CHANGE SIGNALS

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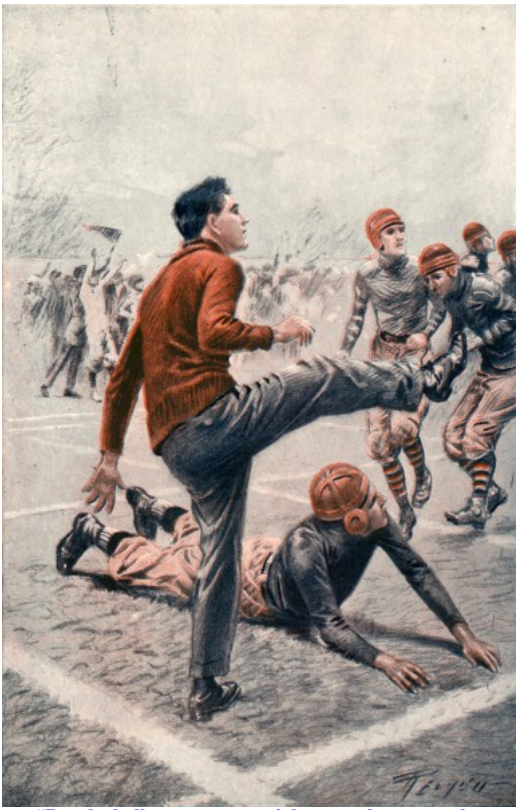
CHANGE SIGNALS

The Spirit of the School.
Four in Camp.
Four Afoot.
Four Afloat.
The Arrival of Jimpson.
Behind the Line.
Captain of the Crew.
For the Honor of the School.
The Half-Back.
On Your Mark.
Weatherby's Inning.

D. APPLETON & COMPANY, NEW YORK.



"But the ball went true, straight up and up, over the crossbar."

CHANGE SIGNALS

A STORY OF THE NEW FOOTBALL

By

RALPH HENRY BARBOUR

AUTHOR OF "FOR YARDLEY," "THE HALF-BACK,"
"FORWARD PASS," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED

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FOREWORD

I am taking this occasion to thank all of my readers, boys and girls alike, who have been so kind as to write to me. Sometimes your letters have gone unanswered for a long time, I fear; and it is possible that now and then, entirely by accident, one has been lost sight of entirely. If so I am both sorry and apologetic, for your letters are always a real pleasure to me, whether, as is so surprisingly often the case, they are filled with praise for my stories, or, as is sometimes the case, they call me to account for mistakes made. Your criticisms, always just, are perhaps better merited than your praise, and are quite as well appreciated. My thanks and my compliments, then, to all my correspondents for their kindly expressions, and my thanks and compliments to all my readers for their kind allegiance.

Very truly yours,

RALPH HENRY BARBOUR.

"Journey's End,"
Manchester, Mass.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CHANGE SIGNALS

CHAPTER I
THE MASS-MEETING

"Old Yardley can't be beat, my boy,
She's bound to win the game!
So give a cheer for Yardley, and
Hats off to Yardley's fame!"

The Banjo and Mandolin Club, huddled together on the right of the platform in Assembly Hall, strummed diligently and with enthusiasm, their zeal atoning for shortcomings due to lack of practice. For this was the first night of the fall term, and many members had not touched their instruments since the final chord had been twanged on class day. (Brewster, playing second mandolin, was doing bravely with a silver dime, having lost his pick and not being able to borrow one!) Beyond the platform some two hundred and fifty clear-eyed, clean-skinned boys sang the words with vim. Many, unable to satisfactorily express their enthusiasm vocally, kept time with their feet. Across the platform from the musicians sat the Assistant Principal, Mr. Collins, the physical instructor, Mr. Bendix, the head coach, Mr. Payson, the president of the First Class, Lawrence Goodyear, and the football captain, Dan Vinton. The mass meeting had been called to formally open the football season at Yardley Hall School. The song ended in a final triumphant burst of sound and Goodyear arose. As he moved to the front of the platform the applause began, the stamping of feet and the long-drawn "*A-a-ay!*" repeated over and over until Goodyear's upraised hand commanded quiet.

"We're here to-night, fellows, to start things going. We're going to hear from the faculty and from the head coach and the captain, and all I'm supposed to do is to introduce the speakers. But before I do that there's just one thing I want to say, fellows, and it's this. We're going to win this year—"

The cheers burst forth deafeningly, and it was a full minute before Goodyear could go on.

"Just as we did last year and other years before that." (Another demonstration, but briefer.) "But to do it we must all get together and stand right back of the team every minute. It's school loyalty that does the business. Every fellow who has been on a team knows what it means to feel that the school is right back of him. It means a lot, I tell you; I don't say that it wins games, but it comes mighty near it sometimes. The team may have its failures; it can't win all the time; but it isn't going to help matters if you start 'knocking.' There may be mistakes made; that happens now and then; but don't 'roast' the team for it. Don't roast anyone; get behind and push harder than ever! That's all, fellows. Mr. Collins will now speak a few words to you."

The audience proved that it was in entire sympathy with Goodyear's sentiments by cheering long and loudly. And then it began again as the Assistant Principal stepped to the front of the stage. Mr. Collins, in spite of the fact that he represented Authority and meted out punishment to ill-doers, was very popular. Doctor Hewitt, or "Toby" as the school called him, was the Principal, but the doctor was getting well along in years now and the actual

school management fell on the younger and very capable shoulders of "Mr. Warren Collins, A.M., Yale," to quote the school catalogue. Mr. Collins confined his remarks to-night to a few moments only. He said he was glad to see them all back again, glad to see so much enthusiasm and glad that the football prospects looked so bright. "With a settled coaching policy well established, a coach whom we all admire and respect and a captain who has proved himself popular, brilliant and earnest," said Mr. Collins, "we are very fortunate, I think. And I, for one, shall be very much surprised if this season proves anything but one of the best in recent years."

Mr. Bendix had his meed of welcome and applause when he followed the Assistant Principal. Although "Muscles" was a hard taskmaster and was often well hated by the lazier youths, he was generally liked. Besides, this was the beginning of the term, the old boys were happy at getting back again and the newcomers delighted to be there, and they would have cheered even "Mother" Walker, who was the least loved of all the faculty, had he appeared. Mr. Bendix had quite a little to say about physical examinations and the matter of training, and his remarks were not especially exhilarating. But everyone heard him through with respect and then burst into thunderous cheers as the football captain came to the front of the platform.

Dan Vinton was a First Class boy, seventeen years of age, tall and lithe, with an alert, good-looking face in which a pair of steady brown eyes and a distinctly good-tempered mouth were the most notable features. Just at present the mouth was smiling, but there was embarrassment in the smile, for Dan wasn't much of a speaker and had been dreading this occasion for weeks. As he waited for the applause to cease he sunk his hands in his trousers pockets, and then, realizing his lapse, hurriedly pulled them out again. The cheers changed to a shout of laughter and a boy in a front seat called:

"Put 'em back again, Dan!"

Then the hall quieted down, and Dan, more embarrassed than before, began to speak.

"Fellows," he said, "I can't talk very well. In fact, I'm just about scared to death. I guess you can see that. But what I've got to say won't take long. You've made me captain and I'm going to do the best I know how for you. I'm not making any promises. That would be a silly thing to do because we none of us can tell what may happen as—as the season advances. But we've got a mighty good start for the team this fall. We've got five of the fellows who played against Broadwood last year and a lot of good second string fellows. So as far as—as experienced material goes we've got no kick coming. But I don't want you to think that we've got all the men we want, for we haven't. I hope that to-morrow afternoon every one of you chaps who hasn't lost a leg or an arm will come out for the team. I want to see the biggest bunch of candidates that ever turned out at Yardley! And don't stay away because you think you can't play football. Come out and get to work and we'll tell you in a week whether you can play or not. You know they've changed the rules again this year and a fellow doesn't have to weigh two hundred pounds to be of use to the team. We want fellows who have speed and who can handle a ball, and, above all, we want fellows who can kick. Well, I guess that's all." Dan's hands unconsciously went back to his pockets and a cheer went up. But he didn't take them out this time. He only smiled. "There's one thing more, though," he went on earnestly. "What Goodyear told you about standing back of the team is so. I don't mean just coming down to the field and cheering. That's all right as far as it goes. What I mean is letting us know all the time that you're right back of us, hoping us on,

wishing us on, pulling every minute! You do your share, fellows, and we'll do ours, I promise you!"

Pandemonium reigned for a good two minutes after Dan walked back to his chair. Then Hammel, the baseball captain, was on his feet calling for "a cheer for Captain Vinton, fellows, and make it good!" And it was good, and if Oxford Hall hadn't been built of granite I think it would have shook under that outburst.

Then Payson got up, and more cheering followed, for the big, broad-shouldered man of thirty-two who faced them was a school idol. In his six years as football and baseball coach at Yardley, John Payson had turned out four winning teams on the gridiron and had done very nearly as well on the diamond. He had quick, sharp black eyes, a broad, strong jaw and an ease and grace of carriage that quite belied his two hundred and odd pounds. Payson spoke quietly and seriously and the hall was so still that you might have heard a pin drop. He agreed with the previous speakers that the outlook was bright, but reminded them that many a team with fine early season prospects had come a cropper before now. And then he repeated the captain's call for candidates, for hard work, for self-sacrifice and devotion and for the whole-souled support of the student body. And then, as he turned away and the stilled audience burst into sound, the leader of the Banjo and Mandolin Club nodded his head and the strains of "The Years Roll On" broke into the tumult. Instantly every fellow was on his feet, singing the slow, sweet song:

"The years roll on. Too soon we find
Our boyhood days are o'er.
The scenes we've known, the friends we've loved,
Are gone to come no more.
But in the shrine of Memory
We'll hold and cherish still
The recollection fond of those
Dear days on Yardley Hill."

Very reverently they sang it, and not many without a thrill and, perhaps, a moistening of the eyes. Many of the older boys could remember standing with heads bared to the cold November wind and singing it grandly after Yardley had gone down to defeat before her rival. All save the new boys had sung it at class day under swaying, many-hued lanterns and with the warm breath of June in their faces. If you are a Yardley man, young or old, you can never hear that song unmoved:

"The years roll on. To man's estate
From youthful mold we pass,
And Life's stern duties bind us round,
And doubts and cares harass.
But God will guard through storms and give
The strength to do His will
And treasure e'er the lessons learned
Of old on Yardley Hill."

The last strain died away, there was a moment of silence, and then caps were slipped onto heads, feet shuffled on the floor, settees were pushed aside and the fellows crowded toward

the doors. Then down the old, worn stairway they went, talking and laughing a little subduedly, and out into a mild September night lighted by millions of twinkling white stars that seemed to shine down kindly as though sympathizing with the glow of exaltation, of courage and kindliness and patriotism, in all those boyish hearts.

CHAPTER II
TOWNE PLAYS A JOKE

To one at least of the audience the mass meeting had been an event of momentous interest. Kendall Burtis, squeezed into a seat in the very last row of settees, had followed the course of events with rapt attention. To Kendall it was wonderful, even miraculous, for of all the sixty-odd boys who had entered Yardley Hall School that day none, I think, was as proud and happy as he. Kendall was a boy whose dream had come true.

There had been a time, only four years ago, when Kendall's ambition, so far as schooling was concerned, extended no further than graduation at the Roanoke High School. Even that had seemed a good deal to hope for, for Kendall's folks were not very well off and there were times in the spring and fall when his services on the farm were badly needed and when tramping into Roanoke to school savored of desertion. Had it not been for his mother Kendall would have missed far more school than he did. Mrs. Burtis wanted him to have what she called "a real education," and many a time Kendall would have remained at home to drop potatoes or swing along behind a cultivator had she not interfered. Then had come a year when all through the Aroostook Country of Maine the potato crop had been an almost total failure. That failure had spelled ruin to more than one grower, and while Farmer Burtis had been in shape to weather the storm, it had proved a hard blow to him financially, and when Mrs. Burtis, casting about for some way in which to add to the slender account at the Roanoke Bank, had suggested taking summer boarders, Kendall's father had, after a good deal of hesitation, acquiesced. The result was a small advertisement in a Boston paper, an advertisement that bore fruit in the shape of four healthy, hungry, brown-skinned college boys. That had been a wonderful summer for Kendall. He had been only "going on twelve" then, but he was large for his age, and old, too, and the collegians had made a good deal of him and he had had the best time of his life. He had acted as guide on fishing and tramping excursions, had driven them to and from Roanoke, two miles away, and had listened in wondering and delighted awe to their happy-go-lucky talk and banter.

"Where are you going to school, kid?" they had asked him one day. And Kendall had told them that he hoped to finish at the high school if he wasn't wanted too badly on the farm.

"High school!" they had scoffed. "That will never do! Go to a boarding school, Kid; that's what you want to do."

But when it came to a question of which boarding school, they couldn't agree. Two of them said Yardley Hall and two of them said Hillton. But when it came to college they were quite agreed. There was nothing to it but Yale.

"No matter where you go to school," declared the biggest one, whose name was Dana, "come to Yale. There may be more than one prep school, kid, but there's only one college, and Yale's it!"

"I—I thought there was Dartmouth and Harvard," Kendall had replied hesitatingly, and Dana had knitted his brows and shaken his head. "Never heard of 'em," he had answered. And his three companions had agreed, chuckling. Finally Kendall had guessed that they

were having fun with him, something they were in the habit of having. But before they had left Dana had spoken quite seriously to Kendall.

"Kid," he had said, "you work for a prep school and college. Make your folks send you to Yardley and then to Yale. It isn't altogether what you learn out of books; it's the friends you make and the self-reliance you get. When the time comes you let me know; just tell me you're ready for Yardley and I'll help you along. You're a bright kid, and nobody's fool, and you're the sort of fellow Yardley wants."

They were all of them, it seemed, on the football team, and all in strict summer training. The amount of eggs and steak and milk that they devoured during the eight weeks of their stay was something amazing. Every afternoon they produced two oval, brown leather balls and went through remarkable proceedings in the meadow behind the barn. Strange as it may seem, Kendall had never seen a football before, although he had indistinct recollections of having heard or read somewhere of the game. He looked on absorbedly and was as proud as a peacock when, one day, he was allowed to kick one of the illusive objects. They got a good deal of fun out of his attempts at first, but it wasn't long before he had discovered the knack, and they professed themselves impressed with his ability.

"The kid's cut out for a kicker," declared Dana. "Those long legs of his were just made for football. Kid, you keep it up, do you hear? Some day you'll be a crackerjack kicker if you do."

The four took their departure early in September to join the rest of the football squad at New Haven. But when they went they left one of the battered balls behind, and during a month of loneliness Kendall made a friend of it. Day after day he went down to the old place in the meadow and kicked and chased the shabby pigskin oval, and dreamed of a time when he should be a Yardley Hall man and play on the football team! But the four left behind them something even better than the old football, and that was a seed that grew and ripened and ultimately bore fruit. They had talked with Kendall's father and mother, the latter especially since she had proved the more receptive, about the boy's future schooling, and Mrs. Burtis had hearkened willingly and remembered. And in the course of time she had won her husband to the plan of sending Kendall away to a good preparatory school when the time came, and, later, to college. But when the time did come money was lacking, and at fourteen, instead of going to Yardley Hall, Kendall went to the high school in Roanoke. Then came a bumper year for the Maine potato growers, and, with it—wonder of wonders!—a shortage over the rest of the country and correspondingly high prices. Potatoes reached a dollar and four cents a bushel that winter and Farmer Burtis fared well. And Kendall's best Christmas present was the promise that the following September he should, if he could pass the examinations, enter Yardley!

Pass the examinations indeed! Kendall never had a doubt of it. That only meant study, and he would have studied twenty hours a day if necessary! It wasn't necessary. He had passed the Third Class examinations with flying colors. And now, behold him a Yardlian, a boy whose dream had come true!

He had listened to the speeches and watched the proceedings with eager curiosity. And when they had sung "The Years Roll On" he had stood up with the others and had tried, very softly, to follow the tune, while, somewhere inside of him, something was stirring that was neither pleasure nor pain, but seemed made of each. After the meeting was over he followed the others out of the building and, since he knew no one yet, set off alone along the walk to

his room in Clarke Hall. He was one of the last out of Oxford, and by the time he had reached the first entrance of Whitson, which stands between Oxford and Clarke, most of the gathering had disappeared. In front of him, however, three boys were walking and as they passed a lighted window Kendall recognized one of them as the football captain. As the trio occupied the width of the path and as Kendall didn't like to crowd past them, he was obliged to suit his pace to theirs, and so couldn't help hearing their conversation.

"How do you like your new room, Tom?" asked Dan Vinton.

"Fine," was the answer from the larger of the other two boys.

"It seems funny, though, not to see Alf and Tom," continued the first speaker. "We're going to miss them, aren't we?"

"Awfully," agreed the third boy. "I'm so used to dropping in at Number 7, Tom, that you mustn't be surprised if it takes me a while to get over the habit."

"Don't get over it," responded Tom Roeder heartily. "Make yourself at home. I suppose Loring and Dyer are feeling pretty big about now."

"Well, Yale got two mighty fine chaps when she got those fellows," said Dan Vinton. "Alf's one of the best there is; and so is Tom."

They turned into Clarke Hall and climbed the stairs, Tom Roeder consenting to "come on up and chin awhile."

"I ought not to, though," he declared. "Wallace is waiting for me to help him hang pictures. I'll get a hard look when I get back."

"How is he?" asked Dan. "Has he taken care of himself this summer?"

"Looks pretty fit. Maybe a few pounds heavy, but it won't take him long to drop that. He's just back from a cruise in his brother's boat, and you can't help getting fat lying around on deck. You don't seem to have put on much fat, Gerald."

"I haven't," was the reply. "I've been playing tennis most all summer, and doing a little running."

"He's grown like the dickens, though," said Dan. "Look at his shoulders. Remember him when he first came, Tom? Doesn't look now much like he did then, eh? Oh, we'll make a man of you yet, Gerald!"

"Thank you," laughed Gerald Pennimore. "That's very kind of you."

The three turned to the left at the head of the stairs and Kendall, pushing open the door of Number 24, saw them enter the corner room at the front of the building. Kendall's own room, which he shared with a classmate named Harold Towne, was Number 21, and was on the rear of the building, its two windows looking out past the back of Dudley to the edge of the grove. Towne was in the room when Kendall entered. He was arranging a row of books on the study table which, placed in the center of the room, equidistant between the two single beds, was common property.

"I've taken this side of the room," announced Towne. "I knew you wouldn't care. Anyhow, as I was here first I had a right to change, you know."

"All right," said Kendall. "I don't care which side I have. I suppose there isn't much difference."

"No. Only I was on that side last year and I thought I'd like a change," replied the other. "Did you bring anything to fix up with, Burtis?"

"N-no, I don't think so."

Towne frowned and looked about the walls. "We'll have to get some pictures, I guess. Cooke, who roomed with me last year, had a lot of stuff, but of course he took it off with him."

"Did he graduate?" asked Kendall.

"No, he's moved into Whitson. A chap named Guild wanted him to room with him. Cooke didn't want to do it much, I guess, but Guild insisted. We'd ought to have about three good pictures over there around the windows. I'd have thought you'd have brought something along with you."

"Well, I didn't think of it," answered Kendall. "Besides, I don't believe I had anything to bring."

"You live in the country, don't you?" asked Towne.

"Yes, near Roanoke. It isn't exactly country, though. I mean there's a good many houses out our way. We're only two miles from town."

Towne laughed. "Two miles! That sounds like country to me, all right. What do you call country, Burtis? I suppose Roanoke is just a village, isn't it?"

"N-no, not exactly. It's got twenty-seven hundred inhabitants."

"Think of that! A regular metropolis, isn't it? Ever been to Bangor?"

"Yes, once; just for a day. It's a nice city, I think."

"You bet it is. That's where I live. Know where the high school is?"

"N-no, I don't think so. I wasn't there long, you see. Why?"

"I was going to tell you where I live. Our house is pretty nearly as big as this whole building."

"Gosh, it must take a lot to heat it!" exclaimed Kendall.

"It's heated with hot water," said Towne.

"Like this is?"

"No, this is steam here. Hot water's better. I guess you haven't been around much, have you?"

"Around the country you mean? No, I haven't. Have you?"

"Er—some. I'm going to California and down through Old Mexico some day soon. That's a trip for you!"

"Quite, some ways," agreed Kendall. "This is as far as I've been yet. It doesn't seem much different from Maine, either. You'd think, being as it's so much farther south, that it would be sort of—of different."

"You talk as though Connecticut was down south," laughed Towne. "It gets just as cold here in winter as it does up home. I suppose they put you in here with me because we're both

from Maine."

"I guess so. And we're in the same class, too. Maybe that had something to do with it. Those books all yours?"

"Yes. I've got twenty times that many at home."

"Honest?" exclaimed Kendall. "Gosh, you must have a regular library. I'm awfully fond of books, but I haven't got many."

"What kind of books do you like?" asked Towne.

"Any kind; just books," replied Kendall simply.

"Well, there's one kind I haven't any love for, and that's text-books," said Towne, frowning at the array before him. "You could have a mighty good time here at Yardley if you didn't have to study so blamed hard."

"Y-yes, but of course a fellow expects to have to study," answered Kendall. "I don't mind that. I guess I sort of like it. Still, I want to have time enough to play football."

"Say, are you one of those athletic cranks?" demanded Towne distastefully.

"I don't believe so. I don't know anything about athletics. I'd like to play football, though. Do you play?"

"Me? Well, I guess not! You don't catch me wearing my young life away doing those stunts. A good game of tennis now and then is all right, but this thing of working like a slave for a couple of hours every afternoon and getting your bones cracked isn't my way, let me tell you! I don't mind seeing a good game sometimes, but I'm no martyr. Besides, if you make the team you have to go to training table and be just about half starved. Not for mine, thank you!"

"That so? I guess I could stand it if they'd let me play. What do you do to get on the team? Just go to the captain and tell him you want to play?"

Towne grinned delightedly at the new boy's simplicity for an instant, and then, banishing his smile quickly, nodded. "Yes," he replied carelessly, "just see the captain and tell him. And, by the way, it's a good plan to see him pretty soon; so many fellows want places, you know; they might be all gone by the time you get there. See?"

"Yes, thank you. I guess I'd better find him the first thing in the morning. I wasn't sure whether that was the way you did it. At the meeting to-night they said something about reporting on the field, and I thought maybe—"

"What's the good of waiting until morning?" asked Towne, hiding his pleasure under a grave face. "Vinton rooms just down the corridor; Number 28; why don't you run down there now and put in your application?"

"Would it be all right?" asked Kendall doubtfully. "I don't want to seem fresh, you know."

"Of course it's all right! Didn't you hear them saying to-night that they wanted all the fellows they could get? Ever played the game?"

"No, not yet. Maybe he won't want me."

"Never fear! It's new—er—new material they're always looking for. Take my advice, Burtis, and get in your application early. Have you got a blank?"

“A blank? What kind of a blank?”

“Why, an application blank, of course; to write down your name and age and so on, and what position on the team you’d like to have.”

“No, could I get one to-night?”

Towne looked doubtful, and finally shook his head. “Not to-night, I’m afraid. Unless—unless Vinton has one he’ll let you have. You could ask him, you know. And anyhow it won’t matter, I guess. The main thing is to let him know as soon as possible. You could fill out your blank to-morrow.”

“Yes, I could do that,” responded Kendall eagerly. “You don’t think he’d mind my seeing him now, as late as this?”

“Late! Why, it’s only a little after nine. That isn’t late. Don’t you worry about his minding, Burtis; he will be tickled to find another fellow for the team. You see there’s a good deal of difficulty here in getting candidates enough. I daresay he will sleep better for knowing that you’re going to help him out.”

Kendall looked at Towne a bit doubtfully, but the latter’s countenance was so innocent that his misgivings passed and he pulled his jacket down and smoothed his hair.

“I—I guess I will, then,” he murmured. “What did you say his name was? Winton?”

“No, Vinton; most of the fellows call him Dan, but you can do as you like about that.”

“Gosh, I couldn’t do that!” exclaimed Kendall.

“All right. Twenty-eight’s the number. Down the hall to the right; last room on the other side.”

“Thanks,” said Kendall, giving a last tug at his sleeves. “I hope he won’t think I’m—fresh.”

“Never fear, old chap; he will be tickled to death,” Towne assured him gravely. But after the door had closed and Kendall’s footsteps died away along the hall Towne’s gravity left him, and he threw himself on the bed, buried his face against the pillow and laughed until his sides ached.

CHAPTER III
KENDALL MAKES A CALL

Tom Roeder had taken himself away to Dudley, pretending alarm at the reception awaiting him at the hands of Wallace Hammel, his roommate, and the two occupants of Number 28 were left alone. Dan Vinton, having discarded coat and vest, stretched himself on his bed, pillowed his head on his clasped hands and smiled across at his chum. Dan was seventeen years old, and a trifle large for his age. Long of limb, tall, lithe, with a sun-browned skin and not a flabby muscle in his whole body, he looked, as he lay there, just what he was; a healthy, wide-awake American boy, kind-hearted, good-tempered, honest and fearless, a born leader of his fellows. He had steady brown eyes, a straight nose that was a little too short for beauty, brown hair and a good mouth. He was a member of the First Class and captain of the Football Team, an honor well deserved.

The boy who smiled back at him from the depths of the Morris chair was a year beneath him in age and class. Gerald Pennimore was a vivid contrast to his roommate in physical appearance. Several inches shorter than Dan, he lacked the latter's even development of body. Rather slender, with hair that was almost yellow, the bluest of blue eyes and a skin much too fair to take kindly to sunburn, he looked, in contrast to Dan, almost delicate. But his appearance belied him to some extent, for Gerald had proved himself a good distance runner, and while it was not likely that he would ever grow into the rugged sort, it was probable that a year or two would find him a very well set-up youth. He was a good-looking youngster, with an eager, alert face that was irresistibly attractive when it smiled.

Gerald's home was right here in Wissining, only a short distance from the school, but since his father, whom rumor credited with being a millionaire several times over, was more often away from his home than in it, Gerald had lived here in Number 28 Clarke during his two years at Yardley. There was, too, a town house in New York, but save at the Christmas recesses Gerald had seen little of that of late; while Gerald's father when in this part of the world was far more likely to open up Sound View for a week or so than occupy the Fifth Avenue residence. Gerald had found at first that being the son of the Steamship King, as Mr. Pennimore was called, was something of a handicap. There had been those who called Gerald a "money-snob," and for the first month or two he had had a rather hard time. But that sort of thing was long since over now, for Gerald had proved that one can be at the same time a gentleman and the heir to millions. Gerald's mother was dead and he had neither brothers nor sisters, and under those circumstances it was almost a miracle that he hadn't been utterly spoiled. Dan firmly believed that only coming to Yardley Hall had saved him from that fate.

"Back again in the old diggings," murmured Dan, stretching himself luxuriously on the bed. "And for the last year," he added with a note of wonder in his voice. "I can hardly believe that, Gerald. Seems now as though I'd always be here; at least, for years and years yet. I wonder how Alf and Tom feel. I'll bet they miss this place. I suppose we'll get a line from them some day soon."

"They said they'd come over and see us," answered Gerald.

"I know." Dan nodded wisely. "But I guess they'll be too busy to do that for awhile. I hope Alf makes the freshman team."

"Oh, he will make it all right. I wouldn't wonder if he got the captaincy."

"Maybe. I don't envy him it, though. Gerald, sometimes I feel as though I'd give a hundred dollars—if I had it—to wake up and find I wasn't captain after all! I get scared stiff whenever I stop and think what's ahead of me the next two months. Just suppose we get beaten!"

"Suppose we do. It's happened before, hasn't it?"

"Not when I was captain! That's where the trouble is. When you're captain and responsible for the success of the team it's a lot different, I tell you, Gerald. Why, if Broadwood beats us this fall I'll feel like tying a dumb-bell to each foot and jumping into the Sound!"

"Don't be an idiot, Dan! You can't do any more than your best. If we get beaten after that it won't be any more your fault than—than mine. You get that notion out of your head or I'll have to put you in a sanitarium before the season's over."

"And maybe I'd be mighty glad to go," sighed Dan.

"I don't see what you're so pessimistic about," said Gerald. "We've got a good start for a new team, and all that sort of thing."

"I know, but—well, I'll tell you, chum. We've won from Broadwood two years running, and I've got an idea that the other fellow is about due for a victory. We never have won three times in succession, and it doesn't seem likely that we will now. I wish we'd lost last year's game, or the one before that. It's fighting against the Law of Averages, whatever that may be!"

"Pshaw! We said the same thing last year, I remember. Yardley had won the year before and so it was Broadwood's turn. Maybe it was, but Broadwood missed her turn. She will miss it again. Why, look here, Dan, there isn't any good reason why we shouldn't win every year for the next century!"

"Oh, well, there's no use worrying about it now, I suppose. As you say, Mr. Pennimore, a fellow can only do his best. I'll do my best and the Law of Averages can take care of itself. I hope, though, there will be a nice big bunch of candidates on the field to-morrow. You know, Gerald, I've always believed that many a good football player has been lost for lack of a chance to show his hand. I'll give every fellow a fair try-out. And if any of the last year men think that they're certain of their places they're fooled. For they're not. Everyone of them has got to work hard or go to the bench."

"I'm coming out, you know, Dan."

"All right, chum, but don't hope too much. You're pretty light for the Varsity. It won't do you any harm to try, though."

"You're not very encouraging," Gerald laughed. "You might at least pretend to think I have a chance, Dan. And, after all, I guess there have been lighter fellows on the team before this."

"I wasn't thinking so much of your actual weight," replied Dan. "A lot depends on the way a chap uses his weight. I may be all wrong, chum, and I hope I am, but it just doesn't seem to me that you're a 'football man.' But I want you to come out and try, just the same. Perhaps you can make the Second Team."

"No, thank you! No Second for me; First Team or none."

"You're a modest little blossom," laughed Dan. "But, I say, what about your cross-country work?"

"Oh, that's all right. I spoke to Goodyear about it, and he said Payson would let me off football practice now and then. Besides, they've got a dandy lot of cross-country fellows this year and don't need me very much."

"I think you're making a mistake, chum. You're a first-rate distance runner, with a chance of finishing first or second in the cross-country run, and you want to sacrifice your real talent for a bare chance of making good in football. That's silly, Gerald."

"No, it isn't, Dan. I've always wanted to play football; you know that; and now Muscles has given me permission to play for the first time. And I'm going to have a whack at it. Besides, I don't see why trying for the Football Team won't keep me in condition for cross-country work."

"You don't? Well, I do. And look here; suppose you should make the team, and suppose you were wanted to play against Broadwood. What would you do in that case? Run a four mile cross-country race in the morning and then play in a gruelling football game in the afternoon?"

Gerald's face fell, but he answered stoutly: "I don't see why not."

"You don't?" Dan laughed. "You would, though, before the game was very old. Besides, Gerald, you know very well that Muscles won't let you go in for both."

"He told me I might."

"Cross-country and football both?"

"He told me I might play football, and he knows very well that I'm on the Cross-Country Team."

"He may know it, but he's forgotten it. And it won't take him long to remember it, Gerald. Anyhow, it's a sure thing that he isn't going to let you do both."

"Then I'll give up cross-country work," said Gerald.

Dan shook his head smilingly. "I don't believe it. It wouldn't be fair to the school, Gerald. A fellow's got to do what he can do best; that's a duty. Suppose I gave up baseball in the spring and said I wanted to try for the Tennis Team!"

Gerald had to smile at that. "The Tennis Team would beg you to keep on with baseball, Dan!"

"Probably, but the idea's the same. I wouldn't have any right to cut out baseball just because I wanted to do something else more. And you haven't any right to give up cross-country running, Gerald."

"Then I can't play football after all?" questioned Gerald disconsolately.

"Not if you're going to do the square thing."

"That's all right," said Gerald mutinously, "but it seems to me that a fellow has some right to do what he likes best."

"Perhaps. The question is, though, how much right? You know," continued Dan with a twinkle in his eye, "we have a motto here at Yardley, Gerald. I wonder if you've ever heard it."

"What?" Gerald demanded suspiciously.

"'The School first,'" replied Dan quietly.

Gerald's eyes fell and he was silent a moment. Then, "Just the same," he muttered, "it's hard lines after wanting to play so long. And I won't be able to play baseball in the spring because I'll have to train with the Track Team!"

"You're too ambitious," laughed Dan. "Why not be satisfied with the glory you have? You're a good cross-country runner, you've won your letter in hockey and track; isn't that enough?"

"But I'm not thinking of glory," argued Gerald. "I want to play football because I like it."

"Then join your class team."

"That isn't—isn't the same thing."

"Why not? It's football. And you say you don't want the glory."

"I don't, but—"

Gerald's explanation was cut short by a knock on the door. He frowned at the interruption, glanced inquiringly at Dan and cried "Come in!" The order was obeyed and a boy of about Gerald's own age, but taller, larger and sturdier, entered and stood embarrassedly in the doorway.

"Is—is Mr. Vinton in?" he asked.

Dan sat up on the bed and nodded, looking inquiringly at the visitor. The latter wasn't by any means a handsome youth. His hair was of a nondescript shade of light brown, a sort of ashy-brown, his eyes were gray, his nose just escaped being a pug nose and his mouth was decidedly large. But there was something about the face, which was most liberally sprinkled with brown freckles, that made you like it; perhaps the eyes with their straightforward way of looking at you, perhaps the nose with its humorous disregard for classic outline, perhaps the good-natured mouth that seemed always on the point of breaking into a smile, perhaps the combination of all the features together. But whatever the cause, the result was undeniable; the face was pleasing in spite, or perhaps because, of its homeliness.

The boy came from the country; there was no manner of doubt about that. His hair, worn too long according to city standards, told you so; the freckles told you so; the poorly cut, pepper-and-salt suit of clothes fairly cried it at you. And a certain awkwardness of carriage affirmed it. Seeing the boy's embarrassment, Dan went to his rescue.

"Hello!" he said. "Come in and sit down. I'm Vinton. What can I do for you?"

"Why—why—my name's Burtis," stammered the other. "I just got here to-day, and I was at the meeting to-night and heard you say you wanted fellows to play football, and I thought

I'd come and see if you had an application blank you—you don't want."

"A—a what?" asked Dan politely.

"An application blank; to fill out."

"Oh, an application blank," responded Dan, trying to disguise his puzzlement. "I see. Now what kind of an application blank? What is it you want to apply for?"

"Why, I—I want to play football," explained Kendall.

"I've got you now," said Dan gravely, fearing to glance at Gerald, who had turned his face away from the boy at the door. "Sit down, won't you?"

Kendall closed the door behind him carefully and took the nearest chair. "I don't know as you want any more players?" he observed questioningly.

"We surely do," replied Dan heartily. "We want all the players we can get. By the way, let me introduce you to my roommate, Mr. Pennimore."

"Glad to meet you," said Gerald after a supreme struggle with his voice. "We—er—we were talking football when you came."

"You've played before?" asked Dan.

Kendall shook his head. "No, sir, but I thought I'd like to learn how."

"Of course. Well, you come out to the field to-morrow afternoon at four o'clock and report to Mr. Payson. He's our coach. Have you any togs?"

"Togs?"

"Yes, football clothes; canvas pants and jacket, you know; and shoes."

"No, sir, but I guess I can get some if they don't cost too much."

"Well, they aren't very expensive. Still, if I were you, I'd just put on an old suit of everyday things to-morrow. Maybe you won't like the game after you've tried it. In that case you'll have saved yourself the price of your football togs."

"I guess that would be best, but I'm pretty sure I'll like football. That's why I came to see you to-night. I was afraid if I waited until morning all the places might be taken."

Gerald had a bad attack of coughing just then, and Dan became very busy looking for something on the table which he didn't find.

"Oh, no fear of that," he replied finally. "You see, Curtis—"

"My name's Burtis," corrected Kendall gravely.

"I beg your pardon, Burtis. You see, we award places on the team by competition. That is, we give every fellow a chance to show what he can do and then we take the best of them for the team. Every fellow who wants to can come out and try. Of course, you'll understand that those who have played the game before have rather the better chance of being retained."

"I see." Kendall nodded thoughtfully. "Maybe I won't be good enough, then."

"You can't tell," said Dan kindly. "I've known inexperienced fellows to make good the first year. Some fellows are natural-born football players."

"Yes," Kendall agreed. "I guess that's the way with me." He was recalling Mr. Dana's prophecy. "Anyway, I'd like to try it, and I'll be on hand surely. And I'm much obliged to you."

"Not at all. And come around again in a day or two and let me know how you're getting on, will you?"

"Thanks. And the—the application blank. Where could I find one to-morrow? And what do I do with it when it's filled out?"

There was a brief silence in the room. Then Dan said gently:

"I guess someone has been having a joke on you. We don't have application blanks to fill out. If you want to try for the team you just come out and report on the field."

"Oh!" Kendall flushed. "He said—"

"Who told you that?" asked Gerald sharply.

"Why, the fellow I room with. His name is Towne."

Dan looked inquiringly at Gerald. "Know him?" he asked.

Gerald nodded. "Yes; Harold Towne; 'Whitey,' they call him. He rooms down the hall. You know him by sight, Dan; thin, light-haired, pasty-faced chap."

Dan remembered him. "Oh, yes, I've seen him," he said. "So he told you to come to me and ask for an application blank?"

"Yes, he said I must fill out a blank and put down my name and age and what position on the team I wanted to play. He said I'd better do it right away or I might be too late. That's why I came to-night. I'm sorry. I didn't know."

"Pshaw! that's all right. No harm done. I'm glad you came, and I hope you'll get on finely, Burtis. Come and see me again and tell me about it. Good night."

"Good night," replied Kendall. Then he fixed his straight level eyes on Gerald. "Good night," he repeated.

"Good night," responded Gerald gravely.

The door closed behind the visitor. Dan smiled at Gerald.

"His friend Towne is a bit of a joker," he observed.

"He ought to have his head punched," declared Gerald hotly. "Playing a joke on a chap as green as that fellow is like—like stealing pennies from a blind man!"

"He doesn't seem to have much doubt as to his ability to play football," said Dan with a laugh. "Said he guessed he was a natural-born player."

Gerald grinned. "Yes, that was funny. Still, I like the chap's looks just the same. And who knows, Dan? He may turn out a star!"

"I'm afraid it will take some turning, though," laughed Dan. "However, he's got my best wishes. Goodness knows I can use all the stars I can find this year!"

When Kendall returned to his room Harold Towne was ready for bed. He faced Kendall with one foot between the sheets and a broad grin on his thin face.

"Well, did you fill out your blank?" he asked with a chuckle. But the chuckle died away in his throat, for Kendall advanced across the room with an unsmiling countenance.

"I've got a good mind," he said in a low voice, "to punch you in the face."

Harold drew back and threw up one arm. "Can't you take a joke?" he stammered.

"Oh, that was a joke, was it?" growled Kendall. "I call it a dirty lie. And I'd like to lick you for it," he added longingly. Harold backed off toward the window, alarm written large on his white face.

"You—you'd better not!" he cried.

"I'm not going to," said Kendall, turning away. "But don't you ever get fresh with me again, Towne, or I'll just naturally whale you! I'm sorry, but I don't guess I'm going to like you."

CHAPTER IV
FIRST PRACTICE

The next day Kendall's school life really began. At half-past seven there was chapel, at eight breakfast in the big dining-room, or commons as it was called, on the first floor of Whitson, and at nine came his first recitation, Latin 3. At half-past nine there was French 3a. Then came a half hour of freedom from class rooms, a half hour put to good use in polishing up for the next trial, mathematics 3, at half-past ten. The mathematics instructor was Mr. McIntyre, a hard taskmaster. At eleven-thirty there was Physical Culture in the gymnasium. After that came dinner at one o'clock, and, at two, English 3b. That, so far as lessons were concerned, finished his day. At a little after three-thirty observe him making his way toward the athletic field, an odd-looking figure with his long legs in a pair of old gray trousers, a faded brown sweater completing his costume. He wore no cap and, since his sweater was of the "turtle-neck" variety, his hair had been much disarranged in the struggle with it. For shoes he had put on a pair of rubber-soled "sneakers." As he passed along in front of the dormitories—taking the longest way since he had only a very general idea where the athletic field lay—he occasioned not a little interest in beholders. Luckily he was quite unaware of the strangeness of his attire and so had no ear for the frequent chuckles that followed his progress.

"An odd-looking figure in a pair of old gray trousers."

The curving path took him past the fronts of Whitson and Oxford and Merle. Below him The Prospect fell away to the green meadows and a half a mile away was the little railroad station of Wissining where he had left the train two days before. Beyond the station lay, a blue ribbon in the afternoon sunlight, the Wissining River, with the town of Greenburg beginning at its further bank. Behind him, over the tops of the trees, lay Long Island Sound, blue and hazy, and dotted with sails and streaked with smoke from distant steamers. Past the Kingdon Gymnasium he went, and then the path descended toward the river, between the tennis courts, and he paused for a minute behind one of the back-stops to watch a game in progress between two white-flanneled youths whose dexterity with racquet and ball made him wonder. At his right, a quarter of a mile away, figures moved over the rolling hillside, now stopping for some mysterious reason and then marching determinedly away again. Kendall had never seen golf played and the movements of the fellows in the distance seemed exceedingly strange. But, for that matter, there was a good deal that was strange to him here at Yardley. And perhaps the strangest thing of all was being here! It still seemed more like a dream than a reality, and he was constantly in fear that he would wake up.

The field was almost empty when he reached it, for it still wanted more than a quarter of an hour to four o'clock, and many of the upper class fellows had three o'clock recitations. But a few boys were scattered around, some on the stands and some, in football regalia, waiting for work. The gridiron had been freshly marked out and the lime lines were dazzlingly white against the grass. Kendall wished there was somebody he might talk to, but

so far he had formed no acquaintances beyond those we know of, and to address any of the careless, laughing fellows about him without overtures from them was quite beyond him. So he seated himself in the sun on one of the steps leading into the grand stand and waited. Behind him and about him there were many amused glances and whispered remarks, but Kendall never noticed. On the river a canoe with two boys at the paddles was working slowly against the current toward Flat Island. Beyond the stream a wide expanse of marshland was showing the first signs of autumn, stretches of yellow mingling with the green of rushes and grass. Singly and in groups of two and three the boys, players and onlookers alike, began to appear around the corner of the stand. Then came Dan Vinton in earnest converse with John Payson, the coach. They passed him only a few yards distant and he wondered whether the captain would recognize him. But he didn't, although his eyes rested idly for a moment on his face as he passed on. Then a little red-haired Irishman appeared with a push-cart which he wheeled to the front of the grand stand amidst facetious greetings from the audience:

"Hello, Andy! how's the boy?"

"The top o' the morning to ye, Andy!"

"Well, see who's here!"

"Andy, I believe your hair's faded!"

The trainer waved a freckled hand toward the seats and began to unload his cart. There were dozens of gray blankets, a gunny sack full of footballs, nose guards, pails, sponges, a can of water and numerous other treasures. Andy inverted the gunny sack and the footballs came tumbling out and went bobbing about in all directions to be pounced on by eager hands. A whistle blew and order resolved out of chaos. The candidates clustered around the coach and captain, Kendall following the others. He couldn't hear very well what the coach was saying, since he was quite on the fringe of the crowd, but he caught occasional fragments:

"... Necessary to learn the rudiments of the game ... seem like hard work, but it's work that pays well in the end.... You can't build a house without a foundation and you can't build a football team without.... Men who played last year report to Roeder.... New men stay here.... On the jump, now!"

I don't intend to weary the reader with a detailed account of Kendall's experiences that afternoon. They were uninteresting, or would have been save for their novelty. Kendall found himself one of a group of twenty fellows in charge of a quick-spoken, gingery little chap whom he afterwards discovered to be Holmes, the second-choice quarter-back. Now and then Payson made his appearance and looked on for a moment, sometimes dropping criticism or encouragement. The work for the awkward squad consisted wholly in accustoming themselves to the handling of the ball. They passed it about in a big circle, passed it at a walk, passed it at a trot. Then they tried dropping on it as Holmes rolled it along the ground, and finally they were made to catch it on the bound and to pick it up on the run as it dribbled along in front of them. Later they were formed in a line on one of the white marks and taught to start quickly as the quarter snapped the ball back.

It was tiresome work, although Kendall only discovered that when it was all over and he was walking back up the hill, walking alone amongst more than a hundred boys and wistfully wishing that he had someone with whom to talk over the practice. It seemed to

Kendall that he was the only boy in school who hadn't friends or acquaintances. He had been instructed to stop at the gymnasium and have his name entered in the manager's book. So he followed the crowd through the big oak doors, down a flight of broad steps and into the locker-room. The manager proved to be an harassed-looking youth whom the others addressed as Cowles or Mister Manag*eer*. It seemed the proper thing to do to confuse Cowles as much as possible, and the manager was continually begging mercy.

"Oh, for the love of mud, Jensen, cut out the rough-house, will you?" he was imploring as Kendall edged up. "I've got your old name down here already.... What's that, Fogg? I don't know; ask Payson.... What's the name, you fellow?"

"Burtis."

"Curtis. What class?"

"Not Curtis, if you please; Bur—"

"Shut up, you fellows, can't you? I can't hear a word. What's your class, Curtis?"

"Third."

"Where're you rooming?"

"Twenty-one Clarke Hall."

"How old?"

"Fifteen; pretty near sixteen."

"Never mind the pretty near part. Squad D. Report to-morrow to Mr. Bendix at twelve for examination. Come on, now, I haven't got all night to do this!"

Kendall pushed his way through the crowded room toward the door. Most of the fellows, he noticed, were changing their football clothes for their usual attire in front of little closets which ran in rows at one end of the room. Some, already disencumbered of everything save huge bath towels, were hurrying toward a doorway from beyond which came the sound of rushing water and eddying clouds of steam. In there, Kendall surmised, were the shower baths. He had heard of them and would like to have tried one, but he had neither towel nor locker. He stood for a moment out of the way and watched the scene. Dan Vinton came hurrying through the outer door and pushed his way through the throng. Several fellows tried to detain him, but he kept on to a bench and rapidly removed his togs, talking as he did so to half a dozen fellows who had followed and quickly surrounded him. In a minute he was off to the showers, still replying to questions as he went and eluding the clutches of friends. Across the room Cowles was still taking names, although his task was about over. The throng began to lessen as the baths swallowed their quota. Kendall turning to reach the door suddenly became aware of a boy who, a yard or two distant, was viewing him uncertainly. It was the boy to whom Kendall had been introduced last night in Vinton's room, but he couldn't recall his name. He was in ordinary attire and looked as though he had just entered. When he caught Kendall's eye he nodded smilingly and stepped across to him.

"We met last night, but I've forgotten your name," he said.

"I remember," Kendall replied a trifle shyly. "My name is Burtis."

"Burtis? I don't think I've ever heard that before. Mine is Pennimore. How did you get on at practice, Burtis?"

"Not very well, I guess."

"One doesn't at first. It's a bit discouraging. After you've got the hang of it, though, it goes better." He surveyed the room and finally called across to the manager. "Cowles, where's Dan?"

"I haven't seen him, Gerald," Cowles replied, waving his book and then slipping it into his pocket.

"If you mean Mr. Vinton," said Kendall, "he went into the bathroom about two or three minutes ago."

"Did he? I guess I won't wait then. Coming my way?"

"I—I was going back to my room," replied Kendall.

"Let's walk along, then. Well, how do you like it as far as you've got?" Gerald held the door open and Kendall murmured "Thank you," and went through.

"I like it very much," he replied when they were outside on the path. "It—it's different, though, from what I expected."

"Is it? How?"

"Well, everything's bigger, for one thing," replied Kendall hesitatingly. "And—and the fellows are—are different."

"Don't you like us?" laughed Gerald.

"Oh, yes! That is, I don't know anyone yet—except the fellow I room with, but you all seem very nice. I don't know that I can explain just what I mean."

"Go ahead and try," Gerald encouraged.

"Well, everyone seems so—so old!"

"Old?"

"Yes, more like fellows in college, you know."

"Really? I never thought of that."

"Maybe old isn't quite the word I want," said Kendall reflectively. "No, I don't guess it is. What I mean is that the fellows are so—so sort of confident, and—and—oh, I don't know."

"I get you now," replied Gerald. "Yes, I know what you mean. I noticed that myself when I came. It's a sort of self-possession, isn't it? You soon catch it, Burtis. You see, after all, Yardley is a good deal like a college. A fellow has to look after himself a good deal. They give us lots of rope here and you can hang yourself mighty easy, Burtis. Some fellows don't understand that when they first come. They think that because they're not watched by someone every minute that they can do as they please and it won't matter. But it does matter, though. There's no one here to say, 'Now you must study your lessons and be a good boy,' you see. Only when you *don't* study your lessons, and *aren't* a good boy, you get into trouble. A fellow can get along maybe half a term by faking, but when the exams come there's a—a rude awakening, as they say in the stories. And then it's too late. Out you go! Good night! So a fellow has to learn to look after himself here; has to realize that if he's going to stay here he's got to do things on his own incentive, and not wait to be told. If you

don't want to study here at Yardley, no one's going to make you. Only some fine day you wake up and find that your trunk's packed and that you've got your ticket home."

"I see," said Kendall thoughtfully. "That accounts for it, I guess."

Gerald's discourse had brought them to the doorway of Clarke and now they climbed the stairs together. Kendall wanted to ask the other boy to his room, but feared it might be considered "fresh." Gerald solved the problem at the head of the stairs.

"Come down to my room and chin awhile," he said, leading the way along the hall. "Unless you want to change."

"No, I'll wait now," answered Kendall. Gerald pointed out the easiest chair to his guest, tossed his cap onto his bed and tossed himself onto the window seat, stuffing the many-hued pillows behind his back.

"There's another thing," said Kendall, returning to the subject. "Everyone seems to be having such a good time."

"Why not? That's what we're here for!"

"Yes, but—but what about studying and—and learning things?"

"Oh, don't worry," Gerald laughed. "We study, Burtis. But we try to have a good time even doing that. I guess it's a sort of pose here at Yardley to seem careless and happy-go-lucky and keep on smiling. Life isn't always a joke, not by any means; but we don't believe in drawing long faces, Burtis. They say over at Broadwood that a Yardley man never knows when he's beaten; and there's something in that, too. I said a minute ago that it was a pose. It isn't, though; it's a habit. Oh, you'll like us better when you learn our ways."

"I like you now," replied Kendall with a smile. "Only I didn't quite understand. I'm glad you've told me."

"I suppose you don't know many fellows yet?"

"No, none to speak of."

"Well, you will in a day or two if you keep on with football. And you must come over here now and then. Fellows drop in here a good deal, you know. How do you like Towne?"

"I—it's pretty soon to judge yet," replied Kendall evasively. Gerald laughed.

"Well, don't judge us all by him," he begged.

"I guess I looked pretty much of a fool last night," said Kendall sheepishly. "About that application blank, I mean."

"Oh, yes; well, that was a bit green, but I don't know why you shouldn't have believed Towne. We're all pretty innocent when we get here first. And, by the way, Burtis, I ought to tell you, I guess, that we don't say 'sir' to one another here. I noticed last night that you said it to Dan."

"Thanks; I'll remember," replied Kendall gratefully. "Only he was older and the football captain and I somehow thought—"

"There was no harm done," Gerald assured him. "Not a bit. But you needn't say 'sir' or 'mister' to anyone except faculty, you know, and Mr. Payson. Let's see, you're in the Third, aren't you?"

“Third Class? Yes.”

“Well, any time you want help come over. I’ve been through with it and I know it’s mighty hard sledding in places. I’m not a ‘grind’ by any means, but I might be able to help you out of a hole maybe.”

“Thank you. I will. I guess I’ll be going now.”

“All right. Come over and see me sometimes. By the way, ever done any running?”

“Running?” repeated Kendall.

“Yes, on the track.” Kendall shook his head.

“Well, you’d better come out in the spring and try for the Track Team,” said Gerald. “With those legs of yours you ought to be able to just eat up the cinders. Good-by. See you again.”

Kendall found Harold Towne stretched out on his bed, reading.

“Hello!” said Harold, “how did you like—” Then he caught sight of Kendall’s attire and a broad grin overspread his face. “Well, say, where on earth did you get that costume?”

“What’s the matter with it?” asked Kendall in surprise.

“What’s the matter with it! You look like a scarecrow! Have you been out for practice like that?”

“Yes. I hadn’t anything else. Vinton said—”

“Well, I’ll bet you made ’em laugh, Burtis. Say, don’t tell anyone you room with me, will you?”

“I won’t,” replied Kendall emphatically. Harold stared a moment. There was something in the tone he didn’t like. Finally,

“Where have you been since practice?” he asked.

“I stopped at the gymnasium for a few minutes and then walked home with a fellow named Pennimore, and I’ve been in his room.”

“Pennimore! Gerald Pennimore?”

“I think his name’s Gerald,” replied Kendall, squirming out of his sweater. Harold whistled. Then he chuckled:

“I’d like to have seen you together, you two. The millionaire and the scarecrow, eh?”

“I don’t know what you mean,” returned Kendall with a scowl.

“I mean you and your friend, Mr. Moneybags. Didn’t you know he’s the richest fellow in school? And the biggest snob?”

“No.” Kendall shook his head and thought a moment. “I guess this was another Pennimore,” he said. “He was just like anyone else—only nicer.”

CHAPTER V
KENDALL LEARNS OF A PLOT

A week passed very quickly and left Kendall pretty well shaken down into his place at Yardley. During that week there were five days of practice on the gridiron and he reported promptly and regularly. I wish I could say that he showed promise of becoming a good player, but I can't. As a matter of fact, he exhibited about as little aptitude for the game as any member of Squad D, and that isn't flattering since Squad D was made up of what in school slang were known as "dubs." It wasn't that Kendall was not willing enough; he'd have worked his feet off to learn to play football well; but he was undeniably awkward in movement and astonishingly slow at getting started. He performed his tasks with a kind of ferocious earnestness that ought to have shown better results.

On Saturday of that week there was no practice, for the weather was unusually warm for the last of September and many of the candidates were showing the effect of the work. Kendall was left with a whole afternoon on his hands with which he didn't know what to do. After his English lesson at two he strolled back to his room half hoping that Harold would be there. He didn't like that roommate of his very well, but to-day even Harold would have been better than no one. But the room was empty when he reached it. He tossed his books onto the table, thrust his hands into his pockets and walked to the window. It was too fine an afternoon to stay indoors, he decided, and so he went out again. In the hallway he glanced undecidedly toward the door of Number 28, but his courage failed him.

He had met Gerald Pennimore three or four times since the day they had walked back from the gymnasium together, but only for a moment on each occasion. Once they had passed on the stairs and perhaps thrice they had nodded and spoken in Oxford. But Kendall had not taken advantage of the other's invitation to call. Since he had learned that Gerald was the son of John T. Pennimore, whose fame had reached even to Roanoke, Kendall had doubted the sincerity of that invitation. It didn't seem reasonable that a boy of Gerald Pennimore's position should really want to make a friend of him. To-day, though, he would have given a good deal for Gerald's companionship. But the door at the end of the hall was closed and it was more than likely that the room was empty. Kendall descended the stairs and, with no objective point in mind, mooned along the path toward the field.

The tennis courts were filled and he stood for some time and looked on. On the baseball diamonds two games seemed to be in progress and the shouts and laughter of the players reached him at the courts. But when he took up his journey again his steps led him toward the boathouse where a number of figures were visible about the float. Up and down the river in the warm afternoon sunlight many gayly hued canoes were gliding. At the boathouse Kendall loitered for some minutes, watching several craft start away and wishing that some of the merry crews would invite him along as a passenger, since he knew no more about paddling or rowing than the average boy whose life has been spent on a farm where the largest body of water within five miles is a six-foot brook. But none of the mariners asked him to accompany them on their voyages and after awhile Kendall left the float and wandered downstream along the bank of the river.

On the other side was Meeker's Marsh, and at intervals enticing little inlets emptied into the larger stream. Kendall wished he were over there that he might explore some of them. It was quite warm, in spite of the breeze that blew across the marsh, and Kendall pushed his straw hat away from his forehead, dug his hands into his pockets and loitered slowly along, whistling a tune. He was a little bit lonely, if the truth is to be told, a little bit inclined for the first time to be homesick. He wondered if he would ever know fellows and enter into the good times about him.

Presently a small island came into view, and then, a little further downstream, a railway bridge. He determined to cross that and return along the opposite bank to the marsh. But when the railway bridge was reached there was another just beyond, a bridge for wagons and pedestrians, and Kendall chose that instead. Once across it a new idea came to him. He would keep on by the dusty road and visit Greenburg. There would be stores with things in the windows, and probably a place where he could buy a glass of soda water or root beer; for he was decidedly thirsty after his walk in the sun. The thought quite cheered him and the whistled tune became louder.

Five minutes on the dusty road brought him to the edge of the town proper and windows with fascinating goods began. Those windows had a deal of attraction for the country-bred boy and more than once his hand sought his trousers pocket enquiringly as some object more than usually alluring tempted him. He had been quite lavishly supplied with spending money by his father when he had left home, and then, afterwards, his mother had taken him aside and thrust a whole five dollar bill into his hand. Of course he didn't have all that wealth with him; he had heard often enough of the danger of carrying money about in the cities; but there was a whole half dollar in his pocket, to say nothing of some nickels and coppers. But Kendall had never learned extravagance, and a thing had to be pretty tempting to make him part with any of his hoard. And so he reached the very middle of Greenburg, where the big dry-goods store is, and the two banks, and the Palace of Sweets, and Wallace's drug store, without having yielded. But when he heard the *siz-z-z* of the soda fountain in Wallace's he knew that the moment had come.

Greenburg is quite a busy, citified place on a fine Saturday afternoon, and the drug store was well filled with customers when Kendall went in. They were two deep in front of the white marble counter and most of the little wire-legged tables were surrounded by thirsty mortals of both sexes. There were so many enticing concoctions advertised on the wall behind the two busy clerks and the ornate fountain that Kendall didn't know what to choose; "Walnut Fudge Sundae"—"Chocolate Egg-and-Milk"—"Orange and Lime"—"Claret Frappé"—"Fresh Fruit College Ices"—"Myer's Root Beer"—"Choco-Cola"—and more besides. Kendall fingered his coins and debated while he waited a chance to make his wants known. When, suddenly, a clerk fixed him with imperative gaze over the shoulder of a very stout lady who was eating a college ice, Kendall was quite unprepared and glanced wildly at the wall. The first sign his eyes rested on was "Chocolate Egg-and-Milk" and so he said "Chocolate Egg-and-Milk" to the clerk, wishing the very next instant he had chosen something he was acquainted with. The clerk held out a hand.

"Check, please," he demanded.

"What?" asked Kendall.

"Get your check at the cashier's desk, please," said the clerk. "What's yours, madam?"

Kendall discovered the cashier's desk and pushed his half dollar across the ledge. "Five, ten or fifteen?" asked the young lady behind the grilling.

Kendall wavered. Then, "Ten, if you please," he said, and a blue celluloid check was passed out and some change. Back at the counter he was forced to await his chance again. When it came it was another clerk who asked his order and Kendall passed over his blue check and said, "Root beer, please."

"Two?"

"No, just one."

"Root beer's only five cents," was the reply. "This is a ten cent check."

"Oh," Kendall stammered. "Then I—I'll take a chocolate egg-and-milk, please."

"That's fifteen cents," replied the clerk impatiently.

"Oh—er—er—ice-cream soda!" blurted Kendall.

"What flavor?"

"Er—er—what have you got?"

The clerk waved a hand toward the wall. "There they are," he said with an air of long-suffering and a wink at a tall boy who was gathering up four glasses of college ice. Kendall's gaze swept the list unseeingly.

"Vanilla, please," he said meekly.

The tall boy pushed past him with an amused look and Kendall saw that he bore his purchases to one of the small tables at the other side of the store where three other youths sat awaiting him. When Kendall's own glass was handed to him, a long-handled spoon sticking out from the top and a paper napkin thrust into the handle, he drew aside and looked for a place to enjoy it at his leisure. At that moment a small table in a far corner was vacated and Kendall made his way to it. A tired-looking rubber plant drooped dejectedly above it and its surface was littered with empty glasses and crumpled napkins. But Kendall pushed these aside, placed his own delectable concoction before him and seated himself.

It was awfully good, that ice cream, cold and sweet and fragrant with vanilla, and just "sting-y" enough with the soda. The first spoonful brought content and the second joy. After that he decided to make it last as long as possible, and so he leaned back in the little chair and looked about him. At the next table, only a scant yard away, was the tall youth and his three companions. Kendall supposed at first that they were Yardley fellows, but their conversation was of things quite foreign to his knowledge and when, presently, he saw that one of the quartette wore a dark green cloth cap with a white B on it he realized that he was looking for the first time on the enemy.

Broadwood Academy, Yardley's rival, was situated about two miles from Greenburg in the opposite direction. Although slightly smaller than Yardley in point of enrollment, it was counted among the foremost preparatory schools of the East. Of course, at Yardley they made fun of it; called it a "fresh water school" because it stood inland, and pretended that it was a joke. But for all of that Broadwood Academy had long proved herself a worthy rival to the older school. Unlike Yardley, Broadwood prohibited her students from going to

Greenburg on all days save Saturdays, unless by special permission, and as a consequence Saturday afternoon found the main street well sprinkled with wearers of the green.

Kendall viewed the four with new interest. They seemed rather nice-looking fellows, he thought. But already the Yardley fealty was beginning to take hold of him and he added to himself that they lacked something that Yardley boys had. As though to offer evidence, two Yardley fellows entered just then and called for sodas. Kendall knew them both by sight and one by name. The taller of the pair was Arthur Thompson, a First Class boy, captain of the Track Team and a pole-vaulter of some reputation. He was trying for the Football Team, too, for Kendall had seen him at practice several times. The other boy was considerably younger; younger even than Kendall; later the latter was to learn that his name was Harry Merrow. There *was* a difference between these two and the Broadwood quartette, although Kendall couldn't have indicated it very clearly, and the difference, Kendall stoutly held, was in favor of the Yardlians. They consumed their beverages at the counter and presently passed out again to the street. They had not gone unnoticed by the Broadwood fellows, however; Kendall heard the latter discussing them in low voices.

"That's Thompson," said one, "the tall fellow. He's their crack pole-vaulter. He was in wrong with the Office last year and couldn't vault, but he will show us a thing or two next spring. They say he's about the best prep school chap in his line, and I heard that two or three colleges have been making love to him."

"He's a rangy looking customer," said another. "I hope we don't run up against a bunch like him to-night. I like fun, but I'm not looking for slaughter."

"Don't shout," counseled a third in a low voice.

"I wasn't. Besides, there isn't a Yardley fellow in sight."

To make sure all four glanced about them. Their gaze passed over Kendall unsuspectingly. It never occurred to any of them that the countrified looking youth in ill-fitting pepper-and-salt clothes was a Yardlian. Kendall was diligently consuming his ice-cream soda and apparently was not even conscious of the quartette's existence.

"Well, anyhow," pursued the remonstrant, "keep your voice down. You never know who's going to hear."

"For my part," said another, "I wouldn't mind a little rough-house with those chaps up there. They think they're the only thing in the state of Connecticut, the conceited pups!"

"What time did Hurd say he'd have the carriage up there?"

"Nine-thirty. I told him to stop about a hundred yards this side of the corner and wait until we came; told him he might have to wait an hour."

"We won't be able to get away until after ten. What's the use having him come so early?"

"So he will be on time. If I'd said ten he'd been there about half-past, probably."

"How long will it take to get to Yardley?"

"Three-quarters of an hour, I guess. We'll leave the carriage at the foot of the hill and sneak up on foot."

"How many brushes did you get, Jim?"

"Two," replied the tall youth.

"What's the matter with four, one for each of us?"

"You can slap on the paint if you want to," was the reply. "I'm not crazy about it. But somebody has got to keep watch. Besides, if more than two of us try to paint the pole we'll get in each other's way."

"I think we ought to paint a few B's around, so they'll know who did it."

"Yes, that would be a fine scheme!" said another sarcastically. "You must want to get fired from school. They'd raise a row at Yardley and we'd get found out. I don't half like the idea of that carriage, anyway."

"Pshaw, they aren't going to tell at the livery stable. Besides, I don't intend to walk all the way, and you can bet on that!"

"You talk like a rabbit," said a former speaker. "Don't you suppose they're going to know who painted their old flagpole even if we don't sign our name to the job?"

"The fellows up there will know, but the faculty won't be sure it wasn't some of their own chaps. They have class colors up there, and green's one of them."

"Green and white; Third Class," corroborated another. "Wouldn't it be a peach of a joke if they blamed their own Third Class fellows for it?"

"Dandy! Come on and let's get back."

They arose from their table and sauntered out. Their conversation had been conducted for the most part in low tones and Kendall had missed a word here and there, but more than enough had reached him to give him a very good idea of the plot. What it all meant was beyond him, however. Why those fellows should want to drive at ten o'clock at night all the way to Yardley to paint a flagpole green he couldn't see. Evidently, though, it was a sort of practical joke on Yardley. It seemed to him a lot of bother for a small result.

He saw the Broadwood boys out of sight and then left the store himself. He forgot all about the window displays on the way back along the street, being busy with his thoughts. Of course he ought to tell someone about the prank, but he wondered who. Harold Towne somehow didn't recommend himself in such an emergency. Of course he had no thought of telling the faculty; he had very well-settled ideas of right and wrong, and to inform the faculty and probably get the conspirators into trouble would be, in his opinion, talebearing pure and simple; which is something that a right-minded boy holds in the deepest contempt. Then he thought of Gerald Pennimore and of Dan Vinton, and he had about made up his mind to seek the former when he reached school when an entirely new and brilliant idea came to him. He stopped short in the road and gave vent to an expressive whistle. Finally he said "Why not?" aloud, nodded his head twice and went on.

When he reached the school boundary at the foot of The Prospect he stopped and studied the lay of the land.

"Here," he said to himself, "is about where the carriage will stop. Then they'll get out and __"

He paused there. The flagpole stood in the middle of The Prospect, a natural terrace in front of Oxford Hall. He glanced up at it from the foot of the hill. The stars and stripes hung motionless from the halyards. To reach the pole the enemy might either follow the roadway, which wound up the hill at the expense of distance, or ascend the steep, grassy slope of The

Prospect. Kendall believed they would do the latter, since they would be out of sight until they reached the top. Further to the left there was a footpath up the slope, but that would bring them out almost in front of Merle and some distance from their scene of operations. In any case, he decided, if the enemy was to be foiled in its nefarious designs it must be when they had reached the flagpole. Luckily, the entrance to Oxford Hall provided a perfect place of concealment for the repulsing force. Kendall wondered whether there would be a moon, recalled the fact that there had been none last night and concluded that only the stars would be likely to illumine the scene. He wanted to try the ascent up the slope himself just to see if it was practicable, but several fellows were in sight returning from Greenburg and he decided not to. Instead he made his way to Whitson along the drive, found Number 21 deserted and, curling himself on the window seat, set about perfecting his plan. Once he arose, crossed to the table, picked up Harold's electric torch and dropped it into his pocket. Then he went back to the window seat and his plotting.

CHAPTER VI
AND FOILS IT

Kendall thought Harold would never get to sleep that night. Hoping that his roommate would follow the example, Kendall piled into bed at half-past nine, but Harold, who usually yawned all through study hour and got between the sheets as soon as possible afterwards, to-night displayed a most unusual and annoying wakefulness. Even after he was in bed and the light was out he wanted to talk, and only stopped when Kendall simulated slumber by making hideous noises in his throat. Had Harold been of an observant nature he would have remarked on the sudden development of this accomplishment, for Kendall had never been known to snore until to-night.

It was long after ten o'clock when regular breathing from across the room told Kendall that his roommate was asleep. He waited five minutes more to make certain and then arose softly, donned trousers and jacket over his nightgown—Kendall had not yet become so stylish as to affect pajamas—and thrust his bare feet into his canvas "sneakers." Making certain that the electric torch was in his pocket, he opened the room door noiselessly and peeked out. The dimly lighted hall was empty. Leaving his door slightly ajar, he scuttled to the stairway and stole down. Two of the faculty, Mr. Collins, the Assistant Principal, and Mr. Frye, lived on the lower floor and Kendall had no desire to encounter them. Mr. Collins's transom, however, was dark, and although a light showed in Mr. Frye's study, it was further down the corridor and well out of sound.

As he expected, the big outer door was locked. But the key was on the inside and it turned without a squeak. The door was not so quiet, but it is doubtful if it made nearly so much noise as Kendall thought. He crept through with his heart in his throat, feeling like a burglar leaving the scene of his depredations. In another moment he was swallowed in the darkness.

Cautiously, treading on the grass and keeping as close as he might to the front of the buildings, he made his way to Oxford. All was quiet as yet. As his eyes became accustomed to the darkness he found that he could see for some little distance. There was the flagpole, a grayish streak in the gloom, and he thought he could make out the edge of The Prospect beyond. Some stars showed, but for the most part they were obscured by clouds. It was an ideal night for desperate deeds, Kendall reflected, and he shivered pleasurably as he ensconced himself in the doorway of Oxford. He wondered what time it was, but had no way of determining. Suddenly a drumming sound reached him and he listened acutely. It grew and grew and at last resolved itself into the rush of a night freight bearing down from the east. Presently a ruddy glow smote the darkness away to the left as the fireman fed coal to the pounding engine. Then all was blackness again, and the roar of the train as it rushed through the cut a little distance away filled the night. After a moment Kendall could see the tail lights as the train swept across the bridge into Greenburg. Hoarse and low came the distant whistle of a steamer on the Sound. Then quiet settled down again.

Although the day had been unseasonably warm, the night held a chill that was fast getting through Kendall's scant attire. And the stones felt very cold under the worn soles of his rubber "sneakers." He wished that the enemy would make its appearance and have done with it. And at almost the same minute, as though in answer to his wish, there reached him faintly

the sound of a creaking carriage from beyond the slope. The sounds ceased. Kendall, straining sight and hearing, waited, his heart pounding against his ribs. Minute after minute passed. Time and again his imagination peopled The Prospect with skulking figures, and more than once he was certain that he heard voices. But when the enemy did appear it was from an unsuspected quarter.

Kendall had been so sure that they would creep up over the edge of The Prospect that he never took his eyes from that direction until a sound at his left, the faintest sound imaginable, summoned his gaze. They had come by the drive, after all, banking, doubtless, on the darkness to remain undetected. When Kendall first saw them they were almost halfway across the turf between the drive and the flagpole, which, from where he hid in the entrance of Oxford, was a scant twelve yards distant.

Kendall's hand, which had been clutching the electric torch for many minutes, tightened and his finger sought the button. But he waited a moment longer, waited while they reached the flagpole, four darker blots in the darkness, and paused there. Then two of the forms separated from the others, one advancing to the right and the other to the left and kneeling, apparently, on the turf. Only once the sound of a voice reached Kendall. Then he thought he heard the word "brush" uttered in a low tone. And then up went his arm, his finger pressed on the button and—

Darkness as before!

The torch had failed to work! Frantically Kendall pressed the button, but it was no use. What was the matter? The torch had been all right earlier in the evening, for he had tested it more than once. Perhaps—! Hurriedly he unscrewed the lens at the end and felt of the tiny lamp inside. That was it! It had become sufficiently unscrewed to break the connection. He tightened it with trembling fingers, put back the lens, again pointed it at the base of the flagpole and pressed the button.

A path of white light leaped before him into the darkness. In that brilliant flood of radiance every object stood out sharp and distinct as though in a flash of lightning. At the pole, frozen into immobility, stood a boy with upraised arm. Beside him a second boy leaned to dip his brush in the can of paint. At the edge of the radiance, to left and right, the two watchers knelt on the grass like Indian scouts and gazed with wide, frightened eyes into the glare of the torch. The picture lasted but an instant. Then came one sudden exclamation of alarm and four figures were scuttling for the edge of The Prospect, their shadows fleeing before them. Then they were gone. Kendall raced after. The light from the torch swept the long, steep slope. Two of the boys had reached the bottom safely, but the others were rolling over and over, pellmell, legs and arms thrashing the air as they went. But not a sound escaped them. At the bottom they picked themselves up and plunged into the blackness beyond the limits of the torch's radiance.

"At the pole stood a boy with upraised arm."

Kendall extinguished the light and stood for a moment in silent laughter as he heard the creak of the carriage, followed the next instant by the sound of galloping hoofs on the road. Then silence fell again. Still chuckling, he retraced his steps across The Prospect. He had had some idea at first of hiding the can of paint, but he didn't know where to put it. And, now that the enemy was routed in disorder, it behooved him to make good his own escape from a precarious position. He wondered whether they had succeeded in putting any of the paint on the pole before their flight, but decided that he had better not show the light again. He would learn to-morrow.

He crept silently back to Clarke and breathed a sigh of relief when he found the door ajar as he had left it. There had always been the possibility that someone would come prowling around, find it undone and relock it. But fortune, it seemed, was with him to-night. He pushed open the door, entered, closed it behind him and noiselessly turned the key again. Then he faced around and discovered himself looking startledly into the eyes of the Assistant Principal!

Mr. Collins was clothed in a crimson bathgown, the tasseled cords of which he was still in the act of tying with fumbling fingers. He had evidently just arisen from bed, and hurriedly. Kendall, the electric torch still clasped in his left hand, remained stock-still and regarded the brilliant apparition with open mouth. It was the apparition that spoke first.

"Where have you been?" asked Mr. Collins sternly.

“Just—just outside, sir,” replied Kendall vaguely.

“What for?”

“Just—just to look around, sir; to get the air. I—I wasn’t sleepy, please, sir, and I—I took a walk.”

“Hm; really?” Mr. Collins’s tone was doubting. “Didn’t you know it was against the rules to leave the building after ten o’clock?”

“Yes, sir, but I—I guess I forgot it.”

“You guess you forgot it, eh? What’s that in your hand?”

Kendall looked down, saw the torch and regarded it with a vast surprise, turning it this way and that in an evident effort to account for it. Finally, though,

“That’s an electric torch, sir,” he answered.

“Hm; so I see. What’s your name?”

“Burtis, sir.”

“What’s your room?”

“Twenty-one, sir.”

“Go to it. I’ll talk with you to-morrow. Wait!”

Kendall “waited” abruptly, almost losing his balance.

“Are you alone?”

“Yes, sir.”

“No one else with you?”

“No, sir.”

“Quite certain of that?”

“Oh, yes, sir.”

“Very well. Don’t let this happen again, Curtis.”

“Burtis, please, sir. No, sir. Thank you, sir.”

“Hm! Good night!”

But the encounter with Mr. Collins couldn’t spoil the adventure. Unaided and alone, reflected Kendall as he mounted the stairs to his room, he had met the enemy and repulsed it! He had saved the school from vandalism! He, Kendall Burtis, had done it, and from now on they could no longer disregard his existence. He was a hero!

Of course, his thoughts continued as he crawled into bed without disturbing the rhythmic breathing of his roommate, of course Mr. Collins might lecture him about leaving the building after lock-up, but what was a lecture in view of his triumph? Eventually Kendall fell asleep to dream of the night’s events in weird parody, little recking of the mischievous possibilities of what is known as Circumstantial Evidence!

CHAPTER VII
CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE

Kendall awoke the next morning possessed by a pleasant feeling of well-being for which he could not, during the first few moments, account. Then recollection of the events of the preceding night came and he smiled broadly and mentally patted himself on the back. He jumped out of bed and dressed himself briskly, thinking that the world was a very good place to be in. Harold, who was usually out of sorts in the early morning, was visibly annoyed at Kendall's high spirits.

"Cut out that whistling, will you?" he begged between yawns. "You give me a headache, you do; always whistling; making a noise—" The words died away in a growl as he patted the cold sponge gingerly over his face. Kendall laughed.

"I guess you don't like music," he said.

"Music!" exclaimed the other with awful irony.

"Yes, that's what the little birdies do in the morning, whistle. I'm playing I'm a little birdie."

"You're playing the silly fool," growled Harold. "Whistling isn't music. Besides, there isn't any tune to what you whistle!"

"I was—what do you call it?—improvising," replied Kendall. "All great musicians do it."

"Well, do it outdoors then. I want peace in my own room."

"All right," agreed Kendall good-naturedly. "I'm off. You'd better hurry or you'll be late for chapel."

"Don't care if I am," answered Harold defiantly. But he dropped the towel and made a rush for his clothes as Kendall closed the door behind him.

When Kendall reached the front of Whitson he observed a little group of fellows at the flagpole. He hurried across to it. On the grass, overturned, lay the paint can, with two brushes, sticky with green paint, balanced on top. The brushes had been found on the grass nearby. A glance at the pole told Kendall that he had not entirely saved it from the enemy after all, for on the farther side two big streaks of bright green marred the whiteness. The group was speculating excitedly. Kendall listened:

"Must have been done early last night. The paint's almost dry."

"Some Third Class gang, of course. Green's their color."

"They ought to get their heads bumped together," said an older boy. "Faculty'll have something to say when they see it."

There was an uneasy silence at that, and one or two of the smaller boys edged away. But others joined the group and the theories kept coming:

"Wonder why they didn't finish it. Must have been scared away, what?"

"Of course! Look at the paint pot. And Decker found one brush ten feet away. They probably heard something and ran." The speaker lowered his voice. "Know anything about it?"

Then the chapel bell stopped ringing and the fellows made a rush for the entrance.

Kendall smiled to himself as he followed. He could tell them something that would surprise them if he wanted to. Of course he would have to tell someone or else he would get no credit for his act; and it is only human nature to want credit for our good deeds. The best way, he guessed, would be to just sort of mention it carelessly to someone. When one fellow knew, it wouldn't take long for the story to get about. And after that—well, at least they'd know who he was!

But presently, when Mr. Collins reached the announcements for the day, Kendall was reminded that life was not all roses.

"I will see the following students at the Office at twelve," said Mr. Collins. Then came a half-dozen names, and the last of all was Burtis!

Kendall left Oxford wondering what sort of punishment was to be meted out to him. It seemed a very small crime, leaving the dormitory after ten o'clock, and Kendall comforted himself with the conclusion that the Assistant Principal would only give him a talking to. But now and then during the forenoon the recollection of the coming interview caused a qualm.

Meanwhile the school had worked itself into quite an excited frame of mind over the green paint episode. Older fellows recalled the time when, a couple of years ago, the front of Dudley had been discovered decorated one morning with a legend in blue paint. But the boy who had performed that startling feat could not be connected with the present adventure for he had removed himself from Yardley a short while after. Younger boys whispered of a mysterious secret society and hinted that they had suspected its existence for some time. By noon the Third Class had been made defendant. They might deny it as much as they pleased, declared the other classes, but anyone could see that it was their work. And, added some of the First Class oracles, the sooner they discovered the culprits and made an example of them the better for the reputation of the Third Class. All of which added to the rapidly growing excitement. Of course the Third Class denied to a man all knowledge of the affair. Well, perhaps not to a man, since Kendall didn't put in any denial, the principal reason for which was that no one thought of accusing him.

By the time breakfast was over the paint can and brushes had disappeared and the janitor was busily at work removing the offending stains. It was rumored that Mr. Collins himself had taken the paint can, but when questioned the janitor only grunted. It was also rumored that faculty was enormously incensed over the affair and had summoned a special meeting that evening to consider what steps to take to discover the miscreants, and that there was the dickens to pay generally! Meanwhile the school waited with bated breath and enjoyed the sensation hugely.

At twelve o'clock Kendall made his way down the long corridor of Oxford and pushed open the ground-glass portal marked "Office." There were two boys ahead of him in the outer room and Kendall sank into a chair to wait. The school secretary glanced up across the top of his desk, fixed Kendall speculatively for an instant and went back to his work. The door of the inner office opened, Mr. Collins appeared, looked over the callers, said "Watkins,

please," and disappeared again, one of the boys at his heels. There was a solemnity about the proceeding that Kendall found a trifle depressing. Five minutes later the same thing was repeated and the second youth disappeared behind that forbidding portal. Meanwhile three other boys had arrived and seated themselves about the room. Then it was Kendall's turn at last and he followed the Assistant Principal across the threshold.

"Take a seat, please, Burtis," said Mr. Collins, closing the door. Kendall sat down in a chair at the end of the broad, flat-topped mahogany desk and Mr. Collins lowered a shade by a few inches at one of the windows and took his own chair. Then he looked at Kendall for a moment in silence. Finally,

"Well, Burtis, suppose you tell me all about it," he said in a kindly tone. "That will save a lot of questions."

"Why, sir," replied Kendall, "there—there isn't anything much to tell, sir. I didn't think about the rule, sir. I don't mean that I didn't know it, only—"

Mr. Collins frowned.

"Never mind about that part of it, Burtis. What induced you to do such a silly, childish thing, my boy?"

"Do—do what, Mr. Collins?"

"Come, come now! Don't beat about the bush, Burtis."

"I don't understand what you mean, sir," replied Kendall bewilderedly. "If you mean why did I go out after lock-up—"

"I mean," said Mr. Collins shortly, drumming with his finger-tips on the top of the desk, "I mean why did you daub the flagpole with green paint? What was your idea in doing such an idiotic thing?"

Kendall stared in amazement.

"Why—why—"

"Well? Come now, tell me all about it."

"But I didn't! You don't understand, sir! I didn't have anything to do with that, Mr. Collins. It was the oth—"

He stopped abruptly. Mr. Collins shook his head impatiently:

"You mean that you didn't actually do any of the painting? Does that matter? You had a hand in the affair, Burtis. Who was with you?"

"No one, sir," answered Kendall, still bewildered.

"That means you refuse to tell their names. Do you mind telling me whether the thing was intended as a Hallowe'en joke or as a mere piece of vandalism?"

"Why, sir, I think it was meant as a joke! But I didn't know it was Hallowe'en. They said —"

"Who said?" asked Mr. Collins sharply. Kendall was silent.

"Come, come, Burtis, don't be silly. Make a frank confession and it will be easier for you."

“I’d rather not say who they were, if you please, sir. But I know they intended it as a sort of joke on the school. I tried to stop them, and I did, but I was too late—”

“So you were on the side of law and order, were you?” asked Mr. Collins ironically. “Very fine of you, Burtis. Then you don’t deny that you were present at the time?”

“N-no, sir; that is, I was—was nearby.”

“Who did that electric torch you had belong to?”

“My roommate, Harold Towne.”

“Hm. Where was Towne at the time?”

“In bed, sir.”

“You’re certain of that?”

“Yes, sir. I waited until he was asleep before I went out.”

“Were the others there when you arrived?”

“No, sir.”

“You had to wait for them? How long?”

“I—I don’t know exactly; about twenty minutes, I guess.”

“Where did you wait?”

“On the steps of Oxford, sir.”

“I see. You had the paint with you then?”

“No, sir! I didn’t have anything to do with the paint. You—you don’t understand, Mr. Collins!”

“I’m trying to, my boy, but you won’t help me. You acknowledge that you took part in the affair—”

“No, sir, really! I had nothing to do with it. I went out to try and stop them.”

“That’s rather a hard pill to swallow, Burtis. How did you know that ‘they’ were going to do it?”

“I overheard them talking about it in the afternoon, sir.”

“Why didn’t you try to stop them then?”

“I—I didn’t know them well enough.”

Mr. Collins was plainly puzzled. Kendall looked as though he were telling the truth, but Mr. Collins had had many disillusionments in his time. He moved impatiently. “Burtis,” he said, “here are the clear facts of the case. I found you last night at almost eleven o’clock coming into the dormitory with an electric torch in your hand. This morning the flagpole is found daubed with green paint—the color of the Third Class, of which you are a member—and a paint pot and two brushes are found nearby. As circumstantial evidence that looks pretty conclusive, doesn’t it?”

Kendall sadly acknowledged that it did. It was his first encounter with Circumstantial Evidence and he was forced to own that Circumstantial Evidence was getting the better of

him.

"Well," resumed the Assistant Principal, "now you confess that you were aware of the project, that you were present, know the other participators—"

"Only by sight, sir!" interrupted Kendall.

"You mean that you don't know their names?"

"Yes, sir! No, sir; I mean that I don't!"

"Um; members of your class, however, are they not?"

"No, sir."

"What! Then why the green paint?"

"Because—because—" But Kendall couldn't answer that without informing on the Broadwood fellows.

"Well?"

"It wasn't used because it was a class color, sir; it—it had another significance." And Kendall found time to be secretly proud of that word before Mr. Collins went on:

"Now you tell me that you went out there to prevent the others from doing what they had planned to do. What method did you intend to use, Burtis?"

"I meant to scare them away."

"Ah! And how did you propose to scare them away?"

"By hiding and turning the searchlight on them, sir. And that's what I did, only the light wouldn't work at first and they got some paint on before it would work. And then they ran away."

"Yes? And in what direction?"

"I—I—" Kendall stopped and observed Mr. Collins apologetically. "I'd rather not tell any more, please, sir."

"Very well, my boy, but bear in mind that you are making it harder for yourself. I'd like very much to believe your version of the story, but, frankly, I can't. Now, wouldn't it be much more sensible to make a clean breast of the whole thing? Is there any reason why the others shouldn't take their share of punishment? Especially if, as you say, they are the ones to blame and you are merely an innocent victim of circumstances? Come, come, Burtis!"

"I couldn't make a clean breast of it, Mr. Collins, without telling on—on the others. And —and you don't think that's right, do you, sir?"

Mr. Collins smiled slightly. "That question has been put up to me a good many times, my boy, and I've always declined to answer it. There's something to be said on both sides. It's a question you'll have to decide for yourself. I must tell you, though, that we have always had very little patience for the sort of tomfoolery indulged in by your party last night. Defacing property is a skulking, mean-spirited business, Burtis. Now and then some prank comes to my attention for which, although I am obliged to mete out punishment, I have a sort of admiration. Ingenuity, daring, courage, all those compel admiration even when displayed in a bad cause. But to sneak out at night under cover of darkness and daub paint on another

person's property has nothing of ingenuity nor courage about it. In short, Burtis, the defacing of school property is held by this faculty as being mischievous and contemptible and is always punished severely. I tell you this that you may realize the seriousness of your position before it is too late. Think it over a minute."

"You mean that I—that you will let me off if I tell who the other fellows were?" asked Kendall unhappily.

"I mean that if you will make a clean breast of the whole affair, fixing blame where it belongs, you will be dealt with much more leniently than you will be if you persist in—in retarding justice," replied Mr. Collins kindly. "Take your time and think about it."

He arose and passed into the front office, and Kendall heard him address Mr. Forisher, the secretary:

"Let me have the card of Burtis, Third Class, please."

He returned with the card in his hand. Kendall could see his name at the top of it. It was evidently taken from the filing cabinet which stood back of the secretary's desk. Mr. Collins laid the card on the desk and looked inquiringly at Kendall. Kendall shook his head:

"I—I'd rather not, please, sir."

"You're certain?"

"Yes, sir. I'd rather not tell."

"I'm sorry." Mr. Collins frowned slightly and picked up the card. For a moment or two there was silence while he glanced over the record it held. Then, "Upon my word, Burtis, this is too bad," he exclaimed annoyedly. "You have good reports for the week from every instructor. Mr. Bendix says you show first-class physical conditions and that you are trying football. Here's a fine, clean card and now you go and spoil it by such tomfoolery as last night's! Too bad, really! Well—"

He laid the card down again, drummed on the desk with his fingers once or twice, swung his chair around so that he could look out the window across the Yard and was silent. A minute passed. Kendall followed the Assistant Principal's gaze with his own and wondered how many pillows were piled in the window seat of a room in Dudley, how you told time by a sun-dial and what the little red discs on the golf course meant. Then Mr. Collins swung around briskly and Kendall came back from his dreaming.

"Well, Burtis," said Mr. Collins in a very matter-of-fact tone of voice, "I guess it will have to be probation."

Kendall made no answer. He was very uncertain as to what probation meant. He didn't like the sound of it, however. It sounded, he thought, almost as bad as Circumstantial Evidence. Mr. Collins didn't leave him long in ignorance, though:

"That means that you must keep within school bounds, my boy, remain in your room from supper time until chapel in the morning, have your lessons perfect and abstain from athletics."

"Does it mean," asked Kendall blankly, "that I mustn't play football, sir?"

"Just that; neither football nor anything else. And the rules oblige me to notify your"—he glanced at the card—"your father, Burtis. I shall write to him this evening. It would be well

for you to do the same, I think."

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir." Kendall was silent a moment, revolving his cap in his hands, and looking very miserable. "I—I'm glad I didn't buy any football clothes," he murmured abstractedly. Mr. Collins smiled a little:

"Well, that's all, Burtis, for this time, I think. Try and let this teach you a lesson. Will you?"

"Yes, sir." Kendall got up slowly. Mr. Collins put out his hand and Kendall placed his in it:

"Being on probation doesn't prohibit you from paying me a call sometimes, Burtis. You know my room. Come in and see me. I've got some books you might like to see, and I'm always glad to loan them to boys who I believe will treat them well."

"Thank you, sir." Kendall walked to the door. There, with his hand on the door, he turned. "There's—there's just one thing, Mr. Collins," he said earnestly. "I know you had to—to do this. I guess my story ain't—I mean isn't—very likely. But I wish you'd just try your very hardest, sir, to believe that I was telling the truth."

"I will try, Burtis. If it is the truth, my boy, it will prove itself some day. If it does you won't be more pleased than I shall. Good morning."

"Good morning, sir."

"Oh, by the way, Burtis! I shall say nothing of this to anyone beyond the faculty. Unless you speak of it yourself to your friends the reason for your punishment is not likely to be known."

When he passed Whitson the entrance was thronged with fellows awaiting the dinner hour. It seemed to him that, as he went by, everyone turned and looked at him, and he could imagine their expressions of amused contempt. To be sure, Mr. Collins had seemed to think that the matter would be kept secret, but it seemed to him that everyone must know already. He passed by on his way to his room with lowered head. As a matter of fact, very few noticed him, and none connected him with the green paint episode.

In his room Kendall washed up for dinner and then sat down on the edge of his bed and strove to think it over. He was very glad that Harold was not there. It would be nice to tell somebody about it, but surely not him. There was the electric torch on the table. He wondered if it would light if he tried it. Funny how it had come unscrewed last night. He would never forget the scene when the light had streamed out across The Prospect. He wondered what the four Broadwood fellows thought of it; what explanation they had fashioned to account for the sudden surprise; whether they connected it with the boy who had sat next to them in the drug store.

Then he pulled himself up. Why, he wasn't thinking of his misfortune at all! He was thinking of what had happened when—when he had been a hero. He felt mighty little like a hero to-day! Probation! No more football! That was tough. Worse than that, though, was the thought of his father's disappointment, and his mother's. He must write that letter and tell them the real facts of it. It wasn't doing very well, he reflected ruefully, to get on probation within the first fortnight of school!

Well—! A fellow had to eat, though, probation or no probation, and he suddenly became aware of a very healthy appetite. After all, he hadn't *really* done anything very bad, and he *had* told the truth to Mr. Collins, and—and, oh, shucks, he was going to dinner!

CHAPTER VIII
THE FIRST GAME

Kendall wrote the letter to his father that afternoon, about the time he was accustomed to chase the pigskin. He felt rather better after the letter was finished, and he took it down and dropped it into the letter box in front of Oxford Hall with a sigh of relief. At least, his parents would know that his conscience was clear. He wondered if his father would be very angry with Mr. Collins! To anticipate a little, however, Mr. Burtis's reply when it reached his son was not entirely satisfactory to that youth. In the first place, asked that worthy Puritan, why had Kendall been sitting around in a drug store? Had he joined the town loafers? Satan, reminded Farmer Burtis, was still finding mischief for idle hands to engage in. Bluntly he suggested that Kendall remain at school and study his lessons and not go gallivanting into the city. As for the punishment, he guessed it wouldn't do Kendall any harm to have to stay around the school and keep away from the football field; he had heard of boys getting their arms and legs broken playing football!

Kendall's mother, however, wrote a letter full of sympathy for Kendall and indignation at Mr. Collins. That letter was like a pat on the back. The only unsatisfactory part of it was where Mrs. Burtis said she didn't see why Kendall needed to have shielded those bad boys who really merited the punishment. Kendall was for a moment disappointed in his mother. But he presently "guessed that a woman doesn't look at those things in quite the way a man does," and viewed her more leniently. When he replied he explained at great length that it would have been a most dishonorable action to have revealed the identity of the Broadwood fellows, and hinted that nothing short of boiling oil or melted lead would ever induce him to speak. Then he struck the pose of a martyr for a page or so and inscribed himself "Your loving son, Kendall."

But these letters and replies came later, and we are getting ahead of our story.

As Mr. Collins had suggested, there was no reason why Kendall's schoolmates should know of his probation, and so Kendall kept the knowledge to himself. There were times when the temptation to tell Harold was strong, times when Kendall felt the need of talking it over with somebody and getting sympathy. But Harold was not what Kendall called a very sympathetic soul, and so the secret was kept. At the end of two or three days the incident of the green paint ceased to interest the school and for the present it remained a mystery. Other things happened to engage the attention of the fellows. There was first scrimmage one Thursday afternoon, when they were allowed to get for the first time some idea of what the line-up of the football team was to be. And then, two days later, came the first game of the schedule, a contest of four eight-minute periods with Greenburg High School. It was a warm afternoon and players and spectators alike sweltered in the sun. Kendall witnessed his first real game of football and found it interesting, although as a matter of fact it was rather a dull and loosely played contest. Neither team had "got together" as yet, and fumbles, mixed signals and other misplays were frequent on both sides. Yardley took the lead in the second period by seizing advantage of a Greenburg fumble on the latter's twenty yards and from there working over the goal line for a touchdown from which Wallace Hammel missed a try at goal by some six yards. In the next period Greenburg tied the score, missing an even easier goal, and in the last period of play Stearns, right half-back, got away around

Greenburg's end for a sixty-yard run and another score. Hammel again missed a goal and the final score stood 10 to 5.

Nobody was unduly elated over the showing of the Yardley team, although, as Tom Roeder pointed out that evening when they were talking it over in Dan's room, they hadn't done so badly considering everything. "Look at the heat, Dan! Thunder, I had a regular cascade running down my back all the time! Bet you I lost five pounds!"

"What did the scales say?" asked Arthur Thompson, who, a new recruit that fall, was after Roeder's or Stearns's position.

"Oh, they said a pound and four ounces," replied Tom carelessly. "But they were probably mistaken!"

"Sandy Fogg played a dandy game at center," said Gerald.

"Good on defense," agreed Dan, "but he was mighty slow on getting into the attack."

"He has too much fat on," said Tom. "Or he did have before we began playing. I guess he's some lighter now."

"What the dickens was the matter with Wallace Hammel?" asked Arthur. Tom shrugged his shoulders.

"Search me. Both those goals were easy enough, and he had all the time he wanted. He's feeling rather rotten about it to-night; peevish as you please; I simply had to get out of the room."

"He will come around all right after awhile," said Dan. "But I certainly wish we had two or three good drop-kickers."

"Simms did pretty good work last year," suggested Arthur.

"Simms had a record of five goals last season," replied Dan, "out of about sixteen chances. What we need is a fellow we can depend on. We need better punters than we've got, too. Ridge is fair, but if he gets put out of a game it's up to Wallace or me, and we're neither of us much good. Payson says he's going to find some kickers if he has to go over the school with a fine-tooth comb, but I don't know where he's going to get them."

"The trouble is," said Tom, "that you can't develop good punters and drop-kickers in a season, and those we had all graduated. We're going to miss Loring like anything. He was a born punter, Alf was."

"He was a born everything in the football line," said Arthur.

"I wish he had his job back again," sighed Dan.

"I'll tell you who was the dandy kicker," said Tom, "and that's Kapenhysen, Dan. Remember how he used to send 'em off?"

"I sure do. I wish I could get him back here this fall to take charge of the punters. I believe I'll write and ask him."

"He couldn't come, I guess," said Tom. "He's on the Yale Varsity this year."

"I know, but he might get away for a week just before the Broadwood game and put the finishing touches on for us. I don't believe Kap will make the first team this season, Tom; he's got too many good men to beat."

"Perhaps not. Better ask him, anyhow. By the way, Gerald, I thought you were going to play this fall."

"I thought so, too, but Dan wouldn't let me."

"He's still trying to boss you? Kick him in the shins, Gerald. Why won't he let you?"

"Because," replied Dan, "Mr. Pennimore is on the Cross-Country Team and they need his services more than we do."

"You don't know, Dan," laughed Gerald. "I may have the making of a great football player in me."

"Better stick to your trade, though," said Tom. "How's the Cross-Country Team coming on?"

"Hard at it every afternoon now," Gerald answered. "We've got a dandy string of runners this year, fellows. Broadwood won't have a look-in."

"Larry Goodyear's captain, isn't he?" asked Arthur.

"Yes. He wants to get Nordham to come in and make it a three-cornered race this year. I wish she would."

"Won't she?" asked Dan.

"I don't know yet. They haven't answered Goodyear's letter. Say, Arthur, Harry's doing pretty well. I suppose he told you he finished eighth yesterday?"

"He said something like that but I didn't believe him."

"Who's Harry?" inquired Tom.

"Young Merrow, Arthur's roommate and fidus," Dan replied.

"Fido would be better," laughed Gerald. "He's always at Arthur's heels. I'll bet you persuaded him to try for the Cross-Country Team, Arthur, so you could get away from him a minute."

"You guessed it, son. I'm going over to Oxford. Anyone coming my way?"

Tom Roeder decided that his path led in that direction and the two boys departed together. After they had gone Dan asked:

"Did you mean that about young Merrow, Gerald? I thought he was a bit of a duffer."

"He was. Arthur used to have to drive him out of the room every afternoon to make him take exercise. But Arthur seems to have knocked some sense into him somehow. I was awfully surprised last week when I found him out for the Cross-Country Team. He told me yesterday that he'd never done anything but play a little tennis, but he's taken hold in good shape."

"I suppose," observed Dan, "that Merrow is Arthur's penalty for heroism."

"That's right. Ever since Arthur pulled Harry out of the lake that time Harry's stuck to him like a brother."

"You had a hand in it, too. It's lucky he didn't decide to stick to you instead of Arthur. By the way, speaking of protégés, your friend down the hall has got tired, I notice."

"Who is that, Dan? Oh, I remember. You mean he's given up football?"

"Yes, I was looking over the list this afternoon and saw his name scratched off. Cowles says he's stopped coming. Another 'natural-born player' gone wrong."

"That's rather funny. I told you, didn't I, that I had him in one afternoon? He seemed—well, not the sort of fellow to quit. I meant to look him up again. I rather liked him. But this cross-country work has kept me busy. Did he show anything in practice?"

"N-no, I believe not. I think you prophesied quite a career for him, didn't you?"

"I said maybe," laughed Gerald. "There was something about the chap that made me—sort of believe in him."

"I remember there was something," Dan agreed. "Well, he will probably find himself in the course of time. Evidently football isn't what he was looking for. Perhaps it's just as well he dropped out, though, for the first cut comes next week and I guess most of Holmes's 'rookies' will retire to private life."

"What does Payson think of the outlook, Dan?"

"Says it's an average one. There's no one very startling in sight. That rather pleases Payson, though; you know he doesn't fancy 'stars.' Says he'd rather have a team of common or garden variety of peggers."

"I thought Billy Norton was considered a 'star,'" said Gerald with a smile.

"He is—by Billy Norton," replied Dan dryly. "He's a star that will suffer eclipse if he doesn't get down out of the clouds and play the game. Sayer is hot after him these days."

"Sayer," mused Gerald. "Yes, he was rather good last year in the Porter game. Let's see, we dropped Porter this year, didn't we?"

"Porter? No, we dropped Brewer. We have seven games instead of eight. Seven's enough, too. Well, let's go over to Cambridge and see what's doing. I haven't been near it yet."

Cambridge and Oxford were the two school societies, with rooms on the top floor of Oxford Hall. On their way down the stairs they met a boy coming up. Gerald nudged Dan.

"Here he is now," he whispered.

The boy was Kendall, and as he reached the others he glanced up, said "How do you do?" and would have gone by had not Gerald spoken.

"How are you getting on?" he asked.

"Pretty well, thanks." Kendall paused on the step above.

"How's football coming?" asked Dan.

"Not very well. I gave it up."

"That so? I'm sorry. What was the trouble?"

"Nothing much. I—I just thought I'd better."

Dan smiled and nodded and started on, but Gerald, yielding to a sudden impulse, said: "I thought you were coming to see me, Burtis. Drop in some evening. I'm not in much in the afternoon now. Will you?"

“Thanks, I—I’d like to.”

“Good stuff! Don’t forget, then.”

At the doorway Dan turned with a quizzical smile. “Why?” he asked.

Gerald looked puzzled and shook his head. “I don’t know. But there’s something about him that—interests me. I don’t know—”

“Maybe it’s his hair,” chuckled Dan. “There’s plenty of it.”

“I must get him to have it cut,” replied Gerald soberly. Then after a moment, he exclaimed triumphantly: “I know what it is!”

“What what is?” asked Dan.

“It’s his mouth, Dan. Ever notice it? It’s always on the point of laughing and it never does it. I want to see him laugh!”

“You’re a queer duffer,” Dan answered with amusement as they entered Oxford. “I believe Curtis, or whatever his name is, has hypnotized you!”

CHAPTER IX
NEW ACQUAINTANCES

Probation didn't weigh as heavily on Kendall as he had thought it was going to. It was hard at first to reconcile himself to giving up the football career he had dreamed of for two years, or, rather, since he meant to try again as soon as he might, to postponing it. But after a week or so the first sting of disappointment passed. At least, he was not barred from watching practice, even if he couldn't take part in it. As for the Saturday afternoon games, he missed none of them. And when, on the thirteenth of October, St. John's Academy played Yardley to no score game Kendall was as bitterly disgruntled as anyone. The plain truth of the matter was that Yardley should have won that contest by two scores. That she didn't was due to two things: Wallace Hammel's inability to kick a field goal from the twenty-five yard line and Simms's headless generalship when, in the third period, Yardley had the ball on St. John's twelve yards on a first down. Dan was not playing. If he had been Simms's signal for a forward pass would have been countermanded. The quarter-back got the throw off in good style, but Norton, who was to have taken it, ran too far across the field and the ball went into the eager arms of a St. John's player who romped half the length of the field with it before Simms, striving heroically to avert the consequences of his error of judgment, brought him down from behind. After that Holmes was sent in at quarter with instructions to pound at the opponent's line for a touchdown. But St. John's managed to stave off defeat until the final whistle came to her rescue, and went home proud and elated.

Yes, even Kendall, who had had scant opportunity to study the strategy of the game, saw where the trouble lay and groaned impotently more than once as Yardley's chances of victory were thrown away. What especially surprised him was Hammel's failure to kick that goal. The pass from Fogg, who played center, was perfect, the dark blue line held like a wall and he had all the time in the world. And yet the ball missed the left upright by a good six feet. Why, Kendall was almost certain that he could have done better than that himself, although he had never tried to drop-kick a goal! He wondered on the way up the hill if anyone would object if he brought his football down there some morning between recitations and tried a few goals. He didn't believe they would. He made up his mind to do it.

And so on Monday morning, after mathematics, he hurried to his room, got his old stained and frayed pigskin and went down to the gridiron. There was not a soul in sight at that time of day. It had rained in the night and the ground was soft and slippery. Kendall started at the fifteen yards and missed the crossbar by five feet or so. At twenty yards he got over once and missed twice. It wasn't as easy as it had looked. At twenty-five yards, however, he had less difficulty. Ten tries netted him six goals, which wasn't so bad considering that Kendall hadn't kicked a football for a month or more.

After that he took the ball to the side of the field and tried angles. Naturally, he wasn't overly successful at this, but he managed several times to get the pigskin across the bar, and he became so interested that he quite lost track of time and the hour bell found him far from Oxford and he had to hide the football in a corner of the tennis shed and sprint all the way up the hill.

He was back again the next morning, and several other mornings that followed and, although there was none to watch or applaud, he didn't get tired of conquering the crossbar with the dirty old brown ball. When, one day he managed to put it over from placement squarely on the thirty-five yard line he was very well pleased indeed. Place-kicking was something he had known nothing of before coming to Yardley, and he had to solve its problems unaided. But solve them he did. He learned to judge the strength of the wind and allow for it, to point the ball according to distance and direction, to keep his eye on the spot to be kicked. Doubtless he would have progressed more rapidly with someone to teach him, but he got along remarkably well alone. An expert would have instructed him to have the laced side of the ball toward him so as to use the lacings as a guide in sighting, and Kendall had to discover the advisability of that unaided. And so the morning's half hour of goal-kicking became quite a regular event for Kendall, and almost every day—always when the weather allowed—he was down on the field after mathematics recitation swinging that long right leg of his and rapidly wearing the leather off the toe of his shoe. And then one forenoon when he was trudging up the hill with the pigskin tucked under his arm it suddenly occurred to him that perhaps for almost a fortnight he had been unintentionally disobeying rules. That afternoon he sacrificed a quarter of an hour of watching practice and found Mr. Collins in the office.

"You know, sir," explained Kendall, "you told me I mustn't take part in athletics, and I've been practicing goal-kicking. Was that wrong, sir?"

"Hm," said Mr. Collins, placing the tips of his fingers together and frowning intently for a moment. "Er—on your own hook, so to speak, Burtis?"

"Oh, yes, sir. I just wanted to see if I could do it."

"Well, no, I don't think you are guilty of any wrong, my boy, for you say you didn't think about it. In fact, I'm not sure that what you've been doing is an infringement of the rules. Still, I think that, in order to be on the safe side, you had better drop it. I'm sorry, but rules are rules, eh?"

"Yes, sir," replied Kendall with a sigh. Then, after a moment's hesitation, "Could you tell me, Mr. Collins, how much longer probation is going to last?" he asked.

Mr. Collins shook his head gently. "No, I can't. I don't know, and it would be wrong to tell you if I did. But I will say that you have been doing very good work, Burtis, and I think I may assure you that if you keep it up your term of probation will terminate before very long."

"Yes, sir, thank you."

"You're very welcome. By the way, you haven't been to see me yet, have you? Or was I out when you called?"

"No, sir, I haven't."

"I wish you would. What are you doing this evening after supper? Couldn't you drop down and see me for a while? There'll be one or two other fellows there, probably. We have a sort of a club on Friday nights. Just to talk things over, you know, and exchange ideas. Perhaps you may know the others; if not you'll want to. Better drop in for a while, Burtis."

"Thank you, sir, I'd like to very much," replied Kendall gratefully.

And yet when the time came he felt rather shy about it and it was nearly eight when he finally descended the stairs and knocked at the door of Mr. Collins's study. It was the Assistant Principal's voice that bade him enter. The room was very comfortable and homelike. The walls were lined with bookshelves, there were many easy-chairs, most of them turned toward the hearth where the tiniest of soft coal fires was burning, and the light was supplied by a squatty lamp on the big table so shaded that the upper part of the room was left in a mellow twilight. Mr. Collins's "one or two other fellows" were in reality five. As Kendall was introduced to them they stood up and their faces were blurred in the pleasant gloom. But two faces he recognized. One belonged to Arthur Thompson and the other to Cowles, the manager of the Football Team. The remaining three boys, all First Class fellows, were Tooker, Sanford and Abercrombie. Tooker was short and round and smiling; Sanford, tall, dark and earnest, and wore tortoise-shell spectacles which gave him the appearance of a benignant owl; Abercrombie was a small chap with light hair and a high-pitched voice whose somewhat buttonish nose was straddled by a pair of glasses which were forever dropping off when he talked and being dragged back at the end of a length of black silk cord.

Everyone seemed very affable and gracious; those within reach shook hands with a hearty grip. Cowles recalled the fact that Kendall had come out for football and mentioned it, asking in the next breath why he had deserted them. Luckily Kendall was spared an answer to this as the tall and earnest Sanford was remarking that he had once known a chap named Burtis in New York.

"Maybe a relative of yours?" he queried.

Kendall, taking the deep chair pushed forward by the host, expressed his doubts of that.

"An odd name, though, if you don't mind my saying so," continued Teller Sanford. "One doesn't encounter it often, I think."

"Probably an accident," remarked Ned Tooker. "The name was Curtis, do you see, and the printer got mixed and set up a B for a C. Simple enough. Merely a typographical error."

"It's no funnier than your name, Ned," observed Arthur Thompson. "I suppose, by the same token, your name was once Hooker?"

"No," replied Ned gravely, "it was formerly Ted Nooker, but owing to an unfortunate habit of mine—"

Everyone laughed, and Kendall, without knowing what at, found himself laughing with the rest. Ned waited gravely and continued:

"As I was saying, or about to say when so rudely interrupted, owing to an unfortunate habit I have of transposing the first letters of words it became Ned Tooker. You get me, I trust, gentlemen?"

"We get you, Ned. It must be confusing, however, for your folks."

"It was at first. But I prevailed on the family to adopt my version and now we're all Tookers. Of course, it *took us* some time to get—"

But he was drowned in a howl of agony.

"Mr. Gaddis told us in class last year," said Abercrombie, dropping his glasses from his nose and rescuing them, "that the pun was the lowest form of humor. I agree with him."

Ned Tooker bowed deeply. “I shall inform him of your agreement, Mr. Abercrombie. He will be glad to learn it.”

“I don’t see why people are so down on puns,” said Cowles stoutly. “I’ve heard some mighty good ones.”

“As far as I am concerned,” said Mr. Collins, “I think a good pun is just as funny as any other form of humor. Sometimes I conclude that persons who frown on punning—and I’m not referring to Mr. Gaddis—are incapable of doing it. The pun has its place. Dr. Holmes, if you recollect, remarks that the pun can claim the parentage of Homer. Doubtless you can all recall instances when that worthy gentleman has descended—or arisen, all according to the point of view—to paronomasia.”

“I beg pardon, sir?” exclaimed Ned Tooker.

Mr. Collins laughed. “Paronomasia, Tooker; that’s the scientific term for it.”

“Sounds like a disease,” observed Sanford.

“I’ve known cases where it amounted to that,” replied Mr. Collins. “And speaking of Oliver Wendell Holmes, the good doctor was very fond of punning, and some he perpetrated are pretty bad. In one place among his verses you’ll find the following:

> “‘Hard is the job to launch the dangerous pun,
> A *pun*-job dangerous as the Indian one.’

That seems to show a good deal of effort, and I take it that a pun should be launched on the spur of the moment. A studied pun is heavy, and a heavy joke is as bad as a heavy biscuit.”

“I remember reading somewhere once,” said Cowles, “about a fellow who was challenged to find a pun for Mephistopheles. He replied that it was a hard thing for a man to do, but that he ‘May if he’s tough, Elise.’”

“Wow!” exclaimed Tooker. “Did they slay him?”

“History doesn’t record,” Cowles acknowledged.

“Talking about names,” said Sanford, “I think one of the oddest I ever heard was Sauerpickle.”

“There’s a fellow in our town named Twelvetrees,” offered Arthur Thompson.

“When I was a boy,” said Mr. Collins, “my mother, I recall, used to tell of an old lady whose name was Hepzibah Gandel. That has always seemed to me about as odd a name as there is.”

“There’s an old man who lives near us,” hazarded Kendall, “whose name is Meshach Fish.”

“Not bad,” drawled Tooker judicially. “Reminds me of my friend Shadrach Rowe. They called him Shad Rowe for short.”

“Ned, that will be about all from you,” laughed Arthur.

“You don’t believe it?” protested Tooker. “Why, the man’s a prominent citizen of my town; keeps a shoot and boe store—”

There was a laugh at that. Tooker waited patiently and resumed. “He doesn’t mind being called Shad; makes no bones about it!”

The talk became more serious after that, and the subjects ran all the way from Football to Elective Courses. At nine o’clock Mr. Collins disappeared and returned presently with a tall pitcher of lemonade and a tin box of biscuits. The conversation again became jocular, Tooker starting it with:

“Well, Teller, I was right after all, wasn’t I?”

“About what?” asked Sanford gravely.

“About the lemonade,” replied Tooker with the straightest of faces. “You said you didn’t think Mr. Collins would give us lemonade to-night and guessed you wouldn’t come. I told you he would, though!”

Sanford’s shocked denials were drowned in the laughter of the rest, from which Tooker’s voice emerged again:

“—Very wrong, I think, to consider your stomach as much as you do, Teller. I’ll have another biscuit, please, Arthur.”

Kendall found Ned Tooker fascinatingly amusing. Kendall was not much of a joker himself, but he was blessed with a generous sense of humor and he enjoyed Ned’s ridiculous remarks thoroughly. Presently the little gathering broke up, Tooker tugging at Sanford’s sleeve with one hand and exhibiting the empty pitcher with the other:

“Come on, Teller, it’s all gone; honest; look for yourself.”

Sanford informed him that he was a “silly ass.”

“I deny it,” replied Ned. “I may lack tact, but I’m not an ass. Good night, Mr. Collins.”

“Good night,” laughed the host. “Come again, fellows.”

“Coming along, Ned?” called Abercrombie from the entrance.

“No, I’m going home with this chap. I want to hear more about his friend Meshach Fish.” The others laughed and went out and Ned turned to Kendall. “Mind if I go up with you and converse awhile? Those fellows are so flippant that I really feel the need of a few moments of serious conversation to compose my mind.”

CHAPTER X
NED TOOKER

Kendall, striving to hide his surprise, replied that he would be very glad to have Tooker come up.

"Thank you," replied Ned, leading the way. "You're in 21, aren't you? I used to be in 17 myself last year."

"What made you leave?" asked Kendall politely.

"Custom, Burtis, custom. We're all slaves to it. In your senior year you have the inestimable privilege of rooming in Dudley. It's always done and so I did it. Left a perfectly comfortable, well-heated room and went over there to freeze in a little two-by-twice hole-in-the-wall. Here we are! Sure you don't mind my sticking around awhile?"

"Glad to have you," replied Kendall, observing with satisfaction that Harold was out. "That big chair's the most comfortable."

But Tooker chose a straight-backed chair, explaining gravely that he believed in mortifying the flesh whenever possible. He took up a book, glanced at the title and laid it down again:

"Mayne Reid. I never read him. Is he good?"

"That's not mine; it's Towne's."

"Towne? Harold Towne?"

Kendall nodded. Ned reached a hand across the table to him. Kendall, at a loss, took it, and Ned gave him a long, hard pressure.

"My poor boy," he sobbed, "my poor, poor boy!"

Then he dropped Kendall's hand, placed his own hands behind his head, leaned back in his chair and surveyed the room.

"Quite chaste," he murmured. "I recognize some of the works of art. That chromo effect over there used to belong to Steve Woods when I was a boy here. And, yes, methinks yon cast-steel engraving was once in my own abode. I sold it to Gus Cooke for fifty cents. We were never friends afterwards. I suspect Gus changed quarters to get away from it."

"I don't think it's so bad," said Kendall.

"You don't—at first. It's a peculiar picture, that one. I recall that I really liked it myself at first. Then it became a—a sort of nightmare. Well, never mind the picture. Tell me, what are you doing here, Burtis?"

"Doing here?" repeated Kendall puzzledly.

"Yes, what is your Great Object? Some of us, you know, come to study our way into college, some of us come to meet fellows who will be useful to us in later life, some of us come to play football or baseball and some of us—some few of us, Burtis,—come to Uplift and Better our Fellow Beings."

“I guess I just came to learn things,” answered Kendall with a smile. “What did you come for?”

“To Uplift and Better,” responded Ned sadly. “It has been a hard task, however. Still, I have done some good, I have had my victories, Burtis. You should have known Teller Sanford before I took him in hand. It was pitiful, absolutely pitiful.”

“Why?” asked Kendall, not knowing whether the other was in jest or earnest.

“No sense of humor at all,” replied Ned confidentially. “Intense! Serious! Heavy! Oh, I don’t pretend that he is completely reclaimed yet, but there’s a big improvement. Everyone says so. It takes time.”

“Do you room with him?” asked Kendall.

“Yes. It was the only way. Constant association, you know.”

“I see,” said Kendall soberly. Ned smiled. Then,

“Do you know, Burtis, I like you,” he exclaimed approvingly. “You have a sense of humor. One wouldn’t suspect it, though. You’re such a serious-looking chap until that smile gets in its work around your mouth. I daresay that’s the New England of it. New Englanders hate to smile if they can get out of it any way, don’t they?”

“Do they?” asked Kendall. “I never thought that. Where do you live?”

“Me? Oh, I’m one of ’em; that’s how I know. I live in a little town called Boston. Some of my folks founded the place, I believe. You come from Maine, I think Mr. Collins said. How do you like our school?”

“Very much, only—”

“Only?” prompted Ned.

Afterwards Kendall was very much surprised at himself, but now there was something about the caller that loosed Kendall’s tongue, and almost before he knew it he had confided the fact that he was on probation. Ned Tooker whistled softly. Then he smiled.

“Burtis—by the way, what did you say your first name was when you asked me to call you by it?”

“Kendall,” laughed the other.

“Great!” exclaimed Ned. “Why don’t you do it oftener?”

“Do what?”

“Laugh. It’s very becoming.”

“Why, I—I don’t know.”

“Yes, you do; it’s because you’re a New Englander. You ought to practice laughing. I had to. Now I can do it almost without an effort. Where were we? Oh, yes, you said your name was Kendall. That’s a good name, Bendall Kurtis. Mine’s Ted Nook—no, I mean Ned Tooker. Call me Ned. I foresee that we’re going to be pals, Curt.”

Kendall tried to think of something to say, and Ned came to his rescue:

"I know what you're thinking. You're thinking that I'm too blamed friendly. Oh, yes, you are! But don't let it worry you. I used to be like you before I threw off the shackles of New England reserve. If I liked a fellow I threw bricks at him. Now if I like him I say so right out in my engaging manner and it saves time. But you haven't told me yet what you did to get the Office down on you."

"I—I don't believe I can," said Kendall. "It isn't my secret alone, you see."

"Dine and fandy!" cried Ned. "Curt, I love you! You not only have a sense of humor, but you possess a Great Secret. I'm positively daffy about secrets. Keep it to yourself as long as you can, but I give you fair warning that I'll have it out of you sooner or later. I shall live for nothing else, Curt!"

"Why do you call me Curt?" asked Kendall.

"Why not? Your name is Bendall Kurtis—"

"It's Kendall Burtis," answered the other with a smile.

"I can't say that. To me you are Bendall Kurtis; Curt for short; short and curt. What's that I see? A football?"

Kendall acknowledged that it was.

"Oh, do you play?"

"I was trying to when—"

"When the sword fell. Football's a good game. I've sometimes thought I had the making of a good player."

"Have you never tried?"

"Oh, yes, many times, but the coaches didn't share my estimate of my ability. Nowadays I'm reduced to golf—and a little tennis."

"I've never seen anyone play golf," admitted Kendall.

"You shall. Not only that, Curt, but I'll make a golfer of you. I'll teach you the game. What are you doing to-morrow? No, there's a football game to-morrow. Then Monday?"

"Why—why, nothing."

"First lesson at four promptly. You have no clubs, I suppose. Naturally you wouldn't have. Very stupid of you, Ned. I'll supply those necessary utensils."

"I don't think I could ever learn," said Kendall doubtfully. "You hit a ball around with a stick, don't you?"

"Poetically put, my boy! You hit a ball around with a stick! You shall see for yourself." He drew out a handsome gold watch, looked at it and raised his eyebrows in surprise. "I must run along home. Have you a clean collar?"

"Why, why, yes," faltered Kendall.

"Let's see it. Thank you." Ned accepted it, drew a pencil from his pocket and wrote on the immaculate linen, "2 Dudley." Then he hung the collar over a corner of the mirror. "There, that's my address, Curt. Come often. I want you to know Teller better. Besides, I believe you can be of help to me in his education. Good night."

“Good night,” said Kendall. “Thank you.”

Ned slammed the door behind him, and then, opening it again, he stuck his head back into the room.

“Enjoyed hearing you talk so much,” he said with a grin.

Kendall heard Ned go down the stairs whistling loudly. Then he turned, looked at the collar hanging on the mirror and sat down on the edge of his bed and dazedly tried to think it all out.

CHAPTER XI
THE MYSTERIOUS KICKER

What puzzled Kendall was why Ned Tooker had gone out of his way to be nice to him. Of course it was plainly to be seen that Ned was a creature of impulse, one who did about what came into his head, but, allowing all that, it wasn't quite explained. Kendall was not impulsive himself, and while he had a strong capacity for affection, it was not his way to form friendships very readily. This made Ned Tooker's behavior all the more strange to Kendall. Perhaps it had been just an evening's prank, a means to pass an hour before bedtime, and perhaps Ned would have forgotten all about it to-morrow. But there was the promise to teach him golf, and, still more tangible evidence, there was one of Kendall's lamentably few clean collars curled about the mirror-post and bearing the scrawling legend in the blackest of soft pencil marks, "2 Dudley." Kendall put aside the problem for the moment with a sigh of despair and got ready for bed. But he hoped that Ned had been sincere, for the older boy had quite won Kendall's heart.

If Kendall had known of a conversation which passed in Mr. Collins's study that evening Ned's sudden attachment would have been more understandable. Mr. Collins had asked Ned to come early as he had something to say to him, and Ned had arrived ten minutes before any of the others. Mr. Collins was standing in front of the little coal fire and Ned had shaken hands with him ceremoniously, a performance he always went through with on such occasions.

"Good evening, sir," said Ned. "I trust I find you in good health."

Mr. Collins replied that he was in the best of condition. Then Ned proceeded to hand an imaginary cane to an imaginary servant, draw off two imaginary gloves which in imagination followed the cane, remove an imaginary top hat with an air and finally, with a hitch of his shoulders, allowed the imaginary servant to remove an imaginary Inverness cape. It was a very clever bit of pantomime and never failed of applause. To-night Mr. Collins laughed appreciatively, laid a hand on Ned's shoulder and drew him to the fire:

"Well, everything all right, Tooker? The Optimist Society making converts?"

"Turning 'em away, sir, at every performance."

"Good. I've got a new recruit for you, or perhaps it would be better to say a new subject for you."

"All right, sir. Who is it?"

"A fellow named Burtis, a new boy this fall. He rooms upstairs here in Number 21. I think you'll like him. I do. He seems to have more than the usual amount of common sense, for one thing. And he has principles. I believe, Tooker, that he's the sort we like, you and I; the sort that becomes a credit to the school. But he needs a little help right now. I can't go into particulars, but Burtis hasn't been altogether fortunate since he came. I think he's a bit down-in-the-mouth just now and he needs some fellow to chum up to him a bit. I've asked him here this evening and I want you to look him over and, if you possibly can, get acquainted

with him and tide him over the next month or so. You're the man for the job, Tooker. Will you take it?"

"Why, of course, sir. You'll see us to-morrow wandering away to the woods arm in arm, to carve our initials on the tree trunks. Fever near, sir!"

"I won't," replied Mr. Collins with a smile. "I'll leave him to you, Tooker. By the way, I neglected to say that Burtis is not yet—er—what we might call a tasteful dresser. There remains about him a strong suggestion of the—er—bucolic."

Ned shook his head. "I've never had that, sir."

"Had what?"

"The bucolic. Is it catching?"

"I don't think so," Mr. Collins laughed. "And, anyhow, Tooker, I don't believe it could ever catch you!"

And so during the evening Ned had been studying Kendall most of the time, even when it seemed that he hadn't a thought beyond creating a laugh. And what he had seen he had liked. He hadn't been surprised, for he had found that Mr. Collins's judgment in such matters usually coincided with his. Ned's verdict by the time the group broke up was something like this: "Rather homely in a nice way. Good eyes and looks straight at you. Well-behaved. Rather shy. Doesn't butt in. Sees a joke before it knocks him down. Has a good voice. Dresses like a farmer and needs a hair-cut and a manicure, but looks as though he knew the use of bath-tubs. On the whole an interesting subject. Get busy."

And he had got busy, with what results we know. If there was some measure of duplicity in Ned's first evidences of interest and friendship, the duplicity was in a good cause. Before he had taken himself away, however, Ned had ceased to play a part, and his disconcerting "Do you know, Burtis, I like you!" had been very genuine. But on the way back to his room Ned had owned to himself that it might not prove an easy task to convert the outward appearance of his new protégé to Yardley standards.

"He must have some other clothes," murmured Ned as he crossed the Yard to Dudley. "And first of all he must have his hair cut. The hair-cut won't be difficult, but it's a mighty delicate matter to tell a chap that his clothes aren't right. Well, I'll go at it gently. Tact, Ned, tact and diplomacy!"

"I wonder," he reflected after he was in bed and listening to the musical efforts of his slumbering roommate, "I wonder what the dickens that kid did to get probation! He doesn't strike you as much of a cut-up. I can't just see him putting a tack in Bertie's chair!" (Bertie was Mr. Albert Von Groll, Instructor in Modern Languages.) "Besides, he said the secret concerned others. I suppose that's what Collins meant when he said the chap hadn't been altogether fortunate since he came. I should say not! It's going some to get on probation within three weeks of the opening of school! Well, I'll look him up again to-morrow. I simply *must* know why he's on pro!"

Yardley played her third football game the next afternoon. Her opponent was Forest Hill School. Forest Hill was not considered very dangerous and there was a rumor that Payson meant to put in a team of substitutes in the last two periods. Ned Tooker reached the field only a few minutes before the time of starting the game and the two teams were already

running through signals and punting. As he turned the corner and walked along in front of the crowded stand many hails reached him:

"Ned, come on up; here's a seat!"

"Oh you Took! Come and sit in my lap, Ned!"

But Ned only waved and smiled and went on, searching the stand with his gaze. It was not until the whistle had sounded and Sandy Fogg had lifted the ball from the tee with the toe of his shoe that Ned found whom he was looking for. Then he climbed the stairs, nodding and eluding the detaining hands thrust toward him, and crowded his way along one of the seats until he reached Kendall. The latter, absorbed in the game—the Forest Hill left half-back was charging back up the field with the pigskin nestled in his arm—hadn't seen Ned's approach, and when the latter crowded down beside him and Kendall turned to see who it was the smile that came into his face was well worth seeing.

"Hello!" he said rather shyly.

"Hello, Bendall Kurtis," replied Ned. "How are you to-day? Who's going to win the game? You're a football sharp, aren't you?"

"Why, we are, of course," returned Kendall confidently. "But I wish you had seen that Forest Hill fellow run that ball back. He must have made twenty yards!"

"Good stuff! Who's playing for us?"

"Most of the regulars. Fogg's at center, Ridge and Merriwell are the guards, Jensen and Mitchell tackles, Vinton and Norton ends, Roeder and Stearns half-backs, Simms quarter, and the full-back I don't know."

"That's Marion. What's the matter with Hammel, I wonder? That isn't Jensen at right tackle, though, Curt; that's Stark."

"Is it? But it looks like Jensen. No, he's got dark hair, hasn't he? And there's Jensen on the bench down there; next to Holmes."

"Jensen's hair, by the way, is about the same color as yours, Curt. I don't like to see them wear it as long as that, though. Nowadays, when headguards are the fashion it isn't necessary." Ned glanced at Kendall's hair and displayed much embarrassment. "I didn't mean— Honest, Curt, I hadn't— You wear yours long, too, don't you?" he ended lamely.

"Me? Why, no; at least, not like Jensen's. I guess mine needs trimming." Kendall laughed. "Mother's always after me to have my hair cut, and now that I'm away from home I guess it'll be down on my shoulders if I don't watch out. It grows awfully fast."

"Then you don't wear it long because you're a footballist?" asked Ned. "I'm glad of it, because you'll look better when it's trimmed a little. I've got to have mine done, too. We might go through the agony together next week, eh? Hello, look at that for a punt!"

"A dandy!" sighed Kendall. "Simms has got it. No! Missed it! Got it again, though. He's down!"

"Now let's see what our chaps can do with the ball," said Ned. "Here we go! Good work, Roeder! Five yards easy! And right through the center! Watch that Forest Hill left end, Curt. He was off-side about a yard that time. There he goes again. I thought so! Penalty for you, Mr. Man!"

The whistle had blown and now the umpire was carrying the ball five yards nearer the Forest Hill goal.

"Now will you behave?" murmured Ned. "This is a fake. Marion can't punt. I thought so. Stearns outside tackle for three yards. That was very neat. Hello! What's wrong?"

"Stearns fumbled," said Kendall sadly. "It's Forest Hill's ball."

"And rather too near our goal to be comfortable. About the thirty-five yard line, isn't it?"

"I think so," answered Kendall, sitting forward on the edge of his seat. Three cheer leaders jumped from their places and called for "A regular cheer, fellows, and get into it!"

And then, while the cheer was crashing forth, a brown-clad youth hurled himself against the Yardley line, broke through, eluding player after player, and circled toward the center of the field and the Yardley goal. The watchers leaped to their feet. Pandemonium reigned. Then Simms dived for him and brought him fiercely to earth on the twenty yards.

But it was first down again and only four white lines separated the eager opponents from a touchdown. The cheering began again, the leaders, their commands drowned in the noise, waving their arms in frantic encouragement. From around Kendall and Ned cries of "*Hold* 'em! *Hold* 'em!" arose and gathered rhythm and volume. The Forest Hill quarter, hand to mouth, was bellowing his signals. Then back went the ball, confusion reigned for a moment and another scant two yards had been conquered.

"Right through Stark that time," said Ned. "I guess they'd better bring Jensen on. Second down and eight to gain. Hold 'em, Yardley!"

But Yardley couldn't, it seemed. What looked like another plunge at the line resolved itself into a delayed pass to left half, who tore along behind the line, squirmed past Mitchell and got away around the end for a good twelve yards. It was first down again then, and Forest Hill, despite the frenzied implorations of the Yardley supporters and the best efforts of Yardley's players, gained the three yard line in two plays and crashed through and over for the final distance and a touchdown amidst the ecstatic cheers of some twenty Forest Hill rooters. Unluckily for the visitors they had secured their touchdown near the side of the field and the subsequent punt-out was lost. But five points looked pretty big at that stage of the game and pessimists amongst the audience were already predicting defeat for the home team.

The first period ended after four more plays and the teams donned blankets and rested. Then the whistle blew again and the game went on. Yardley pulled herself together then and managed to stop the Forest Hill plunges, although the latter twice won her distance in that second period. Once Yardley got to Forest Hill's thirty yards, but only to lose the ball on a fumble. The second period ended with the score still five to nothing and the two teams trotted off the field and up the hill to the gymnasium.

A boy further along the row engaged Ned in conversation, and Kendall, leaning back in his seat, studied his new friend. Although Ned was two years Kendall's senior he was scarcely any taller; there was perhaps the difference of an inch between the two. Ned was fleshy without being fat, carried himself very straight and had a round, good-natured face from which a pair of shrewd brown eyes twinkled. Kendall had already learned that it was only by watching Ned's eyes that he could tell whether the latter was in earnest or only joking, for Ned could, and did, say the most outlandish things with the face of a truthful

undertaker. Ned always looked trim. To-day he wore a suit of blue serge, a soft flannel shirt of gray, a blue knitted silk tie, black socks and rubber-soled tan Oxford shoes. And there was a little gold pin in his tie, a plain seal ring on one finger and from his watch dangled a leather fob with a Yardley seal in silver and enamel. Kendall mentally resolved to have one just like it. He had seen them in a jeweler's window in Greenburg. And Kendall wondered why Ned's clothes fitted him so well, and why his lisle socks showed never a hint of a wrinkle over his ankles. Kendall knew that some persons had their clothes made to order by tailors, and came to the conclusion that Ned was one of these fortunate mortals, a conclusion quite erroneous. Ned's talk with the other boy was all about golf, and much of it Kendall couldn't understand. When the teams trotted back to the field and Ned settled into his seat again Kendall asked:

"Are you at the head of the golf, Tooker?"

Ned looked amused. "I'm captain of the Golf Team," he explained. "We've got a five-man match on with Broadwood here next Saturday. That's what Kirk was talking about. We've never won a match from Broadwood yet, although we've met them three times."

"Why is that?" Kendall asked.

"We haven't the players they have. As a matter of fact, although it sounds like boasting, Curt, I'm the only member of our team that has a show with those chaps. Kirk isn't bad, but he's always unlucky, and he's been beaten every time. This year he says he's going to get revenge. He's been practicing every day except Sundays, I guess, since school opened. Last spring he played a dandy game but drew Frost, who is Broadwood's best player, and so didn't have any show from the start. By the way, don't forget that you're coming out to learn the game Monday. There goes the ball. Now, Yardley, get down to business."

Perhaps the talk they had received from Payson in the gymnasium helped. At all events, Yardley's players did get down to business, almost with the sound of the whistle, and in the ensuing ten minutes of playing time scored two touchdowns. Hammel missed both goals. It was Tom Roeder who proved the hero of that game. Tom tore through the Forest Hill line for short and steady gains that took the ball down the field in short order. Once Stearns got loose for an end run and once Simms worked a very pretty forward pass to Dan, but for the most it was persistent line-bucking that won the day.

In the fourth period, with the score 10 to 5, Yardley sent in many substitutes, one of them Arthur Thompson, who went in for Stearns. Arthur did very well, especially on defense. Holmes took Simms's position at quarter-back and ran the team in good shape. He was a gingery chap, and, while he knew less football than did Simms, and was a less spectacular player, he got more speed from the team in spite of the fact that, towards the last, it held six substitutes. Yardley added a third touchdown to her score in the final minute of play, and Dan elected to try the goal himself. The handful of Forest Hill supporters jeered derisively as the ball left his toe, for it was apparently much too low. But some happy chance took it over the bar by an inch or so—there were some who declared the ball actually brushed the beam—and added another point to the final score of 16 to 5.

On the whole the game had been encouraging to Yardley's hopes. Clearly outplayed in the first period, the Blue had managed to hold her adversary in the second and then, in the last two periods, "come back" and rush Forest Hill off her feet. It was what Ned, walking up the hill with his arm linked in Kendall's, called "a fine recovery."

Ned led Kendall across the Yard to Dudley and down the corridor to Number 2. Sanford was not at home. The room was small in comparison with those in Clarke, but it was more comfortable and had an open fireplace which Kendall envied Ned the possession of. For a half hour Ned showed golf clubs and explained their uses, told stories of matches won or lost and managed to get Kendall quite interested in the ancient and royal game. He even illustrated strokes with his clubs, to the imminent danger of the furniture. Then Kendall discovered a line of mugs on the mantel and had to know about each. And about that time Teller Sanford came in, and Kendall, after a few moments, took himself off, Ned's last words being, "Don't forget, Curt; Monday at half-past three!"

There was a gathering of the talent in Number 28 Clarke that evening after supper; Tom Roeder, Al Simms, Sandy Fogg, Arthur Thompson, Grafton Holmes and, of course, Dan and Gerald. They replayed the game, as boys will, and gave and took criticism in good part. Neglected opportunities were regretted, mistakes explained and many "ifs" indulged in.

"I don't believe," said Sandy Fogg, the broad-shouldered, good-natured center, "I ever played in a game where there was less punting."

"That's so," said Dan. "It was 'old-fashioned football' from start to finish. We should have had another score, though. In the second period we had a dandy chance down there on their thirty yards."

"That was me," said Simms. "I don't know how it happened. Seemed as though that ball just jumped away from me!"

"I don't regret what didn't happen so much as what did," observed Tom. "We ought never to have let them get that touchdown."

Everyone assented more or less gloomily to that.

"Oh, well," said Holmes cheerfully, "what's the good of post mortems? We beat 'em, and could have done it again right afterwards. We were slow in getting started, that's all."

"It won't do to be so slow next Saturday," said Dan. "Carrel's has a pretty good team this year, I hear."

"They're light, though," said Tom.

"There's one thing we ought to find, Dan, if you don't mind my butting into your affairs," said Fogg, "and that's some fellow who can kick a goal once out of twenty times."

"I know," assented Dan with a frown. "And don't you think I'm not worrying about that as much as you are, Sandy. We all thought last year that Hammel was going to make good, but he doesn't seem to get down to it at all. Payson's going to have him out for morning practice next week and says all he needs is a little more confidence. I wish I'd let you try those goals this afternoon, Al."

But Simms shook his head. "I'm glad you didn't, Dan. I'd have slipped up sure on 'em. I was so afraid you were going to, after that second score, that I was afraid to look at you!"

"You should have put in the chap who was kicking goals down at the field one morning last week," said Arthur. "I watched him from the window for about ten minutes and it looked as though he couldn't miss them."

"Who was it?" asked Dan.

“I don’t know. I couldn’t make him out. One of the subs, I suppose.”

“Where was he kicking from?” asked Gerald. “The five yard line?”

“About thirty, I think. And from an angle, too.”

“Oh, come, Arthur,” laughed Dan, “you were looking through one of those crazy panes of glass in Oxford.”

“I was in Oxford, all right; Room C, it was; but there wasn’t anything the matter with my eyesight. I guess the fellow made ten or twelve tries and kicked more than half as many goals.”

Dan glanced about the room questioningly. “Who the dickens could it have been, fellows?” he asked in perplexity. “I don’t know any sub who can do that.”

“Or any regular, either,” murmured Tom.

“This was in the morning, you say?” asked Sandy Fogg.

“Yes, just after my Latin. I was waiting for some papers that Collins had.”

“Well, I don’t like to cast asparagus on your eyesight, Arthur,” said Tom, with a smile, “but your story sounds fishy.”

“What was he kicking, Thompson, drop or place?” asked Simms.

“Drop at first, and then he tried placement.”

“From the thirty yards?” asked Dan skeptically.

“Yes; certainly not nearer, Dan; I wouldn’t swear it wasn’t nearer forty.”

“What did he look like? Had you ever seen him before? Was he alone?”

“Yes, he was all by his lonesome, and he looked sort of tall; about your height, maybe. He had his coat off and wore darkish clothes. That’s all I could see.”

“But why the dickens didn’t you say something about it? Have you seen him since?”

“No, but I haven’t looked for him. I didn’t say anything about it because I forgot it. And, anyway, I supposed you knew; thought you’d sent him down there to practice.”

“I wish I did know! A chap who can kick five goals out of ten would be a find. You’re not joking, Arthur?”

“Of course I’m not,” responded Arthur impatiently. “If you really don’t know who he is I advise you to find him, for he certainly could kick goals that day!”

“You bet I’ll find him! I’ll find him if I have to hire a regiment of detectives! Anyone guess who he is?”

But they all shook their heads.

“The only explanation I can offer,” said Tom, “is that Arthur went to sleep and dreamed it. I don’t believe there’s a fellow in school who can stand on the thirty yard line and drop-kick a goal from an angle once out of two tries. Either you were dreaming, Arthur, or what looked like goals weren’t.”

“That’s so,” agreed Dan. “At that distance it would be hard to tell. Sometimes you’re mistaken from the end of the field.”

“You fellows have it your own way,” said Arthur with a sigh of resignation. “I know what I saw.”

“Well, we will have to keep a lookout and see if we can catch him at it again,” said Dan. “And, for goodness’ sake, fellows, ask everyone you know. If there really is a goal-kicker in our midst we can surely find him.”

“Well, he will have to show me,” said Tom, still unconvinced. “Look here, Arthur, it wasn’t Wallace, was it?”

“No, I’d know Hammel a mile off. Besides, I met and spoke to him ten minutes later in the corridor. No, it wasn’t he.”

“Let’s advertise,” suggested Holmes. “A notice in Oxford might fetch him.”

“Sure,” Simms agreed. “‘If the student who practiced goal-kicking on the field last week will call on Dan Vinton he will hear of something to his advantage.’ Something like that, eh?”

“I’ll try that if everything else fails,” said Dan grimly. “A good drop- or place-kicker will be worth about a million dollars to me this season.”

“We’ll find him all right,” said Fogg. “He’s probably one of the subs who has discovered he can kick and hasn’t the sense to say anything about it.”

“As for me,” said Tom, “I’m like the countryman at the menagerie when he saw the hippopotamus; I don’t believe there’s no such critter!”

CHAPTER XII
NED USES TACT

On Monday Kendall took his first lesson in golf. He appeared at Ned's room wearing his old brown sweater and a pair of heavy shoes, one toe of which showed the effects of many collisions with the football. Ned looked him over and shook his head.

"You can't do anything with that sweater, Curt," he said. "It binds your arms too much. It isn't cold to-day. Leave your sweater here."

"But I haven't any vest on!"

"You don't need a vest. That's it. Hello! where's your belt?"

"I wear suspenders," Kendall replied.

"So I see. Take 'em off and I'll find a belt for you. Here's one of Teller's."

"Won't he mind my using it?" asked Kendall doubtfully as he removed his suspenders.

"He will esteem it an honor," answered Ned gravely. "There you are. Slip your coat on again. Isn't that more comfortable? Now, about shoes."

"These are all right; they're quite easy."

"They look it! Never mind, I guess they'll have to do. I haven't an extra pair. Now then, come along."

Kendall had hoped that they would find the links deserted, since he didn't at all fancy making a public display of his awkwardness and ignorance, but he was doomed to disappointment. At least a half-dozen couples were making the rounds, while four or five fellows were loitering about the first tee. One of them was the boy who had talked with Ned at the football game. He was George Kirk, a good-looking Second Class fellow. Kirk brandished a golf club and hailed Ned with joy.

"Want to play a round, Ned?" he shouted as they approached.

"Thanks, George, but I'm going to show Burtis here something about the game. You fellows ever met?"

They shook hands, Kirk very affably. He showed no surprise at Ned's announcement. In fact, he felt none, for he had become quite used to Ned's vagaries.

"Mind if I go around with you?" he asked of Kendall. Kendall hesitated and glanced at Ned. The latter shook his head:

"Can't have you, old man. This is Burtis's first lesson and he doesn't want a gallery. Where's Morgan?"

"He's over there with Jack Simpson. I thought Wainwright might show up, but he hasn't come yet."

"Pete's gone to Greenburg to the dentist. You'll find someone, though. Come on, Curt. Here's a ball for you. And here's a driver. It is an old one of mine, but it's a dandy." He made

Ned's tee for him, placed him in position and pointed out the first hole. "Now then, just swing your club back as though you didn't care, keep your eye on the ball and hit it."

"I can't," muttered Kendall nervously, darting a glance at the little audience who were watching proceedings.

"Yes, you can. Now let me tell you something. These fellows have all had to learn just as you're learning. You won't do any worse than they did the first time. Go ahead now. I don't care where the ball goes, only hit it. Easy back. That's right. Now down—"

Kendall's driver swished through the air and the ball, disturbed by the passing club, rolled off the tee. Kendall smiled foolishly. The onlookers smiled too, but more with Kendall than at him. Ned picked up the ball and replaced it.

"All right. Try again. But don't try to kill it, Curt. Just give it a nice little rap. And keep your eyes on it all the time."

Kendall, very flustered, raised his driver again, swung down, dug the head of it in the earth some four inches behind the ball.

"You weren't looking at the ball," said Ned severely. "Once more now, and *keep your eyes on the ball*."

Perhaps it was only luck, but Kendall's next attempt resulted in a very clean forty-yard drive, and the glow of satisfaction that came to him more than atoned for what had gone before.

"Good stuff!" said Ned, and the others murmured approval. Kendall tried to dissemble his delight and drew aside to make room for Ned.

"Watch the way I do it," said Ned. Kendall watched, but it is doubtful if he learned much. Ned's club went back for a full swing, swished down, there was a clean *click* and away sailed the white ball high and far to drop safely over the first bunker.

"Rotten!" said Ned.

"Not so bad; a little too high," observed Kirk. "Good luck, Burtis."

Kendall followed Ned to where his ball had fallen and Ned handed him a midiron.

"You're going to play with three clubs until you get the hang of it. This is a midiron, Curt. Now, as you haven't any tee to help you get under the ball, you've got to hit back of it; try to clip a bit of the turf. And the swing is different. Let me show you." Ned illustrated. "Don't try to hit very hard; just try to put the ball up near the bunker."

"Is that mound the bunker?" asked Kendall.

"It is. Now see the way I swing this. Get it? Keep that wrist stiff. No, you're hunching up your right shoulder. Don't do that. And don't set your muscles all stiff like that. Relax! That's the stuff! Now then, have a shot."

Kendall missed the ball entirely twice and finally topped it so that it trickled along for about twelve feet. The next time he buried the whole head of his club six inches behind the ball and looked up apologetically at Ned.

"I'm an awful duffer," he said.

"Well, you're learning the talk, anyway," laughed Ned. "We're all awful duffers when we start. Go ahead now. But try and keep your eyes on the place you want to hit. That's half the secret of golf, Curt; *keep your eye on the ball*. And it's the hardest thing of all to learn. See if you can't give that a nice little rap that will put it over the bunker."

And Kendall did, and again the glow of satisfaction spread through him. He laughed nervously.

"I thought I was going to miss it entirely that time," he said. "But I did keep my eyes on the ball, Tooker."

"You sure did. But don't call me Tooker. It's an awful name to have to listen to. Call me Ned."

"You said the other night that your name was Ted," laughed Kendall.

"Ted, Ned or Ed; it doesn't matter. Only never Tooker. And now here's a bit of information for your future guidance. Never climb over a bunker, Curt; it breaks it down. Further along you will observe a nice little passage left for you; see?"

Kendall saw and started for the break, supposing that Ned was following. As he went through he looked back. Ned was not there. Instead he was in the act of jumping from the top of the bunker.

"I thought you said I mustn't do that," said Kendall.

"You mustn't," replied Ned gravely. "Ever."

"But—why—you did it!"

"And so will you when you've played longer. Now, then, you're away."

"I'm—what?" asked Kendall.

"Away; your ball's farthest from the hole. That means that you play first. Give it a good clean swipe this time."

Kendall managed to send the ball some twenty yards and looked at Ned for approbation. But Ned shook his head.

"All wrong. You let your club slip in your hands and you brought your shoulder up. Watch this."

Click! Away sailed Ned's ball, straight and low for the distant green. It struck, bounded and rolled and finally trickled to within some six yards of the flag. Kendall sighed. He had a lot to learn, he feared, before he could ever equal that performance. But he struggled on and finally his ball lay almost beside Ned's. Then he was given another and quite different implement which Ned explained was a putter. And now—luck again very probably—Kendall distinguished himself by holing out in some marvelous manner in one!

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" breathed Ned softly. It took him two to make the hole. "Four," he said. "That's the best I've ever done this hole in. That iron shot of mine was a dandy."

"What do you mean by 'four'?" asked Kendall.

"Four strokes."

"Oh, and what did I make?"

"I think you were sixteen," replied Ned carelessly. "You did fairly well, Curt."

Kendall thought a minute. Then, "Sixteen to your four," he murmured. "Say, Took—I mean Ned—how many shots would I have taken if I'd done poorly?"

Ned laughed. "You might have taken thirty," he answered. Then he clapped the disconsolate Kendall on the back. "Cheer up, you're doing fine. It takes time and we're all duffers at first."

"I guess I'll watch you for a while," said Kendall sadly.

"I guess you'll take this driver and come over here and knock the spots off this ball," answered Ned. "And no mutiny, if you please, Mr. Bendall Kurtis."

"But—but it must be very tiresome for you," said Kendall.

"Don't you worry about me. I'm as happy as a clam as long as I can swing a golf club. Don't get discouraged, Curt. Remember that Bome wasn't ruilt in a day."

"Remember what?" asked Kendall, puzzled.

"Why, that Rome wasn't duilt in a bay," answered Ned. "Now then, here we go!"

They played five holes that afternoon, and after that Ned made Kendall practice swinging his club for ten minutes or so at the fifth tee. And then he made him drive several times, always patiently correcting and explaining. When Kendall's first lesson in golf was finally over he went back to Clarke with an unwonted aching in his arms and shoulders. There was only one more lesson that week, for Ned had to look after the work of the Golf Team. But on Wednesday, Kendall did rather better and was terribly proud and delighted. Ned had insisted on Kendall's using his spare clubs and suggested that the novice could learn a good deal by playing a few holes alone. Kendall tried that on Thursday and did so poorly, seeming to have lost what little science he had attained, that he went home quite discouraged. On Friday, Ned sought him after school and announced that they were going to Greenburg to have their hair cut.

"But I can't go," said Kendall. "I'm on probation, you see."

"I thought of that and so I saw Collins and got permission for you to leave school for two hours. Come on now."

Ned's hair didn't really require trimming, but he went through with it, and he was glad he had afterwards, since by doing so he had brought about the shearing of Kendall's abundant locks. Kendall looked at least twenty-five per cent. better when he left the barber shop and Ned, whose courage had been failing him, took heart again. "If," he told himself, "a mere hair-cut will work that improvement in him, what will a decent suit of clothes do?"

They strolled along the street, looking in at windows and enjoying themselves hugely, until they reached Wallace's. There Ned stood treat to a wonderful concoction called a "maple-nut sundae." If you don't think it was good, try it yourself some time. It was vanilla ice cream with chopped walnuts and maple sugar lavishly sprinkled over the top of it. It was so good that Kendall begged to be allowed to stand treat in turn, and so they each had another glass of the delectable mixture. Then Ned observed carelessly:

"I wonder if you'd mind walking down to the New York Store with me, Curt?"

"Of course not. What sort of a place is it?"

"Don't you know it? It's the best clothing store here. I want to see what they've got there. I'll have to be buying a winter suit some day."

Once inside, the rest was far easier than Ned had dared hope. He had some ten or fifteen suits produced for their inspection and asked Kendall's opinion and advice constantly. Then he "jollied" the clerk until that young gentleman would have pulled half the stock down for them. At last Ned remarked casually:

"This wouldn't be a bad chance for you to get rigged out with some new togs, Curt. How do you like this?"

"I hadn't thought of buying any new clothes," said Kendall. But the idea, once presented, had attractions. He looked at the neat gray suit Ned was displaying and thought that he would like to see himself in it. Besides, he had never before really shopped for himself and the sudden realization of his independence was oddly exhilarating. He looked longingly at the clothes. Then he tentatively held a coat up to the light, Ned observing him out of the corners of his shrewd eyes.

"That one you've got there would look fine on you, Curt," he said. "Why don't you just slip it on?"

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Kendall.

"Go ahead! There's a room right back of you. Where are the trousers?"

"Those would be a little large for the gentleman," said the clerk. "Just a moment, please." In a jiffy he was back again and Kendall, almost before he realized it, was behind a curtain in a little closet-like apartment with the gray suit on his arm. When he emerged Ned exhibited the utmost enthusiasm:

"My word, Curt, but that suit was made for you! And fit! Why, it couldn't be better, could it?" He appealed to the salesman.

"It would require almost no alteration," replied the latter. "Perhaps the least bit off the sleeves. And the buttons might be set over a trifle."

"It—it doesn't look badly, does it?" murmured Kendall, turning and twisting in front of a long mirror.

"Bad! My dear misguided youth, it becomes you horribly! Don't hesitate a minute; take it along!"

"Oh, but—but—I hadn't thought of buying!" explained Kendall.

"Think now, then. You don't want to lose that suit, Curt. If you put off getting it someone will take it."

"There are probably more of them," answered Kendall, torn between his desire for the suit and the promptings of economy.

"That's the only one of your size, sir," said the clerk. "If you really think of getting it, sir, I'd advise you to do it to-day."

"We-ell—" began Kendall.

"You can make the alterations and deliver it to-morrow, can't you?" Ned asked. The clerk agreed that he could.

Then a man whom the clerk referred to as a bushelman appeared with a tape measure and a square of chalk and the die was cast.

"But I haven't enough money with me," whispered Kendall to Ned.

"That's all right. They'll charge it to you if you like, or you can pay them when they deliver it."

"I'd rather do that," said Kendall. "It's twelve dollars, isn't it?"

"Twelve-fifty. Want anything else to-day?"

"Oh, no!"

"Then we'd better be hitting the trail. We've only got twenty minutes to get back in."

"It's funny about that suit," mused Kendall after they were across the bridge. "I hadn't any sort of idea of buying anything when I went in with you. You were the one who was looking for clothes, Ned, and you didn't buy a thing!"

"I was just looking. You certainly surprised me, Curt. I hadn't any idea you'd be such a sport. It's funny how things happen like that. Sometimes a fellow hasn't any idea of doing a thing, and then, first thing he knows, he's gone and done it! Queer, isn't it?"

"Yes," murmured Kendall. "But—it's a mighty good-looking suit of clothes, isn't it?"

CHAPTER XIII
GOLF WITH BROADWOOD

All that week Kendall had wished that there were two of him that he might both follow football practice and pursue the tantalizing intricacies of golf and the friendship of Ned Tooker. He had attended football practice only twice, on Tuesday and Thursday, and practice was getting very interesting and exciting now, for there was a scrimmage every afternoon between the first and second teams, and, since it was now the height of the season, those scrimmages were no love-feast. Every player was animated either by the stern determination to hold his place at all costs—if he was a first-string man—or to wrest someone else's place from him—if he was a substitute. And so it was nip and tuck between many good friends. There was an exciting contest on between Norton, the regular right end, and Sayer, a younger fellow who was the first choice substitute. And Arthur Thompson had created a mild sensation by beating out both Green and Fayette and standing an excellent show of playing for a time at least in the remaining games as a substitute to Stearns. The rivalry for the position of quarter-back was less intense just for the reason that it was Payson's policy to use both Simms and Holmes to about the same extent. Hammel, Simms, Ridge and Norton had been receiving special instruction in punting and drop-kicking every day for a week past, but Simms and Norton were the only ones who it seemed had profited much. Simms was getting off better punts and Norton was gradually developing into a fair drop-kicker. It was this dawning ability that might insure him his position and defeat Sayer's ambition.

On Saturday the team left early in the forenoon for East Point to play Carrel's School, and with the team went fully half the student body, almost all, in fact, who could obtain permission and enough money to meet the expenses of the trip. Kendall, of course, was barred from going by his probation. And he gathered comfort from the thought that even if he had not been on probation he still would have been forced to remain at home, since in purchasing that suit of clothes he had virtually bankrupted himself. However, Fate provided him with a fairly satisfactory substitute for the football game in the golf match that afternoon between Yardley and Broadwood. The Broadwood representatives were on hand early; seven of them in all. They were a nice-looking lot of boys; Kendall mentally called them "swells," but in no derogatory sense, since, now that he was the possessor of a new suit of clothes and had discovered a blue necktie among his belongings, he secretly considered entering that class himself!

When Kendall reached the course, the drawings had been made and the first two competitors, Kirk of Yardley and Osgood of Broadwood, were just starting off. Ned was busily talking with a group of boys and so Kendall joined the small gallery of stay-at-homes. Kirk had the best of the first drive and the two boys strode off. Presently Wainwright and a tall youth named Linton drove, and they too took their departure. A third couple followed them, Morgan of Yardley and Carter of Broadwood. Kendall let them go, although a few of the onlookers had dribbled away at the heels of the various pairs. Kendall meant to go around with Ned. The latter had loaned him a book of rules and a book of instruction—very interesting, the latter, with many pictures and much puzzling advice—and Kendall had been absorbing them both in his leisure moments. At least, he had managed to obtain a fair idea of the general principles of the game, although a great deal of it was still Greek to him.

Ned and his rival, who turned out to be Frost, Broadwood's best player, started next, leaving Simpson, Yardley, and Sawyer, Broadwood, to follow. Kendall remembered that Ned had termed Frost Broadwood's crack exponent of the game and wondered whether Ned had met his match. Most of the onlookers, like Kendall, had been waiting for this contest and now gathered around the tee. Ned caught sight of Kendall while Frost, whose honor it was, was fixing his tee.

"Hello, Curt!" he said, "how are you to-day? And where are those new clothes we got yesterday? Didn't they send them?"

"Oh, yes, but I thought I wouldn't wear them to-day. They're—they're sort of best, don't you see."

Ned stared for a moment and then a grin spread over his face and he began to chuckle. Kendall viewed him with surprise.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Nothing, nothing at all," laughed Ned. "Just a joke I happened to think of, a joke on yours truly. I'm glad I did think of it, too, for I just needed a good laugh to start this match on."

"Are you going to beat him?" asked Kendall, lowering his voice. Ned, watching Frost prepare to drive, shook his head:

"I don't know, Curt. I think so, but we'll sait and wee. If I have luck and do beat him we'll probably win the match. Wasn't it luck that I drew Frost? Kirk ought to win his game from Osgood without much trouble and Jim Morgan's sure to beat his man. That would give us our three out of five. Well, coming around? Good! See you later." Ned walked toward the tee. "That was a peach, Frost," he said, as his opponent's ball went arching away across the bunker.

Ned's own drive was a few yards shorter but left him on the right side of the hazard, and players and gallery started off. Kendall knew one or two of the fellows to speak to, notably Teller Sanford who had come out to watch his roommate play. Sanford ran across Kendall presently and seemed quite cordial in his rather stiff way. They kept together more or less during the match and, since neither of them knew much golf, asked each other many questions and gave what answers they could. They both were anxious that Ned should win, however, and that was a bond between them. The first hole, 230 yards, was reached in 4 by both players. Four, Teller explained, was bogey. Ned looked wise and nodded, secretly determining to find out what "bogey" might mean.

The course at Yardley is fairly level, and, save for the seventh, none of the holes are very difficult. The distance for the nine holes is 2170 yards and the bogey is 35 strokes. (Ned had once done it in 38, equaling the school record.) It was stroke competition to-day and the match was to go to the side winning three out of five games of eighteen holes. The second was reached by both Ned and Frost in 4, one over bogey. So far their cards were even at 8 strokes. But on the next hole Ned had a piece of bad luck, slicing his drive so that it took him an extra stroke to cross the bunker and Frost took the hole in 5 to Ned's 6. By that time it was apparent even to Kendall that the Broadwood player was superior to Ned with his driver. Frost's drives were quite remarkable. They had both length and direction. Ned drove a slightly shorter ball and was more uncertain as to direction. (Kendall overheard one knowing spectator observe that "Tooker tees too high; that's the trouble with him.") But with the iron

Ned was better than his opponent. He seemed able to place his ball just where he wanted it on approach shots and more than once so far he had gained the hole with only one putt. When it came to the use of the putter there appeared little choice between the two boys. Each seemed possessed of a deadly certainty with that implement in hand. The fourth hole was halved and at the fifth Ned had evened the score. Each made the sixth in 5 and the seventh in 6. That was the one difficult hole of the course. It was 375 yards long and combined a "bowl" and a bunker in such a way that a perfect approach to the green was an impossibility. The bogey was 5, and in doing it in 6 each of the players won applause. Ned took the lead at the next hole by an eight-foot putt that was a marvel of precision and finished the first round by another 3 to his opponent's 4, leaving him two strokes to the good. Ned came over to where Kendall and Teller Sanford were standing and talked a minute before the next round began.

"What do you think of Kirk?" he asked in disgust. "He's four under Osgood at the ninth! I thought that for once he meant to win his match."

"How are you feeling?" asked Kendall anxiously.

"Dine and fandy," replied Ned flippantly. "Say, can't that fellow drive, though? He's a lot better than he was in the spring. Has anybody heard how Jack Simpson is getting on?"

Kendall and Teller shook their heads.

"Morgan was four to the good at the ninth, I heard. I guess he's safe. Well, here goes."

The first hole was halved again, as in the first round, at four each. At the second Frost made a remarkable drive that left him well up. An iron shot laid the ball within four feet of the hole and he went out in 3, which was bogey. Ned's drive was twenty yards shorter than his adversary's and his iron shot left him on the edge of the green. He holed out in 4. The third and fourth holes were taken by each in 5 and 6 respectively. At the fifth Ned again got the worst of it, overrunning a short putt, and on the sixth foozled a short approach shot. The score then for the round was, Ned 29, Frost 26; for the two rounds, Ned 68, Frost 67. Broadwood was one stroke ahead and there were three holes to play.

On the way to the seventh tee Ned sought Kendall and drew him to one side. "I'm one stroke behind, Curt," he said, "but I think I can win the match if you make it worth my while."

"'I think I can win the match if you make it worth my while.'"

"Me!" exclaimed Kendall. "Why, what can I do?"

"I'll tell you. I'll make a bargain with you. If you'll promise to wear your new suit every day I'll win the game. What do you say?"

"Why, I don't see—"

"Oh, just a fancy of mine, Curt. I'm such a whimsical cut-up! What do you say?"

"Wear my new suit every day?"

"Well, I'll let you off sometimes. Let me see; I have it; you may wear your old clothes on the thirty-first of the month."

Kendall smiled. "I suppose it's some sort of a joke," he said, "but I don't see it."

"Never mind. It's a go, eh?"

"Why, yes, I'll wear my new clothes if you like, only I don't see—"

"I know you don't. It's a mystery. All right, then. Here's where I win the game. Wish me luck, Curt."

"Of course. And, Ned, I heard a fellow say a while ago that he thought you teed too high. I don't know just what he meant, but—"

"He was right. I've always known it, though. It's a fault I can't correct, Curt. I hate to be stingy with the sand. So long!"

Bogey for the seventh hole was 5, but no one in the history of the links had ever done it in that. The tee was on the edge of the hill in a space cleared of trees and the hole was 375 yards away in a line with the boathouse. From the tee the ground sloped abruptly to a hollow called The Bowl. Then came a rise to a bunker, a further rise beyond that to the summit of the knoll and then, out of sight from the approach, lay the green. An average drive laid the ball on the side of the hill, just short of The Bowl. A long drive took you into the hollow. In either case it meant two strokes with lofter or mashie to get over the bunker. From there to the hole had always been a matter of two at the least. There was a "longer way round," however, generally affected by the poorer players. By this route The Bowl was entirely avoided, the player driving along the edge of the slope and crossing to the hole past the end of the bunker. This, however, usually meant an 8 for the hole; possibly a 9.

It was Frost's honor and he teed his ball very carefully, using the merest pinch of sand. Conversation had dwindled away of late. Much depended on these last three holes and both contestants were saving their breath and thinking instead of talking. The gallery whispered amongst themselves, but very generally respected the players' desire for silence. Frost took his stance, weighed his driver, looked at the slope beyond the bowl a moment and swung. Back came the club until it hung for an instant behind his left hip. Then up it went, slowly at first, then faster, the head traveling a wide arc ere it swooped down upon the ball. There was a hard, crisp *click* and away sped the guttie, a white speck in the sunlight, straight in line with the distant hole and at just the right height. There was a little spurt of gravel on the slope beyond the hollow where the grass was thin, the ball leaped into the air, came down again several yards beyond and then nestled to earth. It was the longest drive Frost had made that day, and probably the longest ever made from the seventh tee, and a murmur of applause came from the gallery. Frost stepped aside, an expression of pleasure showing in spite of his efforts.

Ned smiled. "Some drive, that, Frost," he said as he dipped his hand in the sand box. "As pretty as I ever saw."

"Not so bad," replied Frost modestly.

"I should say not!" Ned walked to the far corner of the tee and placed his little pinch of sand on the ground, carefully shaping it between his fingers. Then he put his ball on it. But he took it up the next moment and flicked away a half inch from the top of the little cone. When he faced the ball the gallery saw with surprise that he was going to play the "longest way round." The surprise became audible and some of the older boys frowned their neighbors into silence. Ned lost no time in preliminaries. Back came his club and then up in a wide sweep and down again. Off went the ball, low and hard. A dead leaf fluttered down from a branch, showing where the guttie had just escaped coming to grief against an out-reaching limb. Straight along the edge of the hill it sped, ten feet or so above the ground at the top of its arc, and struck, bounded and rolled. It was a good drive, a remarkably good one for Ned, and the gallery's approval was loud and continued, even while they failed to see Ned's reason for driving in that direction. He had put his ball almost as far from the tee as Frost's, but it lay much farther from the hole. The players parted company and the gallery split up into two groups, more than half of them choosing to follow Ned's fortunes.

"It doesn't seem to me," ventured Kendall, "that he gained anything by putting his ball up there."

"It doesn't look so," replied Teller, "but it's all right. Ned will win now. He's laughing. He always laughs when he's at his best. I've seen it lots of times."

"I hope so," murmured Kendall as he followed the others along the edge of the woods. When Ned reached his ball he looked at it for several moments. Then he studied the course ahead. Below him at the right lay The Bowl. Between him and the little red flag at the hole lay a hollow, with a corner of the bunker elbowing into line. One advantage was with him. He was now only a scant yard or two below the level of the bunker, whereas Frost must work uphill all the way to the green. Ned's ball lay on a slight slope, so that he had to stand several inches above it. But it was not cupped. It lay nestled in a little tuft of dry grass, with a tiny twig holding it from rolling further down the slope. Ned thoughtfully picked out his lofter. Then he as thoughtfully slipped it back into the bag and drew forth a brassie. Several of the knowing ones shook their heads. It seemed a bad lie for a brassie shot, they thought. But Ned faced the hole, swung the club and had luck with him. The ball struck the opposite hillside, bounded high in the air and fell dead only four yards from the bunker! A yell of astonishment and delight went up from the watchers.

"What did I tell you?" demanded Teller with a pleased smile on his face.

"But—but he oughtn't to have used that brass club, then," objected Kendall. "The book says so!"

"I guess the book was wrong." Teller nodded at the distant ball. "There's the answer to that."

Below them Frost was making his second stroke. Up the hill went the ball, landed, jumped a foot or two into the air, came down and trickled back a yard before it found lodgment.

"He will be lucky if he gets over from there in one," Kendall heard one of the gallery remark. "He's thirty yards from the bunker and way below it."

But he did get over, making a very pretty shot with a niblick and just grazing the top of the bunker. Ned went over neatly and the ball bounded out of sight toward the green. Frost's fourth stroke took him well onto the green, but at the left of the hole. It was apparent that Ned, playing 4, could at least tie the hole in 6. But when his ball was found it lay only twenty yards or so from the hole and visions of a bogey score floated before the eyes of the excited audience. Smilingly and, as it looked, almost carelessly, Ned took his mashie, cast one short glance at the flag and hit the ball. Up and away it went in a short arching flight.

"Too hard," someone groaned behind Kendall. But Kendall, his heart in his mouth, saw the ball drop, make one feeble effort to bound, and then lie dead within a yard of the flag!

Something that was like a hushed cheer went up from the gallery which had now reunited and had drawn aside at the edge of the green. Ned slipped his mashie back into his bag with a fine unconcern and took out his putter. Frost at the side of the green was looking rather serious as he bent over his ball. His fifth stroke left him within a scant two feet of the hole. The audience literally held their breath as Ned brushed aside an invisible obstacle in his path to the goal, measured the distance and direction with his eye and swung his putter back gently. *Tap!* Forward rolled the ball, straight for the hole, but oh, so slowly! Three inches

away from the edge it seemed about to stop, but it changed its mind and trickled on—on—and then, pop, it was out of sight!

A breath of relief went up from the watchers, but it was not until Frost had holed out that the applause came. Then a dozen fellows pressed around Ned to slap him on the back and shake his hand. “Five, Tooker! That bogey! It’s never been done before! Oh, you Ned Tooker!” Frost shook hands with him, too, hiding his discomfiture as best he could. As they took up the journey to the eighth tee the score for the two rounds stood at 73 each, and the match depended on the next two holes.

CHAPTER XIV
DAN IS OUT OF SORTS

The eighth hole is a short one, 150 yards, and the bogey is 3. A long drive, a short approach and you're on the green. The hole has been done in 3 a good many times, and to-day both Ned and his adversary equaled bogey. At the ninth tee the excitement amongst the audience had grown intense. The ninth was five yards shorter than the last hole and was an easy one. There was a bunker near enough the tee to punish a weak drive, but after that it was fair sailing. Ned made a hard, straight drive that was a fraction too high. Had there been even a mild breeze he would have suffered in direction. Frost's ball went lower, skimming above the bunker with only a half-dozen feet to spare, and doing a remarkable amount of rolling after it had struck the smooth turf. It was a fine long shot and bettered Ned's by fifteen yards. The gallery unanimously agreed as they took up their way across the links and skirted the bunker that the match depended now on the next strokes. Frost had the advantage in distance, but it was felt that Ned was quite capable of overcoming that handicap, since on midiron plays he had shown himself superior to Frost all the afternoon.

Ned was away and played first, using his mashie. The ball went away high and the gallery watched its arch with breathless interest. It struck on the green, about two yards out of line with the flag, and apparently quite near the hole. One of the players who had finished his game and, with the others, was standing near the home green, waved his hand and cut a caper. Frost selected a midiron for his approach. For the first time that day he seemed nervous, and was an unusually long time in making his shot. It had good direction, struck well this side of the green and rolled smoothly on until it lay within four yards of the hole. The gallery hurried to the green, the two players following more leisurely. Ned's lie was almost but not quite as good as Frost's, being just over four paces distant from the hole, while Frost's was just under. Kirk stepped forward and lifted the flag from the hole, treading across the short turf as though presiding at a funeral. The gallery ranged itself around the green, determined not to miss a thrill.

Ned looked critically along the line to the hole, swung his putter once or twice from the wrists and addressed his ball. Had a grasshopper sneezed at that moment every member of the gallery would have jumped a foot! Ned swung his club back gently, brought it smoothly forward, there was a little tap and the ball ran swiftly toward the hole. Ned had put too much force into the stroke, for the ball reached the edge of the cup, leaped across and trickled on for a yard! A murmur of dismay went up. Kendall's heart sank. Frost gripped his putter, brushed aside a tiny pebble, settled himself and tapped his ball very gently. His direction was good, but, having determined not to fall into Ned's error, he erred on the other side and the ball traveled a scant two yards. A sigh of relief arose about Kendall; he caught a boy grinning at him and grinned back; Teller Sanford's black eyes were gleaming with excitement. There was only a tied match to hope for now, but that was better than the defeat that would have come had Frost holed out in his first try. But even a yard is a long way sometimes when much depends on the result, and there was a good deal of suspense while Ned measured the distance and swung his putter. But this time the ball behaved itself and dropped into the hole with a comforting thud. A sigh of relief went up from all around. Then every eye fixed itself on the Broadwood player. Two yards was not a long putt for Frost, but

there was always the chance that he wouldn't make it, and as he sped the little ball forward more than one onlooker gripped his hands. It began to slow down soon after it left the club; a foot from the hole it was barely rolling; at the very brink of the hole it paused, seemed to look into the abyss before it, shudder and stop. For an instant no one moved or breathed. It seemed that the ball would drop over the edge at any instant. But it didn't. Frost, watching it, shrugged his shoulders and walked toward it.

"Oh, call it in!" cried Ned, and jumped in the hope of jarring the ground sufficiently to set the ball in motion. But the thing was obdurate. It never stirred. Frost tapped it with his putter and it rolled out of sight. Then he turned to Ned with outstretched hand.

"You win, Tooker," he said, with a smile. He was a little bit pale. Ned shook hands, but—

"Nonsense!" he said. "I'm not going to take the game on a fluke like that. We'll call it a draw, Frost, and play another nine."

"Oh, no!" replied Frost. "It was a fair win."

He reached down and rescued his ball from the hole. Then he walked very deliberately to the edge of the green, dropped the ball on the turf, swung his putter and sent the offending guttie flying into the river. Then he came back, a smile on his face.

"I feel better," he said to Ned, with a laugh. "Well, we had a close game of it, Tooker, and you deserved to win. Wonder how the other games came out."

"It's two to two," said Linton. "The match depends on those chaps." He nodded across to where Simpson and Sawyer were preparing to drive off from the ninth tee.

"Who won?" asked Ned of Kirk.

"I lost," answered Kirk unhappily. "It was 86 to 90. I'm awfully sorry, Ned."

"It doesn't matter. How did the others come out?"

"Pete lost to Linton and Jim Morgan beat Carter. What was your score, Ned?"

"I was 79 and Frost 80. Anyone heard how Simpson is getting on?"

"He was four to the bad at the end of the first round," replied Kirk. "I guess he's out of it."

And he was. Sawyer, of Broadwood, finished triumphantly with a lead of 6 strokes under Jack Simpson and Broadwood had won the match, three games out of five.

"Well, we will have to try you again in the spring," said Ned to Frost.

"We'll be glad to," the other answered. "And I hope you and I, Tooker, can get together again. You're the best I ever ran up against, but I'm not convinced I can't beat you."

"I daresay you will the next time," laughed Ned. "Good-by. We've had a dandy time."

Ned, Kendall and Teller Sanford walked back together, Ned a little disappointed.

"I don't care if we did get beaten," said Kendall, "as long as you won your game, Ned."

"I do," Ned replied. "I thought sure we'd get a fall out of them this time. Hang 'em, we've never managed to win since I've been here! But you wait until next spring! Gee, but I'm tired! I'm going to have a hot and cold shower, fellows. I'll see you later."

The Football Team came back to school in time for a late supper, wearied and happy. Carrel's School had been vanquished to the tune of 22 to 3, and it seemed that at last Yardley had found her pace. Carrel's three points had been made by a field goal in the first three minutes of play. After that the home team had never had a chance and Yardley had scored a touchdown in each period and had kicked two goals out of four, Hammel succeeding once out of three tries and Dan Vinton securing the other. Only one incident had marred the game. Arthur Thompson, playing right half in the third period, had sprained his knee and would be out of the game for the rest of the season.

The school in general was too happy over the size of the score to pay much attention to this misfortune at first. But by the next day it was realized that the team had sustained a serious loss in Thompson. He had proved himself head and shoulders above any of the other half-back substitutes, and it was scarcely to be supposed that both Roeder and Stearns would be so fortunate as to play through the rest of the season uninterruptedly. Now, in case either was forced to retire, his duties would fall to Green or Fayette, neither of whom could be called a first-class back.

Gerald hurried over to Arthur's room in Whitson as soon as he heard the bad news and found a very despondent-looking invalid. Arthur had had his supper in bed, and the doctor had just gone, after wrapping the injured knee in yards of gauze.

"How's this for luck?" asked Arthur miserably. "I can stand not playing football any more this fall, but what about pole-vaulting? I'll make a fine Track Team captain if I have to hobble around with a cane!"

"It isn't as bad as that, is it?" asked Gerald anxiously. "What did the doctor say?"

"Oh, he didn't say much of anything. Said it would be all right in a week or two, but that I'd have to be careful of it for a month or so after I got out. I asked him if it would interfere with pole work and he just hemmed and hawed and looked wise in that silly way doctors have. I'd like to kick him!"

"Why, of course it will be all right by spring, Arthur," Gerald said with conviction. "Look at the people who sprain their ankles and wrists and—and things every day!"

"Well, why didn't he say so, then?" asked Arthur crossly. "Besides, pole-vaulting puts a lot of work on a fellow's knees, and if mine is stiff and creaky I won't be able to do ten-feet-six!"

"Oh, sure you will! Buck up, Arthur. Tell me about the game."

"The game? Oh, it was all right, I guess. Tom was a wonder to-day; went through 'em as though they were paper. And Hammel was a dandy, too, even if he did miss two goals."

"How did Dan play?"

"Rotten, if you want the unvarnished truth, Gerald. I don't know what's the matter with Dan. I suppose, though, it's just being captain that's queering his game. He dropped two passes to-day and was as slow as molasses down the field. I guess Dan's gone fine."

Gerald nodded. "I thought he seemed to have the dumps this evening," he murmured thoughtfully. "Do you know, Arthur, I'm a bit worried about Dan." Arthur looked a question and Gerald continued: "He isn't the same chap he was last year. He's cross about half the time, and nervous as a—a—"

“As a hen. Hens are awfully nervous, Gerald.”

“Yes, he is. He worries all the time because he’s afraid Broadwood may lick us, and every time a player stubs his toe or skins his knuckles Dan has a fit.”

“I know.” Arthur nodded. “What he needs is the rest cure. He ought to take my place for a week.”

“I wish he could,” said Gerald.

“So do I!”

“He said he was coming over here later to see how you were.”

“Well, I’ll have to be smiling and happy or he will jump into the river, I suppose,” Arthur growled. “Oh, hang the luck, anyway!”

“I’m awfully sorry,” said Gerald sympathetically. “If you want anything while you’re laid up, or if there’s anything I can do—”

“Thanks. There isn’t, though. Hello! Come in!”

It was Dan who had knocked and who, at Arthur’s invitation, entered. At his heels came Tom Roeder. Dan had a frown on his forehead and looked tired and worried.

“Hello!” greeted Arthur cheerfully. “Hello, Tom! What price me?”

“It’s a shame, Arthur,” said Dan. “I don’t know what the team is going to do without you, either.”

“Going to win,” laughed Arthur. “Don’t let that bother you.”

“How are you feeling?” asked Dan anxiously.

“Oh, fine! I could get up and walk around, only that brute of a doctor won’t let me.”

“You’d better not try it,” said Tom sternly. “What does he say about the knee?”

“All right in a week or so.”

“It’s my fault for insisting on your coming out for the team,” Dan grieved.

“Your fault! Poppycock! That’s nonsense to talk like that,” responded Arthur. “Besides, there’s no harm done. My old knee will be as fit as a fiddle in a few days.”

“We’re going to miss you on the team, though,” said Dan mournfully.

Arthur laughed. “You’ll never know I’ve gone,” he said. “Now, for the love of mud, Dan, stop looking like a bereaved cow. Cheer up!”

“I’ve been trying to get him to cheer up all the evening,” said Tom, “and he hasn’t smiled a single smile yet. Honest, Dan, things aren’t half as bad as you look!”

Dan did smile then rather wanly. “I’m tired,” he said. “That’s all that’s the matter with me. Payson says I’ve got to lay off for a day or two, though. I guess I’d better, after the exhibition I put up to-day. Pretty poor, wasn’t it, Tom?”

“So-so,” replied Tom untroubledly. “Don’t let it bother you. We all go to pieces now and then. Payson’s right, though, old man, and you do need a bit of a rest. Next Saturday you’ll feel like a fighting cock and play like a house afire!”

"Hope so. Well, I told Payson I'd go down and see him for a minute. I'm awfully sorry about this, Arthur. If there's any sort of thing I can do, let me know, won't you? Good night. Good night, fellows."

Dan departed. For a moment no one said anything. Arthur, however, raised his brows, and Tom shook his head as much as to say, "Don't ask me!"

"He's got it bad," remarked Arthur finally. "Well, I daresay it's not much fun being football captain at a school where nearly three hundred fellows are watching you all the time and expecting you to turn out a winning team no matter what the conditions may be. I guess it's natural enough to get nervous now and then."

"That's so," Tom agreed. "I'll bet I'd be batty in no time if I was cap. I hope Dan gets over it before next Saturday, though."

"He will. Payson will steady him down all right."

"I daresay. Poor old Dan sure did play a punk game to-day."

"He kicked that goal in good shape, though," said Gerald.

"You're right," Tom agreed. "It was a dandy. Almost as good as that friend of yours could have done, Arthur."

"What friend of mine?"

Tom winked at Gerald. "Why, that chap you saw kicking goals in your sleep that day."

"I wasn't asleep," answered Arthur with a frown. "I don't care if he couldn't be found; I saw him all right."

"Well, if there is such a chap," said Tom, "why doesn't he show up? Payson has hunted the whole school through."

"I have an idea," said Gerald, "that he wasn't one of our fellows at all, that he was some village chap who came up and used the field knowing there wouldn't be anyone there in the morning."

"I hadn't thought of that," Arthur replied. "I'll just bet that was it!"

"The explanation," agreed Tom gravely, "is plausible. I am glad to hear it, Arthur. It restores my faith in your veracity."

Dan did no work on Monday, Tuesday nor Wednesday. The coach even refused to allow him to visit the field the first two days. By Thursday, Dan's attack of nerves had apparently departed. There was an extra hard practice that afternoon in preparation for the game with Porter Institute. Porter was known to have what Tom called "a corking lot of huskies," and was expected to give a good deal of trouble. And so it turned out.

Saturday was a miserable day. It had started to rain Friday evening and had kept it up all night. At eleven the sun shone for a few moments and it was hoped that the afternoon would be fair. But by dinner time the rain was coming down again "fently but girmly," to use Ned Tooker's phrase, and so it continued all during the game, clearing finally when the Porter team was rolling stationward with Yardley's scalps hanging from their belts. For Yardley met her first defeat that day.

Porter Institute had a fine team; there was no gainsaying that; but it must be also acknowledged that Yardley did not play up to form. A fumble by the Porter full-back a few minutes after the game started gave the home team its one lone score. Dan picked up the ball and, with Mitchell assisting for a time, sprinted down the field for seventy yards and a touchdown. Hammel missed the goal with great ease.

After that Yardley was on the defensive for the rest of the first two periods and managed to hold Porter from scoring, although the Blue's goal was twice threatened. Porter, however, came back strong after the rest and hammered out a touchdown in the third period and kicked a goal. Yardley brought everything to bear that she knew after that and succeeded in reaching Porter's twenty-six yards. From there, had she possessed a drop-kicker of fair ability, she might have made a field-goal. But Dan and Simms consulted and decided that they had better not risk it, although Norton had been showing fair work in practice. Instead, they went at Porter's line again and after two downs, which netted them a scant four yards, tried a forward pass that went to a Porter back and lost them the ball. That was Yardley's only chance to score. In the last period Porter found her adversary's line less easy and tried end runs and forward passes and on-side kicks. When the game was almost over Porter had the ball on Yardley's thirty-three yards, made two on a wide run around Norton, and worked the ball back into the center of the gridiron by a whirlwind shift followed by an attack at the guard-tackle hole. With two yards to go the Porter right half stepped back and put the pigskin straight over the bar by a drop-kick, adding another three points to her six. That was the last scoring, and the final account stood 9 to 5.

Dan redeemed himself that day, playing his position brilliantly. The principal fault with the team as a whole was slowness and lack of aggressiveness. The center of the line was especially lacking in the latter. Some two hundred rain-coated youths splashed up the hill after the final whistle had sounded looking rather glum. There were many criticisms. Most of the fellows held that Dan had erred in not trying a goal from the field in the third period. Others pointed out that even had Yardley kicked that goal she would still have been beaten by a point, and maintained that Dan had done the proper thing in trying for a touchdown, which, had it been secured, would have given the contest to the home team. But by the time supper was over the critical attitude passed. After all, Porter Institute was only Porter Institute, and no one really cared very much about her. It was bad to be beaten, but the defeat might act as a tonic and nerve the home team to a grand and impressive victory over Broadwood. And the defeat of Broadwood was the chief aim and consideration.

But Dan was once more in the depths. He had hoped for a clean slate that fall and now here was a beating to be chalked up against him. Payson shrugged his shoulders and smiled, but Dan took the defeat very tragically and refused to be comforted.

"There's something wrong with our fellows," he declared in Payson's room in the village that evening. "They don't *play*! They don't seem to have any *punch*! They—"

"The team's all right," interrupted Payson quietly. "They aren't playing the best they know how, Vinton, but they will two weeks from to-day; and that's what we want, isn't it? We don't want a team that reaches high water mark a fortnight before our big game, you know. They're coming all right. This week we'll hammer some speed into them and give them the new signals. We won't have to fuss with more than six new plays, and that's fortunate. If the fellows come on slowly, as they've been coming and as they ought to come, we can work them hard right up to the Broadwood game and not be afraid of having them go fine. And

that's what I'm hoping for, Vinton. We haven't had what I call a simon-pure slump all season, and I don't want one now. Porter had a well-developed team, my boy, a team at least a week ahead of us. And they outplayed us. If we had won from them to-day our fellows would have gone into a slump next week as sure as fate. Don't ask me why, because I can't tell you; but I know I'm right. It's a matter of psychology, I fancy. I've seen it too often. No, we're doing well enough. There's no need to worry. So don't do it. The first thing you know you'll be all worked up and no use to the team just when you're wanted the most. Get out of doors to-morrow, Vinton, and take a long walk. Take someone with you who will talk of something besides football. Forget football for a day, will you? Just try, eh?"

"All right," replied Dan with a smile. "I suppose I am getting sort of cranky. But you don't happen to know where I'm likely to find a fellow at this time of year who won't talk football, do you?"

"Oh, you can find one," laughed Payson. "Take a fellow who has some other interest. You football chaps are likely to think that everyone is just as interested in the game as you are. Did you know that the Yardley Golf Team had a match with Broadwood last Saturday?"

"No," replied Dan uninterestedly. "Who won?"

"Broadwood, I believe. I just mention it to show that while you and most of the school were 'footballing' there were a few chaps who were absorbed in something entirely different. By the way, do you know Tooker, the golf captain?"

"Yes, fairly well."

"All right. There's your man. Get him to walk with you. Start out after church and take a good long tramp. Go over to Lloyd and have your dinner there. It's six miles or so over there and there's a very good little hotel. After dinner sit around and come back in time for supper. I wish you'd do that, Vinton. Will you?"

"Why, yes, if you really want me to," said Dan doubtfully. "But I don't see much use in it. And I don't believe Ned Tooker will care to go."

"Well, ask him. If he won't, find someone else. But don't take any of the team along. Get away from football for one day. You'll be surprised to find how it will tone you up. By the way, how's your appetite?"

Dan made a face. Payson nodded:

"I thought so. Well, I'll wager you anything you like that if you'll do what I say to-morrow you'll eat enough dinner for a dozen men. And you needn't stick to training diet, either. Eat whatever they give you, and lots of it."

"Why don't you take your own medicine?" asked Dan. "Can't you go along with me?"

"I could, but you'd be dragging in football every minute. And," laughed the coach, "if you didn't I should! No, you do it the way I said. Tooker's a good chap; he will make you laugh, and that's what you need."

After Dan had taken his departure, in a much better frame of mind than he had arrived in, the head coach went to the telephone and called up Dudley Hall. The telephone there was in Mr. Austin's room, and when the chemistry instructor came to the line Mr. Payson said: "Is that you, Mr. Austin? This is Payson. I want very much to get hold of Tooker. Is there any

way you can get him to the ’phone without much trouble? You can? Thank you very much. Yes, I’ll hold the line.”

CHAPTER XV
NED EARNS A QUARTER

"Walking," replied Ned the next morning with enthusiasm, "is the very best thing I do. As our English cousins say, I'm awfully keen about it. When do we go and whither?"

"I thought we might start right after church service and tramp over to Lloyd. Payson says there is a good place to eat over there."

"All right. That suits me."

"You're sure you weren't going to do something else?" asked Dan. "We aren't likely to get back much before supper, you know."

"I wasn't going to do a thing, Vinton. If I had been I'd give it up, because on a dandy day like this there's nothing finer than a good tramp in the country. I'll get into a pair of easier shoes, though, I guess." Ned observed his patent leather Oxfords disapprovingly. "And I'll meet you outside Clarke at eleven-ten sharp."

And so at a quarter-past eleven Dan and Ned took the road together. Each had togged himself in an old suit of knickerbockers and had put on a pair of good stout, easy shoes. The morning was just what one might expect in early November after a day of rain. There was a bright blue sky overhead, a wealth of golden sunshine and a little breeze from the southwest that held a tang of the sparkling Sound. After they had crossed the bridge over the river and taken the inland road that led to Broadwood, they had the broad marsh on their right. The marsh this morning was a wonderful far-stretching expanse of faded green and russet and gold and red, with, here and there, a brilliant blue ribbon of water winding across. On their left as they trudged over the road made firm by the rain, was a hillside of maples and beeches. The storm had almost stripped the former of their scarlet livery, but the beeches were still brightly yellow, while the ground was thickly carpeted with the fallen maple leaves.

For the first mile or so Ned did most of the talking, rattling along unceasingly of every subject under the sun, drawing Dan's attention to a bit of landscape or a brilliant burst of color between whiles. Infrequently a carriage or motor passed them, but for the most of the way they had the curving road to themselves. At the Old Cider Mill, Dan's memory turned to the time the spring before when a number of them had gone over to Broadwood late at night and perpetrated an April fool joke on the rival school. He mentioned it to Ned, and Ned said:

"Tell me about that lark. I never got the rights of it. You needn't mention names, you know."

So Dan recounted the adventure and told how he had tried to keep Gerald in ignorance of the project for fear the boy would insist on going. "I didn't want him to, you see, because I felt sort of responsible to his father." And how, when they had reached the mill, they had paused to eat some sandwiches they had brought along, and had looked up the road in the moonlight and seen someone coming. "We went inside to wait for him to go by. But he didn't pass and after a while we peeked out and there he was sitting over there eating up the

sandwiches. And when we got out it was Gerald himself! He had found out about it and played 'possum until we had started and then followed us."

"And didn't the gardener over at Broadwood hear you and chase you off the place?"

"He did. And he saw Gerald and recognized him and came over and pointed him out to Collins. We had a merry chase through the shrubbery and over the wall. The gardener chap got mixed up with my foot once when he was chasing Gerald and took a header. I fancy it didn't improve his temper any."

"I didn't know anything about it until I got home," said Ned. "Then my dad passed the morning paper over to me and pointed out the story they had about it. Of course he suspected me of having a hand, but I proved a clean bill of health. It's funny, Vinton, they never tried to get back at us for that trick."

"They haven't enough ingenuity," replied Dan. "Perhaps, though, they'll think up some scheme by next first of April." He chuckled. "I'll never forget the way that strip of white cloth looked in the moonlight up there that night. We planted it square in front of Knowles Hall. It's a wonder someone didn't see us."

"What was it you put on the sign? I've forgotten."

"Alf Loring got that up, I think. It was: 'Father, is this a school?' 'No, my son, it is Broadwood.' 'O you April Fools!'"

"That was a hot one," laughed Ned. "I guess that sunk in! I'll bet they were snorting mad."

"They were. And poor Gerald had to go on probation for a dickens of a time. So did Thompson, later. I had to explain things to Gerald's father, which wasn't much fun."

"What sort is the old man?" Ned asked.

"He's a dandy. And he isn't really old. You've seen him, haven't you?"

"Once when he came up to the school and spoke to us in the hall. I didn't remember him very well."

"He got home Friday. Gerald wanted me to go to dinner at Sound View to-day, but I begged off. There's a kid who has improved since he came to Yardley. You don't remember him two years ago, do you?"

"Only dimly. I don't know him very well. I used to think he was a bit stuck-up, but several fellows have told me I was wrong."

"You were," replied Dan earnestly. "Gerald's just as decent a chap as there is in school, and I'm not saying that because he's my roommate or because I sort of brought him up. But I will acknowledge that he wasn't very promising when he first came. His father had pretty nearly spoiled him without realizing it a bit. But Yardley is a great place to take the nonsense out of a fellow. Gerald had his troubles for a while and then, having plenty of common sense, he took a tumble and knuckled down."

"I ran across quite a character the other day," said Ned. "I guess it was two or three weeks ago now. A fellow named Burtis."

"Burtis? I met him. He came to my room one night just after school opened and told me to put him down on the list of football candidates, or something like that. I remember it tickled

Gerald and me to death. But he was rather a smart-looking chap, as I recall him. How's he getting on?"

"Oh, having his troubles too, Vinton. We all do at first, I guess. But he will make good, unless I'm very much mistaken. I'm showing him golf just at present."

"By the way, you fellows played Broadwood the other day, I hear. How did you come out?"

"They won three out of five. They've got a pretty good team. Golf is one of their strong suits."

"They do some things fairly well," Dan allowed. Then, after a pause, and with a smile, he went on: "Funny, isn't it, how rabid we are at first; when we're juniors, say? I used to think that the Broadwood chaps were a lot of thugs and assassins. My patriotism was absolutely murderous! After a while you meet some of the Greenies and it's quite a shock to discover that they're really a very decent lot of fellows, not much different from your own crowd."

"I know," Ned agreed. "I remember once when I was a youngster here; it was my second year, I think; I went home on the train with some Broadwood fellows. They sat across the car from me. I really expected them to be a lot of bounders and instead of that they were a fine-looking set and behaved themselves all the way to New York. As you said, it was something of a shock. And there's the school, by the way. You can just see a corner of a building through the trees."

"Yes, I see. That's the gym, I think. They've got a mighty good location for a school, haven't they?"

"Nice and high, but too far from the water. Here's where we turn off, isn't it? What's the sign board say?"

"'Lloyd 3½ miles,'" Dan read. "We're almost halfway, then. It hasn't seemed far. How are your legs?"

"Just getting limbered up," replied Ned stoutly. "And it's only a little after twelve. We can make it by half-past one without hurrying, I guess. Forward, brave comrade!"

The new road, which led northward at right angles from the turnpike, was narrower and offered harder walking, but they made good time and at one o'clock were out on the Saybrook road with their destination only a mile distant. Lloyd was a tiny hamlet at the intersection of two main lines of travel, but it was a pretty, old-fashioned place, with huge elms drooping over comfortable white houses and many tiny gardens still vivid with autumn flowers: phlox and nasturtiums and cosmos. The railroad passed Lloyd fully a mile away, but for all that the hotel when they reached it was by no means deserted, a fact readily explained by the four or five automobiles standing in front or in the little yard at the side. It was a rambling white building with a veranda running along in front, and a swinging sign hung from a big elm at the corner. "Washington's Head" was the original legend on the board, and under it was a weather-faded likeness of the Father of his Country. But, so the story went, a visiting artist, finding, perhaps, time heavy on his hands, had some years before turned the capital H into a D, so that now the sign informed the world at large that "Washington's Dead."

"I don't know how you feel," said Ned as they went up the steps, "but I'm starved to death."

“I feel a bit hungry myself,” acknowledged Dan. “I wonder if dinner is ready.”

It was, and after washing the marks of the road from their hands and faces they graciously allowed the proprietor of the inn to conduct them to their seats in the dining-room. What followed after may be left to the imagination. There was an old-fashioned vegetable soup to start with of which Ned remarked that they had managed to get everything into it save the kitchen stove. And then there was fish and roast chicken and vegetables and apple fritters and salad and ice cream and lemon pie and cake and cheese and crackers and coffee. And if Ned missed a single item or Dan allowed anything to get by him I have been grossly misinformed. And afterwards they struggled out to the veranda, sank into two chairs, placed their heels on the rail and stared somnolently across the street at a funny little old story-and-a-half house almost hidden by shrubbery and box hedges. There was little conversation for a while. The sun was nice and warm, the breeze was broken by the corner of the veranda and life was very blissful and sleepy. Finally,

“I suppose we ought to start back before long,” murmured Ned drowsily.

“Yes.” Dan lifted his eyelids and nodded lazily. Then he shut his eyes again and returned to a condition halfway between slumber and wakefulness.

“Good night,” muttered Ned. Later by ten minutes,

“How many of those fritters did you eat?” he asked.

“Four,” replied Dan, this time without opening his eyes.

“I only had three,” said Ned regretfully. “I think I’ll go back.”

“Too late, too late!” murmured Dan. “Ye cannot enter now!”

“Perhaps if we hang around here they’ll give us five o’clock tea.”

Dan groaned. “Not if I’m strong enough to resist,” he said. “What time is it?”

“Haven’t you a watch?”

“Yes, but I can’t get at it.”

“That’s my case exactly.”

Five minutes afterwards Ned remarked weakly: “I think it’s about a quarter-past three.”

“We ought to be going,” sighed Dan.

“We ought,” groaned Ned. After that silence fell again.

But presently a motor began to throb around the corner of the house and a big touring car, dusty and dirty, backed up to the curb before the door. The two boys opened their eyes with sighs and frowns and watched. A party of two men and two ladies emerged from the hotel. The man at the wheel of the car called to them:

“See if you can find someone to bring that suitcase out, Jim,” he said. “It’s in front of the desk there.”

Ned’s chair came down with a bang and he jumped to his feet.

“Yes, sir; right away, sir!” he said briskly. In a moment he had dashed into the office and out again, bearing a big leather suitcase. Dan’s chair came down and he stared in bewilderment.

“Where shall I put it, sir?” Ned was asking solicitously.

“Stick it in back there, my boy. That’s it.”

Ned deposited the bag, swung the tonneau door open and stood respectfully at attention while the party seated themselves. The man at the wheel put his hand into his pocket, selected a coin and handed it back.

“Here you are, boy,” he said.

Ned touched his forehead sketchily, “Thank you, sir!”

The car bounded forward and Ned, grinning delightedly, danced up the steps.

“I’ve made a quarter! I’ve made a quarter!” he chanted.

CHAPTER XVI
A DISSERTATION ON MUSHROOMS

"You're the craziest chap I ever saw," laughed Dan. "Is it a good one?"

Ned tried it with his teeth, tapped it on the edge of the railing and eyed it anxiously. "Perfectly good," he replied finally. "It seems to be made of silver."

"Thought it might be a lead quarter," said Dan.

"Fever near, sir; fever near!"

"Eh?"

"I said fever near."

"What's that?"

"That's a phrase of reassurance spoken in my new universal language."

"Your new *what*?"

"Universal language," replied Ned gravely, seating himself on the railing. "It's away ahead of Esperanto, while as for Volapuk—why, Volapuk's dead and buried. The beauty of my system—"

"What do you call it?"

Ned's hesitation was infinitesimal, and he answered without the flicker of an eyelash. "Tookeranto. As I was saying, its greatest beauty is its simplicity. You merely change the first letters of your words; I think transpose is the word I should have used. For instance, I say to you, 'That's a pice shair of noes you have,' and you understand me at once."

"The dickens I do!" Dan laughed.

"You don't? But you would get me if I told you you were pitting on the sorch of the Hashington's Wead?"

"Once more, please, and give me something easier," begged Dan.

"Very well; set me lee. I suppose you know that you had choast ricken for dinner?"

"Roast chicken! But how the dickens do you do it so quickly? I'd have to think an hour."

"Hink a thour, you mean," Ned corrected. "It's serfectly pimple. It pomes with cractice."

"For goodness' sake, shut up!" laughed Dan. "You'll have me crazy. It's a wonderful language, though. I shall study it. Have you written a book about it yet?"

"Yot net," replied Ned, shaking his head, "but I'm toing go. When I do I shall dedicate it to Van Dinton."

Dan put his hands to his ears and jumped up. "Come on," he cried, "and let me take you home before you get any worse!"

"You mean," began Ned gravely.

"*No, I don't!* Shut up! Have we paid for dinner yet? I've eaten so much I've forgotten what has happened."

"We have not. Let's find mine host and settle up."

"Now I know why you worked so hard for that tip. You're going to help pay for your dinner with it."

"That quarter? Never! Do you realize, sir, that that is absolutely the first money I ever earned? Is not that a beautiful thought? I shall always keep that quarter, always treasure it." He slipped it into his vest pocket and patted it fondly. "You never realize the value of money, Vinton, until you earn it by the sweat of your brow."

"Your brow hasn't sweated ten cents' worth," laughed Dan. "Come on and let's hunt up Mr. Washington."

"I wish," murmured Ned regretfully when they had each enriched the hotel exchequer with a dollar bill, "I wish I had eaten that fourth fritter!"

They walked back rather more leisurely through the late sunlight, reaching school just as twilight descended.

"I never thought," Ned confided as they parted in front of Clarke, "that I'd have any appetite for supper, but, to quote our English cousins again, I feel a bit peckish, don't you know."

"I'm hungry again myself," Dan answered. "I say, we had an awfully good time, didn't we? Let's try it again some day, eh? Much obliged to you, Tooker, for coming along. I suppose you thought I was sort of crazy, but it was Payson's idea; he thought I needed a tramp, and so I asked you—"

"Thank you," said Ned gravely. "I may be a tramp, but you needn't throw it in my face."

"I'm sorry; hope I didn't hurt your feelings. Come and see me, will you? Come over to-night for a while."

"Not to-night, for I told Burtis I'd drop in on him. But I'll be around soon. Lo song."

"Eh? Oh, so long. I'm crazy about your Tookeritis—"

"Tookeranto, please," Ned corrected.

"Whatever it is; and I'm going to study it so I can understand what you're saying now and then."

"Unkind, unkind!" murmured Ned sorrowfully. "I fid you barewell, Van Dinton."

Kendall had news for Ned that evening when the latter called on him, but owing to the fact that Harold Towne was in the room he couldn't confide it for a time. Harold entertained a large respect and admiration for Ned Tooker, and whenever he was on hand on the occasions of Ned's visits he always set out to make himself agreeable. Harold's notion of being agreeable was to monopolize most of the conversation, carefully selecting subjects which he believed Ned to be interested in and rattling away on them with an assurance that was at once irritating and amusing. Ned detested Kendall's roommate heartily, but managed to be polite no matter how much Harold's chatter annoyed him. To-night Harold quite surpassed himself, playing the rôle of host from the moment of Ned's appearance.

“Hello, Tooker!” Harold cried. “Awfully glad to see you. Kendall, pull that chair around for Tooker. Throw your cap anywhere; this is Liberty Hall.”

“Much obliged, but I’ll sit here. Well, how are things with you, Curt?”

“Oh, he’s been grinding at his books all the afternoon,” said Harold. “I tell him he’s after a scholarship.”

“Very commendable ambition,” said Ned soberly. “I tried it myself once and came within one of getting a Burrows. I wrote home about it and my dad wrote back that he guessed that was about as near as I’d ever get to making fifty dollars. Such ingratitude was naturally discouraging and I never tried again.”

Harold laughed uproariously and Ned observed him in grave surprise.

“I made a quarter to-day, though,” he went on. “Walked over to Lloyd for dinner and held a man’s auto for him and he gave me a quarter. Here it is. Looks all right, doesn’t it?” He passed it to Kendall.

“Seems to be real money,” laughed Kendall. “What do you mean by saying you held a man’s auto? Looked after it for him?”

“Yes, held it by the bit. It was rather nervous, you see; tried to jump out of the shafts every time a leaf rustled.”

“Oh, it was a horse?” said Harold.

“No, an automobile! a dark bay with coppery points. It was very good-looking, too. Very deep in the radiator, and had an arched neck and fine quarters. This is one of them.”

“You’re crazy, Ned,” laughed Kendall. “*Was it a horse or was it an automobile?*”

“Oh, I don’t know, but I got a quarter. And all I did was hold its head, bring a pail of water for it and polish the brass. My, but it’s easy to earn money if you know how! Want to play some golf to-morrow?”

“Yes, I’d love to, if you care to bother with me,” answered Kendall. “But I would like to know about that horsomobile.”

“I’ve told you everything,” answered Ned with dignity. “If you doubt my story, why, here’s the quarter.”

“What were you doing at Lloyd?” asked Harold. “That’s ten or twelve miles, isn’t it?”

“It’s quite a jaunt. I was looking for mushrooms,” answered Ned calmly.

“Mushrooms? What for?”

“Oh, I collect them. Haven’t you ever seen my fungi? You must come over some time and let me show them to you.”

“Honest, Tooker? I’d like to see them. Did you find any to-day? Any—er—interesting ones?”

“Um—a few. I got a good specimen of the canardius antarcticus; and a few of the Washingtonii and Danvintonii. It’s getting late for them, though. What I was especially anxious to find was the pufum mobilis, or rolling mushroom. You’ve seen that, I suppose.” Harold looked doubtful and murmured that he didn’t think he ever had. “Really? I thought

most everyone knew the rolling mushroom. It's called that because it rolls along the ground."

"Rolls along the ground!" exclaimed Kendall. "I don't believe it!"

Ned smiled kindly on his ignorance. "The mobilis," he explained, "is one of the puff-balls, a small, round puff-ball. It is found on hillsides. Most puff-balls disseminate their pores—I mean spores—by the aid of the wind, remaining where they grow. But the mobilis as soon as it attains maturity detaches itself from its stalk and begins to roll. As I have said, they always grow on the sides of hills. Consequently they roll to the bottom, sowing their spores as they go. We always look along the foot of a hill until we find the dead mobilis. Then we know that we shall find growing ones further up."

"Jimminy, that's quite interesting!" exclaimed Harold. "Do you know, I rather think I'll go in for mushrooms myself! It must be lots of fun collecting them."

"Not bad," replied Ned. "But of course there's always the element of danger."

"How do you mean?" Harold asked.

"Well, there are certain kinds that are poisonous not only to touch but to approach. There's the leoparditus, for instance, a large, angry mushroom—although it would be more correct to give it the popular name of toadstool—that has a purplish body with small livid spots on it. The leoparditus is certain death if you touch it. Even if you only inhale its noxious fumes"—Ned choked a little there—"noxious fumes you will break out with a very painful rash all over the body, more especially the exposed portions. Then there is the Gumponicum eachewupus, which hides in the deep woods and springs out at you as you unsuspectingly pass. Its bite is certain death."

Ned paused and stared gravely at the drop-light. There was a moment of silence. Then Kendall began to chuckle and Harold got rather red in the face.

"You were just stringing us, weren't you?" he asked, with an attempt at a laugh. "I suppose that was pretty funny, Tooker."

"Far be it from me to praise my own efforts," replied Ned modestly. "You asked me what I was doing at Lloyd. As I didn't care to tell you the truth and am far too polite to request you to mind your own business I did the best I could. I hope you found it amusing."

"Yes, but I knew all the time you were stringing," said Harold uncomfortably.

"Your penetration, Mr. Towne," answered Ned graciously, "is most remarkable." Then he began to talk golf to Kendall, and five minutes later Harold said he had promised to see a fellow and took his departure. Ned heaved a sigh of relief when the door had closed behind him.

"I can't stand that fellow," he said. "He gets me so nervous!"

Kendall laughed. "I don't mind him as much as I did," he said. "He means well enough, I guess."

"All right in his way, but doesn't weigh enough," replied Ned flippantly. "Well, out with it, Curt."

"Out with what?"

“I don’t know. Whatever it is. You’ve been fairly dying to tell me something ever since I got here. So let’s have it.”

“I don’t see how you knew,” said Kendall. “I was just going to tell you that Mr. Collins called me down to his study this afternoon and—”

“Wait! Don’t tell me that you’re off probation!”

Kendall nodded. Ned made a gesture of disappointment.

“Isn’t that the dickens?” he exclaimed. “Just when I was getting interested in you, too! I’ve never been chummy with a ‘real devil’ of a fellow before, and now you go and reform!”

“I haven’t reformed,” laughed Kendall. “I’ve just been pardoned for my former sins.”

“Ah! And you’re just as wicked as you ever were?”

“Just!”

“That’s better.” Ned sighed his relief. “I was afraid you were a reformed character, Curt. You see there are plenty of good, moral chaps in school; I know dozens of them; but you’re the first desperate character I ever got to know at all well. And so they’ve lifted the ban, eh? Well, that will help, won’t it? Now you’ll be free to take up your career of crime again. Whisper, Curt; what are you thinking of doing first? Had any experience with bombs? They tell me bombing is a pleasant and fairly safe amusement. Would you mind beginning on that roommate of yours? Incendiarism is another cute little way in which to pass an evening. I’ve often thought that Oxford would make a dandy blaze if you could get it started. Have you ever seriously considered murder? So many of our prominent citizens are going in for murder nowadays. And I can think of so many beautiful subjects for your attentions. Why, one needn’t look beyond his immediate acquaintances!”

“I’m going to try and get back on the Football Team the first thing,” said Kendall.

“Seriously?”

“Yes. Of course, I couldn’t make the First Team now; it’s too late, I guess; but I might make the Second. What do you think?”

“I admire your courage. But I regret that you choose football when you might play golf. I was going to make a gandy dolfer out of you, Curt.”

“I can play golf after the football season,” said Kendall.

“Um; yes; but the two sciences are widely opposed. I’ve never known a football man who could swing a golf club decently. Football seems to—to deaden the sensibilities, whatever those may be, Curt. And a man must have sensibilities to play a good game of golf. However, if you are really determined, come with me.”

“Where?” asked Kendall as Ned jumped up and rescued his cap from the floor.

“To see Vinton. If there’s a chance for you he will tell you.”

“Oh, but I wouldn’t like to do that, Ned!”

“You’ll do as I tell you! I’m going to make something out of you or bust. If you won’t be a golfer you shall be a footballer. Come on and I’ll make arrangements.”

CHAPTER XVII
UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF MR. TOOKER

"Vinton, I want to present to you Mr. Bendall Kurtis," announced Ned. "Mr. Kurtis desires to join your aggregation of thugs and pursue the agile pigskin across the—the verdant meed. Not bad, what?"

They had found Dan alone in Number 28, studying some new plays which were to be taught to the team that week.

"Very poetic," laughed Dan. "Sit down, fellows. Burtis and I have met before, I think. Now kindly tell me all over again, Tooker; what is troubling you?"

"Not a thing. And please don't assume that air of patient fortitude, as though you were humoring an idiot from sheer politeness. I'm talking perfectly good sense. Mr. Kurtis—or Burtis—wishes to join your team of footballers."

"Oh, I see. But isn't it a little late, Burtis?" asked Dan with a smile.

"Yes, I know it is," said Kendall. "I—I didn't want to bother you, but Ned insisted that I should come over. I thought perhaps I might be able to play on the Second Team."

"I see. Well, the Second is pretty well settled now, you see, and I don't believe—"

"May I interrupt?" asked Ned very courteously. "I merely wish to say, Vinton, that you perhaps do not realize the magnitude of the favor I am trying to do you. Mr. Burtis here is no common garden variety of footballer. He is—he is a positive wonder! I have never seen him play, nor have I ever heard him speak of his—his prowess, but I have tried him at golf, and, while I don't say that he might not with patience and perseverance, become a golfer of some ability, yet truth compels me to acknowledge that he would not be likely to become the United States amateur champion. You catch the idea?"

"Hanged if I do!" laughed Dan.

"Why, don't you see that the mere fact that he is only an average golfer makes it more than probable, nay, almost certain, that he is a natural-born footballer? In other words, Vinton, if a fellow isn't a golfer he must be able to do something, and what is easier to do than football?"

"You're an idiot, Tooker! But I'll see what can be done for you, Burtis. Perhaps Staniford may be able to take you on as a sub. You had some training early in the season, didn't you?"

"A little," answered Kendall.

"Were you dropped or did you get tired of it?"

"I—I—"

"Fess up, Curt. The fact is, Vinton, that this seemingly innocent youth is one of the most depraved characters in school. You wouldn't suspect it, would you? Why, man alive, he's been on probation for a month! Fancy that! And that's why he abandoned football. He had no choice, you see."

"So that was it? I'm sorry, Burtis, you couldn't keep on. That was hard luck, wasn't it? Well, I'll speak to Staniford to-morrow; he's captain of the Second, you know; perhaps he will find something for you, although, as you know, I suppose, there are only two weeks more of football. What's your line, Burtis?"

"Line?" asked Kendall vaguely.

"Yes; I mean what position have you played?"

"My dear Vinton," Ned interrupted before Kendall could reply, "my client is an all-around footballer. He can play anything from quarter-back to manager. His—ah—domain, if I may use the word, has no limits, Vinton; he—"

"Oh, please dry up, Ned," begged Kendall laughingly. "He will think I'm a perfect fool!"

"None of us," replied Ned, shaking his head sadly, "are perfect."

"Well, you come down to the field to-morrow afternoon," said Dan to Kendall, "and we'll see. But don't bring your advertising manager with you. First thing I know he will have you captain of the team!"

"Thank you," said Kendall gratefully. "Would it matter if I didn't wear regular things to-morrow?"

"Regular things?" asked Dan. "What sort of things?"

"I mean regular football clothes. You see, I didn't get any because—"

"You shall have mine," exclaimed Ned. "I've got a perfectly magnificent array of football attire! I shall never use them again; they are yours unconditionally, Curt. My football experience was brief but lurid. Perhaps I didn't know as much about playing the game as some; in fact, the coach as much as hinted that; but I will say that when it came to outfit, Vinton, I was head and shoulders above the whole field! Complete, that's the word for it. I don't believe in doing things by halves, and when I determined to lend my assistance to the football team I obtained a catalogue from a dealer in football necessities and luxuries and bought one of everything. I think I owned everything in any way connected with the game except a gridiron. I even had an assortment of leather and felt pads for my ankles, knees, elbows and shoulders in case I should meet with an accident some time while plunging through the enemy's line for a touchdown. And I had—and still have—a rubber thing that strapped around my head and covered my little nose; I held one extremity of it between my pearly teeth, and I can still remember how very unpleasant it tasted. All these things shall be yours, Curt. I intend you to be the Beau Brummel of the football field. All I ask is that some day you will allow me to dress you in full panoply, with a complete assortment of rubber bandages, arm and leg guards, nose guard and head guard, and have your picture taken!"

They were still laughing over Ned's extravagances when the door opened and Gerald Pennimore came in. He shook hands with Kendall and seemed very glad to see him. "I thought you had forgotten your promise to come and see us, Burtis," he said. "How are you, Tooker? I haven't seen much of you this fall."

"Been over to Arthur's?" Dan asked.

"Yes. He's getting on all right. The doctor says he can try crutches, if he likes. The sprain wasn't as bad as it seemed at first, he says."

"Who's that, Pennimore? Arthur Thompson?" asked Ned.

"Yes, he sprained his knee in the game last week."

"I heard about it. Too bad. I'm glad he's getting well, though. I suppose that keeps him out of football for the rest of the season, doesn't it?"

"Yes," Dan replied. "I hope, though, that he will be able to hobble into the Broadwood game for a minute so as to get his Y."

"These the new plays?" asked Gerald, taking up the sheets of paper on the table. "When I see a thing like that I'm glad I'm not on the team," he laughed, holding up one of the diagrams.

"How is the Cross-Country Team getting on?" asked Ned.

"Fine. We have our trials to-morrow afternoon to select the fellows to run against Broadwood a week from Saturday. We've got twenty-two fellows trying, which means that ten of us will get left."

"Ten?" said Dan. "I thought you had only ten in the race."

"That's all, but Andy picks a dozen and two of them are substitutes in case someone can't run. How are you getting on, Burtis?"

"First rate, thank you."

"You gave up football, didn't you? You know you were quite full of it a while ago."

"Yes, I—that is—"

"He's going to try again to-morrow," said Dan. "That is, if I can convince Staniford that he needs another sub. Tooker has accepted the position of Burtis's press agent and manager."

"I should think he'd make a good one," said Gerald, with a smile.

"One of the best," agreed Ned. "After the football season is over I shall be at leisure again. Anything needed in my line?"

"No, I think not," laughed Gerald.

After Ned and Kendall had taken their departures, which they did a few minutes later, Gerald turned a puzzled face to Dan.

"What did you mean by saying that Burtis was going to try again?" he asked.

"I meant," replied Dan ruefully, "that that idiot Tooker came in here with Burtis and hypnotized me into promising to get Burtis on the Second Team if I could. Don't ask me how it happened, because I don't know. But one thing I do know," he added as he took up the diagrams again, "and that is that Tooker can talk you out of house and home. I was afraid all the time he was here that he would decide to make Burtis captain, and that I'd have to resign."

"Yesterday," laughed Gerald, "you were aching to resign. I'm glad you've changed your mind about it, Dan. Things looking brighter to-night?"

"Lots, chum. That walk sort of cleared my brain, I guess. I wonder why I never knew Tooker better. He's a dandy sort."

In spite of Dan's request to the contrary, Ned accompanied Kendall to the field the next afternoon. Kendall was clothed in Ned's football togs, which fitted him fairly well. In appearance they were brand-new, for Ned's football career had been brief and the immaculate khaki trousers held not the tiniest smooch. What Dan had said to the Second Team's captain isn't known, although Ned secretly wondered how the former had managed to put such an extraordinary request. To instate an inexperienced player even on the Second at the tag end of the season was an outlandish proceeding, and Ned knew that Dan had done it only to show his appreciation of Ned's companionship on that walk to Lloyd. As for Kendall, it never occurred to him to wonder about the proceeding. He was still pretty green in such matters. Staniford was a big, broad-shouldered First Class fellow who took his captaincy of the Second very seriously and worked like a Trojan with his fellows under him. He greeted Kendall very briefly and sent him to the bench, but Ned noticed with amusement that the captain's gaze followed Kendall with perplexity.

"He's laying it to politics," said Ned to himself with a chuckle, "and he's wondering what Curt is going to do for Vinton in return. Alas, human nature is terribly suspicious!"

After a while Kendall was sent onto the field with a squad of Second Team substitutes to run through signals. It was his first experience with signals, and from his place at left half-back he made so many mistakes at first that the entire squad viewed him with disgust and resentment. But he began to understand what was required, and for the last five minutes of the drill acquitted himself fairly well. But there were many who asked that afternoon:

"Who's the jay Stany put in here to-day? Where'd he come from? What's he think this is, a kindergarten?"

From which you may gather the impression that Kendall's first day as a member of the Second Team was not highly successful. The First was walked and then trotted through two of the new plays that afternoon, and later, when it faced the Second, it tried them out. You can never tell on paper what a play will be on the field, and to-day one of the two plays proved utterly impractical and was immediately dropped. Altogether, that afternoon's practice was not a success, a fact recognized by coaches, captain and players, and there was a general air of discouragement apparent afterwards. Two graduates, old football players, had put in an appearance that day and had bothered Payson to death with their advice and interference. They had the best intentions in the world and had as likely as not sacrificed time and trouble to be there, but the amount of actual assistance they rendered was nil. Payson growled to Cowles, the manager, on the way up the hill, that if he had his way there'd be a notice at the school entrance reading, "No graduates allowed."

Kendall had watched the scrimmage from the bench, one of two dozen or so blanket-wrapped substitutes, none of whom he knew save by sight and none of whom was apparently aware of his existence. When, panting and perspiring, the members of the opposing teams rescued their sweaters and trotted or limped back to the gymnasium Kendall followed, secretly proud to be even an humble unit in that army of warriors. He had his shower like the rest of them—Ned having procured him a locker all his own—and dressed slowly, listening to the talk about him and watching the scene. Discouragement, as I have said, was the aftermath to-day. Even the Second Team fellows felt that the afternoon had been practically wasted. Kendall saw Dan, at first half undressed and then, later, swathed in a big towel, standing for minutes at a time talking earnestly, scowling the while, with Tom Roeder or Al Simms or Wallace Hammel. Everyone seemed cross and disgruntled. Mr. Payson, crossing

the room once, looked out of sorts, something very unusual for him. Even the door when it closed behind him seemed to slam vindictively. A tussle over the possession of a towel which started good-naturedly between two boys at the farther end of the locker-room ended in a "scrap," with friends of the contestants thrusting them angrily apart and showing a disposition to "start something" themselves on the slightest provocation. Kendall, who had climbed onto a bench to watch events, felt a bit disappointed when the two boys went off growling in different directions, leaving the towel, the bone of contention, quite forgotten on the floor. The steam from the baths eddied out and filled the room with a humid warmth, and from beyond the partition came the hiss of water and the sudden shriek of a bather as the cold stinging jets struck his glowing body. Little by little the babel of sound lessened. One by one, or in groups, the fellows slammed their locker doors and went out. Kendall, who had been ten minutes tying a shoelace, found himself almost alone. The lights were on now and outside the high windows was deep twilight. He finished his toilet, arranged his clothes in the locker, shut the door and dropped the key in his pocket. At the door of the stairway he turned for a final look over the big room with its disarranged benches, its water-stained floor, its litter of discarded or forgotten towels and its heavy, steamy odor. Somehow he felt that here at last was *life*!

That last week but one seemed to rush by. There was Tuesday, when the Second scored on the First by a blocked kick, and Wednesday when the First came back and literally tore the Second to shreds, and Thursday, when Kendall got into the scrimmage for a brief five minutes and emerged from what seemed afterwards to have been a wild chaos with a black eye and bleeding knuckles and a positive hatred of Cowles, whose whistle had ended the fray. That was Kendall's baptism by fire, and it left him trembling with excitement and eager for the morrow. By Friday the First Team had learned its new signals; hard nightly periods in the gymnasium had accomplished that; and had mastered the new plays so that the Second Team went into the scrimmage with no hope of scoring, but only wondering how long they could stand off their opponents. The First was a fighting machine at last, eleven eager, powerful parts working together with a minimum of friction. The Second dug their toes and strained and panted and sweated, but always the First came through, overwhelming them, thrusting them aside, trampling over them to victory. Time and again the Second was given the ball on the First's ten yards or five yards and told to take it over. But the First was a human stone wall, and Staniford almost cried as his attack curled up like spent bullets against steel. The First was coming fast now and discouragement was forgotten. The school was in the throes of the excitement that always presages the Big Game. The first mass meeting had been held on Wednesday; there was another called for Saturday night. Football songs were heard everywhere. Lessons suffered those days, and the instructors mentally shrugged their shoulders and patiently waited for the madness to end. And then, on Saturday forenoon, the First Team and almost the whole student body went off, cheered and cheering, to Nordham for the last contest before the final game. Kendall went, and Ned, and Gerald, and about everyone we know except Arthur Thompson, and all the way to Nordham the Yardley songs and cheers floated out the car windows:

"Yardley! Yardley!! Yardley!!!"

CHAPTER XVIII
YARDLEY VISITS NORDHAM

The Nordham game had been carefully planned by Mr. Payson and Dan. Nordham had this year a light-weight team with a rather weak line and an exceptionally fast and clever back-field. On the offensive Yardley was to stick largely to plays between tackles, relying on Tom Roeder and Wallace Hammel for plunges, while Stearns, lighter but quicker, was expected to "knife" himself through with good effect. Ridge and Simms were to do the punting. Field goals were outside the calculations, since no one could be depended on to perform them with any certainty. On defense it was planned to use the "basket" formation, the end dropping well back and outside the opposing flankers, the full-back playing behind center and the quarter and the two half-backs playing a deep field. This, which was practically Yardley's defense against kick formation, was to be used regularly, since the enemy had a reputation for being wonderfully tricky in her back-field. The arrangement weakened the Yardley line, but Nordham was not thought to be heavy enough to gain by ordinary plunging tactics.

The Blue started the game with the following line-up: Vinton, left end; Mitchell, left tackle; Ridge, left guard; Fogg, center; Merriwell, right guard; Jensen, right tackle; Norton, right end; Simms, quarter-back; Roeder, left half-back; Stearns, right half-back; Hammel, full-back. It was planned to use a number of substitutes just as soon as the game had been "placed on ice." Holmes, quarter; Sayer, end; Greene and Fayette, half-backs; Marion, full-back, and Fales, guard, were all likely to play one or two periods.

Yardley won the toss and Hammel kicked off. Nordham tried the center of the Yardley line in a tentative way and then punted. The kick was a beautiful one against a slight wind and almost went over Simms's head. The Nordham ends came down the field like two streaks of lightning and had little trouble getting by the interference. Simms made four or five yards and then went down with two Nordham players on top of him. Simms started right in trying out the Nordham line and Roeder and Hammel went through for good gains. But it was necessary to punt on the third down. Nordham opened up a bewildering series of attacks then. She had a quick line-shift that was difficult to meet successfully and it soon became evident that the formation being used by Yardley would not meet the requirements of the occasion. Nordham set her whole team in motion to the right or left, as the case might be, with the runner effectually concealed until the moment came for him to "go in." This had the effect of upsetting Yardley's formation, and twice Norton was badly fooled. After Nordham had barely made her distance twice, Dan and Simms held a consultation and the "basket" formation was abandoned, the ends playing up into the line and the halves moving closer. That worked better, but Nordham had a dozen tricks up her sleeve and rattled them off so fast that Yardley began to be dazed. Plays that started without signals, plays in which the whole back-field moved one way and the quarter, carrying the ball, sprang around the opposite end; forward passes from kick formation, forward passes from close formation, on-side kicks and a half-dozen other plays tested the Yardley secondary defense as it had not been tested all the fall. Nordham's plays were, however, all built around two players, her quarter, Buckman, a human eel, and her left half-back, Lishing. Both were exceptionally fast starters, ran like the wind, dodged miraculously and fought like wolves when tackled.

Lishing was tall and slim and the quarter-back was a small, wiry youngster of seventeen, red of hair and freckled of face. He wore no head guard and before the game was ten minutes old the slogan on the Blue's side was, "*Look for the red head!*"

Nordham worked the ball to the middle of the field and there a play went wrong, the runner was thrown by Dan yards behind his line and Nordham kicked. It was Stearns's ball over near the side-line and he had plenty of time to make the catch and get started. But there was a fumble, the Nordham left end tore down, evaded Norton and tackled Stearns just as that youth recovered the ball. It was Yardley's ball on her fifteen yards. A plunge at the Nordham left tackle netted two yards and put the ball outside. It was taken in fifteen yards and Roeder struck the center of the enemy's line for four yards. There was no great trouble getting through the first defense, but the secondary played good ball that day and time and again Roeder, Hammel or Stearns was stopped hard just when it seemed that he was safely through. With four to go, Norton dropped back to punt. A poor pass slowed him up and the kick when it got off was too low. Someone, a Nordham guard perhaps, leaped into the path of the ball and it thudded against his body, rebounded over the heads of the attack and trickled towards the Yardley goal. Half a dozen players dived for it, but it was Lishing who, getting through in some marvelous manner, picked it up and romped straight over the goal-line and scored a touchdown between the posts. Buckman kicked an easy goal.

There was no more scoring in that period, although Yardley took the ball on steady plunges to the Nordham forty yards before the whistle blew. In the second period a thirty-yard run by Lishing along the side-line brought the spectators to their feet. A moment or two later Buckman got away around the other end and covered fifteen before he was finally stopped. With the ball on Yardley's thirty yards, Nordham tried a fake kick that netted little. Then Buckman fell back for a try at goal from placement, although the opponents refused to believe that it would not turn out a fake. It was a bona fide attempt, however, and with a few feet more elevation it would have succeeded. As it was, the ball passed under the crossbar, and a great sigh of relief went up from the Yardley supporters on the stands.

Yardley chose to put the ball in scrimmage and then began an advance down the field that would not be denied. Roeder and Hammel went through the line time and again, and once or twice Stearns got past left tackle for good gains. Simms worked a quarter-back run for twelve yards and placed the pigskin on Nordham's twenty-five. Then Roeder was called on and made eight straight through center. Hammel slammed out four more. Stearns was "knifed" past right guard for three. Nordham rallied desperately and Roeder was thrown back for a loss. It was a situation calling for a good drop-kicker and Dan gritted his teeth in helplessness. Simms was for giving Norton a try, but Dan was afraid to risk it. Instead a forward pass from kick formation was tried, Simms passing to Dan at the side of the field. But Nordham was alert and although Dan made the catch nicely and started for the goal-line he was tackled for small gain and the ball went to Nordham on the twelve yards. Nordham kicked on first down, Stearns caught in midfield and came back seven before he was stopped. From there Yardley again took up her advance. Nordham replaced her left guard, but Yardley still went through and at last, after fourteen plays placed the ball over the line for her first score. A punt-out gave Hammel a try for goal from the twenty yards, but he missed badly. Nordham was still a point ahead.

But now it seemed only a question of how many more touchdowns Yardley could smash out in the remaining time, for the Nordham line, it was evident, could not stop Roeder or

Hammel. There was no more scoring in that period, however, and the two teams trotted off the field.

Payson had his chance to talk then, and he made good use of it. Nordham, he predicted, would play a kicking game for the remainder of the contest and would try field goals whenever she could. It was up to the Yardley ends and half-backs, he said, to see that Nordham didn't gain on punting. "You've got to get that interference for the catcher working, fellows. You let their ends get by every time. You let them fool you. Run them out and don't try to spill them until you can accomplish something. Norton, and you too, Roeder, you go for them too near the line. Several times you've upset those ends and they've picked themselves up again and gone on down the field in time to stop the runner. I've taught you a good interference for the man who's running the ball back. Now make it go! And one thing more, and this is for all of you fellows; keep your eye on the ball. Don't think you know what the play is going to be; don't try to guess it; *watch the ball every minute*! I've been hammering that into you all the fall. If you don't learn to do it now you'll have mighty slim chances of winning from Broadwood next week."

"Could we use a couple of the new plays, sir?" asked Simms. "That delayed pass might work well near goal."

"No, Simms, not with four Broadwood scouts in the stands," replied the coach dryly. "You've got plenty of plays if you make them go. Stick to those. And don't try forward passes inside the twenty-five yards, Simms; these fellows are too knowing for that. Plug the line and wear it out."

The third period was the hardest fought of any. Yardley made good gains through the Nordham line until the twenty-five yards was reached. Then Nordham, playing close formation, twice held her for downs. Had Yardley had a player who could have kicked an easy field goal the game would have been decided then and there. Nordham invariably punted out of danger on first down, and, with what wind there was still favoring her, got off kicks of forty-five and fifty yards. It was discouraging to peg half the length of the field and then be turned back on the very threshold. But that is just what happened to the visitors twice. But finally the tide of fortune turned.

Nordham, gaining the ball on a fumble by Hammel near the middle of the field, kicked for forty yards. Simms gathered the pigskin in, recovered seven yards before he was thrown and then worked an on-side kick that, quite unexpected by Nordham, was recovered by Dan for a gain of thirty yards.

Roeder tore off ten yards on one try and Hammel got six. Roeder made four and Stearns got through for first down. Roeder, who had been worked pretty hard, showed signs of wear and Fayette took his place. Stearns got by left tackle for six yards and Simms went five on a wide end run. Fayette gained two through center and Stearns was stopped on an attempt at the left end. Hammel, on a double pass, made first down through right guard. The ball was now down near the enemy's twenty yard line and near the side of the field. Hammel got around on the short side of the field for twelve but was called back seven as he had stepped over the line. Simms tried a wide run around the other end and made less than a yard. The ball was opposite the goal and Hammel crashed through for five and made it first down. Fayette got three on a "skin-tackle" play and Stearns made four in the same place. Hammel was given the ball then for a straight plunge at left guard and got through and staggered over the goal line for the second touchdown. Dan took the ball out and tried goal, but missed it by

inches. The score stood 10 to 6 in Yardley's favor. Nordham kicked off from midfield and Simms came back twelve before the opposing ends reached him. Then the whistle blew.

It was not advisable to make all the substitutions originally planned, but Mr. Payson sent Holmes in for Simms at quarter, Sayer for Dan and Marion for Hammel. Two minutes after the final period commenced Nordham, from a kick formation, sent her full-back around Sayer for twenty yards and the stands shrieked and howled. A plunge at Merriwell was repulsed and Buckman, Nordham's diminutive quarter-back, squirmed through between Ridge and Mitchell and made seven before he was rudely sat on. It took the youngster two minutes to recover from that experience.

The ball was on Yardley's thirty-eight yards and near the side of the field. With one of her running plays in which Buckman, carrying the pigskin, was hidden behind the line, Nordham placed the ball five yards nearer the goal-line and directly in front of the crossbar. A half-back knelt on the turf and Buckman retreated for a place-kick. The pass was good and although the entire Yardley line came crashing through desperately, Buckman lifted the ball neatly over the bar for three more points. With the score 10 to 9, Yardley settled down to add another touchdown. Stearns was injured slightly on the first play and was taken out. Greene took his place. The back-field was now much weaker, for neither Greene nor Fayette could make the holes that Roeder and Stearns had made. Marion, at full-back, was a dependable line-bucker and it was he who made most of the gains for the next five minutes, gains which finally took the ball past the middle of the field and into Nordham territory again. But unfortunately it was also Marion whose fumble on the Nordham forty-five yard line gave the ball to the enemy. On the first play Sayer was again drawn in and Lishing romped around the Blue's left end for eighteen yards amidst the wild applause of Nordham partisans. Buckman tried the left of the opposing line for a yard, the full-back squirmed through for three and then came one of Nordham's quick shifts and a forward pass across the field to the right end who had managed to run over undetected. That was a hair-raising moment. The end had a clear field ahead of him save for Simms who was down near the twenty yards. But Ridge showed a burst of speed and reached the runner near the thirty yard line and threw him hard out of bounds. The ball was brought in and it was Nordham's first down on the thirty. It was naturally to be expected that Nordham would try an end run, either to place the ball in front of goal or to advance it down the short side of the field. But she didn't. The interference swept to the right, toward middle of the field, and Buckman plunged straight ahead for six yards. The Nordham cheers were deafening now. Along the side-line Mr. Payson and Dan paced, Dan scowling and the coach imperturbable. With four to go, Nordham seemingly elected to try a field goal on second down. The angle was extreme, although the distance was only about twenty-five yards. But it was a fake. The half-back who caught the ball started for a run toward the middle of the field. The opponent, however, was on guard and he was dropped by Sayer for a loss of three yards. But the ball was fairly opposite the posts and again Buckman stepped back and again the half knelt on the turf.

"Block it!" shrieked Ridge, who was field captain. "Get through and block this kick!"

It was Ridge himself who barely tipped the ball as it sailed away from Buckman's toe and went straight over the center of the bar. Pandemonium broke loose in the Nordham camp and the Nordham players jumped and cavorted gleefully. There was less than four minutes of time left. In that four minutes Yardley worked the ball for fifty yards without losing it once, her backs slamming at the Nordham line with the desperation born of despair. And almost

under the shadow of the goal posts, when another four or five downs might have saved the day, the whistle blew!

"Nordham 12, Opponents 10," said the score board. Yardley had met her second defeat.

CHAPTER XIX
CHEERS AND SONGS

"But this paper," said Gerald, kicking the offending sheet from the window seat to the floor, "says Nordham outplayed us. I don't think that's fair. Do you, sir?"

"Well, didn't they outplay us, Pennimore?" asked Mr. Payson who had dropped into Number 28 for a visit after church. "They won, and there were no flukes that I saw."

"But if we'd kicked the goals after our touchdowns—"

"But we didn't, and they outplayed us right there. There's no use being disgruntled and trying to deceive yourselves into thinking that it was a case of hard luck, for it wasn't. What do you say, Vinton?"

"Oh, I suppose they outplayed us," answered Dan wearily. "We were away ahead of them at straight football, but—"

"'Straight football,'" repeated the coach with a smile. "By that you mean bucking the line, I suppose. But that isn't any 'straighter' than any other sort of football nowadays, Vinton. No, sir, Nordham has a remarkable team, a team built around two fast backs and weak in the line, to be sure, but I take my hat off to that coach over there. And to that quarter of theirs, too. He's a little marvel, Vinton."

"Wish we had him," muttered Dan.

"Um; if we had we'd have to make our team over. Of course Nordham had this advantage over us yesterday; they could play to their limit, since their big game is two weeks off, while we were obliged to hold back our best plays on account of Broadwood. She had at least four assistant coaches and players there yesterday, but I don't think they learned much."

"They'll eat us up next Saturday," sighed Dan moodily.

"Perhaps, but I don't think so. If they played the sort of game Nordham plays they might beat us, for we haven't learned a defense against a running game. But Broadwood must play about the sort of game we played yesterday. Her backs are heavy, line-smashing fellows and Saturday's game will be pretty much all what you just called 'straight football.' On the whole, Vinton, we didn't do so badly to hold Nordham to three scores yesterday. She might have run us off our feet with that tricky game of hers."

"Has Broadwood some good kickers this year?" asked Gerald.

"She's still got Rhodes," said Dan. "You remember him last year, don't you?"

"I don't believe," said the coach, "that we need fear goals from field. They've only scored two all season."

"One of those was a fluke," added Dan.

"What we've got to watch out for are forward passes. They've been getting off some fine ones lately. They gained eighty yards in the Forest Hill game by forward passes. How is Stearns this morning?"

"A bit lame," replied Dan. "He will be all right to-morrow, I guess."

"We'll let him lay off to-morrow. It will be light work for all unless this weather changes. It's almost like summer to-day. Well, I must be getting back. How are you feeling, Vinton?"

"All right," was the reply.

"How's the ankle?"

"Oh, it was just a twist. It feels pretty good to-day."

"Well, go easy on it and give it a good rubbing to-night. We got through yesterday very well as far as injuries go. Going to lick Broadwood cross-country Saturday, Pennimore?"

"Yes, sir, hard," answered Gerald with conviction. "We've got a dandy team this year. Ryan picked the fellows last week."

"Glad to hear it. That will mean two defeats for the Green on Saturday. Well, I'll see you to-morrow, Vinton. Good morning."

The next afternoon, as the weather still held warm, all those who had played for more than a period in the Nordham game were sent around the track a few times and then discharged for the day. But there was a hard battle between the First Team substitutes and the Second Team, and Kendall got into it for a whole ten-minute period. I can't say that he especially distinguished himself, although he worked as hard as he knew how. But there were a great many fine points about the duties of a half-back that Kendall had never heard of, and it seemed to him that he came in for more than his share of criticism. The two teams battled through three ten-minute periods without a score on either side.

On Tuesday hard work began again and Mr. Payson sought to correct some of the faults shown in the Nordham contest. The two-day rest had brought the players around in fine shape and the spirit shown argued well for the team's success. Only Dan was disappointing that day. He was badly off his game and seemed in a very low frame of mind. Mr. Payson watched him closely, and so did Andy Ryan, the trainer. The coach trusted that he would pull around by the morrow, but on Wednesday, the final day of real work, Dan was still listless and dumpy. After supper that evening Mr. Payson dropped into Number 28 Clarke again.

"Hello!" said Dan, who was half-heartedly going over his Greek, "I was just going down to see you."

"I thought I'd save you the trouble. Good evening, Pennimore. How are you?"

"Very well, thank you, sir. I wish Dan felt as well."

Dan frowned. "There's nothing wrong with me, Gerald, so please cut it out."

"You don't look terribly bright and cheerful," said Mr. Payson smilingly. "Sleeping all right?"

"Pretty fair," answered Dan.

"He's fibbing, sir," said Gerald. "He was awake about half of last night. Twice I woke up and found him reading."

"For goodness' sake, Gerald, mind your own business," said Dan crossly. "I'm no baby. What if I did read a while? I wasn't sleepy."

"Well, but that won't do, Vinton, and you know it as well as I do," said Mr. Payson quietly. "We can't have you getting nervous now. Too much depends on your being in good shape Saturday."

"Oh, I'll be all right, sir," answered Dan impatiently.

"Of course. Well, let's talk about to-morrow if you have time. I suppose we'll have to go through the motions of practice for the sake of the school, eh?"

"Oh, yes, sir," said Dan. "They're going to march down to the field as usual and shout themselves hoarse. There was some talk of having the band up."

"Well, we'll call practice for four o'clock then. That'll give us fifteen or twenty minutes of it. And that reminds me." He took out a memorandum book and made a note in it. "I'm going to have Fogg and Girard go down early and practice passing to Simms and Holmes. Fogg was a bit ragged Saturday."

"That's a good idea," said Dan. "And Norton ought to have a good half hour at goal practice."

"We'll have him try a few kicks, Vinton, but I don't want to shove him too hard. We've got the fellows just about on edge and some of them, fellows like Norton, are likely to go over if we push them too much. But I guess a couple of dozen drop-kicks won't hurt him. I hope, though, that we won't have to rely on Norton to score. I think that by next fall he will be a pretty good drop-kicker, if he's willing to keep at it and practice."

"I wish he could do it now," said Dan bitterly. "With all the fellows in this school it certainly seems as if there might be one able to lift the ball over the goal once out of ten times!"

"It does seem so, and that's a fact," Mr. Payson agreed. "I don't believe I ever knew of a team so weak in the kicking department of the game. It's largely my fault, of course, but I had no idea that Hammel was going to peter out as he has. Last year he was full of promise. However, we're no worse off than Broadwood. And I daresay that if we get the ball within field goal distance we can shove it over by rushing."

"We'll have to," said Dan dryly.

"I'm afraid so. Well, Cowles is coming down to see me this evening and I'll have to go on. By the way, Vinton, how would you like to take a vacation to-morrow?"

"A vacation?" asked Dan in surprise.

"Yes. I mean pack your bag and run off somewhere to-morrow after practice and stay until Saturday morning. You aren't needed here and it will do you a lot of good to get away from things for a couple of nights. You'll sleep better, for one thing, and eat better, too."

"Oh, pshaw, I don't want to do that! I'm all right, sir. I'll sleep like a top to-night. Besides, I'd worry more away than if I was here where I could watch things."

"There won't be anything to watch," said Mr. Payson with a smile. "Think it over, Vinton. It would be the best thing for you and for the team. We'll talk about it to-morrow. Good night."

"Anybody would think I was dying from the way he talks," said Dan irritably when the coach had gone. "That would be a fine idea, wouldn't it?"

"What?" asked Gerald.

"Why, to go off and leave things just before the game!"

"I think it would be a mighty good idea," replied Gerald firmly. "And I wish you'd do it, Dan."

"Well, I'm not going to! Payson won't get me away from here unless he steals me, I can tell you that!"

And that was Dan's answer the next day when the coach brought the subject up again, although Dan put it more politely. Mr. Payson said, "Just as you say, Vinton," and changed the subject, and Dan, who had slept about four hours out of nine, told himself aggrievedly that Payson didn't care whether he was all right or not!

But Payson did care, and he had been doing a good deal of thinking and some acting, as Dan was to discover.

The entire school marched to the field that afternoon and cheered and sang for the better part of two hours. The band didn't come, but it wasn't missed. The First Team went through ten minutes of signal work, did some punting and catching and then retired. After that the substitutes played a ten-minute game with the Second. It wasn't much of a contest, but nobody cared. Enthusiasm reigned and from the stands came football songs and cheers. When the whistle blew the Second Team gathered together and cheered the First, and the First Team substitutes cheered the Second, and the last day of practice was over. The spectators formed in line of march again and tramped back up the hill to the gymnasium, still singing, in the wake of the players:

"All together! Cheer on cheer!
Now we're charging down the field!
See how Broadwood pales with fear,
Knowing we will never yield!
Wave on high your banners blue,
Cheer for comrades staunch and true;
We are here to die or do,
Fighting for Old Yardley!

"All together! Cheer on cheer!
Victory is ours to-day!
Raise your voices loud and clear!
Yardley pluck has won the fray!
See, the vanquished foeman quails;
All his vaunted courage fails!
Flaunt the Blue that never pales,
Fighting for Old Yardley!"

In front of the gymnasium the crowd gathered and began the cheers for the players. "Rah, rah, rah! Rah, rah, rah! Rah, rah, rah! Vinton!" Then Ridge, and Hammel, and Simms and so on down to the last substitute. And then, "Three cheers for Coach Payson, fellows, and make it good!" And after that three cheers for Andy Ryan, and finally, "Now, fellows, nine times three for the Team!" And after that, with hoarse but undiscouraged voices, a long cheer for

“Yardley! *Yardley!!* YARDLEY!!!” And then, still singing, the procession wound around the front of the buildings and stopped in front of Oxford and gave a cheer for the Principal. (The mere fact that Doctor Hewitt was away for the winter made no difference. They were following the custom.) And then more cheers, and much laughter, and some horseplay, and the throng broke up to descend presently on the supper tables and sweep them clear.

At nine there was a mass meeting in the Assembly Hall and the enthusiasm began again. Mr. Payson spoke and was cheered to the echo, and Mr. Collins spoke and was cheered just as liberally, and then there came a loud, insistent demand for “Vinton! We want Vinton!” And after a moment Mr. Payson arose and announced that the captain was not present this evening and that he thought it would be a good idea to hear from the quarter-back. Simms tried to escape, but was captured after a struggle and lifted none too gently onto the stage, where he stood and viewed the audience helplessly for a full minute, very much embarrassed indeed. And the more embarrassed he got the more they laughed and the louder they cheered. Desperation brought ingenuity. One moment Simms was there and the next he was gone! A sudden dash across the stage to the door of the dressing-room and he was free! Howls of glee filled the hall, and some of the fellows near the entrance started up in pursuit, but were discouraged by older heads.

Ridge, who was a good talker, and whom the fellows all liked, took Simms’s place and spoke for a few minutes. After that the football songs were practiced, the Banjo and Mandolin Club supplying accompaniment. Finally, with a last resounding cheer, the meeting broke up, the members clattering down the stairs and out of the building still singing. Then the cry for Vinton was renewed and was taken up by two hundred throats: “We want Vinton. We want Vinton! We want Vinton!” Presently the throng swirled over to the front of Clarke and the cry was hurled up at the lighted window of Number 28. But the football captain didn’t appear and a half-dozen fellows rushed up the stairs in search of him. But they were soon back, for the room was empty. So they cheered him instead, and finally the throng dissolved, the fellows seeking their rooms. Snatches of song, bursts of laughter, faint cheers floated from open windows for a while, and then one by one the lights went out and Yardley became silent.

It is a good plan to celebrate in advance. One never knows what may happen.

CHAPTER XX
DAN IS KIDNAPPED

They were still cheering in front of Oxford that afternoon when Dan left the gymnasium with Mr. Payson and set off up the hill. It was already twilight and the windows of the dormitories were becoming quadrangles of pale yellow. Both Mr. Payson and Dan were very silent on the way up the path, and it was not until the former paused in front of Merle Hall, where a footpath began that led him across the fields toward the village, that the silence was broken.

"Still think you'd rather not take that vacation I spoke of?" Mr. Payson asked then.

"I'd much rather not," Dan answered.

"All right. Good night."

"Good night, sir. I guess I won't be down this evening."

"No, I'll see you to-morrow."

Mr. Payson ran down the footpath and Dan continued around by The Prospect. He felt a little bit uncomfortable. Perhaps Payson was right and he ought to get away from the school for a day. Although he insisted to the coach that he was feeling all right, he fully realized that he was in a rather disordered condition. He hadn't had a full night's sleep for nearly a week, he had almost forgotten what it was like to be hungry and if someone had come up behind him and said "Boo!" he would have jumped a foot in the air. He dreaded Saturday more than he had ever dreaded anything in his life, and yet he would have given anything he possessed or hoped to possess if he could have had Saturday come to-morrow. The Broadwood game had taken on the aspect of a dozen visits to the dentist all rolled into one nightmarish lump! For the life of him he couldn't see how it was possible for his team to win that game. Not one fellow played as he should, the plays Payson had given them were weak, and certain defeat stared them in the face. Dan wished he had never accepted the captaincy!

When he reached the head of the stairs he saw that the door of Number 28 was wide open. A flood of yellow light filled the end of the hall. Probably Gerald had callers, he thought irritably, and he didn't want to have to talk with anyone this evening. Luckily, however, it would soon be supper time. But when he entered the room he found Gerald, a thick ulster on and a cap in his hand, quite alone. Dan's coonskin coat lay over the back of a chair.

"I thought you'd never come," said Gerald gayly. "Put your kitty-coat on and don't stand there staring. You're going to dinner with me to-night."

"No, thanks, Gerald," said Dan. "I—I don't feel up to it."

"You will when you get there," replied Gerald, seizing the fur coat and holding it invitingly open.

"I'm tired," demurred the other. But nevertheless he worked his arms into the sleeves and Gerald clapped a cap onto his head:

"Come on. The car will be here in a minute. We'll take a spin first and get up an appetite."

Dan's face lighted. An automobile ride sounded good. "But I'll have to see Collins and get leave," he said undecidedly.

"No, you won't. That's all fixed. There's the car now. Come on!" On the way downstairs Gerald said: "By the way, I asked Tooker to come along and bring another fellow. You don't mind, do you? I thought we might as well fill the car while we were about it."

Dan did mind, but didn't say so. In front of Clarke stood a big black touring car, its searchlights already casting white floods of light along the gravel drive. The chauffeur left the seat as the boys came down the steps and stood at attention, touching his cap to them.

"Hello, Higgins!" said Dan. "How are you?"

"Nicely, Mr. Dan. You're well, sir, I hope?"

"Fine and dandy, Higgins," replied Dan, feeling at the moment that this was really so. Gerald spoke for a moment in low tones with Higgins and then took the driver's seat, remarking in what seemed an unnecessarily loud tone: "We're going to take a ride first, Higgins. Get on the running board and I'll take you as far as the station."

"Very well, sir."

Gerald honked the horn and in a moment two boys appeared from around the corner of Clarke. Each carried a bag in his hand. One proved to be Ned Tooker and the other was Kendall Burtis.

"I asked them to spend the night with me," explained Gerald carelessly to Dan. "You fellows dressed warm enough?" he asked them.

"I've got on everything I own," replied Ned as they dropped their bags on the floor of the tonneau and climbed in. Dan took the front seat with Gerald, Higgins slammed the door and mounted the running board and the big car slid noiselessly down the circling drive. At the station it slowed down and Higgins jumped off, touched his cap and said, "There's about eighteen gallons in her, Mr. Gerald."

"All right, Higgins. Good night."

"Good night, sir."

Away shot the car again, across the bridge and into the main street of Greenburg. "One way's as good as another, I guess," said Gerald. "Any special place you want to go to, Dan?"

"No, I don't care where you go." He snuggled down into his coat, crossed his feet and sighed contentedly. "Just keep her going, Gerald."

The car slowed down and passed through the town cautiously, jouncing gently over the cobbles, past the lighted stores and around the clanging trolley cars. Then a turn to the left and the town was behind them and the salty breeze of the Sound met their faces. The big lights bathed the road ahead and Gerald's fingers pulled at the throttle lever. The engine began a steady hum and the air swept past them, damp and cold.

"Warm enough back there?" asked Gerald over his shoulder.

"Warm as toast," answered Ned. "Let her go."

The road was almost straight and nearly deserted at this time of night and the big car ate it up at forty miles an hour. Dan forgot his troubles and his nerves. The moist air smoothed

away the furrows from his forehead and he half closed his eyes and leaned back against the soft cushions contentedly.

On and on they went. Now and then the Sound became visible across the flats. Then there was a rumble as a bridge swept underneath them and they slowed down and hummed quietly through a small village. A turn to the right and the air was warmer and the smell of salt water and seaweed gave place to the odor of autumn woods. It was quite dark save for the light from the car. A long hill sprang up before them and the car took it with a fine rush, and then purred gently down the other side. Dan thought that Gerald was getting pretty far from home and that they would all be late for dinner at Sound View, but he didn't care and he said nothing. Occasionally Gerald spoke of the engine or the speed, but for the most part it was a very silent quartette. The clock on the dash pointed its hands to twenty minutes past six as Gerald slowed down at the junction of four roads.

"I wonder which way we go," he muttered. "Is there a sign post there, Dan?"

"I don't see any," replied Dan sleepily.

"Neither do I. I think this road to the right is the one we want. Tooker, put your hand in the flap on the door next to you and see if the blue book is there, will you?"

Ned found it and passed it over and Gerald held it under the dash light and found the map he wanted. "That's right," he said at last. "Just as I thought. Here you are, Tooker."

Ned took the book back and the car slid around the corner and began its busy song again. Ten minutes more went by and they came to another four-corners. Gerald stopped and looked about him in the darkness.

"This doesn't seem right," he said perplexedly. "Where the dickens are we? Ever seen this place, Tooker?"

"Never. Very beautiful, isn't it?"

Gerald and Kendall laughed and the former said: "Perfectly lovely, but I'd like to know where it is. I must have got the wrong road back there, after all. Looks very much as though we were lost."

"Lost in the night," murmured Ned. "How romantic!"

"Well, I guess the best thing to do is to keep on," said Gerald. "I suppose you fellows are starving to death, too."

"I could eat if forced to," replied Ned philosophically, "but I feel quite happy. How about you, Curt?"

"I don't care if I never eat," said Kendall. "I'd rather keep on riding."

"Bully boy! This is our friend Burtis's first automobile experience, gentlemen, and he quite approves of it."

"Is it really?" asked Gerald. "I'm glad you like it, Burtis. What do you say, Dan? Shall we keep ahead or try to get back the way we came?"

There was no reply and Gerald leaned over his roommate. Then,

"I believe he's asleep!" he said cautiously.

"All the better," chuckled Ned. "On with the dance!"

Very quietly Gerald got under way again and very easily he ran the car for a matter of four miles, avoiding ruts and bumps and doing his best not to disturb Dan. At last lights showed ahead and the car began to run over a smooth road under arching elm trees. Ned leaned across and said softly:

"On your left, Pennimore; the big white house. Get it?"

"I see." The car rolled up to the edge of the sidewalk. "Get those bags inside, fellows, find the proprietor and tell him we want two rooms for the night. Here we are, Dan!" But Dan had to be shaken gently before he condescended to wake up, and when he did he looked about and asked sleepily:

"Are we home? I must have been asleep!"

"No, we aren't home," replied Gerald, "but we're where we can get something to eat. We sort of got lost and we thought we'd better stop and get our dinner here. It's almost seven o'clock. There's a telephone here and I'll call up the house and tell them not to wait dinner for us."

"All right." Dan sat up and stared at the house. "Hello!" he said, "I've been here before. This is Lloyd, isn't it?"

"I think so," Gerald laughed. "Tooker and Burtis have gone in to find out. Come on. I guess the car will be all right here."

"Dinner in fifteen minutes," announced Ned as they entered the Washington's Head. "Come on and get washed up. I'm as hungry as a bear. This is lots more fun than having dinner at your place, Pennimore," he continued as they clattered down the stairs. "No aspersions on Sound View, you understand, but the unexpected is always jollier than the expected. You had a nice little sleep, Vinton, didn't you?"

"Fine! And I'm hungry. Hope they have some more of that good chicken we had here the other day."

"They have; I ordered it. That's why we have to wait. This is a special repast we're getting. Broiled chicken, French fries and all the selicacies of the deason. What ho for the banquet hall!"

Well, Ned was right. This *was* more fun than dining in state at Sound View with a butler and an under butler mousing around behind your chair all the time. Even Dan agreed to that. And how he did eat! And how they all ate! Each one of them sent back for "that other half chicken, Mary, and a few more of the excellentissimo potatoes."

"How do you know her name is Mary?" asked Gerald.

"All waitresses are named Mary," answered Ned gravely. "Sometimes they try to make you believe that their names are Gwendolyn or Hortense, but that's just a fake."

"Bet you this one isn't named Mary," said Dan.

"Bet you she is! Wait until she comes back."

And when fresh supplies had been served, and a new plate of steaming hot biscuits had been passed, Ned said: "These gentlemen don't believe that your name is Mary. It is, isn't it?"

"Yes," answered the waitress with a smile.

"You see?" asked Ned in triumph.

"Bet you you asked her," challenged Gerald.

"Nonsense! Piffle! I don't have to ask. I can tell instantly. Have I asked you your name to-night, Mary?"

"No, not to-night. You asked me the last time you were here," replied the maid with a twinkle in her eyes. At which there was a howl of laughter, and an automobile party eating at a distant table stared disapprovingly across at them. That was a very merry supper, or dinner. Dan insisted that it was supper because they had broiled chicken and hot biscuits. Kendall sided with him. Ned and Gerald said it was dinner because they had bread pudding. "No one," declared Ned, "ever heard of bread pudding with hard sauce for supper. The idea is utterly preposterous."

After they had eaten all they possibly could they found a room at the back of the hotel where an ancient pool table offered them diversion. It was when they were on the fifth game, Gerald and Ned playing against Dan and Kendall, that Gerald said: "I say, fellows, wouldn't it be fun to spend the night here? We might as well, you know. We'd just have to telephone back."

"We'd get the very dickens," said Dan.

"We might try, though. Collins couldn't any more than say no." This from Ned. "I'll stay if the rest will."

"I couldn't," said Dan. "I ought to be on hand in the morning, you see. Your shot, Tooker."

"Pshaw, no one needs you at school, Vinton! Be a sport! I tell you what I'll do. After this game is over I'll play you a string of fifty. If I win we stay; if you win we go back."

"Don't be an idiot, Tooker. I tell you I ought to be there in the morning. If you fellows want to stay, all right. I'll see if I can get a carriage to take me back. I might walk, but it's so dark I'd probably lose my way."

"Oh, if you won't stay we'll all go back," said Gerald disappointedly. "I only thought it would be a peach of a lark, Dan."

"I'd like it as well as anyone," responded Dan, "but—"

"He's afraid I'll beat him," interrupted Ned sweetly, making a woefully bad shot for the corner pocket.

"Oh, I'll play you for fifty points, if that's what you want," said Dan, "but I won't wager staying."

"Then I won't play. You'd probably beat me easily. That's game. Set 'em up, Curt."

"Well, if we're going back, we'd better start," said Gerald. "It's almost nine o'clock. You fellows play a game and I'll go out and look at the car."

He left the room and the others went on with their game. And after that was over they played another and then another, and it wasn't until they were starting a fourth that Gerald returned looking very grave:

"Say, you fellows, come on out and help me shove the car into the shed, will you? Something's wrong with her and she won't start."

CHAPTER XXI
AT THE "WASHINGTON'S HEAD"

"Won't start!" exclaimed Ned.

"Won't start!" cried Dan. "She's got to start!"

Kendall looked supremely grave. Gerald shrugged his shoulders:

"Well, come and help me put her in the shed and I'll see if I can find the trouble."

Then began a half hour of investigation by Gerald. The others held lanterns and offered suggestions. Ned was especially helpful.

"The trouble," he explained airily, "is with your battery. It can't bat."

"I get a perfectly good spark," replied Gerald with apparent irritation. "As far as I can see the trouble's in the engine."

"Let us take it to pieces," said Ned.

"Don't be a silly goat," growled Dan. "There's no use spending the night out here, anyway. Kick the old wagon in the shins, Gerald, and we'll see if we can get a carriage to take us back."

"We won't get any carriage at this time of night," said Ned. "Why, it's long after nine! Fancy being out so late. It's me for bed!"

"That's sensible," replied Gerald, closing the hood. "We might just as well stay here and go back early in the morning. We can get to school by half-past eight. I'll get Mr. Collins on the telephone and tell him we're broken down."

Dan was silent a moment. Then, "All right," he agreed, with a shrug of his shoulders. "But you'd better let me talk to Collins."

"On the contrary, or, as I say so gracefully in French, *au contraire*, Gerald had better do it. You see it's his car and his breakdown. Let him face the music."

"All right," said Dan again. He was much too sleepy to offer further objections. Even the prospect of having to retire without pajamas seemed of little moment. If only he could reach a bed! Gerald hid himself in the telephone booth for five minutes, and, judging from the mutterings that leaked out, talked to someone. Then he announced that everything was all right and they climbed the stairs to two big, low-ceilinged rooms on the front of the house. In one of them Dan went through the motions of undressing—it was the others who really performed the task for him—dabbed his face and hands in water, knelt by the bed to say his prayers and promptly fell asleep there and was finally lifted between the sheets.

"Night," he murmured. Then, waking for an instant, "Where'd I get these pajamas?" he asked.

"They go with the room," said Ned soothingly.

"That's—a lie," sighed Dan. Then he slept.

The others gathered on the bed in the adjoining room and grinned.

"Easy!" said Ned. "We're a very clever little band of conspirators, we are."

"Poor old Dan," said Gerald softly. "He was certainly sleepy! He hasn't slept like that for nights and nights."

"What about to-morrow?" asked Kendall. "Are you going to let him go back?"

Ned shrugged his shoulders. "It's up to him, I guess. We can't tie him. Maybe he will be reasonable. Think you can get your car started in time to take us back, Pennimore?"

Gerald smiled. "I think she will go all right when I put the connections back."

"It was a lucky thing that Vinton didn't know much about autos," laughed Ned.

"It wouldn't have mattered if he had. He was too sleepy to see anything. Well, let's get to bed. I'm dog tired."

"You're no tog direder than I am," responded Ned.

Dan slept without moving for nine hours. Then he awoke in a strange room that was flooded with sunlight. He stared at the white walls and the cracked ceiling and wondered where he was. Beside him Gerald was soundly slumbering. While he was still trying to make it out the floor creaked and Ned appeared. Then Dan remembered.

"Hello!" he said, still somewhat dazed with sleep. "What time is it?"

"Seven-thirty, sir. Will you have your tub now, sir?"

Dan was looking perplexedly at the pajamas he wore.

"Where'd I get these things? They look a whole lot like my own."

"Why not? Don't you usually wear your own pajamas?" asked Ned gravely. Gerald stirred and opened his eyes, sighed and closed them again.

"But how did they get here?" Dan persisted.

"Oh, that's it? Well, you see, you never can tell when you start out in your friend's car where you'll end up. So we thought we'd better be on the safe side. You'll find your toothbrush, hairbrush, comb, a change of linen and some other trifles on the bureau."

Dan stared a moment, frowningly. Then,

"I see," he grunted. "It was a put-up job."

"A gentle and kindly conspiracy," replied Ned. "Payson said you must get away and sleep. He came to me. Pennimore here was with him. We fixed up the scheme, he got leave of absence for you to visit Pennimore until Saturday, the rest of us got excused overnight and the rest you know."

"Hm; and—and that crazy car wasn't busted after all?"

"Not a bit. Pennimore—the deceitful youth!—pulled the wires off the plugs. Now you know all. We throw ourselves on your mercy!"

"You're a precious lot of—of—"

"Don't spare us," said Ned humbly.

"Of kidnappers," ended Dan. But he didn't sound very angry, and Gerald, who had been simulating slumber until the worst was over, awoke suddenly with a prodigious yawn.

"Hello, you chaps!" he said. "Good morning."

"Good morning!" grunted Dan. "I've a good mind to choke you, you deceitful pup!" To prove his inclination he reached for Gerald, but that youth was too quick for him and was in the middle of the floor in an instant. Then Kendall came in and they settled themselves on the bed and talked it all over. Dan felt too rested to be angry, and when Ned broached the programme for the day he was surprisingly complaisant. The rest of them, Ned explained, had to go back in time for recitations. But Payson wanted Dan to stay in Lloyd and take things easy. The others would be back again by five o'clock. They would all spend the night here and return to Yardley in the morning in plenty of time for luncheon. What did Dan say?

Dan said: "All right. Tell Payson I slept like a top and am feeling fine. I'll call him up after a while and talk with him myself, though. I guess there isn't really anything for me to do at school. Now how about breakfast?"

They all ate hungrily, Gerald brought the car around at half-past eight and he and Ned and Kendall set off for school. As the car sped out of sight they turned and waved at Dan on the porch. And Dan waved back gayly, and then, thrusting his hands into his pockets and whistling a tune, set off along the quiet street with a delicious feeling of playing "hookey." He had the whole day ahead of him and nothing to do but eat and loaf! No lessons, no practice, no problems to settle with Payson or Cowles, no nothing! It was simply fine!

Presently he came to a little bridge with stone parapets that seemed just fashioned for idlers like he. He seated himself on one of them, his feet dangling above the little stream that went gurgling by to turn and twist its way through a meadow. Once he saw a fish and he wished he had a hook and line. Then he gathered chips of mortar from the wall, dropped them into the water and watched them go sidling down to the bottom. The sun was warm, although a light breeze rustled the dead leaves in the roadway. The sky was blue overhead, and Dan thought thankfully, "A fine day to-morrow for the game." Then with a start he realized that he had quite forgotten all about the game for hours! Hadn't once thought of it since getting out of bed! And even now it didn't trouble him. They might win it. If they didn't—why, there you were! After all, it was no matter of life or death. Games had been lost before. To be sure, he was captain and he meant to do all he could to win, but if he failed, why, he still would have done the best he knew how; and that, he told himself philosophically, was all anyone could do. And then a pair of crows came sailing overhead, cawing loudly, and he forgot again about the game.

Almost before he knew it, it was noon. A bell somewhere in the little village struck twelve. He pulled himself lazily off the wall and ambled back to the inn. There was time before dinner to call up Mr. Payson, and he did it.

"I'm having a bully time," he told the coach. "Been sitting on the bridge all the morning throwing pebbles into the water."

"Good stuff," replied the voice at the other end. "Go back this afternoon and throw the rest in."

"No, I think I'll go to sleep!" laughed Dan. "Everything all right? If you want me, say so and I'll come over."

“Don’t want you at all. Don’t want to see you until eleven to-morrow forenoon. Everything is all right here. And I think we’re going to have a fine day to-morrow. How’s your appetite?”

“It’s awful! I can’t get enough.”

“Well, don’t overdo it. Better eat light this evening, Vinton. Eat what you want, though. Feeling pretty well, are you?”

“Like a fighting cock, sir!”

“That’s fine. Keep it up. Go to bed early to-night and get some more sleep. Good-by.”

Dan had the dining-room pretty much to himself that noon and was rather glad of it, since he was a little bit ashamed of the way he ate. He felt like apologizing to Mary, the waitress, and to the proprietor. After dinner he lounged upstairs to the room, feeling delightfully sleepy, found a magazine that Gerald had thoughtfully added to the contents of one of the bags and tried to read. But ten minutes later he was stretched out on top of the bed fast asleep.

CHAPTER XXII
KENDALL EXPLAINS

Dan slept for two hours and might have slept longer had it not been that a little cool breeze began to find its way through the wide-open windows. It was after half-past three then, and he went downstairs and wrote a letter home. And finally, at a little before five, there was a terrific honking in the distance, followed presently by the appearance of a cloud of dust down the road and eventually by the arrival of the Pennimore car and the three conspirators.

"Get in," Gerald commanded. "We're going for a ride before supper."

So Dan went up and got into his coat and soon they were off along the twilight road. That was a ride to remember. They were gone one hour and covered forty-three miles by the speedometer. And if there were four hungrier lads in the length and breadth of the land than those four when they sat down to supper, I envy them! After supper they went upstairs to what a white-enameled plate on the door informed them was the Ladies' Parlor and Ned strummed tunes on the old yellow-keyed piano and they all sang and made as much noise as they pleased. Still later they donned sweaters or coats and went down to the porch and put chairs along the railing and sat there with their feet as high as their heads and talked. The breeze had subsided and the night was still and quite warm for the sixteenth of November. A big lob-sided moon climbed up over the tops of the naked elms and flooded the porch with light. They talked of many, many things; almost everything, in fact, except football. To have listened to them one might have thought that there was never such a thing as football. Finally Gerald said:

"It was a night a good deal like this, Dan, that we paid our call on Broadwood last spring."

And then, Ned urging, Dan, with Gerald interpolating at intervals, told the story of the famous joke on Broadwood perpetrated by the S. P. M. ("Society of Predatory Marauders," explained Gerald.) And Kendall, who had never heard of the affair before, listened with open ears. And when Dan had finished Kendall burst out with:

"Then that's why they tried to paint the flagpole!"

"Who? What do you mean?" exclaimed the others.

"Oh! Nothing! That is—!"

"Who tried to paint the flagpole?" Dan demanded. "What do you know about that, Burtis?"

"I—I thought maybe they did," stammered Kendall.

"Broadwood? I never thought of that." This from Dan.

"Nobody ever found out who did do that stunt," said Ned thoughtfully. There was a moment's silence. Then Ned asked suddenly:

"Wasn't it about that time you went on pro, Curt?"

"It—it was a day or so afterwards," replied Kendall.

"Hm. Nice weather we're having."

"What's the point, Tooker?" asked Dan.

"Ask our friend, Mr. Bendall Kurtis."

"All right, Burtis, you've got the floor. If there's a story, let's have it."

"There isn't; at least, there's nothing I can tell," replied Kendall.

"Oh, I thought you knew something."

"What did you mean, Tooker?" asked Gerald. "Out with it."

Ned's chair came down with a crash on the porch and he pointed an accusing finger at Kendall. "There," he declared dramatically, "is the one man who can explain the Mystery of the Paint on the Flagpole!"

"Burtis? Nonsense!" Dan laughed. "Kick him, Burtis."

"Then," said Ned, folding his arms with dignity, "then ask him to explain why he was put on probation the next day."

"Consider yourself asked, Burtis," Gerald laughed.

"Answer!" commanded Ned. "We are all friends together and our motto is 'Discretion.'"

"Why—why—" Kendall stammered. "It isn't my secret. You see— Well, I do know about it, but I oughtn't to tell. I refused to tell Mr. Collins, and that's why he put me on probation. I didn't want them to get into trouble."

"Didn't want who to get into trouble?" asked Ned with the manner of a Grand Inquisitor.

"Those fellows."

"What fellows?"

"The fellows who—who did it."

"You mean the Broadwood fellows?" asked Dan quietly.

"Yes—no—"

"Then Broadwood *did* do it!" exclaimed Ned triumphantly. "I knew it! Now tell us all about it. We all swear secrecy, Curt. By yon gleaming orb we pledge ourselves to never divulge what we are about to hear! Proceed!"

And finally Kendall proceeded and told the whole story from the time he had overheard the conversation between the Broadwood boys in the drug store until he had gone out of the Office in disgrace. And he talked to three deeply interested hearers.

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" exclaimed Dan when Kendall had finished.

"I'll be double jiggered," Ned declared. "Do you mean to tell me, Curt, that you were chump enough to let Collins put you on pro just to save those idiots?"

"I was afraid he would make trouble for them," said Kendall.

"What of it? Don't you know that Broadwood is our hereditary foe?"

"Shut up, Tooker," said Dan. "He was quite right. Only I guess his—what-do-you-call-it? —martyrdom was unnecessary. I don't believe Collins would have taken it up with

Broadwood's faculty. Old Toby might have, but not Collins."

"And that's why you gave up football!" marveled Gerald.

"Yes; he said I couldn't play any longer," replied Kendall regretfully.

Ned arose and brushed an imaginary tear from his eye. "Curt," he said in a voice that trembled with emotion, "you're a hero!" He shook Kendall's hand. "You're a—a martyr to a principal! Get that, fellows? Principal with an 'al.' Good, what?"

"Punk," laughed Dan. "Well, Burtis, I'm glad I got you back on the Second Team. I didn't know why the dickens I was doing it at the time, but I see now that my instincts prompted."

"I think Collins ought to know the truth of it," exclaimed Gerald. "Someone ought to tell him. I will if no one else does."

"I wouldn't do that," said Dan. "No use opening old sores. Collins did what he thought was fair; the evidence was all against Burtis. It's over with now and nobody's any the worse for it."

"That's right," Ned agreed. "Let deeping slogs lie. I do wish I'd known you then, Curt; I surely would have liked to have been there when you flashed the torch on them! We needn't say anything to Collins about it, fellows, but it's too good a joke on Broadwood to keep to ourselves, that is, if Curt doesn't mind having it known."

Kendall said he didn't care about that, and he was quite sure he didn't want to bother Mr. Collins with the affair. "He—he was awfully nice about it. And he's been very kind ever since."

"Collins," said Ned with conviction, "is one fine man."

And the others gravely agreed.

At nine o'clock they went yawning up to their rooms, and at ten nothing was to be heard therein but evidences of healthy slumber.

Mr. Payson had forbidden Dan to return before eleven, but Gerald was forced to be on hand fairly early, since the cross-country race with Broadwood—Nordham had declined Goodyear's invitation to enter the contest—was due to start at ten-thirty, and so it was agreed that they should all return at half-past nine. They were up early and had breakfast at a quarter to eight. The morning had fulfilled the promise of the preceding day. It was an Indian Summer day if ever there was one. Dan had slept like a log, he asserted, and never felt better in his life.

"I'll bet, though," he said ruefully, "that I've taken on six or seven pounds. I can feel it just as plain!"

"Don't worry," said Gerald. "You can stand it. Besides," he added with a grin, "it will be all gone by four this afternoon."

There seemed no good reason for continuing the taboo on the subject of the game, and during the rest of breakfast they discussed it without ceasing. Afterwards Gerald scouted out for a morning paper and finally found one and Dan read the football news it contained aloud to the others as they sat on the steps and waited for the time to start.

"'Broadwood,'" read Dan, "'is a slight favorite in to-day's battle with Yardley Hall at Wissining. Her victories have been woefully few of late and there is a prevalent feeling that

her turn has come. Although handicapped at the beginning of the season by injuries to three of her best men, Broadwood hit her stride in the game with Stamford College two weeks ago and has been coming ever since. She has in Reid, Raynor and Rhodes—the Three R's, as Broadwood calls them—an exceptionally good back-field trio. They have plenty of weight, are exceptionally quick and have so far proved extremely hard to stop. The only occurring criticism of the Broadwood back-field that will start the Yardley Hall game is that, composed, as it is, of players whose strong point is plunging, it can afford but little variety of offense. Broadwood has not developed the running game this year to any great extent, and, with the exception of Saunders, who is as yet an almost unknown quantity at quarter, and who may possess possibilities in this line that he has not yet shown, what end-running talent she has lies with her second-string backs.'

"That," observed Dan, interrupting himself, "is rot. Raynor never made a yard at straight line-bucking in his life. He's a typical dodging back, and he cut off about seventy yards in the Nordham game on runs outside tackle. That's just a sample of the sort of stuff they send out in the hope of misleading the opponent. Just as though we hadn't watched their team all the fall!"

"What other untruths does the Broadwood correspondent indulge in?" asked Ned, who was boring an extra hole in his leather belt with the file-blade of his knife. "Go on, Vinton."

"'In the line,'" Dan continued, "'Broadwood is more than averagely strong. O'Brien, at center, although light, is undoubtedly one of the cleverest players in his position on any preparatory school team.' ("That's a fact," interpolated Dan.) 'O'Brien was a substitute last year, but played part of the Yardley Hall game. The guards are new men this year, but have proved excellent on the defense. The same may be said of the tackles, one of whom, Weldon, played his position last season. At the ends Broadwood has Captain Bishop and Furniss, with Thurston and Donnelly as substitutes. Captain Bishop is an ideal end player, while Furniss has shown so far more promise than fulfillment. By an odd coincidence Captain Bishop will play opposite Yardley Hall's captain, Vinton, and a battle royal is looked for between the rival leaders.

"'There is a feeling here at Broadwood that if any fault can be found with the development of this year's team it must be on the score that in perfecting what appears to be a remarkably strong defense the coaches have failed to produce an offense of more than ordinary value. Granting then what seems to be the case, that Broadwood's defense is fully equal if not superior to Yardley Hall's, the outcome of the struggle will depend on which team can show the strongest attack. A tie score is by no means beyond the realm of possibility, but here at Broadwood coaches and players alike agree that if the Green doesn't come out of the fray victor by the margin of at least one touchdown they will be greatly surprised.'"

"Business of looking surprised by Broadwood coaches," murmured Ned, snapping his knife shut and worming his belt back into place. "That's all right for their side of the thing, Vinton. Now, prithee, sweet youth, what says Yardley?"

"Yardley doesn't say anything," replied Dan, searching the page with a frown. "Who's our correspondent? Anyone know?"

"Chambers used to be," said Gerald. "I don't know who is now."

“Hold on! Here’s something,” announced Dan. “‘Wissining, Conn., November 16. Yardley Hall School and Broadwood Academy will meet to-morrow on the Yardley gridiron for their annual championship battle. Yardley is expected to repeat her victories of the last two years, although a piece of eleventh-hour ill-luck may spoil her chances. Yardley’s captain and left end, Dan Vinton, may not be able to enter the game. Captain Vinton has been ill for about a week and on Thursday, obeying doctor’s orders, left school and has not been heard of since. Whether he will return in time for the game to-morrow, or whether, if he does return, he will be able to take part in it, is not known. Vinton’s leadership and his work at the left end of the Yardley line will be greatly missed.’”

“What do you think of that?” ejaculated Gerald.

Dan laughed. “I guess I’d better go back and show myself,” he said. “I wonder who started that story.”

“The fellow who wrote it for the paper,” replied Ned. “Plenty of fellows knew that you had just gone off to rest up until this morning, although I guess none of them knew where you’d gone. What time is it? Let’s get a move on!”

CHAPTER XXIII
THE MORNING OF THE GAME

They spun back to Wissining in something close to ten minutes, stopping, with a triumphant toot of the horn, in front of Clarke at twenty minutes to ten. Half a dozen fellows who had seen the arrival of the automobile rushed up to shake Dan's hand and inquire anxiously if he were going to play.

"Yes," replied Dan, "and we're going to win."

Then he made his escape to his room, while Gerald and the others sped around to the gymnasium in the car. At a few minutes after the hour Gerald took the wheel again and, with ten boys packed into or onto it, swung the automobile's nose toward Broadwood. They didn't go that far, however, as the start of the cross-country race was at the Old Cider Mill, a mile beyond the bridge. Here the road was already lined with spectators, while numerous bare-legged youths, wrapped in many-hued bath-gowns, awaited the signal. Gerald steered the car into the bushes at one side of the road and left it in charge of Ned. He and Kendall made themselves comfortable in the rear seat, where they were presently joined by Arthur Thompson. Arthur had discarded his crutch several days before, but was glad of a place where he might watch events and favor his knee.

"Gerald says that Dan's back," said Arthur as he climbed into the front seat. "Have you seen him, Tooker?"

"Yes, I've seen him. In fact, Thompson, we spent last night and the night before with him at Lloyd. He was at the hotel over there. He was sort of done up when Payson sent him off, but he's as fit as a fiddle now. How's your knee, by the way?"

"All right, thanks. It gets sort of tired, though, if I use it much. So Dan's really going to play? The paper said—"

"Yes, we saw that. He's going to play all right, Thompson. By the way, do you know Burtis?"

"We used to see each other on the field a while back," responded Arthur, shaking hands. "There, they're going to start. I hope Gerald gets first place to-day. If he does they can't very well help making him captain for next year; they probably will anyway. They're off!"

The sharp report of the pistol rent the air, two lines of runners sprang away and the crowd closed in behind them.

"What I object to," said Ned, when the spectators had begun to stream off up the road toward the finish, a mile distant, "is that I've got to leave this comfortable seat and hit the dusty highway if I want to see the finish."

"You wouldn't mind it a bit," Kendall laughed, "if you had a golf ball in front of you."

"I expected to stay here," said Arthur. "You can get a pretty good idea of things at this point, you know, but if I thought Gerald wouldn't mind my running the car I'd go on up to the finish."

"Can you run it?" asked Ned eagerly.

"Yes, I can run it all right, but he might not like it."

"Not like it! He'd be tickled to death, Thompson. He said coming down that he wished I could take the car to the finish and get him there. He was going to telephone home and have the chauffeur come and do it, but he didn't have time. If you can run her, Thompson, do your worst."

"All right. Can you crank her for me? My knee's still sort of wobbly."

"I'm the original cranker," responded Ned, leaping out. "All right? Let her go!"

Chug, chug, chug, chug, chug, said the big car. And a minute later it was running softly along the road, Arthur at the wheel. It required some manipulation to get the car berthed near the finish line, for Broadwood and Yardley were there in force and resented yielding a foot of ground. Ned finally solved the problem by taking down the bars of a fence and Arthur "parked" the car in somebody's meadow.

There was still some time to wait, for the four-mile course was a fairly difficult one, one part of it, about three-quarters of a mile long, being over the fields. While they waited Arthur, in response to a question from Kendall, explained the conditions of the contest. There were, he said, ten runners on each team, of which the first eight to finish counted in the result. The first man over the line counted one point for his team, the second man two points, the third man three points, and so on, the team scoring the lowest total winning the race.

"There isn't much doubt but that we'll win," he said. "The main interest in the race lies in the struggle for first honors. Crossett of Broadwood, Gerald and Sherwood of our team, are out for those. I think Gerald ought to beat Crossett, but whether he can get away from Sherwood is another matter. Goodyear may show up better than he's been doing, too. He got first place last year. Hiltz may get into the front, too."

"That roommate of yours is running, isn't he?" asked Ned.

"Harry? Yes, he's in it, but I guess he isn't very fast yet. I ran myself last year, but I didn't finish; had a cramp. This year I went in for football instead. Guess I'd better have stayed with the Cross-Country Team; a cramp is better than a sprained knee."

"If Pennimore doesn't get the captaincy, who will?" asked Kendall.

"Holder, probably. He and Gerald are about the only Second Class fellows who have had any experience. Someone's coming now, I guess. Climb up, Tooker, and take a squint."

"Two of them," announced Ned, "about a quarter of a mile up the road."

Kendall sprang onto the seat beside him, and eventually Arthur too, forgetting his knee, got to his feet. Far up the road two figures in white shirts and trunks were trotting doggedly toward the finish. They appeared to be quite close together, but who they were was still uncertain. Finally the sunlight gleamed on a blue ribbon across the breast of the leader and the Yardley contingent sent up a shout of delight. Nearer and nearer they came, while three other runners appeared in sight in the distance. Finally,

"That's Gerald!" exclaimed Arthur with relief. "And that's Goodyear just behind him. First two for us! *Whoopee!*"

It was a gallant race to the line, but the younger boy had enough left in him to spurt just before the finish and win from his captain by a good ten or twelve yards. The two runners were surrounded by their shouting friends, and in a minute Gerald, weary but happy, was climbing into the car.

Crossett, of Broadwood, won third place from Hiltz and Sherwood, of Yardley, and then no more runners finished for several minutes. Finally two tired Broadwood youths trailed in, and Holder and Merrow fought for eighth place. Holder won, but young Merrow had run a plucky race and received such a hearty salvo of applause that he got embarrassed and quickly dodged into the crowd. A few minutes later Yardley's eighth man had finished and the score was known. It was a decisive victory for the Blue, 51 to 85, and Yardley set off for home, passing the last stragglers on the way, two Yardley and six Broadwood fellows. Gerald and Arthur sat on the front seat of the car going back, with Ned, Kendall, Harry Merrow and Goodyear behind. On the way up the hill Arthur leaned over and whispered in Gerald's ear:

"How does it sound, Gerald?"

"What?" asked the other.

"Why, 'Captain Pennimore'!"

"Shut up," growled Gerald sheepishly. "Besides, maybe I won't get it," he added.

"Don't you worry; you will!"

And a week afterwards he did.

As the car rolled past Oxford on the way around to the gymnasium Ned asked:

"What are you rubbering at, Curt?"

"I was looking at that man on the steps," responded Kendall. "Did you notice him, Ned? Do you know who he is?"

"That was Payson, you chump!"

"No, I mean the man with him. He looked like someone I—used—to know."

"I didn't notice him," replied Ned. "Some Old Grad back for the game, I suppose."

"All out!" shouted Gerald. "Far as the car goes!"

Honk! Honk! Honk! said the horn.

CHAPTER XXIV
KENDALL MEETS AN OLD FRIEND

Yardley	Broadwood
Vinton, l. e.	r. e., Bishop
Mitchell, l. t.	r. t., Scott
Ridge, l. g.	r. g., Stafford
Fogg, c.	c., O'Brien
Merriwell, r. g.	l. g., Smith
Stark, r. t.	l. t., Weldon
Norton, r. e.	l. e., Furniss
Simms, q. b.	q. b., Saunders
Roeder, l. h. b.	r. h. b., Reid
Stearns, r. h. b.	l. h. b., Raynor
Hammel, f. b.	f. b., Rhodes

Such a day as it was for the game! Quite perfect from the spectator's point of view; a little bit too warm, perhaps, judged by the player's standard; a day of days however you looked at it. The sky was blue overhead and faded to gray toward the horizon where an autumn haze brooded above the earth. The sun was gently warm, and the turf, which had retained much of its summer green in spite of frosts, was dry and springy underfoot. From the flagstaff over the grand stand the big blue flag with the vivid white Y hung lazily, for never a sign of a breeze stirred it. The stands were filled by the time the two teams trotted out to warm up for the fray, and the Greenburg Band, a cheerful blotch of scarlet in the midst of the somber-hued bank of spectators, was brazenly crashing out a two-step. Inside the ropes was a line of settees on which sat the substitutes, the members of the Second Team—little badges of blue ribbon adorning their coats—and other privileged persons. Andy Ryan, the little red-haired trainer, was there, and Paddy, the rubber, with a fine assortment of head guards and extra shoes and extra laces and electric tape and two big carboys of spring water and other necessary articles. In a big pile lay the blankets, with an extra football or two reposing beside them. Cowles, looking nervous and excited—it had been a hard and busy week for the manager—strode by with his big pad of paper in hand. Mr. Payson, talking to the stranger who had aroused Kendall's curiosity, came on and seated himself at the end of the row of benches. Then around the corner of the stand trotted the Broadwood team. Under or over the ropes they went, bunched themselves into two squads and set diligently to work. They looked a pretty good lot of fellows; big, happy, trained to the moment. From across the field came a mighty Broadwood cheer.

An instant later it was Yardley's turn to applaud, for some thirty blue-stockinged youths dribbled onto the turf, Dan leading, peeled off their sweaters and set to work. Only one boy was left out of the preliminary practice, and he pulled a blanket from the pile and seated himself on the bench. It was Arthur Thompson. Five minutes or so of signal work and punting, and then the officials sauntered on, one, a chubby little man in a faded purple-and-white sweater and a pair of stained flannel trousers, called the captains to him, a coin went

spinning up into the sunlight, three heads bent over it and all save the players who were to begin the game left the field. Payson and Dan conferred a moment and then the opposing armies fell into position. Broadwood had won the toss and Yardley had the ball.

"Ready, Broadwood? Ready, Yardley?"

The whistle piped merrily. Ridge stepped forward with two long strides, the ball sped away down the field, turning over and over in its flight, and the Yardley players leaped forward. The game was on.

Broadwood caught on her thirty-yard line and, with good protection for the runner, swept back to the forty. Her first play sought information. "How's your center?" asked Broadwood, hurling her full-back at Merriwell. "Quite well, thank you," replied Yardley, crumpling Rhodes up for a half-yard gain. Broadwood seemed to doubt it, however, for she tried Reid at the other side of center and gained two yards. Then she chose to kick and Rhodes sent the ball to the Blue's forty-four yard line on a poor punt. Stearns, however, was unable to gain after the catch and it was Yardley's ball on her forty-five yards.

Simms opened up brilliantly with the Yardley tackle shift and Roeder went clean through the Broadwood line for eight yards. Stearns slid by left tackle for three more and it was first down. Simms's try around the left end on the next play was killed and Ridge was called back to punt. The attempt was short and went out near the enemy's forty-five yards. Broadwood worked a double pass for four and a straight plunge on center for three. Then Rhodes punted again and Yardley was penalized for off-side. For the succeeding five minutes of the period the ball hovered between the forty-yard lines. The two teams appeared very evenly matched and seemed to entertain deep respect for each other. Finally, with the ball on her forty-seven yards, Yardley sent Stearns around right end on a fake kick play and that worthy young gentleman reeled off twelve yards before he was brought down. Encouraged by this and the wild cheers from the Yardley stand, the Blue set out to reach the goal.

Roeder cut loose for six yards and Hammel made it first down. A penalty for holding on the part of Broadwood still further cut down the distance. On Broadwood's thirty Simms brought his tackles together again on the shift and Roeder gained four through the Green's left wing. Stearns ran wide and dodged past the enemy for three. Hammel crashed out enough to make first down. But now, near her goal, Broadwood tightened. Roeder failed to gain, Hammel made three and Simms tried a forward pass to Dan. But Broadwood was watching and the pass was intercepted.

Broadwood kicked on first down and the ball went to Simms, who ran back over three white lines to Broadwood's thirty-five. Once more Roeder was brought into play. Five yards resulted, but on the next play he was hurled back for a loss. Simms tried an on-side kick which Norton recovered, but Broadwood stopped him on her eighteen-yard line. There Broadwood stood like a stone wall. Two attempts at the line netted four yards. Dan and Simms put their heads together, and then Norton fell back as though to try at goal with a drop-kick. But when the ball came back it went to Stearns, and he swept wide into the field, looking for an opening. Broadwood, however, was not fooled and after speeding almost the width of the field Stearns was tackled for no gain and Yardley had lost the ball. A groan went up from the Yardley stand as Simms turned and trotted back down the field. Broadwood kicked out of danger, Stearns caught near the middle of the field and the whistle blew.

The second period was almost a repetition of the first. Again Yardley, after marching from her forty yards, threatened Broadwood's goal, only to lose the ball on the twenty-one yard

line, this time by a fumble. Broadwood kicked at once. It seemed as though her policy was to play a purely defensive game through the first two periods, possibly in the hope of wearing down her opponent, and then strike hard. Fumbles and penalties came fast in that period, but Broadwood was at fault quite as often as Yardley. But the fumbles were not costly, although once Raynor, Broadwood's left half, started with a clear field ahead of him and the ball tucked under his arm. But both Dan and Mitchell gave chase and pulled him down from behind before he had covered ten yards. It was in the second that Broadwood tried her one forlorn attempt at a field goal. On Yardley's thirty yards, with two downs against her, Broadwood decided to score from placement. Captain Bishop dropped back, and, with the quarter holding the ball, kicked, while the stands held their breath. Bishop's direction was good but the ball fell far short of the goal and the danger was over. After that it was a see-saw between the two thirty yards, Yardley fighting savagely to score, Broadwood doggedly holding her back and punting whenever the ball was within her territory. Now and then one side or the other tried an end run, but never successfully in that period. Dan and the opposing captain fought a great battle at the ends of their respective lines, with honors about even. The period and the half ended with the ball in Broadwood's possession on Yardley's forty-six yards.

Yardley was a little disappointed and many expressions of the disappointment were heard on the seats as the two teams bundled themselves in their blankets and trotted off to the gymnasium. Yardley, it seemed, had done all the work and to no purpose, while Broadwood had played on the defensive and saved her strength. But Yardley answered defiantly to every Broadwood cheer that was hurled across the field, the band played heroically, the songs were sung and the minutes dragged along.

Huddled in amongst the Second Team members, Kendall had watched the contest with rapt enjoyment. Of course, being only human, he saw where Simms and Dan Vinton were making awful mistakes, and he wondered how Mr. Payson could idle along the side-line and look so calm and imperturbable. As he didn't know his neighbors on either side of him well enough to discuss the game with them, he was forced to keep his opinions and emotions bottled up inside. When the teams trotted off after the second period Mr. Payson went too, and the man whom Kendall had seen with him left the bench to stretch his legs and came walking up the line. He was about twenty-five, a big, good-looking, smiling man in a brown Norfolk suit, with a small bunch of bachelor's buttons on the lapel of his jacket. Kendall watched him approach with a sort of fascination. He was quite, quite certain that he had met the man and known him. Why, he even knew the tones of the man's voice! But who he was he couldn't for the very life of him remember! As he came near the man's eyes wandered along the benches, fell on Kendall, paused a moment and went on. But in the next instant they were back again, questioning, puzzling. Then Kendall did what was for him a very courageous thing. He bowed! As he did he felt the blood rushing into his cheeks and wished he hadn't. Suppose, after all, the man was a total stranger! But Kendall needn't have feared. The man's face broke into a smile of recognition and he strode straight over to the bench, tucking a cane under his arm and stretching out a gloved hand.

"Well, if it isn't Kendall!" exclaimed a deep, pleasant voice. "I didn't know you were here, my boy," he continued as they shook hands. "This your first year?"

"Yes, sir." Kendall was still in the dark and the man noticed it and laughed.

"You don't remember me after all, do you?" he laughed.

“I—I know that I know you,” stammered Kendall, “but—but—”

“Ever kick a football?” asked the other slyly.

“Mr. Dana!” cried Kendall. “Gee, I knew I knew you!”

CHAPTER XXV
"CHANGE SIGNALS!"

"You've got it right," said Mr. Dana. "Here, let's sit down; I want to talk to you." He looked toward the bench and one of the Second Team fellows got up politely and moved to another seat. "Now tell me all about it. This is your first year, eh? Well, do you like it? Was I wrong when I used to tell you to come to Yardley?"

"No, sir, I like it very much indeed."

"That's good. Getting on all right, are you?"

"Yes, sir."

"But, look here, Kendall— By the way, I can't recall your last name, my boy. Was it Benson?"

"Burtis, sir."

"Burtis, of course!" Mr. Dana slapped his knee. "And how are your folks, Burtis? Father and mother well, I hope? They're nice people. We had a bully summer up there that time."

"Yes, sir, thank you, they're all well."

"And the old spotted cow that chased me out of the barnyard one morning? How's she getting on?"

"She's gone," laughed Kendall. "We made beef of her."

"How are the mighty fallen!" said Mr. Dana. "Burtis, that cow was one of the few persons —or things—I was ever afraid of!" He noticed the blue badge on Kendall's coat and nodded at it. "What sort of a decoration is that? What noble deed have you performed to be allowed to wear that proud insignia?"

"It's just a badge to get inside the ropes, sir. I was playing football on the Second Team for a while."

"Second? Dear me, I thought you'd make the first and kick yourself to glory and fame, Burtis! Haven't forgotten all we taught you about punting and drop-kicking, have you?"

"No, sir. I—I've still got that ball."

"What ball is that?"

"The one you gave me when you left our place, sir."

"I'd forgotten about it, Burtis. You still have it, you say. It must be getting a pension now, eh? But, look here, why didn't you get taken on to the First Team, Burtis? If there was ever a team in need of a good punter, to say nothing of a drop-kicker, it's this one right here. Why, Payson told me not an hour ago that kicking was their weakest department."

"I—I did try, Mr. Dana, but I had—bad luck." And then Kendall told about his probation and how he had to give up football and how Dan Vinton had got him back onto the Second Team at the end of the season.

"Too bad." Mr. Dana shook his head. "That sort of thing doesn't pay, Burtis. Of course, I don't object to a fellow having his fun, but it's a mistake to get the Office down on you. See what it's cost in your case. If you hadn't got on probation you might have made the First and been out there now winning the game for us."

"Yes, sir, I know; but it wasn't really my fault. It—it was a sort of mistake."

"Was it?" Mr. Dana smiled. "Well, don't have too many of them. Mistakes are costly. Still kick pretty well, do you? We used to have great hopes of you at the farm, Burtis. Your legs seemed made for kicking a football and you seemed to get the hang of it remarkably well. Did you do the punting for the Second?"

"No, sir. I—I didn't play much, you see."

"Still, you might have kept in practice, Burtis," responded Mr. Dana with a slight frown. "Why didn't you?"

"I did practice a good deal. I used to come down here in the mornings between recitations for a while."

"That sounds more like the boy I used to know," said the other approvingly. "You used to have as much stick-at-it as any lad I ever met. Did you get so you could do your forty yards all right?"

"Yes, sir, and forty-five lots of times. I tried dropping goals a good deal, though. I did seven out of ten from the thirty-five yard line one day."

"That was from placement, of course. But even then it—"

"Oh, no, sir, that was drop-kicking. I've made placements from the forty, and once from the forty-three."

"What! Look here, Burtis, did anyone see you do it?"

"Why, no, sir. I was alone."

"And you mean to say that you can go out there and make a place-kick from, say, the thirty-five yards without trouble?"

Kendall looked doubtful. Mr. Dana's earnestness made him feel uneasy. "Why—why, I don't know, sir. I *could* do it, but I haven't kicked lately. I guess it would soon come back to me."

"But—why, look here, Burtis! Aren't you eligible for the team?"

"I suppose so, sir."

"Then—then I'm blest if I understand it," muttered Mr. Dana. "Payson must be crazy!" He looked around him. Then, he took a firm hold on Kendall's sleeve and pulled him to his feet. "You come with me," he commanded. Kendall, wondering, followed. Mr. Dana reached down and scooped up a football with one hand and ducked under the rope. Kendall went after. Curious glances followed them to the corner of the stand, but in the next moment they were forgotten, for the Yardley team came trotting out onto the field and the Yardley cheer leaders scuttled to their places and seized their big blue megaphones.

"Now, fellows! Regular cheer for the Team! And everyone get into it. Ready! One! Two! Thr—"

Then off bounced the discarded megaphones, arms waved and the stand rocked with the burst of sound that followed. Blue flags fluttered and tossed against the rising bank of shouting youths and down below the big drum *boom-boomed* an accompaniment. Oh, Yardley wasn't defeated yet, nor disheartened! The game was still to be won! So everybody into it! Make 'em hear you! Louder! Cheer, you fellows up there! *Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom!*

"Give 'em the Can-Can, fellows!" shouted a leader.

"*Who* can, can, can? *We* can, can, can! *Anybody* can, can beat old Broadwood! *Who* can, can, can? *We* can, can, can! *Anybody* can, can beat old Broadwood!"

But Broadwood's supporters were not idle. The deep, booming cheers of the Green thundered across from the opposite stand and it was not until the whistle had blown and the ball was in the air that comparative quiet fell.

Yardley had made one change in her line-up. Jensen had replaced Stark at right tackle. Broadwood held Yardley for two downs; took a penalty for off-side play and wrested the ball away almost in midfield. Then she began her real attack. Reid and Rhodes, the heavy artillery, crashed into and through the Blue line for short gains, and Raynor, lighter and first cousin to a streak of lightning, broke around tackle and past the wings for yards at a time. Broadwood's adherents shouted themselves hoarse with joy. Down past the thirty yards went the enemy, Yardley fighting stubbornly and contesting every foot of ground but yielding nevertheless. It was a terrific onslaught and Those Who Knew on the Yardley side looked grave. But down on the twenty-five the defense grew firmer, the gains shorter. The secondary defense, playing close up, stopped what leaked past the outer breastworks. A yard now; then two; then—

"Third down; seven to go!" cried the umpire.

Yardley stood up to a man on the boards and shouted imploringly: "*Hold* 'em! *Hold* 'em! *Hold* 'em!" And from across the trampled field came the frenzied cries of the enemy; "*Touchdown! Touchdown! Touchdown!*"

Broadwood meant to try a forward pass, but the ball went back badly, trickled away from the quarter and was pounced on by Fogg. How Yardley yelled when they saw the Green's quarter trot up the field with hanging head! Norton dropped back as if to kick, but Dan, running behind the line, took the ball at a toss from Simms and cut through between tackle and end. He was clean away before the play was solved, and then it was up to Saunders, the Green's quarter to prevent a score. But near the forty-yard line Dan swung sharply past him as he dived, shook off a detaining hand and streaked straight down the field and under the crossbar for a touchdown, a half-dozen Broadwood pursuers trailing behind!

What a pandemonium broke loose then on the Yardley stand! Caps flew into the air, the big drum boomed, flags darted and snapped! Beyond the rope two cheer leaders, clasped closely together, danced and cavorted, and the Second Team fellows were jumping around like maniacs. Near at hand, Mr. Payson strolling along the line, pulled his pipe from his pocket, filled it with steady fingers and took his first smoke that day. Even the fact that Hammel missed the goal failed to leaven the joy.

But Broadwood wasn't ready to acknowledge defeat. Back she went as savagely as ever, but Yardley seemed to have found herself now and, while she couldn't always stop the Green, she made the going much more difficult. Broadwood lost the ball presently on a

fumble and Yardley started back the way she had come. Simms was holding nothing back now. Every play he knew was called on. But the opponents were well blessed with that football sense that enables a team to "size up" a play even while it is getting under way, and few of Payson's pet tricks netted real gains. It was elemental football that won the most ground for Yardley, plays in which Roeder or Hammel banged, smashed and wormed themselves through the opposing line. Stearns, too, found his holes and did his best. Forty-eight yards went the Blue without a pause, just winning their distance time and again by inches only. Then came a mix-up of signals and Roeder was thrown heavily three yards behind his line.

It took him a minute or two to get his breath back and the Yardley supporters waited anxiously. But presently he was up again, shaking his head like a bulldog who has had the worst of a battle, and a wild shout of joy hurtled across to him. A forward pass, Simms to Norton, gained seven yards, and the whistle blew for the end of the quarter.

The ball was carried to the other end of the field and in a minute or two later they were at it again. It was Yardley's ball on Broadwood's seventeen-yard line and nothing, it seemed, could prevent a second score for the Blue. But something did. Something turned a decisive victory into a probable defeat. With four yards to go on second down, Roeder fumbled. Simms fell on the ball. It was third down and eight to go. Roeder plunged straight at right tackle, the line wavered and gave, cries and tumult filled the air. The whistle blew. Somewhere at the bottom of a pile of players lay the ball—and Tom Roeder. When they found the former it lacked a foot of being where it should have been for a first down, and when they found Tom they turned him over and held him quiet while the doctor ran onto the field. It was a blow on the head, or possibly a kick, and Tom was of no more use that day. He was borne off between two substitutes, his head lolling on his shoulder, the little doctor striding along briskly behind, while a great cheer went up for "*Roeder! Roeder! Roeder!*"

In sped Fayette to take his place. But Fortune had dealt hardly with the Blue. She had lost her best back and she had lost the ball on that play. Broadwood got through for six yards on a fake kick, gained two more around Norton's end and made her distance through Jensen. But on the next play she was thrown back, and, as the ball was still perilously close to her goal-line, Captain Bishop dropped back and got off a wonderful punt. Down went the Broadwood ends, with Dan and Norton blocking them off. Dan disposed of his man, Scott, right tackle, but Furniss got away from Norton and by the time Simms was under the ball Furniss was ready for Simms. Bishop, meanwhile, had followed his kick very closely, and when the ball descended into Simms's arms Furniss tackled savagely. The pigskin bounded away. Dan and Bishop both made for it, but Bishop was nearer. The Broadwood captain took it on the bound, squirmed past Dan, and streaked for the goal-line, thirty yards away. It was a close race, and had the distance been forty yards instead of thirty Dan would have brought down his quarry. But as it was Bishop plunged over the last white mark just before Dan's arms wrapped themselves about him, and the score was tied!

It was Broadwood's moment and she made the most of it. She had no band to help her, but she didn't need it! And while the wild cheers were still thundering out, the Yardley players drew up in line under the crossbar, Simms with tears streaming down his tired face, and Bishop himself directed the canting of the ball held by Saunders.

A strange stillness settled over the field. If Bishop kicked the goal—and it was not a difficult one—it would probably spell a Broadwood victory, for the last quarter was fully

half over. There were plenty of white faces on the Yardley stand just then and more than one fellow, his clenched hands thrust into his pockets, settled back into his seat and refused to look.

Very leisurely, Bishop, still fighting for breath after his run, directed Saunders. Finally he stepped back, hitched his trousers at the waist, cast a glance at the goal, and—kicked.

Up went the ball, straight for the bar. One brief instant of suspense, and then—bedlam on the Broadwood side and deep gloom across the field! On the score board Broadwood's 5 changed to a 6.

"How much time?" cried Simms as the teams trotted back to their places. The timer held up one outstretched hand and two fingers of the other.

"Seven minutes, Dan," panted Simms. "There's time to kill 'em yet."

"All right! Hard into it, fellows!" cried Dan.

Mr. Payson sent in Sayer for Norton and Plant for Mitchell, and the game went on. Broadwood resumed the defensive now. Yardley got the ball as far as the Green's thirty-eight yards only to lose it on downs, and Broadwood promptly booted the leather far up the field again. Simms got away for a twenty-yard run once, and Fayette, who, if he was not Roeder's equal, was fresh and untired and eager, pulled off a wonderful plunge through the left of the Green's line and squirmed and pulled himself—and three opponents—along for twelve yards! Hammel pounded the line for gains and Stearns knifed himself through for a yard or two at a time. Then came a fumble by Fayette and a Broadwood player pounced on the ball. Once more Broadwood kicked. Stearns caught the punt on the run, the interference formed about him, and he came pounding back for nearly twenty yards.

Again Yardley took up the journey, but the time was growing perilously short. Past the middle of the field she worked; Hammel; Fayette; Stearns; then Hammel again. Finally an end run by Simms that laid the pigskin on the thirty-five-yard line. A plunge by Fayette netted a scant yard and Stearns tried a skin-tackle play and made six. But he was hurt and Greene took his place. Broadwood seized the opportunity to put three fresh men into her line. Greene was given the ball on the next play and tore off three yards, making it first down again. Only two minutes and a half remained. Simms, hoarse, almost staggering, called signals, changed them and then looked appealingly at Dan.

"It's all right!" yelled Dan savagely. "Go ahead!"

But it wasn't all right. Fayette should have had the ball, and Fayette wasn't there. Simms was still clutching it when the Broadwood left guard hurled himself through and slammed Simms to earth. Simms gave up then for a minute. Ryan came on with the pail and the big sponge, and Dan and Ridge talked together while the quarter struggled for his breath.

"We'd better have Holmes, hadn't we?" asked Ridge through two swollen lips.

Dan shook his head, looking doubtfully at the side-line.

"No, Simms can do it if it can be done. Why, oh, why, Hal, haven't we a fellow who can kick that ball over from here? I'd try it myself if there was a ghost of a chance. Even Norton's off now, and he's about the only one—"

He broke off and hurried over to Simms. The quarter was on his feet and staring rather dazedly around him.

“What’s the down, Dan?” he whispered huskily.

“Second; twelve to gain. Come back here.” He led him away. “What do you think? Forward pass? Or Number 24? Or shall we try to smash it out, Al?”

“Smashing’s—no good—now,” panted Simms. “Roeder’s the only fellow—who could get us by. Better try a forward, Dan; it’s the only chance. Isn’t it? What else can we do, Dan? There’s only a couple of minutes more, and it’s second down. Gee, Dan, I don’t want to lose this game!” Simms was almost whimpering now.

“Cut out the weeps,” said Dan brutally. “Brace up, Al. Try a forward. Give it to me and I’ll get through with it somehow!”

Simms dug a dirty knuckle into one eye, took a long breath and said quietly: “All right, Cap. We’ll get ’em yet!”

“Hurry up,” said the referee impatiently.

“You’ve got two minutes more,” cried the timer, running up, watch in hand.

“All right here,” said Dan. “Now, fellows, get into this and make it go! You’ve got to do it! They’re half dead already! They can’t stop you! They can’t stop you! Look at them! They’re beaten now and they know it!”

“We’d be dead for sure if bluff counted,” growled Bishop, as he edged along in front of Dan.

The whistle blew.

Simms laid his hand on Fogg’s back and raised his voice huskily: “Twenty-seven—twenty-one—fifteen—thirty-three—”

“Hold on!” cried Greene. “Here’s a sub coming!”

Simms straightened up again. Onto the field raced a youth in a pair of long gray trousers and a blue sweater.

“What’s the matter?” cried Dan impatiently. Simms nodded.

“Substitute for right half, sir!” cried the newcomer.

“Who the dickens—” began Greene in disgust as he tore off his headgear. Dan hurried back, frowning.

“Here, who sent you on?”

“Mr. Payson.”

“Hurry up, please!” cried the referee.

But Dan and Simms and the newcomer were whispering together and paid no heed.

“I’ll penalize you for delay if you don’t start,” threatened the referee.

“All right, fellows!” cried Dan, springing back to his place, and,

“*Change signals!*” shouted Simms.

CHAPTER XXVI
KENDALL MAKES THE FIRST

As Mr. Dana, followed by Kendall, had gone around the end of the stand the Yardley players had come crowding past. Behind them, talking to Dan, was Mr. Payson, and the coach, observing the football in Mr. Dana's hand, had stopped a moment.

"You'll be lame to-morrow if you do," he said with a smile.

"Not me," replied Mr. Dana; "I know better. I'm going to try to solve a mystery, Payson."

The coach nodded and went on, and Mr. Dana and Kendall skirted the back of the stand until they reached the edge of the links. Then Mr. Dana turned to Kendall.

"Now pull your coat and vest off, turn up your trousers and show me, Burtis!"

"Kick it, sir?" asked Kendall wonderingly.

"Kick the stuffing out of it! See how near you can come to putting it over there by that red flag."

Kendall threw aside coat and vest, took a good reef in his precious gray trousers at the bottoms and took the ball. "Drop-kick, sir?" he asked.

"Yes."

Kendall poised the ball in his hands, judged distance and direction, took a step, dropped the pigskin and met it fairly with his toe. It was a fairly good kick, the ball traveling some thirty-five yards or more before it struck, but it landed twenty or thirty feet away from the flag. He turned apologetically to Mr. Dana.

"That wasn't very good, but you see I haven't kicked for two or three weeks. Shall I try it again?"

"Yes, try a placement."

Mr. Dana led the way with long strides to where the ball lay and picked it up. "I'll hold it for you," he said. "Make it straight and goal-high, Burtis. Suppose you were kicking from the thirty yards." Mr. Dana dropped his cane, tossed his hat beside it and stretched himself out on the turf. Then with the ball lengthwise between his hands he waited directions.

"I—I never had anyone hold it for me," said Kendall dubiously. "Will you put it more that way, please?"

"How's that?"

"All right, I guess." Kendall stepped forward, swung and the ball shot away, turning on its shortened axis, straight and true. Mr. Dana, poised on one knee, watched. Had there been a crossbar within thirty-five yards that ball would have gone over it with room to spare. Mr. Dana arose, brushed his knees and elbows lightly and shook his head. Kendall saw and was humble.

"It's awfully hard to judge, Mr. Dana, when there aren't any lines to go by. I'll try again, if you like."

Mr. Dana eyed him thoughtfully. Finally,

"I'll tell you frankly, Burtis, that your form is miserable, but that's something that can be easily mended. If you swung freer from your hip, kept your knee locked tightly, you'd get another ten yards, I believe. But I'm not finding any fault, my boy. I used to be a pretty good kicker in my day, but I couldn't have equaled that last one before my freshman year in college. Let's try a couple more if you're not tired."

"I'm not tired at all," Kendall answered, trying to hide the pleasure he felt, "but I'm a little stiff yet."

"All right; we'll get rid of some of that stiffness."

Ten minutes later Mr. Dana, satisfied, told Kendall to get his coat and vest. Then they went back to the field. On the way Mr. Dana said: "Burtis, I ought to apologize to you. When you told me you'd done seven out of ten from the thirty-five-yard line I—well, frankly, I thought you were spreading it a bit thick. After what you've shown me, though, I don't doubt it. The one thing I don't understand is why Payson hasn't had you in training. Well, I wonder how the fortunes of war are going. You go back to your bench, Burtis, and have a rest. I want to see Payson."

He found the coach down opposite the play, crouching low and pulling gently on a pipe that had long since gone out. Broadwood had kicked her goal and Yardley had the ball near the Green's forty yards. Mr. Payson looked up as the other knelt beside him.

"Hello," he said. "Have you noticed that quarter-back of theirs, Dana? He's going to make the All-American some day if he keeps on the way he's started."

"That so? I hadn't noticed him especially." Yardley lost the ball on downs and Broadwood punted. "Think we can do the trick, Payson?"

"I doubt it. Our fellows are getting pretty tired. Watch this now. Simms has got it." The little quarter-back skirted the end and made his twenty-yard gain, while the stand behind them shrieked wildly. Then Fayette got through for twelve, and the coach took his pipe from his mouth, tapped the ashes out carefully and replaced it between his teeth. Mr. Dana, watching sympathetically, smiled. He knew pretty well how the coach was feeling just then, for he had been through it himself.

A minute or two later came Fayette's fumble, Broadwood's punt and Stearns's clever run after the catch.

"Time must be getting short," said Mr. Dana. The coach nodded.

"I guess so. Not more than five or six minutes, I suppose. A clean forward pass might help now."

But Simms was using his backs and Broadwood was steadily losing ground. Then came Simms's run around the left end of the line and the ball lay on the thirty-five yards. Seven more by plunges, and time out for Stearns. Mr. Payson looked, walked up the line and called "Greene! Hurry up!" When the substitute ran up to him he only said: "All right. Send Stearns out. You know what to do. Tell Simms to plug away."

"Wouldn't it be a good idea to try a field goal?" asked Mr. Dana. "There can't be more than a couple of minutes left."

“Haven’t a man who could come within twenty feet of the bar,” replied Mr. Payson shortly.

“Not out there you haven’t,” said Mr. Dana. “But there’s a chap back there on the bench who could probably do it for you.”

Mr. Payson turned with a frown. “Who do you mean?” he asked.

“Burtis, of the Second.”

“Never heard of him. Someone’s been stringing you. Three fresh men for Broadwood, eh?” He puffed hard at his empty pipe. The whistle blew and the lines crouched again.

“No, I know what I’m talking about,” continued Mr. Dana quietly. “He’s sort of a protégé of mine. I’ve just had him back of the stand and he made two or three drops and placements of anywhere from thirty-five to forty-five, Payson.”

“What! Are you crazy, Dana?”

“No.”

The coach took his eyes from the scrimmage for one short moment. “Bring him here,” he said curtly.

Mr. Dana hurried back to the center of the field, his gaze searching the benches for Kendall. But Kendall was not to be seen.

“I’m looking for Burtis,” he said anxiously to some of the substitutes. “The coach wants him.”

The fellows shook their heads. “Don’t know him, sir. What’s he like?” asked one, eager to assist.

“He was on the Second,” replied Mr. Dana impatiently.

The boy who had spoken hurried down to where the Second Team men sat. “Any of you fellows know who Burtis is?” he demanded.

“Burtis! Yes, he was here a while ago. Want him?”

“He went up into the stand about five minutes ago,” volunteered another. He stood up and turned toward the crowd beyond the rope. “Burtis!” he bellowed at the top of his lungs. “Burtis wanted!”

In the middle of the stand a boy arose uncertainly and looked down. Mr. Dana saw him and beckoned impatiently. And when Kendall had wormed his way to the bottom he was over the rope and was pulling him along.

“Payson wants you,” he said. “Here, pull off that coat and vest. Who’s got a sweater to loan?” Several of the substitutes jumped to their feet.

“Take this, sir!”

“Thanks!” Mr. Dana selected one and tossed it to Kendall. “Get into it,” he said quickly. “Look after these things, somebody.” He tossed Kendall’s beloved gray coat and vest helter-skelter in the direction of the bench. “Come on,” he said.

Simms had just been buried under the big form of the Broadwood left guard when they reached Mr. Payson.

"Here's your man, Payson," announced Mr. Dana.

The coach took his eyes from the inert form of Simms for a moment and looked Kendall up and down.

"Dana says you can kick," he said inquiringly.

"Yes, sir, some."

"Were you on the Second?"

"Yes, sir, for awhile."

"Think you could go in there now and put that ball over the goal for us?"

Kendall looked and shook his head slowly.

"I—I don't believe so, sir," he faltered.

Mr. Payson shrugged his shoulders and glanced at Mr. Dana.

"Thought so," he said.

"Wait a minute," said Mr. Dana as the coach turned his attention to the field again. "What do you mean, Kendall?" he asked sternly. "The ball's on the twenty-eight yards. That's not a hard kick."

"No, sir, only I—I've never tried to kick in a real game, and—"

"You're afraid!" sneered Mr. Dana. "I thought you had some spunk!" Kendall colored and stared miserably before him. "Do you mean that you'd rather see Broadwood win than go out there and try to make an easy goal like that!"

"No, sir," replied Kendall. "I'll try."

Mr. Dana looked at the coach. Mr. Payson hesitated for a moment. Then he took his pipe from his month and dropped it into his pocket.

"All right," he said. "Go in there, send Greene out and tell Simms I say you're to kick a goal. And you *do* it, do you hear?"

"I'll try, sir," replied Kendall.

"Report to the referee first, Burtis," said Mr. Dana, clapping him on the back. "And just forget that there's anyone near you. Make believe you're kicking just to show me what you can do, my boy. Never mind what's ahead of you. Watch the ball and boost it a good one!"

And Kendall, very frightened, ran onto the field.

"*Change signals!*" cried Simms. "*Kick formation!*"

Kendall stepped back slowly, measuring the distance, and dug his heel in the turf. Simms scuttled back and dropped to the ground.

"Hold hard now!" cried Dan.

There was a great silence. The stands held their breath and even the players settled into quiet. Only the sound of their labored breathing came to Kendall as he dropped further back.

"Thirty-one! Sixty-four!" cried Simms. "Seventeen! Eight—"

Back came the ball to his hands. He turned it end up, canted it a trifle, settled it to earth. Kendall stepped forward. He had forgotten that the enemy, desperate and determined, were waiting to throw themselves upon him. He only saw the ball and, dimly, the whitewashed posts straight ahead. The lines broke. Broadwood came rushing through. Canvas rasped against canvas. Inarticulate cries filled the air. Kendall's toe met the ball squarely below the lacing. Somebody plunged against him and he went over backward.

But the ball went true, safe over the upstretched hands of the leaping Broadwood forwards, straight up and up, turning leisurely in its flight, over the crossbar!

Later, when Kendall, somewhat dazed, sat again on the bench with a dozen fellows questioning and laughing about him, the game paused a moment and Arthur Thompson, throwing off his blanket and sweater, limped onto the field to play the final thirty seconds and win his Y.

And then it was all over, and Yardley, triumphant, dizzy with joy, cavorted over the battleground and tossed hats and caps over the crossbars, while the Greenburg Band thumped out a brazen march of victory!

THE END

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Except for the frontispiece, illustrations have been moved to follow the text that they illustrate, so the page number of the illustration may not match the page number in the List of Illustrations.

Printer's, punctuation and spelling inaccuracies were silently corrected.

Archaic and variable spelling has been preserved.

Variations in hyphenation and compound words have been preserved.

[The end of *Change Signals* by Ralph Henry Barbour]