave a great reach forward. The better part of his force was spent at the beginning of the stroke, and, as I say, the stroke was not carried far back. He feathered his paddle beautifully, and it was spoon-bladed.

The Charlestonians openly guyed the Lakerim canoeist when they saw him plump himself down low in the



THE CANOE RACE.

McGraw

canoe; but the way he covered water sobered them not a little, and at the end of the 25-yard paddle, in spite of the advantage of the wind, B. J. had almost overtaken the Charleston oarsman. He had capsized his canoe and landed in the water before the Charleston man was fairly started on the home stretch.

B. J., in his excitement over the speed of the stroke he had adopted against the advice of many old skilled paddlers, made a fluke of righting his canoe and getting himself into it. It looked as if the Charleston man would have an easy victory, so wide was the distance between him and B. J. when B. J. was again at work.

Once B. J. was well under way, however, he simply tore over the water, or, as it seemed, he floated over it in a light balloon that danced across the ripples. He stretched forward until he was the shape of a letter U lying on its side, and pulled with one hand and pushed with the other like a madman. He gained on the Charleston oarsman as if his rival had fallen asleep.

If his rival had indeed fallen asleep, he did not look it, or he was having a sad nightmare of a dream. For he had turned to throw one contemptuous glance over his shoulder at the Lakerim oarsman, and he had seen what looked to him, not like a canoe, but a shark, or something that devoured space in a most inhuman way. Then he fell to paddling so violently that his canoe shook like a freighter in a gale. But though he wobbled as badly as B. J. did when he ran, there was no eluding the straightforward, businesslike canoe that came flashing along

after him. He had hardly time to realize that B. J. had caught up with him when B. J. was alongside; and it had just got into his head that a Lakerim bathing-suit was at his elbow when he realized that it was no longer there—it had gone on before. B. J. shot across the finishing-line like one of the defenders of the *America's* Cup, and Charleston came plodding in afterward like one of the challengers from over sea.

Once they were ashore again, the Charleston man was full of apologies to his friends, and of explanations to the Lakerimmers that he had not let himself out because he had not expected to find so good a canoeist with so curious a manner of rowing.

The Lakerim men merely patted B. J. on the back a little harder, and smiled in a superior manner.

This angered the Charleston expert, and he declared in a loud voice that in a straightaway race he would soon show them whether or not he knew what he was talking about—Jumbo having suggested in an aside to Sawed-Off that the stranger was talking through his hat. Evidently the hat he was said to talk through was not a thinking-cap.

B. J. said he would not mind, just for the fun of the thing, trying a straightaway race with the visitor. A half-mile was agreed on, since both of the men were rather tired. It was simply the story of the hurry-scurry race in a revised edition.

The Charleston man again had the advantage of the wind in the beginning of the course. He threw all his energy now into the task of teaching the Lakerim man

to know his superiors when he saw them; but B. J. overcame his rival even when he had the aid of the wind, which made a sail-boat out of him, and he left the Charleston man hopelessly in the rear in the finish of the course.

He was sorry now that the breeze was against his rival, because, being a thorough sportsman, he did not enjoy an easy victory. He even slowed down and let the other man catch up.

He was too well-mannered to do this in a mocking way, as if conscious of his superiority; but he pretended to be winded, or to let his paddle slip and to regain it as it tried to drift away. But the ease with which he got past the Charlestonian again as soon as the fellow came up convinced him finally that his rival was "out-classed," as he modestly worded it. Then, just for the glory of Lakerim and the delight of the Dozen, he put on full steam, and sped along the home stretch with a speed that would rival the flight of an albatross.

The Lakerimmers howled with pride as their hero beached his boat; and even the Charlestonians were compelled to grip him by the hand and tell him that he ought to come to Charleston Academy—the highest compliment they knew how to pay.

But B. J. said with pride: "The Lakerim High School's good enough for me."

NOT many days after the Charlestonians disappeared into the distance, the Twelve gathered around the camp-fire like a war council of Indians, and built air-castles in the future.

“Speaking of air-castles,” said B. J., “what is the matter with the real thing—the club-house that is going up at home?”

And then they all felt homesick to see how their future castle was prospering, and perhaps down in their hearts they were a little homesick for their mothers and their other best girls.

So they decided that they had camped long enough. So the next day they folded their tents like the Arabs, and noisily moved away.

So that evening found them at home.

So they saw the club-house, and saw that the carpenters were now busy putting flesh on the dry bones they had last seen when they went out a-camping.

XIV

“**H**I! Hi, yi! Hi, yi, yi! Booma-lacka, bow-wow!
Hullabaloo! Yah, wah! Chick-a-go-runk! go-
runk! Siss boom 'rah! Hey-ip! hey-ip! Siccum!
'Rah-zoo! Wah-hoo! Bang! Ki-yi, mockali-on!
Buzz-saw! Boom 'rah! Hobble-gobble, razzle-dazzle!
Breke-kek-ex, ko-ax, ko-ax! Skookum, skookum!”

This marvelous language was not the small talk of the debating society of an insane asylum, nor was it a kennel of mad dogs broken loose. It was only the joint efforts of twelve solemn young gentlemen to decide upon a club yell. Each man had his own howl, and insisted on singing out with it while all the rest were rehearsing their own. It is reported that when this grand combination broke loose, all the small boys in town thought a circus was coming along with its calliope (which, of course, they pronounced “callie-ope”), while the two small policemen that pretended to protect the town of Lakerim are reported to have thought that a gang of outlaws was attacking the place, and to have crawled into a deep ditch, and pulled the ditch in after them.

After every one had yelled himself hoarse, each of the Twelve began yelling again to quiet the others, and the noise was almost greater than before. At length, however, they quieted down enough to listen to the various candidates for the yell. History proposed a long Latin quotation, and insisted on at least having some big words in the yell. He and Bobbles joined forces, and compromised on the following gem :

“Doodle-um! Diddle-um! Dandle-um! The duodecimal Dozen!”

Punk, however, said that this yell was beneath the dignity of such great men, and proposed one which he persuaded them to try over. It could hardly be called short, but it was certainly complete, and consisted not only in spelling out the full name of the club, but surrounding this with most of the well-known yells of all the colleges. It went something like this :

“Breke-kek-ex, ko-ax, ko-ax! Siss boom 'rah! Hulla-baloo, ha! L-a-k-e-r-i-m A-t-h-l-e-t-i-c C-l-u-b! 'Rah, 'rah, 'rah! 'Rah, 'rah, 'rah! 'Rah, 'rah, 'rah!”

The Dozen started vigorously to yell this out, and kept together fairly well until they came to the spelling of the long name, but there they began to fall by the wayside; they dropped to the ground, exhausted, one by one, so fast that by the time they reached the last “'Rah!” only one man survived, and that was the long-winded Punk, and even he gasped it out like a sick rooster.

After this they all sat still on the ground where they had fallen, and thought hard for some time, and debated

in whispers. The result of this debate was the final selection of a brisk yell that left some breath in the body of the yellers, though it threatened to break all the windows for miles around. The word "Lakerim" was given three times, with a long *a* and a short *i*, and the yell went out in a burst of glory, all the voices keeping together until half-way through the last long "Hoo!" when they divided and took different vowels. This gave the yell a blood-curdling sound that reminded B. J. of the tribes of Indians he had never seen. And this was the yell:

"Lāy-krīm! Lāy-krīm! Lāy-krīm! Hoo-
 { rah!
 ri!
 ro!
 ray!
 row!
 roo!"

Once the yell was settled upon, and learned and practised until they snapped it off as if it were a whip, they were troubled with the problem of club colors. This worried them seriously; and while they did not make so much noise in their deliberations as they had in discussing a yell, the colors they finally selected were even louder than the loudest yell they could rip out of their lungs. They were very secret about the choice of their colors, and no one of the townspeople knew what they were to be, till, on the occasion of a large picnic, the Twelve blossomed out in neck-scarfs made out of two colors by a

tailor who had been sworn to secrecy. Well might he have kept them secret, for they were the most fearful and wonderful nooses that ever encircled human necks.

The two colors were a pale, sickly green and a violent purple, that glared at each other like a frightened lamb and a hungry wolf. There is no way of describing just the particular shades that were joined in this hideous partnership. It must be enough to say that those colors almost broke up the picnic, and made such a sensation that the pride of the Dozen had a Humpty-Dumpty fall, and with one accord they decided to wear their handkerchiefs about their necks to hide the scarfs they had bought at such expense.

The girl that Pretty honored with the greater part of his attentions took him aside and told him he deserved his misery for not going to her or to some one with taste to select the club colors. Then the Dozen voted unanimously to make a new selection, and to leave the choice to the girls that called themselves the Lakerim Annex.

Then there was more trouble, for the feminine committee picked out such a dainty combination of wild-rose pink and baby-blue as would have disgraced an athletic club even more than the purple-green horror the boys selected. The Annex and the club had a conference then, and after much debating, and more combinations than were ever seen in a rainbow, they chose the not very original combination of gold and blue, which, however, was substantial enough and gorgeous enough for all purposes.

And History even wrote a very bad poem all about "pure gold" and "true blue," though Jumbo was mean enough to say that he could not understand just how History made "Lakerim Athletic" rime with "18-karat," or "apple-blossom" with "the Dozen."¹ But History scornfully said that Jumbo had no soul for poetry.

XV

NOW this girl friend of Pretty's, who had saved the club from their green-and-purple horror, was the best tennis-player among the girls of Lakerim, as Pretty was the best among the boys; and there was no "mixed team" in town that could equal them when they played together. Accordingly, when this girl—her name was Enid—was invited to a house-party at a near-by summer resort, where there was a country club with a fine lot of tennis-courts, she soon secured an invitation for Pretty. And he was doubly glad to go, since he knew that on these superfine tennis-courts he would meet some of the superfine tennis-players of the Tri-State Interscholastic League, which felt itself so superfine that it would not admit the Lakerim Athletic Club to membership.

When the Dozen went to the station to see Pretty off, B. J. took him to one side, and said with bated breath (all B. J.'s heroes always spoke with bated breath, though neither had he nor have I the slightest idea what a bated breath is):

"Now is the chance of a lifetime, Poorty, to bring home a beltful of scalps."

Then History buttonholed him, and said in an important voice:

“Lawn-tennis, Prëtty, is one of the most venerable and dignified games we have in these benighted days, and the Athletic Club will receive you with unrestrained admiration if you return victorious.”

Every one of the eleven had some good word to say, and when the train pulled out, the last thing Pretty saw was the little band of faithfuls waving gold-and-blue flags at him; and even when the train swept around a curve that hid them from sight, he heard faintly on the air the magic words:

“Lāy-krīm! Lāy-krīm! Lāy-krīm! Hoo-
 { rah!
 ri!
 ro!
 ray!
 row!
 roo!”

And this made him more than ever determined to show those Interscholastics what they were missing in keeping Lakerim out of the League.

The Interscholastic League had finished its tennis tournament long before; but while the championship had been won by a man named Hall from the Kingston Academy, three other men had given him a hard fight—Gates of the Troy Latin School, Eaton of Charleston, and Sprague of Greenville.

When Pretty arrived at the country club he found Enid

busily engaged in defeating the best tennis-players among the girls and women there. She hardly took time to skip across the court, and shake hands with him, and introduce him to two or three people, before she hurried back to the game.

One of the few whom Pretty met was the great and only Hall himself. He gave Pretty one languid glance, and asked with a lofty manner:

“Do you play the game?”

“A little,” said Pretty, modestly; and though he knew perfectly well who the uppish Hall was, he could not help adding: “Do you?”

“Ahem! ahem!” said Hall, in some confusion. “Well, rather! I am the champion of the Tri-State League!”

“Oh,” said Pretty, “I believe I have heard something about that. I’d like to play you a set or two.”

This presumption almost took the mighty Hall’s breath away, but he had enough left to sniff:

“What handicap would you want?”

Then it was Pretty’s turn to lose his breath at the sublime conceit of the man, and he exclaimed:

“Handicap? Why, I want an even game, of course.”

“Oho!” laughed Hall. “Well, I don’t mind—some day when I have no other engagement.” And he strode majestically away.

His behavior nettled Pretty so much that he vowed never to condescend to ask Hall to condescend to play him. He soon made up some matches, however, with the smaller fry, whom he defeated so easily that the

three men who had contested with Hall in the Interscholastic finals began to look upon him as an interesting possibility.

It would be hard to say whether tennis was made for Pretty, or Pretty for tennis, but the two certainly got along beautifully together. In spite of the name the boys had given him, his good looks and gracefulness did not make a milksop of him; and while his muscles were not so big and gnarly as those of others of the Dozen, yet they were by no means lacking in strength. He was rather like the lithe Indians, whose development is so equal and whose strength is so agile that they do not show through the skin, as do those of many a weaker man, who, for all his biceps like a base-ball, may be muscle-bound.

Sawed-Off had sniffed scornfully that lawn-tennis was a game fit for nobody but girls and pretty boys. The only answer Pretty made was to persuade him to go out on the court and have a little practice. Pretty played easily with the lumbering Sawed-Off, and placed the ball so gently always in the corner of the court hardest for Sawed-Off to reach that he kept the giant lunging this way and darting that, falling all over himself and the net so violently that it was not long before he was bathed in perspiration, panting for breath, his head and his wind both lost. Then Sawed-Off dropped the racket he had handled so awkwardly, and muttered:

“Foot-ball is child’s play compared to tennis!”

The best thing about Pretty’s game of tennis was not so much that he was great in any one style as that he was

good in all. He rarely made those marvelous plays that take the breath away from the crowd and compel even the opponents to applaud; for those marvelous plays are usually more than half good luck, and less than half skill. Pretty won his applause from the spectators by his unfailing coolness, his jaunty freshness after the most wearing play, and by the wonderful persistence that proved, in the long run, better than any streak of good luck, and won the more games. Pretty played with style, and style in all sports, as in all machinery, accompanies easiest and most scientific action. He was graceful as a panther, and withal as alert and active, while the game never grew so fierce that it left him dripping with sweat and generally shabby; and yet no effort was too violent for him to make, when any good seemed likely to be gained. The ball never flew so far away, or so swiftly, that he did not at least make a try for it.

In this fact that he never let a chance go by, and in his coolness, he showed the making of an ideal tennis-player; and it was his main ambition to perfect himself, so that some day, when he was older, he might be the champion of his country, and meet some of those English and Irish experts that come over here so proudly. He wanted to send them home a little sadder and a little wiser.

What looked like laziness in Pretty was really cautiousness. He often lost the first game or two he played with a new man; but he did not waste it: he spent it getting acquainted with his rival; and after his rival had

served one game, and been the striker-out in the next, Pretty usually knew just what sort of player the other man was. Pretty played a scientific game, with a strong wrist, and a grip that never let the racket twist in the hand. While he was not a big-muscled fellow, he wielded his racket with the fine, long swing before the ball is struck that carries it faster and truer than any short stroke, however strong. Pretty had a base of operations, like a general, and tried always to play from that, and work back toward it after every stroke. But best of all, as I have said, were his steadiness and his patience and good humor, for he never lost his temper or his head.

What, never?

Well, hardly ever.

Pretty had not been at the country club many days before Enid chose him as her partner for a tournament of mixed doubles. The two understood each other perfectly, and Enid took her full share of the game. She never failed to run hard after a ball; she played well at the net, and was very tricky at placing and returning; so Pretty never felt it necessary to poach on her preserves, or to do all the running.

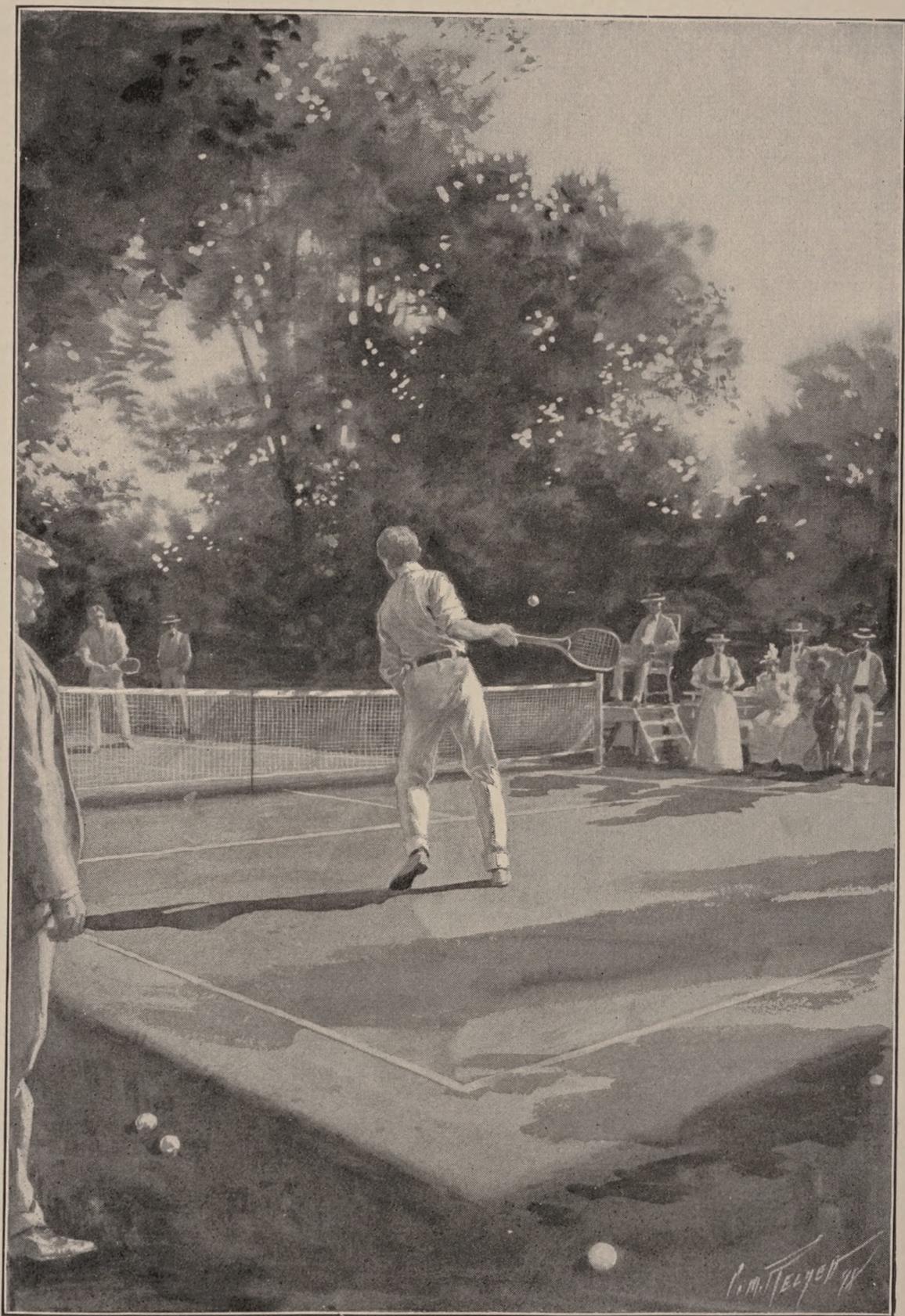
The man on the other side of the net was Gates, one of the three good men whom the champion Hall had beaten in the Interscholastic tournament; and when Pretty and Enid won handsomely with a good margin, Gates felt called upon to challenge Pretty to play. Of course Pretty accepted greedily.

It took Pretty about two games to decide that Gates

could not do much but lob. This style of knocking the ball sky-high never struck Pretty as a very good thing to make a whole game out of, and it was a style he rarely used. It puzzled him at first, and he generally misjudged the bound of the lob, or, if he struck it before it bounded, usually returned it wild. But he soon adapted himself to Gates' game, and while he could not beat him in his own manner, he returned Gates' sky-scrapers with such smashes and cuts that the Troy champion was soon beaten badly.

Then Eaton, another one of the three, who had watched the game, smiled at the childish lobbing of Gates, and thought he would teach this newcomer a lesson; so he challenged him. And of course Pretty accepted greedily.

Eaton was another one-style man; most tennis-players are. He relied mainly on the old-fashioned twist; he came as near the stroke that is named after the great English player Lawford, as he could. This stroke, as you know, is curious, because it takes such a violent effort to lawford the ball, and the bounce that results is such a sickly twist. Eaton would slash the ball with a stiffened wrist, an elbow swing, and a quick, hard jump into the air at the same time, to put the "English" on. This stroke is one of the most violent forms of amusement known to civilized races. But Pretty soon learned to calculate just how the ball would bound by watching the way it was delivered. So he calmly placed himself on the proper side, and usually before Eaton could untangle himself from the bow-knot into which he had tied himself, Pretty had returned the ball with a swift stroke, or a twist



PRETTY WINS THE GAME OF TENNIS AGAINST HALL.

that landed in a part of the court where Eaton could not reach it.

Then the third man, Sprague, tried to administer punishment on this stranger who had beaten two of the best Interscholastics. Of course Pretty accepted his challenge greedily.

Sprague was almost as much of a specialist as the other two, and he depended almost altogether on a delicate drop-stroke and a strong overhead drive. With these he played a fairly good game; but Pretty soon knew both these things, and paid them back with interest, and Sprague also joined the disgruntled two.

Now it happened that the great man Hall had been away from the club while Pretty was polishing off the three men Hall had won his championship from. Pretty had been so modest and complimentary in the games he had played that the three victims of his science began to wish very hard that he might take a little of the conceit—it would have been impossible to take it all—out of Champion Hall. When Hall returned, therefore, they speedily gave him glowing accounts of the wonderful new player, and they insinuated that he would prove too much for Hall, as he had for them. But Hall was too self-satisfied to be frightened, and he determined to show Pretty “a thing or two.”

The day after he got back, he sauntered up to Pretty, and said in a patronizing way:

“The fellows have been telling me that you put up a pretty stiff game of tennis.”

“Is that so?” was all Pretty said. He was still smarting under the indignation he felt at Hall’s treatment of him at their first meeting, and he went on with what he was saying to Enid.

But Hall persisted: “What would you say to playing me?” and he said it with the same magnificent manner a king might use in saying to a beggar: “How would you like to be made a duke?”

“I should n’t mind,” said Pretty, calmly.

“Best three sets out of five?”

“That suits me.”

“Be here at ten o’clock to-morrow morning,” was Hall’s royal command.

Pretty wanted to punch his head on general principles, but decided it would be better to beat him at tennis.

He knew, however, that Hall was an unusually strong player, and he felt very anxious for the result; so he said nothing to any one of the coming game. But Hall was so eager to prove his greatness publicly that he went around inviting every one at the club to be on hand at the finish of the stranger; and the next morning found a large crowd, beautiful with summer colors, gathered round the court.

Hall insisted on having an umpire, and a linesman at each base-line, though Pretty had expected only an informal game. They tossed up a penny, and Hall won first toss, and served. Pretty, therefore, chose the side of the court where the sun was least bothersome.

“Are you ready?” said the umpire.

Both players nodded.

"Play!" said the umpire. And almost before the word was out of his mouth Hall sent a vicious drive across the net. Hall knew the court so well that the first service was true, while Pretty misjudged the ball, and flunked on the return.

"Fifteen, love!" said the umpire.

The next service upon the left court was equally true, and found Pretty again equally unable to get it back.

"Thirty, love!" said the umpire; and a slight grin appeared on Hall's face as he went back to the base-line of the right court, and repeated the success of the first.

"Forty, love!" said the umpire; and his next word was "Game!"

As Hall batted the balls across the net for Pretty to serve, his slight grin had grown wider, and he waited easily for the opening shot from Pretty. Pretty's first serve was a pet of his, though he did not allow it to monopolize all his favor. It was a vicious forehand drive. When it went where it was sent, it just dipped the extreme corner of the service-court, and while it was a hard stroke to deliver, it was a harder one to return. But when the first ball went straight into the net, Pretty did not, as most players do, send over an easy one after his first fault; but tried the same stroke again. This also went into the net, though not so deeply as the first one.

"Love, fifteen!" said the umpire.

On the next service Pretty made the first fault on a

ball that went far too high above the net. His second went still too high, but not so high.

“Love, thirty!” said the umpire.

Still Pretty persisted, and lost the whole game on faults. Two love games in succession were enough to upset the best of Pretty’s friends, and to make them believe either that he was hopelessly inferior to Hall, or—which was quite as bad—that he was having an off day. But neither they nor the gloating Hall knew that Pretty was only studying Hall when Hall served, and only doing a little scientific range-finding when he himself served. And now Hall was serving again.

His first service was accurate, but this time Pretty returned it—into the net. And Hall’s service from the left court Pretty also found and returned, with a short pick-up or half-volley that took Hall so by surprise that he tried to return it, though it would have gone outside of bounds if left alone.

“Fifteen-all!” said the umpire; and Enid thought this a much pleasanter-sounding score than those that had so much “love” in them.

His other serve Pretty returned again, this time accurately; but Hall had made a mistake in rushing after a ball that went wild before, so he made no effort to reach this one, and realized that the score was now 15 to 30, and he must wake up a little; so he did, and won the game.

The fourth game Pretty began with another fault, but the second effort was successful, though Hall returned it with ease. Pretty put more force into the following ser-

vice, and this Hall returned with difficulty; and Pretty killed his return without difficulty. Pretty managed in this game to work the score up to "deuce," but Hall won both the "advantages" and the game.

The fifth game Pretty managed to make also a long, deuce game, in spite of the fact that the great and glorious Hall was serving; but at a critical moment he misjudged a volley, and heard the sickening smack of the wood when the ball struck the edge of his racket, and he knew that the game was lost. It looked at the time as if it would be a love set, but Pretty shut his teeth a little harder, and won the sixth game on his own serve. The next, however, though hard fought, went to Hall, and the set was his, at a score of 6 to 1.

"Had enough?" said Hall, as they passed each other to change courts.

"No, not yet," said Pretty, and he could not help borrowing an idea from John Paul Jones; he added: "I've just begun to play."

Now Pretty had the sun in his eyes, and a new side of the net to work from; but he had played what might be called a constructive game, and though he found himself with the score against him, he also found himself pretty well acquainted with Hall's methods. Hall, however, was so convinced that he had an easy victory that he had paid little heed to Pretty's improvement, and had grown careless and ragged. He scored many double faults, and netted many a let, and planted many an easy return outside the side-lines or beyond the back-lines.

Pretty was still, however, playing so cautiously, and

studying the new tricks that Hall felt called upon to let him see, that he could not quite win the set, though he brought it to the point of "games-all" and lost by the very respectable score of 7 to 5.

Now Hall decided that one more set was all that was necessary to put a stop to the gossip that had been going around to the effect that this newcomer from the small town of Lakerim understood the game of tennis. He went in to win, and played his best. But Pretty also went in to win and show that he also knew a thing or two. He won the first three games of the set with some difficulty, and for the fourth administered him a love game. This put Hall on his mettle, indeed, and brought from him some of those brilliant displays that had won him the championship in the Interscholastic League; but though Hall took the next three games, Pretty did not lose heart at the outbursts of applause—that even Enid was forced to join—in praise of Hall's fierce volleys and his long, running returns.

Nor did Pretty grow frightened when Hall charged down on the net like a wild bull, but he faced him calmly as a toreador, and returned volley for volley. There ensued one of those plays that even a stranger to lawn-tennis can enjoy watching—and there are not many plays that a stranger to lawn-tennis can make head or tail of. This little single combat was a fierce one. Hall tried volleying returns till he found that he could not get the ball past Pretty that way. Then he tried lobbing the ball, and got lobs back. He tried high lobs, and low

lobs, and lobs with a twisting cut. But at every point Pretty met him, till a misstep brought him to the ground with a wrenched ankle, and Hall placed the ball with a gentle tap far out of his reach, though he ran after it on hands and knees.

Pretty's ankle was not sprained seriously, yet it was such a wrench as made every step a twinge. If people sometimes thought him a bit effeminate, he now showed a woman's ability to smile through pain, and none of the spectators knew he suffered; and though he lost in this one duel, he won the game, and the next two after it; which gave him the set by the comfortable score of 6 to 3.

The next set found Hall still more determined to wipe Pretty off the face of the earth; but his determination was of the heating and disconcerting kind, while Pretty's determination to win made him all the more cool and all the more cautious. Hall began now to bring out of his box of tricks everything he knew about tennis. He dropped his slashing overhead serve for a low forehand twist; but Pretty knew that this would always bound to the left side, and stood ready. Then Hall tried the low backhand stroke; but Pretty, watching his cut, stood waiting for a bounce to the right, and returned it without difficulty. And then the disgusted Hall began to use the backward twist, but quit it soon, when he saw that Pretty could foretell that it would always bounce straight back toward the net.

Pretty had been perfected in this style of returning by his experience in the games with Eaton; and his contest

with Sprague had perfected him in the dainty drop-stroke, which landed the ball just over the net, and to which Hall turned in desperation. Finding himself beaten at all these points, and tired out, besides, with a combination of rash rushes and explosive temper, Hall tried to get a little rest and breath by devoting most of his time to lobbing. But he found that he was losing more than he gained, for Pretty's game with Sprague had perfected him in the lob, which he returned in all sorts of unexpected ways and places. In fact, if the three men had seriously gone about training Pretty to take down their high and mighty conqueror Hall, they could not have done better; for the experience with three players, each very good in his own little specialty, had broadened Pretty into the all-round education that is needed by a would-be champion.

And now, when the fourth set went Pretty's way, it was the great and only Hall himself that proposed an adjournment until the afternoon, seeing that the score in sets was a tie.

But Pretty's ankle was protesting so violently against this hard usage that he knew that his only hope was in playing the contest to a finish immediately. By afternoon it would probably be so swollen that he would not be able to walk on it, and he felt that any excuse he would make for postponing the finish of the game indefinitely would be taken as a sign of cowardice by Mr. Hall. So he relentlessly insisted that he would rather play it out at once, and Hall was too proud to cry "Quits!" again.

Pretty felt now that his only hope was in setting Hall such a pace that the end would come soon, for every step sent a dash of pain through his whole body; but he realized that the only truly strong game is a careful game, and he played more with his mind than ever. He was forced to let several chances pass that he might have taken advantage of by a violent effort, but he feared another tumble, and found his revenge in placing his returns so neatly that they always taxed Hall to the utmost.

He sent him flying to the back-line, and brought him dashing back to the net; he drove down the side-lines, and so varied his straight volleys and his drop-strokes, and so masked his twists, that Hall's tongue was almost hanging out from exhaustion.

And now it was Pretty's turn to provoke the applause of the spectators, and Enid wore her gloves to tatters pounding her little hands together in her ecstasy over his successes; for now he was playing with Hall as a cat with a mouse, meeting Hall's frantic efforts with his own coolness, and meeting Hall's brute force with teasing devices planned on the spur of the moment. But luck was on Hall's side, though science was on Pretty's, and they were tied at the end of the eighth game.

"Four-And," however, found Pretty almost more desperate than the champion, for he felt that his ankle would never last out a deuce set. His forehead was clammy with pain, but only a slight knitting of his brows, and the tight pressure of his pale lips, would have shown any

beholder that he was having a harder battle even than the champion who saw his laurels being wrested from him.

Then followed a long and bitter contest, and the score kept bobbing back to "games-all" till Pretty grew fairly dizzy. He found himself finally with the advantage game in his favor, and Hall to serve. And now he felt that he had only one more game in him before the last jot of his strength was drained out.

Hall's first service was a drive which Pretty took on a splendid pick-up that just clipped the back-line of Hall's court, and sent up a beautiful little puff of lime-smoke that looked far from beautiful to Hall. Again Hall delivered a drive, and again Pretty returned it with a half-volley, and again it just nipped the line. But this time Hall claimed that it was "out," and when the umpire decided against him he protested angrily. The umpire stuck to his decision in spite of Hall's fuming, however, until Pretty came forward to the net and requested the umpire to change his decision in Hall's favor. At Lake-rim he had learned the spirit of the true sportsman.

The score was now "fifteen-all," and this time Hall sent over a drop-stroke that brought Pretty forward to the net with a run in which every step was agony. But he reached the ball in time, and returned it with a low lob which Hall decided to return with a mad killing stroke. But the smashing blow he gave it sent it into the net, and in his wrath he whirled his racket in after it. That was his method of expressing disappointment. But when Pretty misjudged the next service, and returned the ball

into the lap of Enid, instead of imitating Hall's action, he only dried the wet palm of his hand on his handkerchief, and gripped his racket tighter. This was his method of expressing disappointment.

"Thirty-all," said the umpire.

Hall repeated the successful twist he had used before ; but Pretty rarely made the same mistake twice, and lifted his return gently over the net. Here Hall found it, however, since he had started to run forward immediately after his service. He sent it swishing right at Pretty's face ; but there Pretty met it with a loose racket, and it went back to Hall's left side. Hall scooped it in with a clever backhanded stroke, and Pretty, suffering with a constant throbbing pain, struck blindly at it, and the ball hit him a stinging blow in the mouth. This point was doubly Hall's then, and the umpire had nothing to say but :

"Forty-thirty !"

Pretty tied the score on the next service. And now Hall made a fierce effort to use the Lawford stroke, which it is said no one but its inventor ever succeeded in perfecting, and by a mad contortion he sent over one perfect example of it. But Pretty foresaw what was coming, and for once luck was on his side in his effort to return it.

"Vantage out !" sang the umpire.

Hall tried the Lawford again on his next service, but flunked, and the umpire cried :

"Fault one !"

Upon this next service the whole contest hung, and

Hall returned to his first love, a fierce overhead drive; but Pretty fell back before it far enough to return it on a long level volley that barely skimmed the net. This Hall was forced to take with an underhand stroke that made a lob of his return, and Pretty, who had run forward to take the net, saw, to his chagrin, the ball going far over his head and well back of him. He turned and dashed desperately after it; but it struck the ground and bounded high again before he could get far enough to return it with a forward drive. His only hope lay in taking the desperate chance of a backward lob; so, as he ran, he dipped his racket under it, and it returned again skyward just as Pretty tumbled in a heap upon the ground.

Hall watched it as it soared, and smiled as it came easily within his reach. He decided to let it bound, and noting with one quick glance that his rival was far to the rear, decided to give it a gentle pat that should lift it just clear of the net; but the smile died out as the perverse little ball struck the canvas band and fell rippling down the net into the court.

Then the umpire sang out that the game and the set and the contest belonged to the man from Lakerim, and everybody broke out into gay applause for a well-earned victory.

But the applause stopped short, for the victor did not rise and acknowledge it; he lay upon the ground in a still, white heap; and when Enid and others ran to him they found that he had fainted away.

XVI

“WELL, I made a fozzle at the tenth, and heeled the ball, and landed in a bunker; but I took a good stance, and got a strong grip on my mashie, and—”

It was History that spoke, and in a stranger language than ever. Quiz had won his name by earning it, and he alone of all the dumb-struck Dozen had strength enough to break in with a question. He grasped the nearest strange word, and queried:

“Say, History, what ’s a mashie?”

“Why,” said History, superiorly, “a mashie is a straight-faced niblick.”

Ten of the boys had only breath enough to gasp:

“Whew!”

But Quiz persisted:

“And what under the sun is a niblick?”

And History answered scornfully:

“Why, I thought everybody knew that a niblick is a narrow-headed iron to be used when you get in a whin.”

And then no one dared ask what a “whin” might be, and all History saw was a little cloud of dust raised by

twenty-two heels, and all he heard was a feeble chorus of "Good day!"

The rest of the Dozen had fled for their lives.

History was bad enough when he stuck to the English dictionary, but now he had gone mad—or, to be Scotch, he had gone "daffy"—over golf.

Golf appealed to History particularly for three reasons: In the first place, it had so many new, hard words that none of the other boys in Lakerim could understand. In the second, it required no running or jumping.

"And, besides, it is a very venerable game," said History. "They had it in Scotland before they had firearms."

"Yes," said Jumbo; "if they had had firearms first, the man that invented golf would never have lived to know what struck him."

But History told with gusto the story of the occasion, almost three centuries ago, when the Scot that was afterward James II of England had chosen a shoemaker for his partner, and had beaten the English noblemen that claimed to know the game.

At first the boys called History a snob, and made all manner of second-rate jokes about his mania; but he reminded them of how they had imported hockey; and used such a fearful and wonderful vocabulary in trying to explain to them the charms of the game that they finally thought it best to leave him to himself.

And so he practised at the game like the serious-minded old gentleman he was. He went about swiping at all the pebbles with a shinny-club he had borrowed of Jumbo,

and he bought him a volume or two on the science of the game—he called them “text-books”! He got him a couple of well-made clubs from an old Highlander who had settled in Lakerim; and went at golf with as much seriousness as if there were a diploma to win.

He carried his book with him; and he would read a passage, and then stick the book into his pocket, and try to put into practice what he had read. At first he missed the golf-ball with surprising regularity, and either cut the turf or raised large welts on the atmosphere. Finally he “found the ball,” as they say in base-ball, but now it always went in some direction far from the one he aimed at.

Then, one day, his spectacles dropped off, and he caught them a clip with his club, that sent them splintering into the middle of week after next; and that day some one had to lead him home.

But he would not be discouraged, and at length his natural awkwardness was worn away until he was able to strike the ball squarely and fairly. Yet now, hard as his weak arms smote it, it would roll only a few feet along. But in time he learned that the secret of the golf-stroke is not so much in the force of the blow as in the length of the swing before and after the club strikes the ball. The knack of “following the stroke through,” as good golfers phrase it, is half the game.

So at length History was enabled to conquer the temptation to bat the ball, and he learned rather to sweep it away, carrying the club on after it in line with the flight of the ball.

History had this advantage over more athletic fellows in learning golf: that he was willing to begin right, and improve slowly but steadily along the correct way, instead of beginning with quick and only fairly good results, accomplished in bad form and never improved.

He began with a very short swing, but slowly increased the length of his stroke until he brought the club fairly well back over his left shoulder, then brought it accurately down upon the ball. And he learned the cardinal rule—to keep the eye on the ball until the stroke is finished, and to consider the stroke unfinished till the club has followed the ball as far as possible without being let go. He learned, too, the importance of gripping the club right, of choosing the right stroke, and the right club for each stroke, of building not too high a pat of sand (or “tee”) to set the ball on, and of taking the right position (or “stance”) before it.

He had an infinite patience, had History. He did not lose his temper, and he broke few clubs with wild strokes. At length his knack and his strength grew so that he got to knocking the ball so far on the “drive” that his weak eyes usually lost it; and he understood that description of the game which says: “Fine game, golf! First you hit the ball. Then, if you find it the same day you hit it—you win.”

And now History began to try other clubs; and though he did not place his reliance on having the full set of nineteen, he learned the need of seven, and these he got of the old Scot, who turned them for him from pure love of the cause, and who gave the boy the necessary iron clubs

for the price of certain old school-books that History sold sorrowfully enough.

He had to be his own "caddie" and carry his own bag of clubs at first, until a certain girl of the town—she who thought History the greatest man living—insisted upon wandering around the fields and carrying the clubs, like a papoose, for him. History's reason for admiring the girl, by the way, was the fact that her first name was the high-sounding title Sophronisba (her last name it was Jones), and—oh, yes, he had one other reason for admiring her, and that was that she knew enough to admire him.

Almost any day, then, one could see the pathetic little figure of History working out his golf salvation as tirelessly and as solemnly as ever a penitent of the middle ages worked out his. He started early to school, and banged the golf-ball all the way, and after school he followed it all the way home. Soon the pedestrians of Lakerim learned that a new danger threatened their steps. It used to be that boys were pitching and batting base-balls across all the streets until the very horses almost learned to distinguish between a strike and a fair hit. Now the horses and the two-footed animals learned that when they heard a shrill voice crying "Fore!" it was time to jump for their lives and climb a tree, if possible, before a golf-ball came zipping between their legs or past the tips of their noses.

THAT fall, History was invited to spend a few days at the country club made famous forevermore by the great victories at tennis won by Pretty—who, it is high time

to tell, was soon up and about after his sprained ankle had laid aside its bandages.

Now, it happened that the High Moguls of the great and glorious Tri-State Interscholastic League were to have their annual fall meeting at this same country club.

The Lakerim athletes felt that, having defeated every member of the Interscholastic League in some game or other, at least once, they were fairly entitled to a membership in the League. While the Dozen had by no means won every game they had played, they had proved to the satisfaction of some of the members of the League that they were too important to leave out any longer.

"For," Tug argued, "the champion of the League can't well call itself champion over three States when one of the States contains a high-school club that has walloped it."

But other members of the League felt that an academy was so much superior to a high school that a high school had no right to associate with an academy. These members were too strong to be voted down, and it looked very much as if the Dozen would have to continue a lonely career indefinitely.

Yet the boys were so proud of the club-house, now almost completed, that they determined to make a hard fight to force their way into the League, and they planned to send delegates to the convention to make a powerful appeal for admission to membership.

The contractors on the building, however, had demanded another payment, and the moneys of the treasury were so

few and far between that the question of paying delegates' expenses was a hard one to solve.

At this moment History received his invitation to visit the country club; and up spake Jumbo, saying:

"If we make History our delegate to the convention of the League we 'll save ourselves from spending a lot of money we have n't got; and, besides, if History once gets the floor he 'll talk them so deaf, dumb, and blind that they 'll vote us into the League before they know what they 're doing."

On these rather uncomplimentary grounds History was unanimously appointed a delegate—he called himself "Envoy Extraordinary and Ambassador Plenipotentiary."

"That 's right," sang out Sawed-Off; "just shake the dictionary through a coal-sieve, as the fellow said; and don't let any little words creep into your speech, History, and they 'll give you whatever you ask."

XVII

AND so History went. And he found the convention assembled. And he got permission to make a speech after some difficulty.

He had written his argument in a very fine hand on very many sheets of legal cap. When he rose to address the Tri-State Interscholastic League, he tucked the roll under his arm and wiped his spectacles on a handkerchief with a blue-and-gold border; as he did so he remarked with great importance:

“Ahem! ahum!”

At these awful words, and at the sight of the roll of legal cap, the members of the League sat up straight and looked at one another in a scared sort of way, and wondered why they had chosen to meet in a second-story room with no fire-escape, and why they had allowed History to get between them and the door.

History's argument began at the year One, and followed the history of the world pretty closely down to date, bringing in telling allusions to Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, and Themistocles—History called him “Themmy-stockles.”

By the time History was half-way through his speech,

most of the members that were in favor of admitting the Lakerim Dozen had gone comfortably to sleep,—it was warm and drowsy weather,—and the enemies of the Dozen were growing desperate. But all things human must have an end, and even History's speech had a peroration. He finished it with a fine burst of eloquence that would have been more impressive if his voice had not cracked on the most important, beautiful word, and if he had not said "pittomless bot," when he meant "bottomless pit." But History was satisfied that he had made a deep impression, and he went out of the room proud of his oratory, and blissfully ignorant of the fact that even the friends of the Lakerim cause had grown indignant that the Dozen had sent such a long-winded, long-worded delegate to torment the League.

Out of the club-house History wandered, and, thinking that such a mental effort deserved some physical relaxation, sent one of the club's caddies after his golf-sticks, and went forth upon the links seeking whom he might persuade to a game.

At the very beginning of the links he found one of the best golfers in the club, a big, brawny athlete named Campbell. He was making a few practice shots, and was watched by a crowd of admirers, many of them good players whom he had defeated and who did not now dare to pit their skill against his. To him in his solitary grandeur little History came, as Jack the Giant-Killer to the ogre; and him History challenged as a Lilliputian might have dared Gulliver to put up his dukes.

The giant looked down at History and grinned, and looked at the crowd, and they grinned. But this giant was, like almost all the giants I have ever met, a good-natured fellow, and it struck him that History was better than nobody at all to play with, and that perhaps he might teach History a few things that would be of value to him. So he accepted the boy's challenge gracefully, and soon the game was on.

Golf, as not everybody knows even at this day, when it has become one of the best-liked games in America, is played on a course, or "links," of irregular ground, with eighteen holes, each about four inches wide and six inches deep, placed at irregular distances upon it. The object of the game is to knock the ball successively into each of the holes in the fewest number of shots. It is a sort of magnificent croquet with holes instead of wickets and posts, and with those holes from one to four hundred yards apart, so that the ball moves a distance of three or four miles when most scientifically played, and many times that distance when "duffers" are playing. Like lawn-tennis, golf is looked upon as a lazy and silly game until it is once played, and thereafter it is likely to become a mania and to put mind and body to a severe test.

Around each hole should be a smooth space of about twenty yards (called the "putting-green") for careful strokes. Between some of the holes there are various obstacles, such as deep sand-pits, long grass, pools of water, and mounds like soldiers' trenches. These are mean places to get the ball into and out of, and they are well called "hazards."



HISTORY CHALLENGES CAMPBELL.

Before the first shot for each hole the ball is placed on a little mound of sand or earth, called the "tee," so that it may be driven off with a good long swiipe. After this it is struck from wherever it lies, and gradually driven to the putting-green about the next hole. Here the effort is to knock the ball into the hole for which it is intended. Once in a hole, the number of strokes is noted on a score-card, and the player walks to the next teeing ground; a new tee is built, and the ball is placed on it and knocked toward the next hole.

So now History's opponent Campbell is patting into shape a little tee and placing his golf-ball gingerly upon it. And now he is standing alongside of the ball; he is making a few preliminary waggles to prepare for an accurate shot. And now the club goes back with a great swing over his head and almost to his left shoulder, and then it comes swishing through the air, catching the ball squarely as the head of the club is on the rise, and sending it flashing through the air. But the stroke does not stop, as a base-ball batsman's does, when it meets the ball; it follows on after it until the player is swung almost off his feet, and the club goes round and finishes the circle.

It was a superb drive that Campbell had made, and there was a chorus of "ahs" and "ohs" from the crowd that watched him.

And now History is building the tee for his own golf-ball, and the crowd that was so consumed with admiration for Campbell has little interest in seeing the diminutive

History make a "foozle." Some of them turn away, while the rest look on listlessly. But some of these are good enough players to note that History addresses the ball in surprisingly good form, that he also gives a long swing to his club and follows the stroke through. They note with surprise that, while there is not muscle enough back of the club to send the drive as far as Campbell's, yet the ball has been struck neither with the heel nor with the toe of the "driver," but has been sent through on a bee-line for a fair distance. So they decide to follow, and see what the little shaver is good for, after all.

The distance to the first hole was a long four hundred yards up hill and down, but Campbell brought himself finally a few yards from the level space of the putting-green in four shots. He made a good "approach" that landed the ball within two feet of the hole, and he was out, or "down," in six.

History, though feebler in the biceps than Campbell, was right at his heels. He made a brilliant approach shot that landed him on the putting-green so comfortably close to the little cup that he "holed" out in six, and halved the hole with Campbell.

Campbell looked the picture of amazement as he stooped down to build a little tee of earth for his next drive. He was so surprised at being tied by the diminutive rival to whom he had intended to teach the game that he built his tee too big and miscalculated on his drive, so that, catching the ball too low, he sent it high up into the air, and the strong wind that was blowing across

the links took it far out of its course and landed it in a sandy spot he had hoped to avoid.

History, however, built his tee carefully and addressed the ball with great care before he struck it, and then took advantage of the breeze, and drove the ball slightly into the wind, so that it was rather a help than a hindrance.

Campbell found his golf-ball snugly nestling in a little bunker of sand; he made a bad effort to "loft" it out, and succeeded in sending it only a few feet.

On his second shot History also found himself bunkered, but he purposely struck the ground in front of the ball, and though the stroke tore up the sand, it caught the ball nicely on the center and drove it far and true. Campbell, however, was playing in hard luck, and when he finally reached the putting-green he missed the put, overplayed the hole, and had to spend a seventh stroke before he landed the ball in the cup.

History, on the other hand, had made a businesslike approach and a cautious put, and was down in five.

Having won this hole, History had the "honor," and made the first drive for the next. He played his strokes so that the ball was kept close to the ground and was hardly hampered by the wind. Campbell, however, was still so disconcerted at the unexpected good form of the pygmy from Lakerim that he failed to heed the warning of the wind, and made no accounting for its force in his long, high shots.

On the third hole he was not down until the eighth shot, while History holed out in six.

And now History was stampeded by his success, and his little heart was in such a flutter of ecstasy that he forgot his caution and his careful planning of every stroke, and smashed wildly; but Campbell also had his troubles, and the fourth—an easy one, too—was halved in seven, when it should have been finished in five.

And now Campbell braced himself with an effort, and on the fifth drive dealt the ball so mighty a blow that he was on the putting-green in two by a long stroke of his "brassie," and he made the hole in four, while History, attempting to show how skilful he also was with the brassie, used it when an iron club was plainly the proper weapon, and he could not hole out before he had expended seven shots.

Then Campbell's strength got him into trouble in the next course, for though he had to play only a half-iron shot on the putting-green, he grew too zealous, and sent the ball whizzing across the grass right under the fence and out of bounds. Now he took a new ball and dropped it from behind him over his head, and this, with the penalty of one stroke, brought the new ball back to the putting-green and holed it out in seven. History, however, was still suffering from over-excitement, and found himself barely on the edge of the putting-green at his sixth shot. The only thing to save him would be a remarkable put that would land his golf-ball in the hole in one shot. He bethought him of a new style of putting, invented by an American—for you may be sure that no institution, serious or sporty, is so venerable or so highly

finished that some American will not make some improvement in it.

Once on the putting-green, every golf-player has a style of his own. Some use one hand, some use two; some stand in a soldierly attitude, some cower down over the ball like frogs; some grasp the shaft of the club at the bottom, some at the top; some use the club like a spoon, some like a whisk-broom; some players do not use a golf-club at all, but a croquet-mallet or even a billiard-cue: anything and everything is tried that may wheedle the ball a short distance across the putting-green into the little tin cup of a hole.

But the new method that History used was not in the choice of a new weapon, but in the manner of handling the old. He stood facing the hole squarely back of the wall; the left hand rested on his hip, and the right hand held the club lightly. The ball was rapped smartly, not with the face of the club, but with the back of it, after a slight pendulum motion to and fro over it to get the exact line. With this method History could put the ball as accurately as if the turf were a green billiard-cloth and the club a cue.

It was in these two things—the approach and the put—that History excelled. He was not exceptionally good at the drive, because he was too young to have acquired a very full swing, and in the approach shot a three-quarters swing is the one best used. On the approach shot his backward swing was indeed shorter than that of many a player, but after the ball was struck he followed it

through with an unusually long swing, so that the ball was hit accurately, flew close to the ground, and stopped short. In the putting History's delicacy and his caution were the causes of his success and saved him many an extra shot. He not only religiously obeyed the first commandment of golf, "Keep your eye on the ball," but, since he wore spectacles, he could be said to keep four eyes on the ball.

History's habit of reading constantly—at his meals, and on his way to school, always—had given him a great power of concentrating his mind, so that he hardly knew what went on about him. And now this stood him in good stead in golf, because, while Campbell was distracted by every movement of the restless caddie, and disturbed by the slightest whisper of inconsiderate onlookers, History gave all his mind to the ball, and hardly knew that any one else existed on the earth.

To describe a game of golf to readers that are not very familiar with it requires the use of almost as many strange, dark words as it would to deliver a lecture on the Greek language to an audience that did not know *alpha* from *omega*. So now I am afraid that the great game History played before these people, to whom he was as strange as one of Rip Van Winkle's Catskill Mountain pygmies, cannot be described at length without talking a lot of gibberish that would only grow the more gibberish-ish the further I got.

Therefore I will not say a word about the way he was trapped by a sand-bunker on his drive from the fifth tee

and got out neatly with the niblick on the second shot, bowled over the second bunker beautifully with his mashie, and with a fine brassie laid the ball dead on the hole in three and holed out in four; I will not mention the fact that Campbell, who relied on his strong drive and on his cuts, found the wind to be a worse rival than the stranger from Lakerim; I will not tell you how on the eighth course his mashie shot overran on a down-hill lie, and how he made a brassie approach that went too far.

I will not even insinuate that when Campbell did, as most golfers do, since the game is a Scotch game, insist on taking every advantage of the least little rule, and when he grew quarrelsome, History refused to quarrel, because he had been so long a member of the Lakerim Athletic Club that he was a true sportsman and preferred earning his points to having them given to him by some rule. And you will never know from me that, after Campbell stood out so strongly to gain a point by quarreling over the rules, he met his just reward by losing the ball through a bad shot that sent it into a patch of long grass, where he could not find it until just five seconds after he had searched the five minutes the law allows; so that he lost the hole, after all.

You must live your life out—if you can—in eternal ignorance of this glorious game, and you must go about your business knowing nothing except that whenever History lost a point or two he made it up at once; and that usually when he could not win he did not lose, but halved the hole, so that the game hung in the balance until

the very last drive on the very last hole, the eighteenth, when History brought down the house, or rather brought down "all outdoors," with a wonderful put in the American method, that left Campbell, with his Scotch-English putting, in the lurch, and gave the delegate from the Dozen a lasting reputation at that country club.

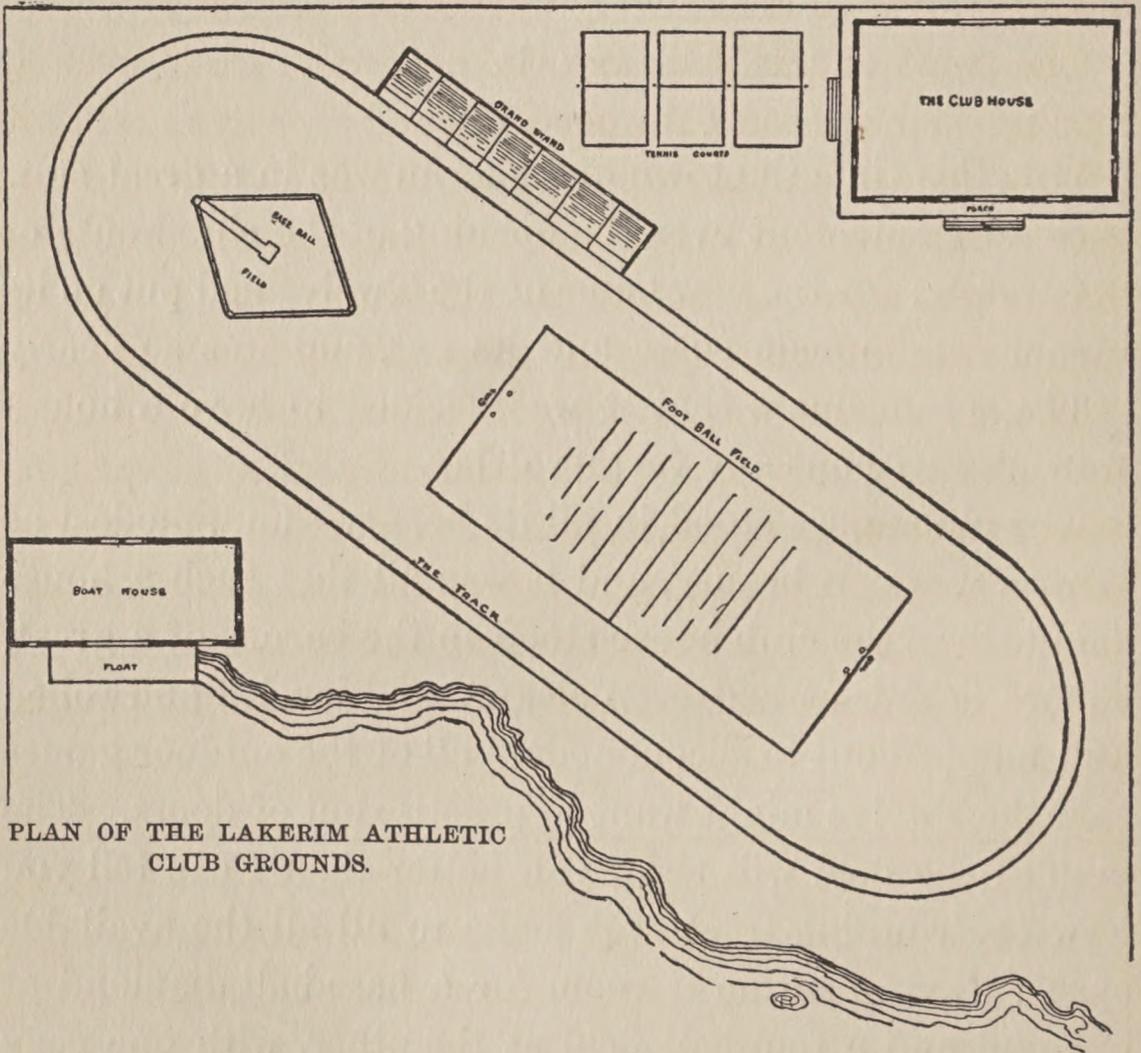
When History had won the game and the applause of the crowd, which had by now grown very large, he remembered that no answer had been given to the invitation which the Lakerim Athletic Club had given itself to join the Tri-State Interscholastic League. So he tore himself away from the crowd, without seeing the hands stretched out to shake his, and, thinking only of catching the train for Lakerim, ran to the club-house to learn what action had been taken on the all-important question.

XVIII

ALL this time the town of Lakerim was in a great stew of excitement over the opening of the club-house of the Dozen ; for the new home of the Twelve had put on its outside and inside coats and its hat, and was so nearly ready for business that it was decided to have a house-warming without any further delay.

The club-house stood in all its beauty—and, modest as it was, it was a beauty, and it was all that such a house should be—the club-house stood in the corner of a great, square field that had been cleared and leveled and rolled and mapped out to accommodate all of the outdoor games that the Twelve might want to practise out of doors. The map of the field will show you better than I can tell you how the running-track was made to fill all the available space, leaving inside it room for a base-ball diamond at one end and a foot-ball field at the other, with one cozy grand stand that served for both ; how two perfect tennis-courts were tucked into one corner left vacant by the oval-shaped track, and how a little boat-house fronted on the lake in the other corner, so that the club was indeed a Lakerim club.

It would take an architect to tell you how Sawed-Off's father had designed the club-house so that it should contain the greatest possible room and convenience at the least possible cost. The basement was given over to bowling-alleys and bath-rooms and lockers, with space



PLAN OF THE LAKERIM ATHLETIC CLUB GROUNDS.

between them for a bricked and netted court to practise tennis or base-ball or basket-ball in the winter. And there was at one end a long, narrow pool of water, in which the men could swim, or the boat crew practise when the club had earned money enough to pay for a stationary boat.

The first floor was devoted to a gymnasium, not very liberally equipped, but yet with chest-weights and rowing-machines and ladders and stationary bicycles and horizontal bars and trapezes, Indian clubs of all sizes and dumb-bells of all weights, fencing-foils, single sticks, and boxing-gloves to reach every muscle in every body.

The front of this floor and the next were given over to reading-rooms, rooms for checkers and chess and all that tribe of games, and to rooms where the club or its committees could meet to debate any of the solemn problems that might come up before it. Up-stairs was a gallery with a running-track tilted at the ends, and padded.

The club-house was, in fact, an ideal home for an ideal club of boys who were not altogether ideal themselves, perhaps, and yet were very decent fellows and thorough sportsmen, who had learned in a year of association with one another and a year of contests with rivals at least these four virtues, which are, after all, not so common as they might well be :

To do zealously and with all power of mind and body whatever task comes to hand or can be found by search.

To dare much and yet be cautious and thoroughly honest withal.

To take victory modestly and defeat pluckily, determined to improve every success and to repeat no mistake.

And, above all, to be a true sportsman, not a cry-baby or a sneak.

The event of the house-warming found the club-house lighted up inside from basement to roof, and festooned outside with Japanese lanterns and bicycle-lamps. All the Twelve except History were there with their best girls; and History was represented by Miss Sophronisba Jones. Besides, there were such new members as the Twelve had found it necessary and desirable to take into the club to share its advantages—and its expenses. There were also the fathers and mothers of such boys as had fathers and mothers, and, in short, all the best people of all ages in the town. The ceremonies were to open with a grand march to be led by the president, to the music of the village band, employed at great expense. The band was instructed to strike up Mr. Sousa's "The Stars and Stripes Forever!" exactly at eight o'clock; and the village players were just filling their cheeks with wind enough to blow the brass trombones and trumpets inside out when they were ordered to postpone the struggle by the president of the club, who had just left a little crowd where eleven of the Dozen were anxiously discussing History's delay.

Sleepy had suggested that the train was probably late. But B. J. had whispered excitedly:

"Perhaps it has been held up by train-robbers."

But Jumbo had grunted:

"I'll bet History has n't finished making that speech yet."

But Sawed-Off had said:

"I'll bet they won't let him make it, and he has choked to death on some of those big words."

But Reddy and Heady broke out as one:

“Maybe they voted not to let us in—”

“And,” Tug went on for them, “he ’s ashamed to come back.”

“Or else,” suggested Bobbles, “he does n’t want to put a damper on our celebration.”

The Dozen were worried, and the Dozen were growing blue, and the Dozen began to feel that the club-house and the club and all the things they had been working for so hard for a whole year were n’t worth it, after all, if they failed to get into the League.

“I guess I will postpone the march awhile longer,” said Tug, sadly.

So they waited and waited, and chewed their handkerchiefs, and worked at their unusually high collars, and looked ashamed and embarrassed, and kept away from their friends.

Nothing, not even the measles, is so catching as a feeling of uneasiness once let loose in a large and happy crowd. And soon the guests began to feel that something was wrong, and to whisper together and feel uncomfortable.

When the discomfort had grown almost unendurable, and the talk had died out, and everybody was simply waiting, there was a clatter of hurrying feet on the walk outside, and then on the steps to the club-house, and lo! the long-expected History appeared at the door.

He gave just one wild look at the crowd, and then dropped to the ground and began fumbling about the floor. As usual, he had lost his spectacles!

But the Dozen made a dash for him, and refused to let him stop and hunt for them, and hustled him through the

crowd, belaboring him with questions like stuffed clubs. History, however, answered never a word until he reached a clear space in the floor. Then he faced about and began, as all good orators do, at the beginning.

“Gentlemen of the Lakerim Athletic Club, and Kind Friends: When, in the course of human events—”

Here Quiz broke out: “Do we get in?”

This embarrassed History so that he skipped three pages in the oration he had written down on the train, and he went on:

“Secondly, a careful study of the world’s history—”

“DO WE GET IN?” shouted Quiz and Jumbo.

And again History’s speech slipped several cogs.

“The well-known philosopher Socrates said—”

“Hang Socrates! what did the League say?” cried Quiz and Jumbo and the Twins.

And now History was compelled to rebuke them with a request that they wait until he got to that point. But the whole Dozen sang out:

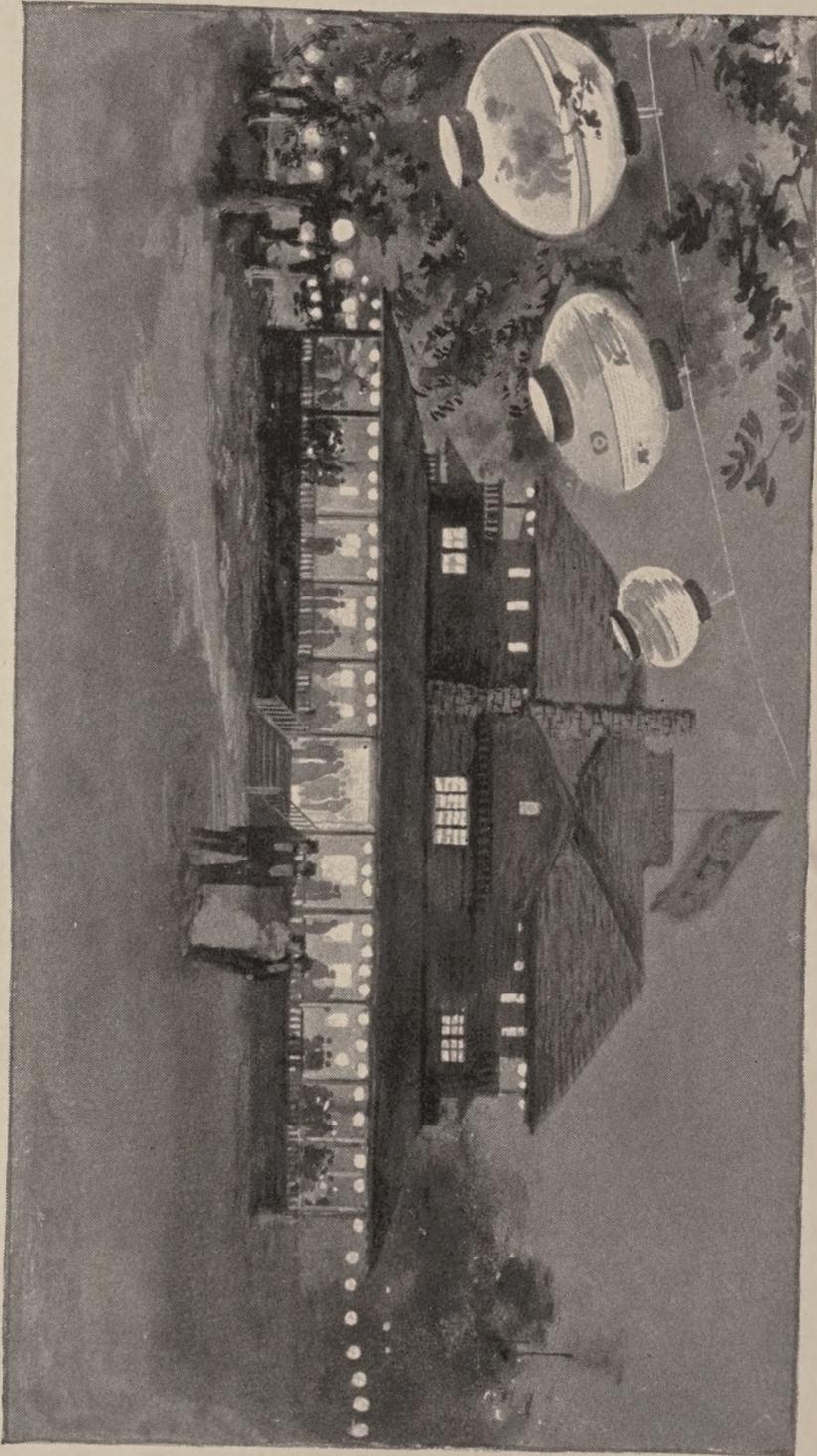
“Tell us now, and finish your speech afterward!”

History gave a little groan of annoyance and remarked carelessly:

“They said they guessed they ’d have to let us in.”

But now that he had let the cat out of the bag, when he tried to go on with his speech, what he said was drowned in the wild uproar of delight of the eleven and their friends; and the band struck up the long-lost music, and the grand march began.

First came Tug, arm in arm with Mr. Mills, the young



"THE CLUB-HOUSE IN ALL ITS BEAUTY."

lawyer, whose services had surely entitled him to this honor. After him followed Jumbo, with Carrie Shields in tow; and then Pretty, with Enid at his side, both very fine to look upon. Then came Quiz, escorting Cecily Brown, and asking her whether the club-house was n't "simply great." And next was Bobbles, with the girl Betsy, after whom he had named his famous sled. And then came B. J., with a freckle-faced little girl whom he usually thought of as a princess carried away by a band of Indians, and whom he frequently rescued, single-handed and with great slaughter—in his imagination. Then Sleepy appeared, dragged along by the lively girl who stood next to base-ball in his heart. After them came Reddy and Heady, one on either side of the same girl; they had quarreled over her until, to avoid a scene, she had decided to go with both.

History was about to be left out of the parade in his solemn determination to finish his speech; but when Sophronisba Jones realized that she was the only one in all the crowd that was listening to the pearls of thought he was offering, she grabbed him by the arm and hurried him into line just before the rest of the people paired off and followed in the wake of the Dozen.

So they went, sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, sisters, cousins, and aunts, new members and all; and they marched up-stairs and down-stairs and through all the rooms, and in a long string around the running-track. The hearts of the Dozen were beating like tenor drums with delight; and the band was playing as it had never played before. Why, it kept on the key almost half the time!

When the triumphal procession had thus marched all about the club-house, the crowd gathered on the main gymnasium floor to hear a lot of speeches and see a lot of wonderful gymnastic feats by the Dozen, and to perform some wonderful feats itself in the stowing away of ice-cream and cakes, not to mention lemonade.

Then the Dozen got together in the center of the floor, and gave three cheers for everything they could think of.

And ended the old year and began the new with a great and glorious club cheer that roared up to a grand climax and broke out like a sky-rocket:

“Lāy-krīm!

Lāy-

krīm!

Lāy-

krīm!

Hoo-

rah! ray! roo! ri! ro! row!

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GOAL



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