

AROUND
THE END
BARBOUR

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RALPH HENRY BARBOUR



APPLETONS

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AROUND THE END

BY RALPH HENRY BARBOUR.

Around the End.
The Junior Trophy.
Change Signals!
For Yardley.
Finkler's Field.
Winning His "Y."
The New Boy at Hilltop.
Double Play.
Forward Pass!
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.



[“To the right, off the port bow of the launch, a hulking shadow took shape.”](#)

AROUND THE END



By

RALPH HENRY BARBOUR

AUTHOR OF "THE HALF-BACK," "CHANGE SIGNALS," "FORWARD PASS," ETC.



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1913

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AROUND THE END

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST SCRIMMAGE

“This way, everyone!”

Coach Payson sent the call to each end of the field and then, swinging his small blue megaphone in his hand, waited for the panting players to gather about him in front of the bench. They came running in from all parts of the gridiron, a motley gathering of football aspirants; seasoned veterans of last year's Yardley Varsity, Second Team men, substitutes, new boys; big, little, fat, thin, all sizes and conditions. Andy Ryan, the little red-haired trainer, stood over his pile of blankets and his water pail, back of the side-line, and viewed the sixty-odd candidates with a pessimistic shake of his head. John Payson, turning at the moment, saw it and smiled.

“What's the matter, Andy? Don't they look good?” he asked.

“I've seen some funny bunches in my day,” replied the trainer, “but never anything like them!”

“That's what you say every year,” scoffed Payson good-naturedly. “I guess this lot will average about the same.” He turned to the breathless fellows gathering about him and pulled a little red book from his pocket. “All right, now. First scrimmage to-day, fellows. First squad: Cousins, Plant, Fales, Girard, Merriwell, Stark, Metz, Holmes, Greene, Fayette, Marion. Second squad: Fox, Steger, Keene, Johnson, McKesson, Fenwick, Adler, Simms, Crandall, Burtis, Brinspool. First squad take the south goal and kick off to the second. Men not playing get into blankets. On the run now. We'll have two ten-minute periods. Get a couple of fellows to take the chains, will you, Andy?”

The two teams trotted to their positions, Andy tossed a horn to Davis, the manager, and summoned two blue-blanketed figures from the bench to act as linesmen, and in a moment the ball was hurtling from Merriwell's toe.

Behind the benches, scattered over the grand stand, a hundred or more watchers who, during the preliminary practice, had lolled comfortably on the sunny seats, sat up and gave their attention to the scrimmage. Simms gathered in the long kick and, behind a quickly-formed interference, ran the ball back a good twenty yards before the first squad smothered him. Murmurs of applause arose from the audience.

"That was a dandy run, wasn't it?" observed Harry Merrow, who, seated beside Gerald Pennimore halfway up the stand, was eating peanuts as though his life depended on it. Gerald nodded.

"I wonder why Payson put Simms on the second and Holmes on the first," he said. "Holmes only got into the Broadwood game last year for a few minutes at the end."

"He played all through the Nordham game, though, didn't he? I think he's every bit as good as Simms."

"He's just as good a player maybe, Harry, but he isn't half the general Al is. I see Burtis is playing right half on the second. I wonder if he will make the team this year. Of course he will get into the games now and then if only to kick goals, but I guess he's got a lot of football to learn yet."

"Gee, they ought to make him a present of his position on the First Team," responded Harry, flicking a peanut shell at a group of boys below. "Any fellow who will go into a Broadwood game without any experience and win for us by a goal from the field ought to have anything he wants."

"Well, I guess Payson will take him on all right. I hope so. I like Burtis. Do you know him?"

“I met him once in your room last Spring. It was the day of the baseball game with Broadwood. He seemed a quiet sort of chap.”

“Yes, he’s a bit shy at first,” Gerald chuckled, and then, in response to his friend’s look of inquiry, continued: “I’ll never forget the night last year he came into our room and told Dan quite seriously that he ‘would like to play on the football team, please.’ Harold Towne put him up to it. Burtis was a pretty green lad then.”

“Towne always was a pup,” remarked Harry cheerfully. “There he goes now!”

“Who? Towne?”

“Burtis; he’s got the ball. Made a peach of a catch and— Oh, good work, Burtis! Gee, Gerald, he must have made fifteen easily. Say, he can run with the ball, can’t he? Did you see him slip away from Fayette?”

“Yes. I wouldn’t be surprised if he made good this year. Goodness knows we need a couple of half-backs! We’re going to miss Tom Roeder and Stearns and Hammel like anything.”

“We’re going to miss a whole lot of fellows. We’ll never have an end as good as Dan Vinton, nor a guard like Ridge. Did you hear Payson say at the meeting the other night that only once before since he’s been coaching have we had so few veterans to build the team around?”

“Yes. So, too, I guess. Simms and Merriwell are really the only members of last year’s team we have; Holmes was more of a second-string man than anything else. Still, there’s good material out there; Marion for full, Stark for tackle, two good quarters, Fayette and Crandall and Greene for halves; we’ll get along, I guess.”

“I wonder what sort of a captain Merriwell will make,” mused Harry. “He’s a good player, but——”

“And a good fellow, and well liked, don’t you think? I don’t believe he’s the leader that Dan was, though.”

“I should say not! You must miss Dan a whole lot, Gerald.”

“It’s something fierce! Lonely’s no name for it! I had a letter from him yesterday. He’s out for the Yale Freshman Team, of course.”

“I dare say they’ll make him captain,” asserted Harry loyally.

But Gerald shook his head. “Not much chance of that, I guess. They made Alf Loring captain last year, and it isn’t likely they’d give the captaincy to Yardley fellows two years running. First’s going to score, Harry. Who’s playing center for them? Girard? He’s a whopping big brute, isn’t he? Pshaw! He’d better learn to pass back better than that. Blocked! *Ball, you idiots!* Who’s got it! First, I think. No, second. Who? Burtis? It does look like him, but—no, it’s—It *is* Burtis, for a fact! How the dickens did he manage to get around that end? If he doesn’t watch out Payson will have him on the First Team.”

“Then he’s not likely to watch out,” laughed Harry. “Time’s up.”

They watched the players return to the bench and don their blankets while Andy ladled out the water sparingly. Payson studied his memorandum book, talking the while with Percy Davis, the manager. Captain Merriwell, trailing his blanket behind him, joined them. Then the coach turned to the line of players.

“All right, Plant, Girard, Stark, Marion, Steger, Johnson, McKesson, Fenwick and Brinspool,” he called. “Once around the field on the trot and run in. And don’t forget to weigh.”

Nine blankets were tossed aside and the released players started their jog around the side-lines. Mr. Payson filled their places in the line-up, and a few minutes later the second half of the scrimmage began. Up on the stand, Harry Merrow, having finished the last of the peanuts, blew up the bag and demolished it with a loud report that made the audience jump in their seats. When his amusement had subsided he turned to Gerald again.

“I wish I’d gone in for football,” he sighed.

“You’re too light, you silly chump,” replied Gerald. “Besides, you can’t do cross-country work and play football. That’s what kept me out of football; that and the fact that Dan wouldn’t let me on!”

“When are we going to start work?” asked Harry.

“In about two weeks. Andy wants the weather to get a bit colder. Where did you finish last year? Eighth, wasn’t it?”

“Ninth. Holder beat me out at the line. We ought to have an easy time with Broadwood this year, Gerald. Most of their best men last year were seniors.”

“I hope not. I don’t want any runaway race. There’s no fun in that. Look, second’s going to try a goal from field. There goes Burtis back. I hope he makes it.”

“Where is it? About the twenty yards? He ought to make it, if they don’t get through on him. There it goes! Over, wasn’t it?”

“I think so, but it was pretty far to the left. Yes, it’s a goal. That chap’s playing half the game for the second squad to-day. I’ll bet they’ll have him in the first to-morrow.”

“I’ll bet they won’t.”

“Why?”

“Because to-morrow’s Sunday,” replied Harry with a chuckle. Gerald pulled Harry’s cap over his face, rumped his hair and ran an elbow into his ribs.

“You’re a smart little joker, aren’t you?” he laughed. “Sit up and watch the kick-off; and behave yourself; or, as Ned Tooker used to say, hebave yourself.”

“He was a silly ass,” said Harry, smoothing his hair and adjusting his cap.

“Ned? Don’t you believe it, Harry. He was a dandy, Ned was. I’ll bet he has a better time than any other three fellows I know. That’s a punk kick-off. Fenwick’s got it. Go it, you slowpoke! They’ve got

him. He ran the wrong way, the chump. Funny how easy it is to play the game from the grand stand, Harry.”

“Yes, I guess you and I would do some brilliant little stunts if we had to go out there,” agreed Harry, nodding his head toward the field. “If I had the ball and one of those big chaps like Girard came at me I’d drop it like a hot potato and never stop running until I was in 20 Whitson with the door locked behind me! Oh, I’d be a brave little football player!”

“Every man to his trade,” laughed Gerald. “Your trade—and mine—is running, Harry.”

“That’s so. Then I guess I’d get to my room ahead of Girard, wouldn’t I? Hello, time’s up. Let’s get back. I’m getting goose-flesh all over me. It certainly gets cold when the sun quits business. Did you have a good time this summer?”

“Dandy! Dad and I went across for two months; England, France, Switzerland, Holland, Germany and a little bit of Italy. It was great.”

“It must have been,” sighed Harry. “Wish *my* father owned all the steamship lines in the world! I spent the summer down on the Jersey coast with the mosquitoes. Had a good time, though. Used to get into my bathing suit at eleven and keep it on until ’most dinner time. You ought to see my back. It’s like—like mahogany.”

“Your face is bad enough. I didn’t know you that day you yelled to me from the window. Thought you were a colored gentleman!”

They made their way down the stand and on to the field. Ahead of them the players, their blankets flapping grotesquely behind them, were racing up the path toward the gymnasium. Two or three, however, still lingered where coach, manager and trainer were in consultation. As Gerald and Harry reached the end of the field, one of these passed them at a trot, turned to look and stopped.

“Hello, Pennimore,” he said. “I guess you remember me, don’t you?”

“Of course I do, Burtis. Glad to see you again. How are you?”
They shook hands. “You know Merrow?”

“I—think so. We met last year, didn’t we?” asked Kendall Burtis, as he shook hands again. Harry said yes, and Gerald asked:

“Are you in Clarke again this year, Burtis?”

“Yes, same place. I’m alone so far. My roommate, Towne, hasn’t shown up yet.”

“That so? What’s the matter with him?” asked Gerald as they went on.

“I don’t know. I asked at the Office the other day and the secretary there said they were expecting him.”

“It would be a terrible loss to the school if he didn’t come back,” observed Gerald gravely. Kendall shot a glance at him and smiled.

“Hope he stays away,” said Harry. “You played some football today, Burtis.”

“Much obliged. I had pretty good luck.”

“Luck didn’t kick that goal, did it?” laughed Gerald.

“Well, there’s always a lot of luck in trying for goal,” replied Kendall seriously. “Sometimes, just when you’re getting the ball away something happens, like a forward breaking through, and you get sort of rattled. Then there’s the pass, too. If that doesn’t come right you’re likely to miss. There’s a lot of luck in it. Well, I must be getting on. Glad to have seen you again, Pennimore. You, too, Merrow.”

“Thanks. What are you doing this evening, Burtis? Mind if I drop in for a minute?”

“I wish you would. I haven’t anything to do. I—I’ll look for you.” He nodded and trotted ahead.

“Funny about him,” mused Harry. “He’s as homely as a mud-fence until he smiles, and then blessed if he isn’t almost good-looking! What do you know about that, old Gerald?”

CHAPTER II

THE RABBIT AND THE DUKE

Harry Merrow's remark was quite true, true in what it said and in what it implied. When he smiled Kendall Burtis was a different looking chap entirely, but he didn't often smile, and when he didn't it was no exaggeration to call him homely. He was sixteen years of age, of average height, with a figure that seemed to have more than the usual allowance of corners. He had the rugged appearance of a boy who has lived out of doors, and worked there, too. He had ashy-brown hair, dark gray eyes, a nose which was almost a pug, and a broad mouth. Add plenty of brown freckles to a face well tanned, and you have a fair idea of Kendall's physiognomy. But the mouth was kindly, the nose suggested a sense of humor, and the gray eyes were clear and honest, and somehow, in spite of its homeliness, the face was attractive.

He sat at the table in 21 Clarke Hall after supper that evening, with his books open before him and a lead pencil protruding from a corner of his mouth. And as he coned his lesson, muttering to himself at times, the pencil wobbled about ludicrously. The room was on the second floor and at the back of the building. It was plainly furnished and had a somewhat threadbare look. What few pictures adorned the walls were mostly on one side of the room, the side sacred to the roommate who had not yet returned.

There was a knock on the door and in response to Kendall's invitation Gerald Pennimore entered. "You know you said I might call, Burtis," he announced, "but if you're busy——"

"I'm not, Pennimore. I was just having a go at Latin. Sit down, won't you?" And Kendall arose and pushed forward a chair with eager shyness. "This is Harold's; I don't own anything as comfortable."

Gerald seated himself in the Morris chair and looked about him. He was a decided contrast to his host. Rather tall, slim and lithe, with a graceful carriage and easy manners, fair-haired, blue-eyed, eager and alert, he was quite different from the almost delicate youngster who had entered Yardley Hall School three years before. To-day, in his senior year, he was Class President, captain of the Cross-Country Team, a valuable member of the Track Team, a hockey player of some ability and a power in the school. In age he was a year older than Kendall.

“Towne hasn’t shown up yet?” he asked.

“Not yet. They say at the Office that he is expected, but I have a notion he isn’t coming back.”

“You’ll be heart-broken about it, of course,” said Gerald, sympathetically. But there was a smile in his blue eyes.

Kendall looked across gravely. “Well, I got sort of used to him,” he answered. “Maybe they’d put some other fellow in I wouldn’t get along with as well. I suppose you miss Vinton a good deal, Pennimore. He was an awfully fine chap, wasn’t he?”

“Yes. Yes, I miss him a lot. You see, we were together three years here in school and we spent some of our vacations together, too. I’ve traveled with older fellows ever since I came here and now they’re about all gone. I suppose it’s a mistake not to pick your friends from your own class, but I couldn’t very well help myself. I had rather a hard time of it when I first struck this place.” Gerald smiled reminiscently. “You see, Burtis, I was handicapped by having a father so wealthy that everyone knew about him. Then, too, I’ve lived in the summer right here within a mile of the school. So when I came a lot of the fellows were down on me. They used to call me ‘Miss Nancy’ and ‘Money-bags’ and things like that, and I was pretty miserable for a while. If it hadn’t been for Dan and two or three other fellows, fellows like Alf Loring and Tom Dyer, I’d have given it up, I guess. Well, I’m glad I didn’t. How are the

football prospects this year, Burtis? Are we going to do the usual thing to Broadwood?”

“I don’t know much about them. I hear that we’ve only got two or three first-string men left from last year, though.”

“Yes, but we’ve got a lot of good subs and fellows from last year’s Second. I suppose you’re fairly certain of a place, Burtis.”

“I don’t know,” replied Kendall slowly. “I haven’t had much experience, you see.”

“Experience! Great Scott, you had experience enough to go in in the last minute and land a goal from the forty-yard line!”

“That wasn’t hard. You see, Fogg made a fine pass and Simms aimed the ball just right, and all I had to do was kick it.”

“Yes, with the whole crazy Broadwood team charging through on you like a lot of madmen! Sure, it was dead easy—I don’t think!” Gerald laughed. “I saw you to-day, too, Burtis, and all I’ve got to say is that if you can kick as well as you did last year and run as well as you did to-day they’ll have an awfully hard time keeping you off the First Team! Of course, I’m not a football player—never had time for it except with a scrub team one year—but you can’t live with a fellow who has football on the brain for three years without getting the critical eye. And I’m going to tell you something that Dan said last Spring. Maybe I oughtn’t to, but I guess you’re not the sort to get a swelled head. Dan said, ‘That fellow Burtis is a born football player, and if he had got started earlier he’d have most of us looking like amateurs. They’ll make him captain before he gets through, see if they don’t!’”

Kendall colored with pleasure and embarrassment. “That’s—that’s awfully kind of Vinton,” he murmured, “but—but I guess he was mistaken——”

“Yes, he was always making mistakes about football things,” replied Gerald dryly. “Dan is stupid like a fox. Anyway, I hope he’s right, Burtis.”

“Thank you. Maybe if I had gone to a school where they played football before I came here I’d know more about it. There’s—there’s a lot to learn, you see.”

“You’ll learn it,” affirmed Gerald heartily. “Well, you’ve got studying to do and I guess a little of it won’t hurt me any, so I’ll run along. Hold on, though! I very nearly forgot what I came for. I applied for a room in Dudley last Spring; you know, I guess, that Seniors have the privilege of rooming there if they want to; and I got my room—Number 14; I was to share it with a fellow named Kirk.”

“George Kirk? Captain of the Golf Team? I know him.”

“That’s the fellow. I’ve nothing against Kirk; rather like him, in fact; what I know of him, which isn’t very much; but afterwards I sort of hated the idea of giving up my old room here, and when I got back the other day and saw it I hiked around to the Office and begged Mr. Forisher to let me keep it. He kicked a lot, but finally said I might. Seems he had a couple of fellows down for it and had to switch them somewhere else. So, as it is, I’m alone in 28. Now, what I was going to suggest was this—why—hello!”

Gerald stopped and listened. In the hall above there was a slamming of doors and a scurry of feet. “They’d better cut that before they get downstairs or Collins will nab them!” The clamor increased. Through the partly open door they could hear someone taking the stairs at bounds, while above there was the clamor as of a pursuing mob. The quarry, whoever he was, reached the bottom of the flight with a final jump, and then, in a twinkling, the room door crashed wide open and a tall, lank youth plunged in. He was out of breath and the smile he summoned was too agitated to seem genuine.

“Say, let me hide here a minute, will you?” he whispered to Gerald hoarsely.

Gerald motioned to the further bed. “Slide under there,” he said quietly. The boy flew around the table, dropped to the floor and squirmed quickly from sight. Gerald stepped to the door to close it, but the pursuit was already at the bottom of the stairs, laughing and calling. Gerald left the door ajar, scurried back to his chair and, thrusting his hands into his pockets, leaned carelessly back.



“The boy dropped to the floor and squirmed quickly from sight.”

“Yes, when it came to doing it, Burtis, I just couldn’t give up the old place. You get terribly fond of a room after——”

There was a hurried knock and the door was pushed open, revealing a half-dozen laughing faces beyond.

“Hello, Pennimore! Is he in here?” The spokesman was a big fellow named Johnson, a Second Class boy, who roomed on the floor above.

“Hello,” returned Gerald with a display of mild curiosity. “Is who here?”

“The Rabbit! Cotton-Tail! Didn’t he slide in here?” Johnson looked suspiciously around.

“Of course he did,” cried another of the crowd. “He didn’t go downstairs and this is the only door that’s open! Where is he, Pennimore? We’ve got to have him! We need him in our business!”

“I don’t know the gentleman,” replied Gerald with a smile.

“Well, he’s in here just the same,” declared Johnson.

“Oh, sure! I’ve got him in my pocket!”

“He’s in a closet,” whispered another fellow audibly.

“Under a bed, probably,” growled a third. “Say, whose room is this, anyway?”

“This room belongs to my friend, Mr. Burtis,” returned Gerald amiably. “If you ask him nicely he will probably allow you to come in and search it to your heart’s content. Mind if this committee of thugs looks around, Burtis?”

“N-no, I suppose not,” answered Kendall. “But I don’t see why they should.”

“I don’t see any reason myself,” agreed Gerald, carefully avoiding a glance toward the further bed. “Johnson, on the whole, I

guess you'd better run away. And you might close the door after you."

"Then he isn't here?" asked Johnson doubtfully.

"Who isn't here?" demanded Gerald with a fine show of irritability. "Can't you see he isn't here? Who the dickens do you want, anyhow?"

"Maybe he did sneak downstairs, after all," someone suggested. "We'll get him when he comes back, fellows."

"All right," said Johnson. "Abject apologies for disturbing you, Pennimore, but the law must be enforced, you know."

"Oh, certainly," replied Gerald carelessly. "Go as far as you like, but close the door after you."

The door closed and the footfalls died away up the stairs. After a minute:

"Come out, Mr. Rabbit," said Gerald softly. "The hounds have gone."

There was a scuffling under Kendall's bed and, feet first, the quarry emerged. "Much obliged," he panted. "Are you sure they've gone?"

"Mm; fairly sure. I'll lock the door, anyhow. Sit down and recover your *savoir faire*, whatever that is. You must be a newcomer, Mr. Rabbit. I don't recall your features."

"Yes, I—I came last week," replied the other, seating himself on the foot of the bed and brushing the dust from his clothes. He had eyes that, for want of a better word, might be called hazel, and the rims were inflamed; Gerald decided, however, that the redness was not from too much poring over text-books, for the youth didn't look like that sort. He was lanky, ungainly and none too attractive. His mouth was unpleasant and his face didn't look quite clean. And the red-rimmed eyes had a sly look in them very unlike a rabbit's. In age he seemed about seventeen.

“May I ask,” continued Gerald, “why the gentlemen were so eager to discover you?”

The boy’s eyes shifted and dropped. “They—they were hazing me,” he muttered.

“Hazing you! Oh, surely not! Hazing isn’t indulged in here. Mister—er—what did you say the name was? Rabbit?”

“My name’s Cotton. I don’t care what you call it, but they were trying to make me hold my head in a basin of water.”

“In a basin of water? What an odd thing to do! Why, Mr. Cotton?”

“They said”—Cotton gulped angrily—“they said they wanted to see if I was absorbent.”

“Absorbent? Oh, I see; absorbent cotton.” Gerald laughed and even Kendall had to smile a little. “Well, were you?”

“I got away from them,” he growled.

“Oh, well, that wouldn’t have hurt you any, you know. In fact”—and Gerald smiled slightly—“in fact a little water might be beneficial, Cotton.”

Cotton scowled. “Well, they needn’t think they can do that sort of thing to me. I’m too old a bird. I’ve been to school before. And if they try any more of their funny stunts, someone will get hurt!”

“I don’t like your attitude,” said Gerald coldly. “A little fun doesn’t hurt anyone, and as you’re a newcomer, Cotton, you must expect a certain amount of ragging. I think you’ll find the coast clear now.”

“Besides,” went on Cotton aggrievedly, disdaining the hint, “they wanted to put ink in the water.”

“You should have reminded them that you were not blotting-paper; merely absorbent cotton,” replied Gerald with a smile.

There was a knock on the door and Gerald looked inquiringly at Kendall. Cotton slipped to the floor, prepared to again seek the refuge of the bed.

“Who is there?” asked Kendall.

“Wellington. May I come in a moment?”

“It’s all right, I guess,” said Gerald. “It’s The Duke.” He arose and unlocked the door and the newcomer slipped in. He had a round, merry face above which a tousled head of red-brown hair glistened in the light like copper. He was about Gerald’s age, but heavier, rounder, softer. He grinned at Gerald as he closed the door softly behind him, and then observed the other two boys.

“Trouble’s over, Cotton,” he announced. “The enemy is dispersed. Keep quiet and you can make it all right. Lock the door if you want to. Better start along, though, before they get together again.”

Cotton moved doubtfully toward the door. “They’d better not touch me,” he threatened, “or——”

“Son,” said The Duke sternly, “you take my advice and don’t make any foolish remarks. I don’t care much whether they drown you in a basin. Rather wish they would. Beat it, Cotton!”

And Cotton “beat it,” only pausing long enough to cast a scowl at The Duke.

The latter watched him go and, when the door was closed behind him, turned with a comical look of despair to Gerald.

“Say, honest, Gerald, what would you do if you had a thing like that wished on you?”

“You don’t mean he’s rooming with you?” exclaimed Gerald.

“’Tis true, O Solomon! My chum got away from me this year and that’s what I drew. When I first saw it I thought to myself, it’s no use, Duke, you can’t do it! It’s too much! Send in your resignation

and pack your little hand-bag. But then I got to thinking that if I didn't suffer someone else would have to, and my self-sacrificing nature prevailed. So that's how. Say, you might introduce me to your friend, if you think he can stand it, Gerald."

"I beg pardon! I thought you fellows knew each other. Burtis, this is The Duke of Wellington; Duke, this is Mr. Kendall Burtis."

"Ah, he of the nimble toe? I'm glad to know you, Burtis. I saw you kick that goal last Fall. I need not say that I am one of your humble but sincere admirers."

Kendall smiled shyly as they shook hands.

"Where does this Cotton chap come from?" asked Gerald as they seated themselves again. "Somehow he—he doesn't quite look as though he belonged, Duke."

"He comes from some place in 'Maryland, my Maryland.' He's been at school somewhere down there, I think. Anyhow, he's always comparing Yardley with his last place to the detriment of Yardley. That's what started the trouble to-night. Lin Johnson and Billy Richards and two or three others happened in and in about twenty seconds Cotton was telling us what was wrong with the school. I don't know where this other place he's been at is located, but to hear him talk about it you'd think it was just outside of Paradise! Well, the fellows stood it for a while, looking sort of pained and surprised, you know, and then Lin got started and began to josh him. He doesn't take a joke very well, and so—oh, I don't know, but pretty soon they decided they'd find out whether he was absorbent cotton or just plain batting. And so they tried to get him to put his head in a bowl of water. Of course, I couldn't interfere with the pleasure of my guests, and of course I couldn't take a hand at ragging my roommate, so I was forced to maintain a difficult neutrality. I rather wished they'd drown him, but he got away and bolted down the hall. His name, by the way, is Charles, Charles Cotton."

"That sounds familiar," mused Gerald.

“You’re thinking of the chap who helped Izaak Walton write his ‘Compleat Angler,’ but I don’t think this is the same. I’m not sure, though; he looks a good deal like a fish. The worst I can say about him, fellows, is that he has an apparently insurmountable hatred of water when applied to the outer person. I hope, however, to overcome his aversion. Each evening I recite to him that charming little poem:

““Water, cold water! For washing and drinking
There’s nothing like water, cold water, I’m
thinking.””

And The Duke, having arisen to deliver the poetical gem, bowed deeply and vanished through the doorway.

“What did you say his name is?” asked Kendall. “The Duke of Wellington?”

“His name,” laughed the other, “is Lester Wellington, but he’s been known as The Duke of Wellington ever since he came here. The Duke is a good sort, but he’s horribly lazy about study. He’s been here five years, I believe, and has just got into the Second Class. Everyone likes him, though, and he’s as kind-hearted as can be. It’s a shame he doesn’t do better with his studies. I’d hate to be in his place and have that Mr. Rabbit rooming with me!” Gerald shuddered. “I don’t know why I should take such an aversion to the chap, but—— Well, let’s forget him. What I started to say half an hour ago, Burtis, was this: I’ve got half a room that’s empty and I’d be glad to have you come and use it. What do you say?”

“You mean—share your room—with you?” stammered Kendall incredulously.

“Yes. Think it over. Let me know to-morrow, though, if you can. They are likely to plank someone down with me any moment, and with fellows like that Cotton chap floating around”—Gerald shook his head dubiously—“there’s no telling what might happen to me!”

“But—but I don’t see why you want *me!*” blurted Kendall.

“Great Scott, don’t be so modest!” laughed Gerald. “Why not? You are respectable, aren’t you? Well, think it over and——”

“But I don’t need to think it over! I’d—I’d like to do it very much if you are sure you really want me to.”

“Good! That’s fine! To-morrow we’ll go and see the Office. I don’t believe Forisher will mind if we double up, considering that we are each alone. Anyway, we’ll see. Good-night, Burtis. Sorry you’ve had so much interruption. All my fault, I fear. See you to-morrow.”

CHAPTER III

COTTON TRIES FOOTBALL

Kendall emerged from the doorway of Whitson Hall and stood for a minute at the top of the flight of worn granite steps. It was a warm, lazy day in the last week of September, a day that promised to become even warmer and lazier as it progressed. Just now the time was only a little after half-past eight, and breakfast was just over. The first recitation hour was at nine and in front of the buildings fellows were loitering in the sunlight. Here on the steps of Whitson at least a dozen were holding forth: Girard, who played center on the football team; Jensen, another pigskin follower; Davis, the manager, who was somewhat handicapped with the given name of Percival, which had been mercifully shortened and amended to “Perky”; Perry Whitehall, the dignified editor-in-chief of the school weekly, *The Scholiast*; and others whom Kendall knew only by sight. Many looked up as he came out and nodded or spoke to him. Doubtless any one of the three or four groups sitting or standing about the steps would have been pleased had he joined them, for Kendall had been a school hero in a small way ever since when, nearly a year ago now, he had won the Broadwood game by a kick from placement in the last two minutes of play. But Kendall was still rather shy, still very modest in his estimate of his own merits, and would rather have taken a licking than intrude where he wasn't wanted.

He had been rooming with Gerald Pennimore in 28 Clarke for four days now and was still wondering about it. Why Gerald, who was perhaps the richest boy in school—there was a Fourth Class fellow named Hodgkins who had just entered and whose father, a railway magnate, was popularly credited with the possession of more wealth than Mr. John T. Pennimore, the Steamship King—why Gerald, wealthy and popular, had selected him, who was

anything but wealthy and whose circle of friends included possibly not more than a dozen or so, for a roommate was a puzzle. The only likely explanation, Kendall decided, was that Gerald had done it out of pure kindness of heart. Whatever the reason, however, Kendall was intensely grateful. It was fine to have such a fellow as Gerald Pennimore for a friend, fine to share such a comfortable, even luxurious room as Number 28, fine to get away from his former roommate, Harold Towne, a chap with whom anyone with less patience and good nature than Kendall could never have put up.

But there was something else that Kendall was yet more grateful for, and as he stood there at the top of the steps and let his gaze wander over the scene before him, he realized it anew. He was very grateful to his father, who, by more than one sacrifice, had found the money for Kendall's second year at Yardley. There had been a time during the summer when the boy's chances of returning to school had looked pretty slim. It had been a bad summer for potatoes, and up in Aroostook County, Maine, where the Burtis farm was, a failure of the potato crop spelled trouble. It had been not until almost a fortnight before the commencement of the Fall Term that Kendall had been quite certain of returning to Yardley, and he very well knew that back home more than one comfort would be dispensed with the coming Winter that he might keep on with his education. And he had made up his mind that none of the money spent on him should be wasted. He meant to study hard and learn all he could this year, for it might be his last. He had resolved to win a scholarship if hard work would do it. There was the Gordon Scholarship which rebated the entire tuition fee, or, failing that, there remained four Sidney Scholarships of eighty dollars. One of the five Kendall meant to win.

From where he stood, Long Island Sound, blue and still, stretched east and west, visible over the tops of the trees which ran for nearly a half-mile between the school grounds and the shore. The buildings circled about the edge of a plateau down which a well-kept roadway dropped to the meadow lands below and wound westward to the

little village of Wissining, to the river beyond, and, finally, to the small city of Greenburg beyond that. The river flowed down from behind the school property, a placid tidal stream which in fair weather was usually alive with boats and canoes. There were six school buildings, four of them, Clarke, Whitson, Dudley and Merle, dormitories, one of them, Oxford, given over to recitation rooms, library, assembly hall, the Office, the Principal's living quarters and the rooms of the two school societies, Cambridge and Oxford. Beyond Merle Hall, the dormitory for the Preparatory Class boys, was the Kingdon Gymnasium, completing the line. Between the gymnasium and the river lay the athletic grounds. Here were the tennis courts, the baseball and football fields, the hockey rink in winter, the quarter-mile cinder track and the boathouse and floats. The golf links began nearby and wandered away along the curving stream, uphill and down.

Yardley Hall School is so well known that it is perhaps unnecessary for me to bore you with description. Therefore, a few more words and I am done. The school's enrollment is about two hundred and seventy students. There are five classes, First, Second, Third, Fourth and Preparatory. The faculty numbers twelve, ranging from the Principal, Dr. Tobias Hewitt, known as "Toby," down to Mrs. Ponder, the matron, affectionately—and surreptitiously—called "Emily."

Kendall descended the steps and turned to his left. At the first entrance of Clarke Hall he entered and climbed two flights of well-worn stairs, bore to his left again and opened the door of the last room on the front of the building. Number 28 was a big, square, well-lighted room. Beside the shallow bay windows in front there was a window on the side from which, past the obtruding shoulder of Whitson, one caught a brief view of Wissining and the mouth of the river in the distance and of The Prospect in the foreground. Each side of the room held a bed, a washstand and a bureau. A big, broad study table held the center and was flanked by easy chairs. There were many pictures, photographs and trophies on the walls, the

carpet was cheerful in tones of brown and gold and the window-seat was piled high with many-hued cushions. Altogether the room looked home-like and cheerful, and while there were numerous evidences of wealth, from the silverbacked brushes and toilet articles on Gerald's chiffonier to the heavy, soft-piled carpet underfoot, there was no ostentation.

Gerald, half-buried in the cushions of the window-seat, was having a last look at "Wilhelm Tell" before going into class. A German dictionary was lying beside him on the sill of the open window and a frown was playing about his brow. He looked up when Kendall came in and slammed the volume of Schiller shut with a sigh of relief.

"It's criminal, Kendall, to have to translate German on a day like this. You can't do justice to it. It needs a thick fog to gargle with. No one can manage a good German pronunciation on a fair day; no one, that is, but a German." Gerald gathered the books together and sat up. "Thanks be, I'm not a German! Think of going through life having to call an insurance policy a—a—wait a minute!" He opened the dictionary and fluttered the leaves quickly. "Ha! Having to call it a *versicherungsschein*! Wouldn't that be—well, *niederschlagend*? Wouldn't it?"

"Worse than that," laughed Kendall. "It would be *grimmig*!"

"*Grimmig*?" Gerald frowned a moment. "That's furious, isn't it?"

"Yes, or fierce!"

"Oh! I wonder if the Germans can talk slang. I bet they can't. Any nation that calls an irregular verb an *unregelmässig Zeitwort* must be far too deficient in humor to produce any George Ades. What time is it?"

Kendall glanced at a small traveling clock on Gerald's chiffonier and informed him that it was twelve minutes to nine. Gerald sighed again.

“I’m off to the sacrifice then,” he murmured. “By the way, don’t make any engagement for to-morrow, please. I want you to have dinner with me at the house. Afterwards, if it doesn’t rain”—Gerald looked anxiously at the bank of haze along the horizon—“we’ll kick along shore in the launch. See you later.”

As the door closed Kendall, picking up his Cicero, smiled. It wasn’t very likely that he would have had an engagement on Sunday! Then the smile faded and he wondered, as he went out, what sort of an appearance he would make at Sound View. He had been there once before, but there had been several others with him and the occasion had been most informal. Sunday dinner, he reflected ruefully, was a different proposition. Perhaps, however, his blue serge suit, purchased in Greenburg last Spring and pretty well worn since, would do if it were well brushed. As he reached the stairs The Duke clattered down the flight above and overtook him. The Duke was radiant in a suit of intensely blue flannel, the coat of which, cut extremely low and secured with two buttons, allowed a generous view of a vividly pink shirt. The Duke was bare-headed and his coppery hair showed evidences of having been recently wet and brushed.

“Hello, Burtis,” he greeted, ranging himself alongside. “I’ve got grand news for you.”

Kendall looked politely curious.

“Yes, sir, stu-pend-ous news! Mr. Charles Cotton is going out for the football team!” The Duke chuckled. “Can you imagine it? Picture the doughty Charles hurling himself fiercely against the—the craven foe, his eyes lighted with the joy of battle and the ball clasped desperately to his heaving chest! Get it? What? He told me of his decision this morning, his epoch-marking decision. Epoch-marking is some language, what? I’ve been simply bursting with the news ever since, but you’re the first fellow I’ve told. My word, but I’ll bet Payson will be pleased!” He looked at Kendall and grinned. “Simply lays you flat, doesn’t it? Can’t express yourself at all,

what? I knew you'd be overcome. I congratulated Charles with tears in my voice, Burtis. I said to him, 'Charles, my boy, this is indeed a happy moment for the old school. I thank you. I thank you on behalf of my schoolmates, Charles, on behalf of the team, on behalf of the coach and the captain! And I thank you on my own behalf, Charles, for you have brought joy to my sad heart, light to my weary eyes and laughter to my lips!' Yes, sir, I said all that. And do you think he was pleased? Not a bit of it! He turned upon me like—like a viper and called me—well, I think I'd better not tell you what he called me. It was distinctly in bad taste."

Kendall laughed and The Duke, encouraged, rattled on. "Now the question is whether we'd better divulge the news all at once or sort of prepare folks for it. I tell you it's going to make an awful difference to the team, having Cotton on it. With his noble example before you, you fellows can't help but go in and win. I hope Broadwood won't hear about it. If she did she'd probably disband her team to-morrow."

"Has he ever played before?" asked Kendall as they joined the throng crowding its way into Oxford.

"No, never, I believe. I think he offered his services last year wherever he was, but they were not accepted. He lays the fact to jealousy. Isn't it sad such things can be? Where are you headed? Latin? Me, too. And that reminds me that I forgot to do my composition. Won't Collins be pleased!"

If the Assistant Principal was pleased he didn't allow the fact to become evident, for he said several dryly sarcastic things to The Duke and ended by suggesting to him that he deliver the Latin composition to him at his room not later than six o'clock that evening. Whereupon The Duke, cheerful and forgiving, promised to accept the suggestion and the Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero engaged the attention of the class.

As it was Saturday, football practice began at three o'clock instead of four. Kendall joined the stream of candidates that flowed

from the gymnasium locker room to the field and wondered whether Coach Payson would see fit to start him to-day with the first squad. Kendall's opinion of his football ability was modest, but he firmly believed that, while there was undoubtedly plenty left for him to learn, he could play half-back as well as either Fayette or Crandall, players who thus far enjoyed the call for the position he coveted. However, he kept this opinion to himself, which was a wise thing to do.

Fifteen minutes later, one of a dozen candidates for places behind the line who were busily engaged in catching punts and running them back, he spied the redoubtable Cotton, long, lanky, awkward and bewildered, hurling himself to the ground in the effort to land upon a deceptive pigskin tossed by the hand of a bored and pessimistic veteran to whom the drudgery of breaking in a squad of green candidates had been entrusted. Cotton was suitably arrayed, and his canvas breeches and cleated shoes held the stamp of newness. The striped blue and white jersey, however, in which the upper part of his thin body was attired had evidently seen service of some kind. Observing him a moment, Kendall decided that the jersey had not reached its present faded and torn condition on the football field, for Cotton was so palpably out of his element that the spectacle he afforded was almost pathetic. Kendall, recalling Wellington's nonsense, smiled. Cotton, he told himself, had a hard row to hoe before he reached the First Team!

Still later, after a full half hour of signal work in the squad directed by Holmes, Kendall walked back to the bench, draping a blanket over his shoulders, and spied an empty space beside Cotton. He was not favorably impressed by that youth, but the latter's attempts had been so pathetic and his countenance now showed so much weariness that Kendall, from kindness of heart, squeezed into the space and asked cheerfully how he had got on. Cotton evidently did not for the minute recognize in football togs his host of a few nights before, nor did he respond very affably to the overture. Instead he shot a rather sullen and somewhat suspicious glance at

Kendall and said, “All right,” in a tone that seemed to ask what business it was of the inquirer’s.

“Have you ever played before?” asked Kendall. “I think Wellington said you had, though.”

“A little.” He examined Kendall curiously, began to recall his features and thawed. “I went out for the team last Fall, but”—he shrugged his shoulders, hinting at things too regrettable to mention —“I didn’t make it. Say, you’re Burtis, aren’t you? I didn’t know you at first.”

Kendall acknowledged it. “What school were you at last year?” he asked, less from curiosity than a desire to seem friendly.

“Kingston Manor; near Baltimore. It’s a pretty good school; not as big as this, but I didn’t care much for the fellows there. It was awfully cliquish. That’s why I didn’t get on the team. I wasn’t swell enough for them.” He laughed disagreeably.

“Too bad.” Kendall tried to put into his voice sympathy he didn’t feel. For some reason Cotton awakened a feeling in him closely akin to dislike, and it troubled Kendall, for there seemed no excuse for it. Kendall could almost invariably find something to like in an acquaintance, and when he couldn’t he still stopped short of actual antipathy. In the present case, fearing that he was doing the other an injustice, he took especial pains to be nice. They talked football for a minute or two. Cotton expressed doubt of obtaining a fair trial.

“I guess if you don’t have friends here it’s about the same as it was at Kingston or—or anywhere else.”

“I don’t think that,” responded Kendall. “I don’t believe they care much here who or what you are if you can play football. Why, I didn’t know a soul in school when I got here last Fall. I don’t know very many yet.”

“Oh, well, you got taken up by Pennimore and that crowd,” replied Cotton with something like a sneer.

“Not exactly that,” said Kendall quietly. “I did make a few friends, though, of course, but the reason I got on at football was because I could do a little something and they found it out. You buckle down and learn the game, Cotton, and then, if you can play fairly well, you’ll get your chance. There isn’t a squarer man alive than Coach Payson, and Captain Merriwell is a mighty good sort, too. Just the same, it won’t do you any harm to meet fellows, and I tell you what you do, Cotton; you come down some evening and make a call. Fellows are always drifting in and out of our room. Lots of them I don’t know very well myself, but Gerald will introduce you.”

“Thanks,” replied Cotton almost gratefully. “I will. Wellington doesn’t like me very well, I guess, and I don’t think much of him, either. He’s a sort of a Smart Aleck, isn’t he?”

“I don’t know him very well,” answered Kendall noncommittally. “Here comes the scrimmage. Don’t forget, Cotton. Come and see us some evening.”

“First and second squads!” called Mr. Payson. “Line up as you did yesterday.”

Blankets were tossed aside, head-guards caught up and twenty-two eager aspirants thronged on to the field. Kendall trotted out to his place on the second squad. Across the field, at the other end of the fifteen-yard line, was Greene. Under the goal stood Holmes, who was fighting hard against Simms for the quarter-back position. Up the field the first squad were lined up for the kick-off, on their toes, awaiting the whistle. Then Fales, left-guard, swung his long leg and the brown oval came flying over the white lines, turning lazily in its flight. Down rushed the enemy. The second squad defenders moved to the left to meet the onslaught as the ball dipped into Greene’s arms. The interference formed quickly. Bodies thudded together, players went down. Greene, clutching the ball, shot forward, three players cutting a path for him. A feint to the left, a quick turn to the right and the opening was found. One, two, three

white lines passed under his pounding feet. Then a lithe body sprang upon him. Greene struggled forward. Another foeman charged and the three went down. The whistle piped.

“First down! Ten to go!” called the referee.

There was a quick lining-up, Holmes rattled off the signal, Kendall trotted back to punting position, Best, at center, passed the ball, Kendall caught it breast-high, stepped forward, swung his leg and away hurtled the pigskin, arching high against the blue afternoon sky, and away sped the players to line up again on the first squad’s thirty yards. The punt had been a good one, forty-five yards in distance and high enough to let the ends down under it and upset the runner before he could more than get started.

There was no scoring in the first ten-minute period. Andy Ryan kept a close watch on the water pail, for the day was warm and the temptation to drink a dipperful was great. “Easy with the water, boys,” he counseled time and again. And, “Get your blankets on! Don’t stand around there getting cold! Have you no sense at all?” There were many changes for the last period, but Kendall was retained, and, since the first squad seemed to have gained more by the influx of fresh material than the second and forced the playing from the start, he was needed. Five times he was called on to punt out of danger from under his own goal and as many times, coolly and exactly as though he were practicing on an empty gridiron, he responded successfully. Then, in the last minute of play, the tragedy occurred. First swept down to the twenty yards. Two tries netted but four yards more. A forward pass, unexpected and well executed, went to Cousins, but Kendall downed him in his fourth stride and the ball went to the second on her fifteen-yard line. Folsom, who had taken Holmes’ place at quarter, called on Kendall and Kendall dropped back just under the cross-bar. For once Best passed badly. The ball struck the ground a yard in front of the punter and although Kendall got it on the bound and swung and even started the kick away, the first squad forwards crashed through, the ball struck an

upraised hand and Captain Merriwell fell on it behind the goal-line. Simms missed a try-at-goal. Score, first squad, 6; second squad, 0.

A moment later, panting, tired, aching, the players trotted up the hill to the gymnasium, blankets trailing and flapping, to feel the grateful splash of the warm water over their bodies, to writhe and gasp as the icy-cold deluge followed, and to talk it all over, accusing, defending, explaining, regretting, exulting! Then to dress leisurely, weariedly and withal happily in an atmosphere of steam and witch hazel and arnica, in a babel of talk and laughter, silently resolving better things for next practice, wondering how they could live through the whole long hour that must elapse before they could have supper!

CHAPTER IV

AT SOUND VIEW

The Pennimore country place, Sound View, lies within a half mile of the school buildings and adjoins the school property on the west. Taking the path across The Prospect, as the terrace of lawn in front of Oxford Hall was called, descending a flight of steps, crossing the curving drive and continuing the path again beyond, you come to a rustic bridge which surmounts a twenty-foot cut. Through this the railroad runs almost due east and west, in the latter direction ultimately reaching, like so many of the boys who graduate in sight of the cut, the city of New Haven. Eastward, at a nearly corresponding distance, lies Newport. But Kendall was thinking of neither New Haven nor Newport, as, shortly after morning church the next day, he crossed the bridge and entered the woods. He was taking the shortest route to Sound View and he was wondering whether the suit of clothes he had put on in honor of the occasion really looked as well as it had seemed to him. He had brushed and rebrushed for a quarter of an hour, and had worked with soap and water and a corner of a towel for as much longer in an attempt to eradicate stains from the jacket. The latter effort had not been altogether successful, but he flattered himself that if you didn't look very close you couldn't see the obnoxious spots. At the dividing of the path he chose the right-hand way and in a minute or two came within sight of the high fence which divided the school grounds from Mr. Pennimore's land. It was a warm but cloudy afternoon, with a little gusty breeze coming in off the Sound and lazily moving the leaves. Presently he reached a narrow gate set in the fence. There was a round hole in it and he put his hand through and lifted a latch on the further side. Then he stepped in, wound by a broad bed of shrubbery, following a well-trodden path, and found himself finally on the seaward side of the big stone house with a

wide expanse of lawn and flower-beds and borders of shrubs near at hand, and the Sound, looking rather green and sullen to-day, stretching away into the distance beyond. A big white steam yacht swung idly at her moorings off the mouth of the river and near a long steel and granite wharf. A sudden barking of dogs brought Kendall's gaze back to the direction of the house just in time for him to see Gerald vault over the low wall of the terrace and start to meet him. An instant later a wire-haired terrier rushed down the steps, frantic with excitement, followed more leisurely by a red setter.

"Hello," called Gerald. "I thought you'd missed your way! Why didn't you come earlier?"

"Well, you said to come for dinner," replied Kendall, stooping to pat the setter who was wagging him a welcome. "I thought half-past twelve was early enough. What's his name, Gerald?"

"The setter's? His name is Jack. I've had him for years. The other little duffer, who wants to sample your trousers, but doesn't quite dare to, is Three Foot, so called because when he is very anxious to get anywhere he picks up one foot and travels on the other three. Come on up and sit down. Warm, isn't it? Dad had to go down to New York last night and hasn't got back yet. I sent the car over to meet the eleven-thirty train, but he wasn't on it. He will be sorry not to be here to meet you. You've never met the Dad, have you?"

"Once for a minute or two last Spring, over at Broadwood. But I guess he wouldn't remember me."

"Don't you believe it! Dad never forgets anything. Sit down and get cool. Have some water or a glass of ginger ale or something?"

Kendall declined as he sank into a long rattan chair and fanned himself with his hat. "Is that your yacht?" he asked.

"Yes—that is, it's Dad's. Mine is a bit smaller." Gerald smiled. "About a hundred and twenty-five feet shorter. We'll try her after dinner. I asked Harry Merrow to go along. Don't mind, do you?"

“Not a bit. I like Merrow, although I don’t know him very well. He spoke to me the other day after mathematics and we had a talk.”

“He’s a very decent kid. I suppose,” Gerald added with a laugh, “he’s only a year younger than I am, but he’s always seemed a lot younger to me.”

“I guess he’s about sixteen. You’re seventeen, aren’t you?”

“Yes. I’ll be eighteen next Fall when I get to Yale. I suppose that’s early enough, but I’d have made it this year if Dad hadn’t kept me on a diet of tutors for so long. It was funny the way I happened to go to Yardley. Jack was mixed up in it, weren’t you, old doggums?”

Jack, stretched on the stones at Gerald’s feet, thumped his tail affirmatively.

“How did it happen?” asked Kendall.

“Well, over there near where you came through the gate I used to have a playhouse when I was a kid. Once somebody gave me a fireman’s uniform as a present; you know, red blouse and helmet and a brass trumpet and so on. So one day I thought it would be a bright idea to have a real fire and do a rescue stunt. So I put on my fireman’s outfit, got an ax from the stable, shut Jack in the playhouse and set fire to it.”

“Thunder!” exclaimed Kendall.

“Also lightning,” agreed Gerald. “It was a fool thing to do and Jack might have been burned to a crisp because I locked the door and threw the key away for some unknown reason. And the first thing I knew the place was burning like a bonfire. Not that I was troubling much, however. I’d brought along a couple of those chemical extinguishers from the house and my plan was to break open the door, rescue Jack heroically, just like a sure-enough fire-fighter, and then put out the flames with the extinguishers. Poor old Jack was howling like a good one, and I was telling him to keep his courage up or something like that when a fellow sang out from the

other side of the fence and wanted to know what I was doing. I told him and invited him over to help. I think he called me a silly little fool, which was impolite but dreadfully true. Then he jumped over, grabbed the ax away from me and beat in the door. The place was just a mass of flames inside and Jack was stretched out like dead. I guess the poor old fellow was scared stiff. So then there was nothing to do but go in and get him. The trouble was that after I reached Jack I was too choked up with smoke and too frightened to get out again, and if the other chap hadn't lugged us both out—well, you wouldn't be sitting here; and neither would I, nor Jack. We all got scorched a little and we boys were put to bed and had to be dosed and fixed up by the doctor, and there was a big old fuss.”

“What an awful thing to do!” said Kendall. “Why, you might have been burned horribly. Who was the other boy?”

“Dan Vinton. And that's how I happened to go to Yardley to school. I'd had about half a dozen tutors and none of them would stay very long because I was a mean little brat and made their lives a burden to them, I guess. Dad sort of fell in love with Dan, just as I did, and after a while, when I insisted that I wouldn't be happy if I couldn't go to Yardley, Dad let me go on the understanding that Dan was to take charge of me. You see, Dad was away a good deal more then than he is now. So I went to room with Dan, and he made me toe the mark, too. I was like a kid with three nurses, for when Dan wasn't looking after me then Alf Loring or Tom Dyer was! Well, I had my troubles for a while, but I got through with them. It did me a lot of good, I tell you, Kendall, for I was in a fair way to become a conceited, puny little idiot. Why, I didn't know what it was to be hungry until I went to Yardley and played football and lived out of doors! I tell you, the fellow that doesn't go to a school where he can mix with other fellows and be thrown on his own resources and fight his own battles is mighty unfortunate.”

“I suppose so,” agreed Kendall, “but it must be pretty hard on some fellows. Take chaps who are shy and have been made a lot of

at home, Gerald; I guess they get pretty unhappy sometimes at boarding school.”

“Rather! I was so homesick and—and miserable that I ran away once and went home to New York. And Dan came after me and lugged me back. Oh, I know what it is about as well as any fellow. And that’s why I always try to be friendly with the youngsters that come to school looking as though they were walking into a den of lions. You come across them every day at this time of year, trailing around by themselves and looking sort of red about the eyes and doleful all over. I know about how they feel; homesick and scared of the other fellows and scared of faculty and scared of their lessons. It’s bad while it lasts, but it doesn’t last long. Some morning you wake up with an appetite for breakfast that almost makes you ache; and some fellow says, ‘Hello, kid,’ to you as you go downstairs, and smiles at you or maybe claps you on the back, and you eat a big breakfast and sort of look around and think how jolly everything looks and how friendly the fellows seem all of a sudden. And you wake up to the fact that you belong, that you’re one of the crowd, that you’re a Yardley Hall fellow. And you walk out of commons with a bit of a swagger and begin to try and decide whether to be captain of the football team or a First Honors man!”

Kendall smiled appreciatively. He had been through it himself and it was just as Gerald had described it. And he believed he knew a little better now why Gerald had picked him for a roommate!

“Another thing,” continued Gerald, rubbing Jack’s ribs with one foot, “that sort of thing has to come some time, anyway. I mean that—that stage-fright or whatever you want to call it. If you don’t go through with it at prep school you’ll have to face it later; perhaps when you go to college or perhaps when you go into business. Every fellow has to face it some time. It’s a good deal like being tossed into the water and told to swim. You swim after a fashion—because you have to to keep afloat, but you’re scared to death at first. After a bit you like it and they can’t keep you out of the water unless they tie you up!”

“That’s something I can’t do,” said Kendall, “swim.”

“You can’t?” asked Gerald incredulously. “It’s high time you learned then. Where have you been all your life?”

“On a farm,” laughed Kendall. “I’m a hayseed.”

“Aren’t afraid of the water, are you?”

“N-no, I think not. I rather like it, only I’ve never tried to swim in it.”

“That’s good. Just as long as you aren’t scared at the outset you’ll get on all right. You want to keep in your mind the fact that the Lord gave you air to breathe in, ground to walk on and water to swim in, and that you’re just about as safe one place as another. I’ll have to take you in hand some day soon and teach you to swim.”

“I wish you would. I’ve always wanted to know how.”

A minute later they went in to dinner, followed by the two dogs, and sat at opposite sides of a round table and were attended by a serious-faced butler. Kendall held the butler in a good deal of awe and marveled at the casual, almost disrespectful way in which his host addressed that functionary. Once or twice he almost held his breath for fear that the butler, whose name appeared to be Murdock at times and at other times Scout, would take umbrage at the way in which Gerald bossed him around. And when, finally, Gerald said carelessly, “That’s all, Murdock, for a while. Just beat it, will you?” Kendall was quite sure that Murdock would immediately pack his trunk and leave. But he didn’t, for when it was time for the dessert Gerald pressed a button and Murdock noiselessly reappeared, just as though nothing had happened. That dinner was one to remember and dream about, and both boys, though more especially Kendall, enjoyed it heartily from the funny little disks of toast covered with some sort of paste that tasted like fish, and which, following Gerald’s lead, Kendall anointed with lemon-juice, to the black coffee served in cups so frail that Kendall almost feared to lift one.

Afterwards they went upstairs to Gerald's room and saw his treasures of various kinds and sat in a broad window-seat that overlooked the Sound. And at about three a maid announced the arrival of Harry Merrow, and they arose with sighs and returned to the terrace.

Harry Merrow didn't look to be sixteen by a full year. He was small of build and slim of body, with a somewhat thin face that lacked color. He had nice eyes, which were the saving of an otherwise rather featureless face. He jumped out of a chair as the other boys emerged from the house and came to meet them.

"It's all right," he announced merrily. "I've insured my life for its full value, Gerald, and now where's the boat?"

"I guess you didn't have to pay a very heavy premium," Gerald laughed. "Come inside and let's get some sweaters. It may be cold on the water, even if it isn't here."

The dogs accompanied them down to the pier, barking excitedly, but there Gerald sent them sternly back to the house. The launch, which rocked gently at the side of the float, won loud praise from Harry.

"Say, Gerald, she's a beauty! When did you get her? This summer? How fast can she go? My wordy, look at all the brass on her! Glad I don't have to keep her polished."

The Dart was eighteen feet over all, with a six foot beam. She had a cruising cabin with two bunks and a tiny galley. Her hull was of white cedar painted light gray, with a gold line, while the inboard finish was mahogany. She was a handsome little craft, and even Kendall, whose knowledge of boats was limited, knew that she was a launch to be proud of. The boys sprang aboard and looked her all over from stem to stern. Harry had to stretch out on a bunk before he was satisfied, and insisted on having the small stove lighted so he could see just how it worked. Finally, returning to the cockpit,

Gerald started the engine, Harry, under his directions, cast off the moorings, and *The Dart* headed out to sea.

CHAPTER V

LOST IN THE FOG

Southward lay Plum Island, seven miles distant, and beyond it the main shore of Long Island was hazily visible. To the southeast, in clear weather, one could see Montauk Point, but to-day it was hidden by a fog bank. There were numerous sailing craft in sight, and an excursion steamer, well loaded with passengers, passed down the Sound a half mile away, an occasional blare of music from her band reaching them on the breeze. There was very little sea to-day and *The Dart* sped along on an almost even keel. And how she did go! Fourteen miles, said Gerald, but it seemed to Kendall that it must be more than that. Gerald, from where he sat at the wheel in the cockpit, could look along the roof of the cabin and had a clear view of the course. Everything for the control of the launch was within reach, spark, throttle, clutches and a strident electric whistle.

“It’s just like an automobile, isn’t it?” said Harry with a sigh of envious admiration.

“It’s better,” laughed Gerald. “There aren’t any tires to blow out!”

Kendall perched himself in the stern where he could watch and enjoy the rush of the green water. Harry stretched himself along the cabin roof. “Are you going all the way across?” he asked.

Gerald shook his head. “No, I’m going to turn in a few minutes and run up toward Fishers Island. There’s fog over there and I don’t want to get caught in it. We’re three or four miles out now, I guess.”

When, presently, *The Dart* turned her head eastward the breeze was less apparent. For a moment the sun broke through and the waters of the Sound took on new shades of paler green as they broke past the stern. But the clouds soon closed again. Harry, lying against the low handrail at the edge of the cabin roof, showed an

inclination toward slumber. Gerald and Kendall chatted of a hundred things while the launch shot her way steadily and swiftly along. Fishers Island grew larger and nearer. A four-masted schooner lazily dipped by and a long, low torpedo destroyer, her battleship-gray hull scarcely distinguishable from the sullen water, steamed toward the mouth of the Thames River, probably on her way to the Navy Yard above New London. Suddenly a slight exclamation from Gerald brought Kendall's attention back from the wicked-looking craft. Gerald was gazing southward in surprise. All vestige of Long Island was gone and a bank of gray fog was advancing across the Sound.

"I don't like that," muttered Gerald, and *The Dart* circled rapidly and shot away toward home. The sudden turn disturbed Harry's dreams and he looked down at the others, blinking inquiringly.

"What was that? Who shoved me? I say, Gerald, look at the fog out there, will you? Hadn't we better beat it?"

"We're beating it now," answered Gerald grimly, advancing the throttle lever a little. The steady whirr of the propeller increased and there was a louder sound from the engine below. "Take the wheel a minute, Kendall, while I douse some oil. Hold her just as she is."

Kendall scrambled over and gripped the rim of the wheel, while Gerald stepped into the cabin and poked around with a long-nosed oil-can. *The Dart* was headed straight back for Wissining, but there was a good five miles ahead of her and the fog-bank was rolling in fast. Kendall viewed it apprehensively, without realizing just what it meant. It moved toward them steadily, inexorably. At first nearly a mile away, now it was less than half that distance. While he looked a sloop, beating toward Orient Point, grew suddenly faint to view, then disappeared utterly from sight. Gerald came back and took the wheel.

"We'll be in it in another five minutes," he said. "Hustle down, Harry, and dig the fog-horn out of that after locker. That's it. Know

how to work it? Just turn the handle around as though you were churning ice cream or grinding coffee.”

Harry obeyed and a most dismal bellow was emitted from the box. “Isn’t it sweet?” laughed Harry. “Want me to do it again, Gerald?”

“Not yet. Put it up on the roof and when the fog hits us give her a turn every half minute or so.”

“How far from home are we?” asked Gerald, looking down the shore.

“Oh, three miles or so. She’s making a good sixteen miles now, but I’ll have to bring her down to four or five in a minute or two. Here she comes, fellows!”

There was a faint, damp puff of wind in their faces. Then it passed over them and gradually the shore line was blotted from sight. Around them fell a gray blanket of mist. Twenty feet away in any direction the eye lost itself in the fog. *The Dart* slowed down and the triumphant whirr of the screw died away to a timid thudding. The engine clicked feebly and the rods at the sides of the cylinders moved up and down as though grown suddenly weary.

“Harry, get busy with your horn,” directed Gerald. “Kendall, you crawl along to the bow and keep your eyes peeled. If you see anything, even a log of wood, yell back to me. We’ll be home in half an hour or so now, but I don’t want to run down a Fall River steamer or anything like that. It’s awfully bad for your paint!”

At intervals Harry turned the crank of the patent fog-horn and a lugubrious wail arose to lose itself in the impenetrable mist. Between times, from various directions, far and near, came similar sounds. Save for these warnings the silence was deep. What breeze there had been was scarcely perceptible, although the bank of fog was not stationary, but moved constantly across them toward the mainland. Once or twice its grayness was tinged with amber as, for a moment only, the sun came through the clouds above. Kendall,

seated at the forward end of the cabin roof, strained his eyes into the blank wall ahead. Ten minutes passed. From somewhere off the bow came the faint shriek of a locomotive.

“Can’t be far out now,” observed Gerald. “Can you see anything, Kendall?”

“Not a thing, but—I think I hear something.”

“So do I. Get busy with that horn, Harry!” And Gerald, seizing the whistle pull, sent a series of frantic blasts into the air that so surprised Kendall that he almost fell overboard. Then Harry worked the horn again, and after that they listened intently. From somewhere ahead came the loud beat of an engine. Then a hoarse shriek broke the silence.

“She’s a steamer,” muttered Gerald, “and a big one, I guess.” Again he sent the short, sharp peals of the whistle into the air. Now they could hear the beat of the propeller on the approaching steamer. Again her fog-horn tore the silence asunder.

“She’s right on us!” cried Harry, grinding frantically at the crank. Gerald, standing at the wheel, peering forward, worked desperately at the whistle pull and jammed a lever over. *The Dart* lost headway, slowed, stopped. The loud throb of the steamer’s screw seemed all about them. Uncertainly, Gerald started *The Dart* forward again, turning her nose to starboard. Then, as another hoarse bellow came to them, he stopped the launch as suddenly and pulled the lever to reverse. The launch began backing away, circling slowly, to an accompaniment of hysterical shrieks of the whistle and agonized groans of the fog-horn.

“Come back here, Kendall!” called Gerald, and Kendall scurried for the cockpit. There was a sudden *swash* as of a wave running up a beach, and then——

“Hold on hard, fellows!” shouted Gerald, twirling the wheel.

To the right, off the port bow of the launch, a hulking shadow took shape, a shadow that loomed high above the water and

broadened instantly into the black bow of a steamer. Somewhere up there a voice shouted and was drowned in the roar of the whistle. For a long moment the three boys cowering in the cockpit of the launch, frozen into silence, neither spoke nor moved. Then Gerald seized a cushion from a seat and thrust it at Kendall.

“Hold tight to that and jump,” he cried. “Quick.”

CHAPTER VI

THE RESCUE

Kendall, clutching the cork-filled cushion, hesitated, but another glance at the towering black shadow almost against them decided him. Harry was already in the water. Gerald, poised on the combing, cried to him again, and so, holding the cushion to his breast, Kendall leaped. He felt the water close over him, heard its surge in his ears. Then, fighting for breath, choked by the water he had swallowed, he found himself afloat, buoyed up by the cushion. Instinctively he worked his legs as he had seen swimmers do, striving to win out of the path of the steamer. A voice called near at hand.

“Gerald! Kendall!”

Kendall tried to answer, but seemingly had no voice, and only succeeded in choking and coughing. But Gerald, from somewhere in the fog, replied:

“Over here, Harry. Can you keep afloat? Where’s Kendall?”

This time Kendall managed to answer.

“I’m here. I’m all right. Did she hit us?”

“I don’t know. Find Kendall, Harry. He’s got a cushion that will keep you up, too. Call again, Kendall.”

Then from a distance away, muffled by the fog, came a hail:

“Launch ahoy! Are you all right?”

“We’re in the water,” called Gerald. “Can’t see our launch.”

“What?” asked the voice, evidently through a megaphone.

Gerald repeated.

“Hold on then! We’re dropping a boat!”

The voice was fainter. Gerald swam out of the mist and made toward Kendall, calling to Harry. Harry replied and in a moment joined the others. “Take hold of the cushion,” Gerald panted. “It’ll hold you both up.”

“Take hold yourself,” said Harry, struggling for breath. “I’m all right. If I—didn’t have these shoes on——”

“I think this will hold us all up,” said Kendall weakly. He eased away from the cushion.

“Careful,” said Gerald. “Keep one arm over it. That’s it. Lay hold of a corner, Harry, and rest a bit.”

“I will if you will,” said Harry stubbornly.

“All right.” Gerald took a grip on the cushion and Harry followed suit, and although it sank a little it sustained them.

“They’re going to pick us up,” said Gerald. “All right, Kendall?”

“All right,” replied Kendall. But his teeth were chattering and he felt a little faint.

“If I could get this old sweater off,” Harry was muttering when a hail came across the water.

“Which way?” called a voice.

“Over here,” Gerald shouted loudly. Then they heard the creak of oars in locks, and after a moment of suspense, during which Gerald shouted again, a boat took shape in the grayness and came toward them. It was manned by two sailors and a young man in uniform who stood in the bow.

“All right, kids,” he said cheerfully. “We’ll get you in. Pull around a bit to starboard, men. Now then, one at a time, boys. Give me a hand.”

The young officer had made his way to the stern of the small boat while talking and now leaned over toward the group in the water as the rowers backed the boat nearer.

“You first, Kendall,” Gerald directed. Kendall stretched forth an arm and the young officer seized his wrist and in a moment he was squirming across the gunwale. Once inside he subsided between two seats and closed his eyes dizzily. When he opened them again Gerald and Harry were out of the water and the officer was asking Gerald if he wanted to pick up the cushion.

“Never mind it, thanks,” answered Gerald. “I guess the launch is gone, anyway.”

“No, we passed it back there and I guess we can find it again all right. Give way, men.”

“Then you didn’t strike it?” asked Gerald in surprise.

“Just grazed it, I guess. The lookout saw you and we sheered off in time not to sink you. You fellows take my advice and keep off the water in weather like this.”

The steamer sent a blast of her whistle and the rowers altered their course a little.

“We were trying to get home when the fog closed in on us,” replied Gerald.

“I see. Well, what do you want us to do with you? Put you aboard your launch or take you with us? We can’t tow that boat of yours, of course, but she’ll be picked up sooner or later, I guess. We’re bound for New Haven.”

“There she is, sir,” announced one of the sailors as the launch appeared through the fog.

“Just put us aboard her, if you please,” said Gerald. “We’ll be all right, thank you. It was very kind of you to pick us up.”

The officer laughed. He was a fine-looking chap of twenty-one or two, bronzed and blue-eyed. “Well, we couldn’t do much less, I guess. Glad things didn’t turn out any worse, boys. Live around here, do you?”

“Wissining,” answered Harry. “We go to school there; Yardley Hall, you know.”

“What’s your boat, please?” asked Gerald.

“*Conomoit*, Captain Livingstone; Newport News.”

“And what line, sir?”

“Blue Cross Line. Say, you’re a bit particular, ain’t you, about who pulls you out of the water? Or are you going to sue for damages? Anything else you’d like to know?” And the officer’s blue eyes twinkled.

“I’d like to know your name, please,” replied Gerald, smiling.

“Oh, my name? My name’s Hallet, Second Officer.”

“Thank you,” answered Gerald. “We’re very much obliged to you.”

“You’re welcome. Say, that’s a fine looking little launch there. Glad we didn’t rip her up, boys. Over with you, please.”

The Dart, apparently unscathed, although later Gerald found a long smear of black paint along the side where the steamer had grazed, was rocking quietly enough in the little oily waves as the sailors paddled the rowboat alongside. Gerald had thrown the clutch out before he jumped overboard, but the engine was still running. One by one the boys climbed across to the wet, fog-drenched cockpit.

“Good luck,” called their rescuer. “Keep your whistle going. Give way, men.”

The small boat disappeared into the fog, the crew of *The Dart* waving good-by. Then, “Harry, you and Kendall go down there and

get your wet clothes off,” said Gerald. “You’ll find towels in the bottom of the right-hand locker. Rub yourself dry and put some blankets around you. I’ll stay here and keep the horn going until you get fixed up.”

“What’s the matter with you doing it?” asked Harry. “You’re as wet as I am.”

“You do as I say,” replied Gerald shortly. “I’m boss on this ship. Hurry up now!”

Kendall’s teeth chattered so as he pulled and tugged at his wet garments that Harry became alarmed and went to his assistance. But when they had rubbed their bodies into a glow with the coarse bath towels they felt rather better for their bath than worse. They took Gerald’s place on deck and he disappeared to follow the same course of treatment. The discarded clothing was wrung out and hung about to dry if it would, and the three mariners, attired in gray blankets, presented a ludicrous appearance.

“I hope no one will see us,” laughed Harry as Gerald joined them in the cockpit. “We might be taken for the Flying Dutchman.”

“You look more like an Indian,” said Kendall. “What shall we do when we get ashore? We can’t go up to school in these blankets!”

“We’ll get ashore first,” replied Gerald, “and decide that afterwards. Have you heard the *Conomoit’s* whistle lately?”

“Yes, a min—there it is now.”

Gerald stared into the fog, striving to locate exactly the direction of the steamer. “Which way did that come from?” he asked puzzledly.

“Over there,” said Harry, pointing to port.

“Over there,” said Kendall, pointing over the bow.

Then the three looked at each other in dawning dismay. “I thought it was more back there,” said Gerald doubtfully. “Let’s wait

until we hear it again.” But when it came again it was further away and might have proceeded from almost any point at their right.

“That’s funny,” said Harry. “The last time it seemed more over there.”

“The launch has swung around, probably,” said Gerald. “Well, we’ll have to make a try, anyway. There’s no use staying here and drifting around the Sound.” He started the launch slowly ahead and turned her nose toward where, in his belief, the Connecticut shore lay some mile and a half away. Harry went back to the fog-horn and Kendall resumed his position as lookout in the bow. Now and then a whistle sounded at a distance in one direction or another, and once they heard the slow, steady beat of a propeller through the enveloping mist, but no craft came very near them, and *The Dart*, proceeding slowly and cautiously, with Harry winding lugubrious wails of warning from the patent fog-horn every half minute or so and Kendall straining his eyes into the gray wall ahead, slid through the water. In spite of the fact that it seemed quite probable that they might have to spend the night wandering around the Sound, the three boys were in high spirits, due, doubtless, to the reaction which usually follows a moment of peril, and chattered like magpies. It was unanimously agreed that it would be quite unnecessary to mention their misadventure to anyone.

“Toby would probably tell us to keep off the water,” said Harry. “And I guess your father would have something to say, too, Gerald.”

Gerald smiled. “He probably would. It’s all over and I’ve learned my lesson, which is keep on dry land when there’s a fog in sight. Kendall, were you scared?”

Kendall hesitated a moment. Then, “Yes,” he answered quite honestly. “I was. I wasn’t scared when I was in the water so much, but I certainly hated to take that jump!”

“I don’t blame you,” said Harry. “It’s no fun when you can’t swim. That’s something you’ll have to learn, Burtis.”

“I’m going to. I don’t believe it’ll be hard. I swam a little to-day.”

Harry laughed. “Of course you could with a cork cushion under your chin. You’ll find it different when there’s nothing to hold you up.”

“Don’t discourage him,” said Gerald, smiling. “We’ll take him down to the river some day, Harry, and put him through his stunts. See anything, Kendall?”

“Nothing,” replied the lookout at the bow. “There’s a sound somewhere, though.” They all listened. Then Harry gave a shout.

“It’s a train, Gerald. We must be getting near shore.”

“Yes. And I think I hear a bell. Do you?”

The others agreed that they did. “It’s a fog-bell on some ship,” said Gerald. “Let’s make for it and maybe they can tell us where we are.” He turned the bow of *The Dart* a little more to starboard and they ran slowly on, the *ding-dong* of the unseen bell growing momentarily louder.

Presently, “Why were you so anxious to find out the name of that steamer?” asked Harry.

“I thought that perhaps it was one of Dad’s boats,” replied Gerald.

“Oh! And was it?”

“Yes, a Blue Cross boat. I’m going to send that chap something. He was awfully decent to us.”

“Why not, seeing that he ran us down?” laughed Harry.

“I guess it was quite as much our fault as theirs. Yell if you see anything, Kendall.”

“Not a thing yet, Gerald. That bell’s getting pretty near, though.”

“That’s what I think,” responded Gerald, peering ahead. “I wonder where the dickens we are. It would be a joke on us if we

found ourselves down near New London somewhere. Perhaps that bell's on some lighthouse, fellows. Guess not, though; it doesn't sound like it. Well, we'll soon find out. Hello——”

“What?” asked Harry, working another groan from the horn.

“I thought I saw something ahead there, but it's gone now. Did you see anything, Kendall?”

“N-no, I don't think so. Sometimes the fog sort of thickens and you think you see things like shadows.”

And then the bell, which had not sounded for a minute, clanged again and Gerald snatched at a lever, for it seemed almost at their bow. And as *The Dart* slid through the water silently, with diminishing speed, something took shape in the fog ahead of them.

“Land!” exclaimed Harry.

“It's a boat!” called Kendall. “Straight ahead of us, Gerald. You'd better stop.”

Gerald reversed the propeller, *The Dart* churned the water at her stern and quivered as she began to back. By this time they could see the amidship section of a white vessel. Gerald raised his voice as the bell clanged its two notes once more.

“Ahoy there!”

“Ahoy!” answered a voice startlingly near.

“We've lost our bearings. How far is the shore?”

“About three hundred feet.”

“Oh! Well, where are we?”

“Pretty nigh off the mouth of the Wissining River. Where do you want to get to?”

“Wissining River! Then—then what boat's that?”

“Steam yacht *Princess*, New York, at anchor.”

“Why, that——” began Harry excitedly.

“S-sh!” cautioned Gerald. Then, “Thank you,” he called to the invisible informant. “We’re all right then.”

Very cautiously *The Dart* circled away and made a detour of the yacht’s bow. “I didn’t want him to see us,” said Gerald with a chuckle. “He might have recognized the launch and told Dad some time. That was Purdy, the steward. Keep your eyes peeled, Kendall, and watch for the pier.”

A few minutes later *The Dart* was snuggled up to the float, the lines were made fast and the three boys were stumbling up the gangplank with their blankets flapping around them and their wet clothing in their arms. The fog seemed less heavy on shore, but it was still so thick that they almost reached the house before they saw it. Gerald led the way around to a side entrance, from which, treading softly and giggling as they went, they climbed to Gerald’s room without being seen. One after another they took possession of the bath-tub and then scrambled for the dry clothing that Gerald provided. The garments didn’t fit very well, but they answered the purpose. When a maid arrived in response to Gerald’s ring she was sworn to silence and given the wet clothing.

“Put them where they’ll dry in a hurry,” said Gerald. “Has Father returned yet?”

“No, sir. He telephoned he wouldn’t be home until to-morrow morning.”

Gerald gave a sigh of relief as the maid closed the door. “Of course I’m sorry he’s not going to be here for supper,” he explained, “but it might have been difficult to explain the costumes you fellows are wearing. Harry, that coat looks as though you expected to grow a whole lot in the next half hour!”

“Well, it may be a bit large,” allowed Harry, “but it’s some coat, just the same. It’s a heap dressier than anything I own. What are we going to do while those things dry, Gerald?”

“Anything you like. We’ll go down and have a fire in the library and take it easy. You fellows will stay for supper, you know, and by the time I’ve killed this appetite of mine your clothes will be ready, I guess. Come on down.”

For an hour or more they sat in front of the fire and talked of a hundred things, their voices growing drowsier and drowsier as time passed. Then, just when Harry had begun to snore melodiously in his big armchair, supper was announced. In spite of all the dinner they had eaten their afternoon adventures had created fine new appetites, and all three did full justice to the supper. By eight o’clock the clothes were pronounced ready to wear again, and Harry and Kendall changed back to their own garments. Half an hour later the three trudged back to school by way of the village, Gerald having decided, since his father was not to be at home that evening, to return with the others. They parted from Harry at Whitson, after he had been again sworn to secrecy, and, rather tired and very sleepy, crawled the two flights of stairs to Number 28 Clarke. As Kendall lighted the light Gerald caught sight of a card on the table and picked it up.

“What the dickens is this?” he said. “Charles Phillip Cotton! Now who is he and why does he leave a visiting card?”

“He’s that chap who rooms with Wellington,” answered Kendall. “The fellow they chased into my room that night. Don’t you remember?”

“Oh, that duffer? Well, what does he want here?”

“I—I told him I’d be glad to have him look me up. He—he doesn’t know many fellows, and——”

“Oh, I see.” Gerald crumpled up the card and tossed it into the waste basket. “All right, but he must be a silly chump to leave a calling card here. What does he think this is? Fifth Avenue?”

“If you’d rather he didn’t call——” began Kendall.

“Not a bit of it. Maybe he’s better than he looks. You ask any fellows you want, Kendall. Personally, I don’t think I’d ever get very fond of Mr. Cotton, but if you like him it’s all right.”

“I don’t think I do—very much. Only he seemed kind of out of it, and I thought if he came in here some time he might meet some of the fellows. He’s out for the team, you know.”

“Not the football team?” asked Gerald, pausing in the middle of a yawn. Kendall nodded. Gerald grinned and completed his yawn. Then, “Well, he’s got plenty of cheek, hasn’t he? Fancy Mr. Cotton playing football! If I wasn’t so sleepy, Kendall, I’d laugh!”

“And if I wasn’t so sleepy,” murmured Kendall, “I’d have a go at my German.”

“Oh, hush,” said Gerald, crawling into bed with a long sigh of delight. “Don’t mention study to a man—who’s just been—rescued—watery grave——”

Then he slept.

CHAPTER VII

GERALD MAPS A CAMPAIGN

Two afternoons later Kendall ran across Charles Cotton on the football field. Cotton was still struggling along with the awkward squad, and when Kendall, chasing a pigskin that had gone over his head, encountered him he was on his way to the bench.

“Sorry I wasn’t at home Sunday when you called,” said Kendall. “I hope you’ll try again.”

“Oh, it didn’t matter,” Cotton replied. “I didn’t have anything to do, and just thought I’d drop in for a minute.”

“Glad you did. Hope I’ll be there next time. How are you getting on?”

“Pretty fair.”

Kendall nodded and went his way, while Cotton, standing where he was, watched the other boy pick up the ball and hurl it cleverly back across the field. “Thinks he’s a smart guy,” he muttered with a curl of his lip. “Some day I’ll tell him what I think of him and his patronizing ways. Not till I get what I want out of him, though.”

The first game of the season, that with Greenburg High School, was only four days away, and this afternoon the scrimmage was longer than heretofore. For the first time the school was able to get an idea of how the First Team or Varsity would be made up. Cousins played left end that afternoon; Plant, left tackle; Fales, left guard; Girard, center; McKesson, right guard; Stark, right tackle; Adler, right end; Simms, quarter; Crandall, left half; Fayette, right half, and Marion, full-back. Of course, McKesson at guard was only temporary, for that was Captain Merriwell’s position; and a good many looked for a change at right end before the season was much older. But it was generally agreed that the First Team, as made up

this afternoon, would, with one or two changes and barring accidents and unforeseen circumstances, play the season through. A Second Team, captained by Jim Hough, was also formed, and it was this Second Team that went up against the First for three twelve-minute periods and was badly beaten.

The first cut came on Wednesday and some twenty-odd fellows left the squad and swallowed their disappointment. The First Team retained thirty-six players for the present, and the Second Team twenty-three. Charles Cotton survived the weeding-out process and remained among the First Team substitutes. He was trying for end. Kendall was a little disappointed at finding himself second choice, but was comforted with the knowledge that he was certain of getting into a full share of the games since he was by far the best goal kicker in the squad. Holmes, who since the beginning of practice had been pushing Albert Simms hard for the quarter position, was more disappointed than Kendall. It was his last year, and he had been after the place ever since he had entered Yardley.

On Thursday the Second surprised themselves and everyone else by rushing the First Team off its feet in two periods and finally winning the practice game by 10 to 9, scoring two touchdowns and missing the goal in each case. The First Team got a touchdown, and Kendall, called on from the side-line, kicked the goal. Later, in the final period, having substituted Crandall, he added another three points by a goal from the field. But that wasn't enough to beat the Second, and Hugh's charges gamboled off highly pleased with themselves. There was no practice on Friday, although the players listened to a half-hour lecture in the gymnasium and afterward walked through a few simple plays.

Greenburg High School was not a formidable opponent, and the contest on Saturday was not much more than a glorified practice game. The school turned out to a fellow and filled the grand stand and nibbled peanuts and applauded every opportunity. Merriwell played through the first two periods and then gave way to McKesson. In the third period Yardley presented an almost entirely

new line-up. Steger went in for Plant, Jackson for Fales, Best for Girard, Adler for Metz, Holmes for Simms, Kendall for Fayette, and Brinspool for Marion. Greenburg also seized the opportunity to try out her new material, and the latter part of the game was something of a comedy of errors. Yardley already had a score of 22 to 0, and Holmes received instructions to score by straight football only. That, however, proved easier to say than to do. Greenburg, even with a substitute back-field and a rather inexperienced line, was quick and heady and stopped the Yardley attack for short gains time after time. The third period ended without a score for either side.

Up on the grand stand, with a bag of peanuts between them, Gerald and Harry sat in the warm sunlight and viewed the contest with mild and critical interest.

“More changes,” murmured Harry as the fourth period was about to begin. “Best is coming off and Lin Johnson is going in. And there goes Folsom to take Holmes’s place. Say, wouldn’t you hate to be a football coach, Gerald?”

“Why?”

“Oh, think of having to lick a bunch like that into shape every year. Gee, I’d get so discouraged I’d want to quit sometimes!”

“But you mustn’t judge a team by the first game it plays,” answered Gerald. “Wait a month and then have a look.”

“I know. Somebody’s hurt. There goes Andy with the water pail. Isn’t it funny that as long as we’ve been playing football, Gerald, nobody’s ever thought to carry water on to the field in anything but a pail?”

“What would they carry it in? A tumbler?”

“No, but you can’t run with a pail of water without splashing most of it out. Look at that! Why not use a can or something with a lid? Who is that chap? Whoever he is, they’re taking him out. It’s Adler, isn’t it?”

“I don’t know him. Somebody’s given him a nasty looking eye, though.”

“I should say so! Yes, that’s Adler. He’s after Cousins’s place. Who’s the funny looking guy Payson’s sending in?”

“Oh, his name is Cotton. He doesn’t look much as though he could play end, does he?”

“Cotton?” Harry watched the substitute run on to the field. “Who is he?”

“I don’t know. I met him a week or so ago. He’s rooming with The Duke in Clarke. He’s new this Fall.”

“Funny,” muttered Harry, “but I seem to know that chap. Name sounds familiar, too. Cotton ... Cotton....”

“He’s a protégé of Kendall’s,” said Gerald. “Kendall has taken pity on him because he’s new and doesn’t know many fellows. He asked him around and he came last Sunday while we were away. Left his visiting card! What do you know about that for style?”

“Well, whoever he is, he can’t play end,” said Harry in disgust. “That Greenburg tackle is making him look like a canceled stamp _____”

Harry stopped so abruptly that Gerald turned to regard him curiously. “What’s the matter?” he asked.

Harry shook his head. He was staring across the field at Cotton with a frown of perplexity on his face. “Nothing,” he answered finally. “Only that fellow bothers me. I’m almost certain I’ve seen him somewhere before.”

“You’ve probably seen him in class or around school,” said Gerald. “That’s not quite impossible, you know.”

But Harry again shook his head. “If I’d seen him here before I’d remember it. Almost seems as if I’d met him. Where does he come from?”

“I don’t know. Hold on, though; seems to me The Duke said he came from Maryland.”

“Well, it wasn’t there, for I’ve never been in Maryland, except to go through it on a train. There goes Kendall with the ball. Good work, Burtis! That fellow is certainly a wonder at keeping his feet, Gerald!”

“And he’s pretty good at keeping his head, too,” replied Gerald with a smile.

“Funny idea you taking him in with you, though,” said Harry. “I like him first rate, but——”

“But what?” asked Gerald.

“Oh, I don’t know. He seems hardly your style. That’s all.”

Gerald was silent a moment, watching the efforts of Yardley to carry the pigskin over the remaining four white lines intervening between it and the Greenburg goal. At last, “I’ll tell you, Harry,” he said, “I’ve always felt a sort of interest in Kendall ever since he butted into the room one night with the calm announcement to Dan that he’d like to join the football team. Towne put him up to it, you know.”

“I hear Towne isn’t coming back this year,” interpolated Harry.

“You can’t make me feel bad that way,” replied Gerald. “Well, I really meant to cultivate Kendall after that, but I got busy with the cross-country work and one thing and another and didn’t see much of him. Ned Tooker sort of took him up, though, and he seemed in pretty good hands. Then came that affair of the field goal and the school made a hero of him, or would have had he let them. Dan was interested in Kendall, too, and we got him over to the room once or twice, but he seemed afraid of coming when he wasn’t wanted, and we sort of gave him up after awhile.

“But Dan was a great believer in Kendall. Said he was the most ‘natural’ football player he had ever seen. And he also said”——

Gerald lowered his voice—“that unless something happened, like Kendall getting hurt or leaving school, he would be captain before he got through here.”

Harry whistled softly but expressively.

“And you know Dan doesn’t make mistakes,” added Gerald, his fondness for his friend sounding in his voice.

“Looks as if he’d made one this time, though, doesn’t it?” asked Harry with a smile.

“Why?”

“Why? Well, look.” Harry nodded to where Kendall was racing up the field after a punt. “He’s only first sub now and next year is his last, isn’t it?”

“Yes. And that’s why we’ve got to get busy.”

“Eh? Who? Get busy doing what?”

“Proving that Dan wasn’t mistaken,” replied Gerald quietly. “If Kendall’s going to have the captaincy before he leaves here then next year’s his last chance. And that means that he’s got to win it this Fall.”

“Yes, but what did you mean when you said we’d got to get busy?”

“Just that,” answered Gerald with a smile. “Dan said Kendall would be captain. He expects him to be and wants him to be. Well, you know I’m pretty fond of old Dan, and so it’s up to me to see that things happen the way he wants them to.”

“But what the dickens can you do?” gasped Harry.

“I don’t quite know yet. But you can see what I have done. I’ve brought Kendall over to my room where he will meet a lot of fellows he ought to know. I want him to get close to the other fellows on the team, for one thing, for it’s those fellows who will elect the captain next month. Of course, it’s up to him to make good

on the gridiron, and I think he will. He will if I can make him, anyway!”

“But—but, look here, Gerald—that—that’s rank politics!”

“No, it isn’t,” replied Gerald, shaking his head gently. “It’s politics, but it isn’t rank. It amounts to this, Harry: Kendall hasn’t the push to get himself elected captain if left to his own efforts. But there’s no reason why he shouldn’t be captain if he’s wanted——”

“But he won’t be!”

“Not if he’s left to himself, but I intend to see that he is wanted. What I am conducting is a quiet campaign in the interests of Kendall Burtis. If he does his part you’ll find when it comes time to elect a captain for next year that they’ll be crying for Kendall!”

Harry viewed the other in rapt and admiring awe for a moment. Then, doubtfully, “But it doesn’t seem to me that he’s got it in him to be a good captain, Gerald. He—he isn’t a leader. I don’t say he can’t play football, for I think he can, although even that’s got to be proved a bit more, hasn’t it? But—well, it takes certain qualities to be a good captain.”

“What are they?”

“Eh? Oh, I don’t know. Pluck, of course, and brains and—and executive ability——”

“Whatever that is,” laughed Gerald. “Well, you can’t say Kendall hasn’t pluck after the way he went overboard the other day without being able to swim a stroke. And as for brains, well, you think a minute.”

Harry nodded. “Yes, he’s got a good thinker, I guess.”

“And he can be wonderfully cool in an emergency,” continued Gerald.

“How do you know that?”

“By the way he stepped out on the field last year at the eleventh hour, grabbed off the grand stand in a pair of long trousers and hustled into a sweater, and stood there and kicked that goal with the whole Broadwood team trying to get through and kill him.”

“Y-yes, but——”

“As for the other thing, what you call executive ability and what the rest of us, who haven’t your visiting acquaintance with fine English, call leadership, why, no, he hasn’t displayed any of that yet. He hasn’t had a chance, I guess. That’s something we’ll have to develop in him, or, at least, bring out. And he’s discouragingly shy. He will have to get over some of that. I don’t expect to make him popular in the general meaning of the word. That isn’t necessary. I don’t think you can call Charlie Merriwell a very popular chap.”

“He isn’t, and it remains to be seen what sort of a captain he will make. Simms ought to have had it.”

“Yes, Simms is popular, but he didn’t get the captaincy. I know of at least two fellows on the team who don’t really like Merriwell and who cast their votes for him because they knew he could play football and believed he’d make a good captain and because they respected him. See? Well, I mean to have Kendall prove that he can play football, show that he can lead, and win the respect of the fellows.”

“Gee, you’ve got a job! Sounds like a confidence game to me, too, Gerald. Hanged if you aren’t deliberately setting to work to—to what’s that word?—to foist a captain on the school that they don’t even know!”

“But they will know him before the time comes,” replied Gerald confidently. “As for foisting”—he shrugged his shoulders—“it’s a fine old word, Harry, but it’s in wrong. Dan has chosen Kendall for next year’s captain; Dan knows; Kendall shall be captain. There it is in a nutshell!”

“You’ve certainly got plenty of cheek,” laughed Harry. “And you can bet I’ll be watching things with rapt attention, Gerald. I wish you luck, and Kendall, too, but I’m very much afraid you’ll be disappointed.”

“Perhaps. If we are we’ll stand it. There’s one thing you seem to miss, though. You talk about standing by and watching things. I have tried to convey the idea that you were in on the campaign, Harry.”

“Me! What the dickens can I do?”

“I don’t know yet. I think you can be useful, however. Perhaps I’ll make you head of the publicity department. Anyhow, I want your help. If I hadn’t I wouldn’t have told you all this. Because it’s got to be kept a secret from everyone, Harry, and especially Kendall.”

“What? Isn’t he to know?”

“Not a word of it!”

“Then I don’t see how you can expect him to—to do things, to get next to the fellows, to——”

“Don’t you see that if we told him he’d back out right now? He hasn’t any more idea of getting the captancy that he has of—of flying. And even if he agreed to it he’d be so self-conscious all the time that he’d make a horrible mess of it. No, you and I, and maybe another chap before we’re through, must keep this to ourselves. No one must even guess that we’re booming Kendall.”

“Sounds difficult,” Harry objected.

“Not very. There’s no reason why anyone should suspect that we are doing it, is there? Just now Kendall Burtis is about the last fellow anyone would think of as next year’s captain, isn’t he?”

“He certainly is,” agreed Harry, with conviction.

“Then why should anyone suspect that we’re pushing him for it? Diplomacy, Harry, diplomacy! Also secrecy!”

“Two orders of each,” said Harry. “Well, it sounds sort of crazy to me, but I’ll take a chance with you. And now, as the practice has been over for some five minutes and as we’re about the only fellows in sight, I’d like to move along. Even politicians have to eat, Gerald.”

CHAPTER VIII

COTTON MAKES A WAGER

I often wonder what Kendall's sensations would have been had he learned of the plot to make him football captain. Disbelief, first of all, I fancy, and then wonder and alarm, and, finally, absolute stupefaction! But he never did learn, never so much as suspected what was going on. There was no reason why he should. Number 28 Clarke had long been a popular place of gathering, as Kendall, who had spent a year in the same corridor, well knew, and if it sometimes seemed to him that the room was rapidly degenerating into a club it never occurred to him that he had anything to do with it. He often wished that Gerald was less popular, for the gatherings in Number 28 often seriously interfered with his studying. All kinds of fellows came and went, and Kendall met them all sooner or later. Had he given the matter special thought he might have remarked on the fact that while the visitors represented about every interest in school they were all fellows worth knowing, fellows who had made good in one way or another, fellows whose words carried weight and who held influence. They were by no means all football chaps, nor even all athletic chaps. What Harry Merrow called "the High-Brow Element" was well represented. At one time or another in that month of October Gerald managed to attract to his room, and always in the most natural and casual way, about all the prominent fellows in Yardley. And Kendall thought it was very nice and enjoyed meeting the visitors, and, having no ax to grind, was diffidently polite and did more listening than talking. One evening after Merriwell and Simms, of the football team, and one or two others had been in and gone again Gerald took Kendall good-naturedly to task.

"Look here, Kendall," he said, as they were getting ready for bed, "it's a fine thing to be modest and all that, but, as the negro said, 'it

don't get you nothin'!' Why don't you talk a little more?"

"Why, I—I guess I don't think of anything to say, Gerald."

"Rot! You talk more sense than most fellows when you do talk. I'm not suggesting that you jabber just to make a noise, but you're overdoing the wise owl act, old man. Fellows may get it into their heads that you don't approve of their statements and remarks, you see. Loosen up now and then, Kendall, loosen up!"

There was no more said, but the suggestion bore fruit. Kendall really made an effort on the next occasion. He wasn't exactly chatty, but he hazarded an opinion now and then, and was both surprised and flattered to find that what he said was listened to with at least a show of interest. A chap who doesn't talk often is pretty certain of a hearing when he does say anything, and as Kendall seldom spoke unless he had a remark of some value to offer he soon became certain of his audience. But all this took time, and in the meanwhile life was pretty busy with him and he had far more important affairs to think of than polite conversation in Number 28.

St. John's School came and departed with trailing banners. Kendall played through two periods of that game and acquitted himself with honor. Jennings Academy proved a harder conundrum for the wearers of the Yardley blue. Jennings was a new opponent, having been given a place on the schedule that Fall for the first time, vice Carrel's School. Jennings had Yardley pretty well scared for three periods, during which she ran up ten points to the Blue's five. But in the final ten minutes Yardley buckled down and hammered her way almost the length of the field and sent Simms dodging and twisting across the line for another score. Luckily Fales barely managed to place the pigskin over the bars in the try-at-goal, and Yardley nosed out of the fray victor by one point. It was by this time well past the middle of October, and the remaining contests, with Porter Institute, Forest Hill, Nordham and Broadwood, were all of the major variety. Yardley was to go away from home for the Porter game, and this year it was Broadwood's turn to entertain her rival,

but the other two games were to be contested on the Yardley field. The Nordham game, for the reason that Nordham had trounced the Blue the preceding Fall, was looked forward to with unusual interest and a grim determination to wreak revenge. Not that Coach Payson meant to endanger his chances of defeating Broadwood the week afterward, or that any of the fellows wanted him to. However, if it was in any way possible to square accounts with Nordham without overexerting or injuring her players, Yardley meant to do it.

Football practice was no longer a romp, although Coach Payson never allowed the work to become so severe as to be distasteful. Many a day the players, First Team, Second Team and substitutes, trailed back up the hill to the gymnasium tired in every muscle and almost ready for mutiny. But always by the time they had had supper the bruises were forgotten, the muscles had stopped aching and their thoughts were set eagerly on the morrow's practice. Of course, there were the usual minor injuries to contend with during the early season, the usual cases of overtraining, but no serious setback to the progress of the team occurred. That progress was slow and steady. More time than usual had been given this year to the fundamentals. It was not until after the Jennings game that tackling the dummy ceased to be a part of the afternoon programme. Even then the stuffed figure continued to swing and dance between the uprights and was occasionally visited by some player who had failed to grasp the knack of stopping the runner. The kickers, Kendall amongst them, held a half-hour of practice each day. Simms, the quarter, was a fairly proficient drop-kicker but had never showed much punting ability, and Payson meant he should learn the art. Graduation had deprived the team of one or two fair punters, and it was necessary to replace them. The material was not very promising at the beginning of the season, if we except Kendall. Kendall had proved himself a born kicker, but no coach wants to depend on one man for the whole season. So Fales and Crandall and Plant were added to the kicking staff, and by the middle of the season Fales had become a drop-kicker of some ability and Plant

was getting off punts of forty and forty-five yards. But Kendall still held his superiority in both lines.

It was the Monday after the Jennings game that Kendall ceased being a substitute and took Fayette's place at right half-back. The change surprised no one, not even Fayette, I think, for the school had all the Fall expected Kendall to make the team and had only wondered why Payson had not placed him before. A player with Kendall's ability to punt, drop-kick or place-kick deserved a position on the team even if his football ability ended there. But Kendall's didn't, and he proved it time and again as the season wore on. He was a daring runner with the ball, a brilliant ground-gainer, who dodged and whirled through a broken field like a small cyclone, and was as difficult to seize and stop! He was so dependable, in fact, that when the First Team was in a tight place one was likely to hear murmurs along the side-lines of, "Why don't they give it to Burtis?" But Kendall had his limitations, too, for at line-plunging he failed to gain as did either Marion or Crandall. He was lighter than those players and could not hit the line as hard. But if the opening was there Kendall could knife himself through as well as anyone, and once going he was harder to stop than the big Marion.

But if the Jennings contest decided favorably the fortunes of Kendall it also brought disaster to the ambitions of another of our acquaintances. Charles Cotton was dropped on that Monday. Others went with him in that final cut, and I doubt if any deserved banishment more than Cotton; and I'm sure none took it less gracefully. Cotton's soul was filled with bitterness and wrath and his speech with condemnation.

Since that first unsuccessful visit to Number 28 Cotton had called many times. Gerald bore with him for the sake of Kendall, and Kendall, secretly weary to death of him and disliking him more and more each time, tried his best to blame himself for the distaste he felt for Cotton and, for fear he was doing that youth an injustice, was as nice as pie to him. Cotton always seemed to know when

Captain Merriwell or other influential football fellows were in Number 28, and timed his visits by such knowledge. He “swiped” frankly and assiduously. He tried his hardest to make a hit with Merriwell, but only succeeded in making the captain loathe the sight of him. He was boastful, sarcastic and far from kind-hearted, but for a while he managed to make even Merriwell and, in a lesser degree, Gerald believe in his football prowess. He never hesitated to praise himself and his playing, and if one does that often enough and with sufficient enthusiasm one will impress the audience. Unfortunately, however, Cotton was unable to prove on the gridiron what he proclaimed in the dormitory, and as elocution doesn’t win football games Cotton’s career came to an end. He selected the evening of the day of his demise to call on Kendall. Perhaps he hoped to find Merriwell there and to make a plea for reinstatement. If so he was disappointed, for only Gerald and Kendall were in the room when he made his appearance.

“Well, I see you struck it, Burtis,” he announced after greetings were over. “Very glad, I’m sure. You can play all around Fayette.”

“Thanks,” murmured Kendall. “It was just because I am a bit handier at kicking than Fayette is that they gave me his place. He may have me out again before the big game.”

“Pshaw, don’t you worry! Payson loves you; Merriwell does, too; you’re popular. That makes a difference.”

“Just what do you mean by that?” asked Gerald, with a frown.

“Oh, you know well enough what I mean. A fellow hasn’t much show here to make anything unless he’s got plenty of friends. Look at me. I can play end as well as Fox can; better, for that matter; but I get pitched out and he stays in. Fox has been here two years and has a pull. I’m a new fellow and haven’t. That’s all.”

“If you can play better than Fox,” exclaimed Gerald impatiently, “why the dickens don’t you?”

“I have! All the Fall! Ask any one.”

“I don’t need to. I’ve watched practice myself almost every day until a week ago, and I’ll tell you frankly, Cotton, you never showed anything when I was looking!”

“I didn’t know you considered yourself an authority on football, Pennimore. I thought running was your specialty.”

“It is, but I’ve played some football, and I’ve seen a heap of it, and if you want my opinion I’ll tell you plainly that you play the game about as well as a piece of cheese! I don’t want to hurt your feelings, Cotton, but there’s no sense in making charges of favoritism here. In this school a fellow wins on his merits, and when you’ve been here longer you’ll realize it.”

“That’s your opinion,” growled Cotton. “You’ve always had everything you wanted, and you think you’ve earned it all. I’ll bet you that if you hadn’t known lots of the fellows who give out favors you’d be just where you were when you came.”

Kendall, who had been listening with an anxious countenance, attempted the rôle of peacemaker. “Well, you’ve got another year yet, Cotton. I wouldn’t feel badly about it. After all——”

“Badly! Oh, I’m not breaking my heart,” replied Cotton, with a sneer. “It’s no great honor to win your place by a pull. Besides, that team will be beaten to a froth this year. Why, Broadwood will put it all over them! You wait and see!”

“You’re one of the sort who doesn’t want to play on the losing side, are you?” asked Gerald disdainfully. “Then I guess the team’s well off without you, Cotton.”

Cotton turned toward Gerald with an angry light in his pale eyes, but whatever the words were that sprang to his lips they never got past. His reply to the taunt was so gentle that both Gerald and Kendall stared in surprise. “I can take a licking as well as the next fellow,” said Cotton quietly. “But I do think it’s a shame to keep good players off the team and get beaten for it by Broadwood.”

“The team’s no worse than last year’s,” replied Gerald, regaining his good nature, “and that was good enough to lick old Broadwood, my friend.”

“Yes, by a goal from the field! Broadwood had you beaten before that.”

“What’s the odds? A field goal is a field goal, and we won. And we’ll do it again this year.”

“Bet you don’t!”

“Bet we do! That is, I might bet if betting was allowed,” continued Gerald with a chuckle.

“Well, what will you bet?” Cotton demanded eagerly.

“Not allowed,” responded Gerald. “Betting is barred.”

“You know you’d lose,” taunted the other.

Gerald’s eyes snapped. “Wait a bit, Mr. Cotton! Seems to me you are pretty certain, considering that the game is a month away.”

“I *am* certain. Broadwood will make your team——”

“Why mine? Why not *ours*?”

“Well, our team, then! Broadwood will make it look like—like a bunch of has-beens!”

“May I ask on what you base your judgment?” asked Gerald.

“On lots of things! On the players, and the coaching system——”

“You don’t approve of our coaching system?”

“I certainly don’t! Payson works the fellows like a lot of dray horses, for one thing. And he’s old-fashioned, too. He sticks to old formations and plays that were worn out when Walter Camp was a baby. And look at the way he runs practice! Every fellow doing about what he likes! When does he begin to teach team-play, I’d like to know? In Saturday’s game there was about as much coördination”——Gerald blinked——“as there is in a pack of hens!”

“You mean a swarm of hens,” corrected Gerald gently. “Well, all that may be true. I wish, anyway, you’d mention it to Payson; he ought to be warned. But—*but*, my caustic and critical friend, we’ll send Broadwood home with its tail between its legs!”

“Maybe, but you don’t believe it hard enough to bet anything on it!”

“Merely because betting is not allowed and because I have been taught, besides, that it isn’t nice. Still——” Gerald paused and considered. “Still, we might perhaps come to an agreement that would—er—add a personal interest to the outcome of the game. Let me see, Cotton. I’ll tell you!” Gerald viewed him in mild triumph. “If Broadwood wins I’ll invite you to spend Christmas recess with me in New York and give you a good time, all differences and animosities forgotten. On the other hand, if Broadwood is defeated you will—what the dickens *will* you do?” Cotton opened his mouth to speak, but Gerald went on. “I have it! If Yardley wins you will stand on the steps of Oxford at five o’clock, give a cheer for Yardley, and proclaim a certain passage from a play of one William Shakespeare which I will indicate when the time comes.”

“That’s silly,” growled Cotton.

“Maybe; what’s the difference? Do you agree?”

“Yes. If Broadwood wins you’re to give me a week at your place in New York at Christmas——”

“Ten days, if you like.”

“And if Broadwood loses I am to stand in front of Oxford Hall and cheer for Yardley and say something out of Shakespeare.”

“At five o’clock on the day of the game. And you’re to cheer and speak loud enough to be heard—er—at the farthest edge of the stupendous throng.”

“It’s a bargain,” agreed Cotton, with a grin. “I expect to have a pretty good time at recess. Much obliged. Now I’ll be going. I’m

sort of sorry for you, though, Pennimore.”

“So shall I be if I lose,” laughed Gerald, as Cotton’s footsteps died away down the hall.

“What is it you want him to repeat?” asked Kendall.

“If he loses? Why, nothing but that famous passage from Mr. Shakespeare’s ‘Much Ado About Nothing.’ You remember the words of our old friend Dogberry? ‘Masters, remember that I am an ass; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass!’”

CHAPTER IX

HARRY SCENTS A MYSTERY

Life wasn't all football, however. There was a lot of studying to attend to. Kendall was taking five courses, in preparation for that college he might never reach: Latin, Greek, mathematics, English and German. These made up a total of twenty-two hours a week. French, physics and chemistry he was leaving to his senior year. Luckily Kendall had the valuable gift of application, and application might also be called the royal road to results. Certainly an ounce of it is better than a pound of labor. Kendall was doing well in all his courses. He was fond of languages and learned easily, German, however, presenting a rather more difficult road than Greek or Latin. It was in mathematics that he had to work hardest. There are some who never manage to get themselves in sympathy with that science, and Kendall was one of these. Geometry was his bugbear that year. But, with the scholarship beckoning, he worked as hard as he knew how and usually secured creditable marks. Although he had only three hours of English, that course required a good deal of outside reading; just now they were digging at Milton, with Shakespeare looming ahead; and there were weekly compositions to be written, and, of course, one never quite got away from rhetoric. So Kendall had his hands full, and there were times when it seemed to him that it would be the part of wisdom to give up football and devote all his thought and time to digging for that scholarship. He didn't, however, although he became panicky pretty often and assured himself discouragedly that he hadn't the ghost of a show of winning even a Sidney. The panicky moments became more frequent as the Broadwood game drew near and as football made greater and greater demands on his time and thought. (But when the awards were made at the end of the term Kendall found that his fears had been groundless, for he won the Gordon

Scholarship after all. And the pleasure he experienced in writing the news to his father more than made up for all the labor he had gone through.)

Studying in his room in the evening wasn't a very great success, for, although the study hour was more or less strictly observed, the gatherings there continued, and it was difficult to get the mind settled on geometry or German, Latin or Greek when you had been listening for an hour to a discussion of the afternoon's practice. Gerald, in his last year, had less to do than Kendall. He was taking but four courses, found them easy and so had to study but little. Kendall made use of the hours when he had no recitations to retire to the library in Oxford, and most of his studying was done there.

And, aside from football, there were other athletic interests demanding the attention of the school. The cross-country candidates were training five days a week. The golf team was preparing for the match with Broadwood. There was a Fall Handicap Tournament going on at the tennis courts. Even the baseball diamonds were occupied in fair weather. Boys who found no appeal in any of these pursuits took to the water, and as long as the Winter held off the river was dotted with canoes and skiffs, pair-oars and tubs. And yet, back of all this, one event loomed fatefully, growing each day larger and more portentous. That was the Big Game. All the athletic industries culminated with the Broadwood contest; the eighteenth of November marked the end of the Autumn season, and fellows had a way of making promises to themselves like this: "After the Broadwood game I'll buckle down and get caught up with Latin"; or, "When the Broadwood game's over I'll have more time for study." There was a subconscious spirit of nervous unrest pervading the school that grew as the days went by. After the eleven had journeyed away and returned with the scalp of Porter Institute the season settled into its final stride, and only two games intervened before the great test.

Yardley found Porter easy, and rolled up twenty-four points against her opponent, meanwhile denying Porter the consolation of

a single score. The school declared that the team had found itself and that the rest was easy. More knowing ones, taking Porter's weakness into consideration, found cause for doubts and criticisms. Twice Yardley had had the ball within Porter's ten-yard line and had failed to score. There had been four bad fumbles. The team was still weak on offense. If Broadwood was to be beaten the Blue must improve vastly in the next three weeks. Thus the knowing ones. What Coach Payson thought no one knew.

In the meantime Gerald's campaign went forward and bore results. Kendall made friends. Nowadays to walk from his room in Clarke to a recitation room in Oxford entailed more greetings than last year he would have been called on to accord in a month. He was really surprised to find how many fellows he knew well enough to stop and talk to, how many others demanded recognition, a word, a nod or a wave of the hand. Of course, among the younger boys he was a hero second only to Captain Merriwell himself, and the Preparatory Class youth who won a word from Kendall hurried off to tell the rest of the inhabitants of Merle of the talk he had had with Burtis, describing just how Kendall had looked and just what he had said, and, I'm afraid, enlarging a little on the incident. But that's a weakness not confined to Preparatory Class boys. Had you asked some of Kendall's fellow members of the team why they had taken a liking to him it is probable that they would each have said about the same thing—had they deigned to answer such a question at all! "Burtis?" they would have said. "Oh, I don't know. He's a good sort, don't you think? Awfully quiet, of course, but has a lot of horse sense. Doesn't butt in, either. Not much on the handsome, but sort of nice looking, too, somehow. Doesn't have much to say about what he has done or is going to do or can do; just goes ahead and does it. Awfully square sort, I'd say. Besides, he certainly can play football!"

Gerald was pretty busy nowadays with the Cross-Country Team. He was captain of it and about the best performer. And so Kendall saw less of him than during the first of the term. But they usually

spent the evenings together. Harry Merrow, also a member of the Cross-Country squad, was very likely to turn up at Number 28 after supper, and Kendall had grown to like him very much. There had been another jaunt on *The Dart* since the day they had been lost in the fog, but the second voyage had been an affair without incident. Kendall had not yet become a proficient swimmer, principally because he had had but three lessons in the art. It was very hard to find time for anything just now. But he had managed thirty strokes on the last occasion and had swallowed only about three quarts of the Wissining River. Gerald and Harry had assured him that he had done excellently, and Kendall promised himself that when Spring came he would complete his education.

Another fairly frequent visitor to Number 28 was The Duke. The Duke had a way of knocking subduedly and entering on tiptoe, throwing fearful glances behind him and subsiding into a chair with a long sigh of relief.

“Ha!” he would whisper hoarsely. “Again I have thrown him off the track! Ah, the peace and quiet of this refuse!” (Perhaps it isn’t necessary to explain that in The Duke’s language “refuse” meant “refuge.”) He always pretended that Cotton was dogging his footsteps and that it was only by extraordinary stealth and cunning that he could escape his roommate. Once or twice it happened that Cotton followed him later, and on those occasions The Duke would throw up his hands, roll his eyes, and spend the rest of the time of his visit sitting silent and staring at Cotton as though hypnotized.

Cotton still insisted that he had been badly used by coach and captain and still predicted utter annihilation for the forces of Yardley. Gerald’s wager soon became known of and occasioned a lot of merriment. The Duke pretended to be—or perhaps really was—much concerned. “My word, Gerald, suppose we really did get licked! Have you paused to consider the fate you have—er—invited? Think of having Cotton on your hands every hour for a week or ten days! Breakfast, luncheon, dinner, Gerald! No time off for recitations! Oh, woe is you!”

Some of the other fellows, too, tried to alarm Gerald, declaring that they wouldn't be a bit surprised if Broadwood won this year. Then they drew graphic word pictures of Gerald towing Charles Cotton around New York in Christmas recess. "Whatever you do, Gerald," begged Bert Simms, "don't take him to the Eden Musee! When you went out you'd get arrested for attempting to steal one of the wax figures!"

From all of which it will be seen that Mr. Cotton had unfortunately not ingratiated himself to any extent with the habitués of Number 28. One evening about midway between the Porter and Forest Hill games the room was pretty well filled. Merriwell and Simms and Girard, of the football element, were present, and George Kirk, captain of the golf team, had dropped in. These, with Gerald and Kendall, pretty well taxed the seating accommodations. Naturally the three subjects uppermost were football, cross-country running, and golf. Kirk had been bewailing the loss to the golf team of Ned Tooker, last year's captain and star player, and had expressed himself as very doubtful of the outcome of the match to be played at Broadwood the following Saturday.

"Burtis, I thought you were going to play golf this year," said Kirk.

"I am, I think, after the Broadwood game," answered Kendall. "I like it first-rate, Kirk, but there isn't much time for it now, you know."

"I suppose not. Maybe you'll get in shape to play with us in the Spring matches, though. It's the hardest thing to get fellows to take an interest in golf here!"

"Everyone wants to play football in the Fall and baseball in Spring," said Gerald. "You can't get them to think of anything else, barring track sports. We've had a dickens of a time this year getting enough fellows together to make up the Cross-Country Team."

“I thought you had lots of candidates,” said Charles Merriwell, a good-looking, dark-haired fellow of nineteen. “Anyhow, you’re going to win, aren’t you?”

“Oh, I suppose we’ll win all right enough, but if we do it will be because Broadwood’s weak this year. Our team doesn’t begin to compare with last season’s.”

“That’s what they all say,” scoffed big Girard, the center. “You hear that every year. Nothing ever compares with what we had last year. It’s rot!”

“Not always,” replied Bert Simms. “Our team isn’t as good as last year’s, and you know it, Pete.”

“What’s the matter with it?”

“Too light, for one thing. Broadwood’s got the heaviest team she ever put on the field. Bet you she’ll outweigh us four pounds to a man.”

“Oh, piffle! Look at O’Brien, their center; he’s a mite!”

“Well, he’s the only mite they’ve got, Pete. As for the back-field, they’re tons heavier than we are.”

“Then we’ll make up for it by getting the jump on ’em,” said Girard. “Weight isn’t everything.”

“Nice of *you* to say so,” murmured Simms, causing chuckles of amusement from the others. Girard reached out with a big foot and, hooking it around a leg of Simms’ chair, brought that youth to the floor.

“Bert’s right, though,” declared Merriwell, when order had been restored, “and we’ll find when Payson shows his new plays that we’re in for a kicking game, with most of our gains on wide runs. You’ll be busy that day, Burtis.”

At that moment there was a rap at the door and The Duke entered, hands in pockets, whistling, his eyes roaming the ceiling,

elaborately careless. He had an old felt hat on the back of his head, his coat was tightly buttoned and the collar was turned up, and a false mustache, fiercely red, hovered uncertainly under his nose. A burst of laughter greeted him. Once inside the room, however, his demeanor changed. Turning swiftly, he threw himself against the door and, as it crashed shut, quickly turned the key and leaned there breathing heavily, his eyes darting about with a haunted and terrified glare.

“What is it?” asked Merriwell. “Sherlock Holmes?”

“Old Sleuth,” suggested Gerald. “How did you cut your lip, Duke?”

Without replying The Duke leaned down and pressed an ear against the keyhole. Then, apparently satisfied, he unlocked the door and dramatically removed hat and mustache.

“Aha!” he exclaimed hoarsely; “foiled again!”

“Bet you he will be along inside five minutes,” laughed Gerald. “Sit on the bed, Duke, and try to look like a pillow. Maybe he won’t recognize you.”

The Duke followed the first part of the suggestion, but refused to disguise himself as a pillow, even when Simms suggested that that shouldn’t be a difficult stunt for anyone as feather-brained as The Duke.

“Don’t trifle with me,” hissed The Duke. “I’m a der-esperate man!”

“Where’d you get the red mustache?” asked Girard. “Let’s see it.”

“Bought in the village,” replied The Duke as he tossed it over. “It makes a perfect disguise, doesn’t it? I’m going to wear it to history recitation to-morrow so Collins won’t know me and won’t ask for my digest, which I have forgotten to prepare.”

“I stump you to,” said Simms. “If you will——” But the rest was lost in the laughter caused by Girard’s appearance with the

mustache on. After that they all had to try it, and just as it finally got around to Kendall there was another knock on the door.

“Ha!” muttered The Duke. “’Tis he! I am discovered! But I shall sell my life dearly!”

There was a moment of silence as the door swung slowly open, and then, as Cotton walked in with fine dignity, a howl of laughter went up. Only The Duke remained grave. Holding a pillow in front of him, he gazed fiercely over the top of it, muttering and hissing. Cotton paused in surprise. Simms was rolling on the bed in convulsions and Girard was sprawled back in his chair, holding his sides. Cotton viewed the scene at first with bewilderment and then with distaste. A flush crept into his cheeks as he closed the door behind him.

“Hello,” he said stiffly, “what’s the joke, you fellows?”

Kendall was the first to recover. “Oh, just some of Wellington’s nonsense,” he replied hastily. “Sit down, Cotton.”

“Y-yes,” gurgled Gerald, “s-sit down somewhere if you can find room. Sit on the bed there next to The Duke.”

The Duke lowered the pillow, his gaze fixed on Cotton with fearful intensity. Then, as the latter passed around the table to reach the bed, The Duke seized the false mustache from Kendall, clapped it to his face and confronted Cotton superbly.

“Aha, James Mortimer!” he drawled, stroking one end of the brilliant mustache. “So we meet again, do we? What have you done with the che-ild?”

Cotton, who had suspected himself to be in some way the subject of the laughter that had greeted him, was restored to equanimity. He joined in the laughter that followed and made himself comfortable on the bed.

“Where’d you get that thing?” he asked. “Let’s see how I’d look in it, Duke.”

“Heaven forfend!” replied The Duke vehemently as he thrust it into his pocket. “It wouldn’t become you, Charles, it really wouldn’t.”

Cotton smiled in the manner of one humoring a child or harmless lunatic and turned to Merriwell. “How’s the team getting on?” he asked.

“Fair, thanks,” replied the captain without enthusiasm.

“Going to win on Saturday?”

“Hope to.”

“You’ll have to brace up your line, then. I was reading to-day that Forest Hill has a wonderful attack this year.”

“What sort of an attack?” asked The Duke interestedly. “Not mumps, I hope.”

“She’s got most of her last year’s team, hasn’t she?” asked Kendall hurriedly.

“Blessed if I know,” answered Merriwell. “I guess Payson isn’t much worried about it, though. I do hope we’ll trim Nordham, though, fellows.”

“Oh, we’ll run away with her this year,” asserted Girard.

There was another knock on the door.

“Well, we’re some popular to-night,” said Gerald. “Come in!”

It was Harry Merrow. “Hello, everybody,” he greeted. “What is this? A mass meeting?” Just then his gaze fell on Cotton and his eyes narrowed suddenly, and for some time after he had perched himself beside Gerald on the latter’s bed he continued to observe Cotton curiously across the room. The conversation went on for a minute or two. Then Harry whispered to Gerald, and the latter broke in with:

“Cotton, I believe you haven’t met Merrow. He’s in your class, by the way. Sorry; I thought you knew each other.”

Harry reached over Girard’s head and shook hands with Cotton.

“Glad to know you,” he said. “We’ve met before, though, haven’t we?”

“I don’t think so,” replied Cotton. “I’ve only been here this Fall.”

“I mean before that,” said Harry. “Your face seems very familiar.”

“How about his manner?” asked The Duke innocently. Cotton flushed as he took his seat again.

“That’s an old joke,” he said contemptuously.

“How dear to my heart are the jokes of my childhood,” chanted The Duke. “When fond recollection presents them to view!”

Harry, looking polite and incredulous, sat down again, but every now and then he shot a puzzled glance at Cotton. The latter, however, appeared to have forgotten Harry’s existence after the introduction and steadily kept his eyes away from that youth. Soon after, Merriwell and Girard took their departure, followed later by Kirk and Simms. Cotton stayed on until at last The Duke, giving Gerald a look of despair, said good night. Cotton left with him, and as soon as the door was shut Harry broke out:

“I’d give a thousand dollars to know where I’ve seen that fellow!” he declared.

“That’s a lot of money,” yawned Gerald.

“Not if you say it quick. But honest, fellows, that chap bothers me. I know I’ve met him before and talked with him, but I can’t imagine where it could have been. You remember, Gerald, that day at practice I told you he looked familiar? Well, I was right. There’s—there’s some mystery about Cotton.”

“Oh, he probably looks like someone else,” said Gerald soothingly. “Although, to be strictly truthful, Harry, I never saw

anyone who looked just like him!”

“He knew to-night that I recognized him,” mused Harry, “and he wouldn’t look at me once. Well!” He moved toward the door. “I mean to find out. Good night, fellows!”

CHAPTER X

THE SPY

However, Harry did not at once borrow The Duke's red mustache and go sleuthing. As curious as he was about Cotton, he was much too busy these days to play detective, for, although he was pretty certain of winning the cross-country race from Broadwood, Gerald wasn't taking any chances, and the way he and Andy Ryan kept the team on the go was a caution.

The race was to be held, as usual, on the morning of the day of the football game between the rivals, and over a course which might be called neutral, lying as it did practically halfway between the two schools. Broadwood Academy was situated some four miles from Yardley on the other side of Greenburg and so far inland that at Yardley they spoke of it humorously as a "freshwater college." Broadwood was slightly smaller than Yardley in point of enrollment, but for all of that was an ideal rival, since she fought hard in every competition and obligingly went down in defeat oftener than she triumphed. There was no student now in Yardley who could recall a Broadwood victory on the gridiron, although there had been some heart-breaking struggles and alarmingly close scores. In baseball Broadwood was not so obliging, although since John Payson's advent at Yardley she had experienced more defeats than victories. The rivalry between the two preparatory institutions, both good ones, was healthy. Yardley fellows simulated a contempt for the wearers of the Green that they really didn't feel, and Broadwood pretended similar sentiments toward the Blue. In reality, however, each school entertained a deep-seated respect for the other. While Yardley graduates were likely to go up to Yale to complete their education, Broadwood traditions favored Princeton.

But while Broadwood usually excelled at hockey, garnered a full share of the track and field honors, proved herself as good as her

rival at baseball, and accepted defeat on the gridiron only after the game's battles, she was weak at cross-country running and had been beaten each of the few times that she had met Yardley. Gerald, who would have liked to complete his hill-and-dale career and celebrate his year as captain with a hard-fought victory, lamented Broadwood's weakness this year.

"I wish we might give them a handicap," he confided to Harry that Saturday morning as they went back to the gymnasium after a two-mile jaunt. It was the day of the Forest Hill game, and partly because it seemed fair to let the cross-country runners witness the afternoon contest and partly because it was advisable to accustom the team to morning work, since the race was to be run in the forenoon, to-day's work had started at ten-thirty. Gerald seemed as fresh as when he had started out, and save for the disks of red which had not yet faded from his cheeks, one would never have suspected that he had led nine others over approximately two miles of the hardest sort of going. Harry Merrow, however, showed the pace. He had managed to finish fourth and was rather proud of himself, although when Gerald had clapped him on the back at the finish and congratulated him he had only smiled depreciatingly.

"We might give them a quarter-mile start," proposed Harry, with a laugh, in response to Gerald's remark. "But I don't see why you're so anxious to get beaten, Gerald."

"I'm not, but I'd like to have the race a really close one. As it is, we're just as likely as not to finish the first four men ahead of them. I'm pretty certain we will if you run as well as you did to-day."

"I ought to do three or four minutes better on the eighteenth," said Harry. "How far behind you was I to-day?"

"About six minutes. And I did as well within three minutes as I ever did," said Gerald.

Harry thought that over for a minute as they climbed the footpath that affords a short cut to the gymnasium from the village road, and

before he had succeeded in figuring out what their relative positions would probably be in the race Gerald introduced a change of subject.

“How do you think the campaign is going, Harry?” he asked.

“Campaign? Oh, you mean Kendall’s. Why, pretty well, I think. But I hear that there’s a good deal of talk of making Crandall captain. He’s pretty popular, you know. And a good player, too.”

“That so? I hadn’t heard it. Well, Howard’s a fine chap, and if our candidate loses he ought to make a good captain. Have you heard talk of any other fellows for captain?”

“No, I guess not. Fales would take it if he could get it. So would two or three others. Pete Girard, for one.”

“He’d be a wonder,” laughed Gerald. “No, I guess it will be up to either Howard Crandall or Kendall. You haven’t heard Kendall’s name mentioned, have you?”

“For the captaincy? No, but I don’t hear much of the talk. But Kendall has certainly made good so far, hasn’t he? I mean with the fellows. They all seem to like him. If he’d get busy and pull off some brilliant stunt this afternoon or next week, or win the Broadwood game with a field-goal, I guess he could have the captaincy, eh?”

“I think so. Unfortunately, we can’t advise him to get off any gallery plays. He wouldn’t if we did. Besides, a fellow can’t make opportunities. All he can do is to grab them when they come. I hope, though, that Kendall will put up a good game to-day. It’s time the fellows began to consider him as a possibility. If they don’t we’ll have to drop a hint pretty soon.”

“You’re a regular old politician,” laughed Harry.

“Say diplomat,” said Gerald. “It sounds more respectable.”

“Schemer is more like it,” responded Harry, as they entered the gymnasium. “Something tells me that a shower is going to feel

mighty good.”

Half an hour later, when they rounded the front of Oxford, the Golf Team was just setting off for Broadwood, after an early dinner, in a three-seated carriage. George Kirk waved to them and then spoke to the driver, and the carriage stopped. Kirk leaned out and called to Gerald.

“Say, Gerald, do something for me? Find The Duke; he’s at the telephone, I think, and tell him never mind about New York; I’ll call up this evening.”

“Never mind about New York, you’ll call up this evening. All right, George; I’ll tell him. Good luck! Go to it and eat ’em alive!”

Kirk nodded and waved, and the carriage went on down the drive.

“I suppose,” mused Harry as he followed Gerald back to Oxford, “that Kirk is just as much excited about his old golf match as you and I will be about the race two weeks from now. Funny, isn’t it?”

“Funny?” repeated Gerald as he ran up the steps. “Why?”

“Oh, funny to think it matters who wins a golf match!”

“It’s evident you’re not a golfer,” laughed Gerald. “I’ll bet that if George’s outfit gets licked this afternoon he will be like a bear with a sore head! There’s The Duke in the booth.”

The long-distance booth was halfway down the main corridor of Oxford, and, although it was rather dim, they could descry a figure behind the glass. It was dinner hour and Oxford was otherwise quite deserted. Gerald walked down the corridor, Harry sauntering behind.

“Hi, Duke! Kirk says never mind about New York!” shouted Gerald.

The Duke looked very angry and red-faced behind the window as Gerald drew near, and was gesticulating wildly. He was also saying things, but what they were Gerald was still too far away to hear.

“The Duke’s having a fit, Harry,” he announced interestedly. “Come and watch him.”

“... Door ... lemme out...”

“What’s he saying?” asked Harry grinning as he realized The Duke’s dilemma. Gerald shook his head.

“Can’t understand him. Can you? Seems quite worked up about something, though.”

“Lemme out! Don’t be a fool! Can’t you see this blamed door’s stuck?” And The Duke mouthed and grimaced behind the glass.

Gerald and Harry, maintaining a respectful distance, viewed him gravely.

“Can’t get his number, I suppose,” said Harry sympathetically.

“Maybe he’s got hold of a live wire somehow. Anything wrong, Duke?”

“You open this door, Gerald! I’m suffocating in here!”

“He wants you to open the door,” explained Harry brightly. “But do you think you’d better? He looks a bit dangerous, doesn’t he?”

“Y-yes,” responded Gerald doubtfully. “Perhaps we’d better have help in case he gets——”

But there was such a rattling of the door, such an assault on the side of the booth that Gerald’s words were drowned. “I do hope he’s hung up the receiver so that the operator can’t hear him,” said Harry. “It might give the school a bad name.”

Gerald, at last taking pity on the prisoner, turned the door knob and The Duke stumbled out, angry of countenance and incoherent of speech.

“Wish you’d get yourself locked up in that blamed thing,” he sputtered, “and see how you like it! It’s ninety-eight in there, and

you can't breathe! Why didn't you open that door before? Wanted to be smart, I suppose?"

"What's the matter with the door?" asked Harry.

"It's crazy, I guess. You can't open it from inside to save your life. It ought to be fixed."

"Oh, I guess you didn't go at it right," said Harry soothingly. "Let me try it."

So Harry stepped into the booth and closed the door behind him, The Duke's expression of wrath changing slowly to a wicked grin. Harry turned the knob inside and pushed. The door remained firm. Then he tried again and with no better success. The Duke was thoroughly enjoying himself now, applauding and encouraging. Gerald observed smilingly. At last Harry gave it up.

"Can't be did," he announced from within in a smothered voice. "Open her up, Gerald."

Gerald looked inquiringly at The Duke and The Duke gazed questioningly at Gerald. "Strange," observed the latter, "that you can't hear what he says. Perhaps if he put his mouth to the keyhole _____"

"There isn't any," said The Duke.

"That's so." Gerald shook his head sadly. "I don't see what he can do then."

Harry threatened them behind the glass. "You open that door, you silly chumps! I want my dinner."

"Did you get that?" asked The Duke.

Gerald shook his head. "Only a faint murmur. These sound-proof booths are wonderful, aren't they?"

"Marvelous! Who'd ever suppose that a person could be as near as that and not be heard?"

Harry was now doing his best to kick a hole through the wooden paneling, his expression an interesting mixture of amusement and annoyance.

“Listen!” said The Duke. “I think I hear a tapping!”

“He is probably trying to signal to us, the way they do in the mines, you know, when they’re imprisoned.”

“I know. They let food down to them through pipes somehow, don’t they? I wonder if we could get his dinner to him anyway? We might telephone it, perhaps.”

“If you don’t open this door,” announced Harry desperately, “I’ll break the glass and you fellows will have to pay for it. Fair warning!”

“I hear a little better now,” said The Duke. “Perhaps he wants to come out, Gerald!”

“I wonder! How stupid of us! I’ll bet that’s it, Duke. Suppose we open the door and see.”

“Silly asses!” grunted Harry as he emerged, warm and disgusted.

“It makes an awful difference who the joke is on, doesn’t it, dearie?” asked The Duke sweetly.

“Somebody ought to tell someone about that,” said Harry, “and have it fixed.”

“And someone had better get into commons before someone loses someone’s dinner,” replied The Duke. “You fellows been in?”

“No, we were on the way when Kirk asked us to find you and give you a message.”

“He was in a rush and asked me to call up his folks in New York and say he’d telephone this evening. Couldn’t get the house, though. Central said they didn’t answer. I wonder if he knew about that door!”

“I don’t think so,” laughed Gerald as they ran up the steps of Whitson. “He didn’t look to be in a very—very flippant mood.”

After dinner the three boys went up to Gerald’s room and loafed until it was time to go to the game. They reached the field early, but found the grand stand already nearly filled. Forest Hill School had sent over nearly a half hundred rooters and these had taken possession of one end of the stand and were already tuning up for the afternoon’s vocal performance. A good many folks had come over from Greenburg and, of course, Yardley had turned out to a man. The crowds was still streaming on to the field when the Forest Hill team trotted past the corner of the stand and crossed the gridiron to throw off blankets along the further side-line. Gerald, Harry and The Duke were idling by the ropes on the Yardley side when “Perky” Davis, the football manager, stopped. Davis was a thin, light-haired youth with an habitual expression of care and concern. Just now he seemed more worried than ever, and the creases on his forehead were many and deep.

“Look who’s here, Gerald,” he said in a low voice.

Gerald’s gaze followed the manager’s toward the grand stand.

“Who, Perky?” he asked.

“Gibson, of Broadwood; the fellow who substitutes at guard. See him? The big chap with the light gray overcoat and the derby hat, sitting next to the Forest Hill crowd. He’s here to spy on us. Probably thinks we won’t recognize him. I wish he’d choke. We were going to use four or five new plays to-day, too. I’ll have to tell Payson.”

“I remember him,” said The Duke. “He’s got his nerve, hasn’t he? I think he sees us looking at him.”

“Let him,” muttered Davis. “It’s just like Broadwood to send spies over here.”

“Seen any more?” asked Gerald.

Davis shook his head, searching the throng suspiciously. “Not yet. Maybe he’s the only one. They wouldn’t send more than one, I guess. He isn’t much of a player, but they say he’s a mighty clever chap at sizing up things.”

“Well, I suppose they have a right to do it if they want to,” said Gerald. “And we can’t very well put him out, can we?”

“No, but he won’t learn much, because when I tell Payson he will shut down on any new stuff. It’s too bad, though, because we need to try out those plays.”

At that moment the Yardley team came on and the Yardley cheerers started into action. “We’d better find some seats or there won’t be any,” suggested Harry.

“Wait a minute,” said Gerald. Davis had hurried away and was speaking to the coach. When he turned back Gerald hailed him.

“What did Payson say, Perky?”

“Asked me if I was certain, and I said I was. Then he nodded and called Charlie and Bert. I guess they’re making over the programme.”

At a little distance Payson, Merriwell and Simms were in consultation. The rest of the team had taken the field and the footballs were already flying through the air.

“Someone ought to kick him out,” said Harry, fixing the Broadwood youth with hostile regard.

“We might kidnap him,” suggested The Duke dreamily. “Anyone got a gunny-sack handy? We could tie him up in it and drop him into the Bosphorus—I mean the Wissining.”

“What we should have done,” said Davis, “is to have sent someone to watch Broadwood play Nordham to-day. If it’s fair for them it’s fair for us.”

“It’s extremely low-bridge,” replied The Duke disapprovingly. “Quite reprehensible, whatever that may be. Also, fellows, if anything should happen to him he’d have only himself to thank.”

“What’s going to happen to him?” asked Gerald, eyeing The Duke with suspicion. The Duke only smiled carelessly.

“Why ask me? I don’t say anything is going to happen. I only say if anything should happen——”

“Oh,” murmured Davis disappointedly, “I thought perhaps you had a plan to get rid of him.”

The Duke viewed him reprovingly. “Perky, if you want anyone put out of the way you must do it yourself. I refuse to stain my hands with the life blood of even a Broadwood fellow. I’m that particular!”

“Well, I hope he enjoys himself,” muttered the manager. “He won’t learn much, anyway.” He nodded and hurried off, drawing his note-book and pencil into sight. The Duke quietly beckoned Gerald and Harry toward the entrance. Outside the three stood for several minutes with their heads together. When they ambled carelessly back their countenances were as innocent of guile as the faces of three babies. Only there was a suspicious twinkle in The Duke’s eyes.

The grand stand being filled, the three found a space on the grass near the rope and watched the two teams take their positions. It was a clear, nippy Fall day, with a brisk northwest breeze quartering across the field and streamers of white clouds scudding by overhead. Forest Hill had won the toss and chosen the north goal. The whistle blew and Fales kicked off.

CHAPTER XI

BROADWOOD IS FOILED

Yardley's first chance to score came within three minutes of the kick-off, after Forest Hill's quarter had fumbled on the second play and Stark had fallen on the ball near the twenty-yard line. But although the Blue worked down to within twelve yards of the goal, the attack weakened and the pigskin changed hands. Forest Hill kicked on first down and the play went to the middle of the field. And about the middle of the field, with small advantage to either side, it stayed for the rest of the twelve-minute period, with neither team being able to gain much ground.

A minute or two before the whistle sounded The Duke carelessly arose, yawned, stretched and wandered away down the line. Now and then he paused to look back at the play or to speak to an acquaintance, but presently, having left the grand stand far behind, he doubled back and hurried around between the stand and the tennis courts, reappearing at the entrance just as the two teams, donning blankets, paused for the two-minute intermission. The Duke pushed his way through the throng with an important air and faced the sloping tiers.

"Mr. Gibson wanted at the telephone!" announced The Duke loudly. "Is Mr. Gibson here?"

Without appearing to look in his direction The Duke saw the Broadwood fellow start in his seat, look indecisively down and settle back again.

"Mr. Gibson wanted at the 'phone!" he continued, passing along in front of the stand. "Mr. Gibson wanted at the 'phone immediately. Is Mr. Gibson here?"

The fellows took up the cry. "Is Mr. Gibson here? O you Mr. Gibson! Show yourself, Gib! There he goes! Here he is! Who wants Gibson? I don't! O you Mr. Gibson!"

At the first aisle a tall, broad-shouldered youth in a derby hat was picking his way down as unostentatiously as possible. The Duke turned back and met him as he reached the ground.

"Is your name Gibson?" he asked. The other nodded. "You're wanted at the 'phone. I'll show you where it is."

Followed by the youth in the derby, The Duke pushed his way through the crowd about the entrance. Back of him a whistle shrilled and the teams lined up once more.

"Do you know who wants me?" asked Gibson as they started up the path.

"I couldn't say," replied The Duke. "Nice day for the game, isn't it? You're a Forest Hill fellow, aren't you?"

"Hm," responded the other noncommittally. "Where is this telephone?"

"Oxford," replied The Duke, leading the way around the front of the gymnasium and thereby lengthening the journey. "It's right around the corner here." A burst of cheering came from the field below them and Gibson looked regretfully over his shoulder.

"Those are your fellows cheering," said The Duke. "I shouldn't wonder if you beat us to-day. How many of you came along?"

"Er—quite a number; forty or fifty, I guess. This the building?"

"Next," said The Duke, conducting the visitor past Merle. "Here we are." They went up the steps of Oxford and The Duke led the way down the dim and silent corridor to the telephone booth. Politely he opened the door and, Mr. Gibson once inside, politely and very carefully he closed it. The click of the lock was simultaneous with the lifting of the receiver from the hook.

“Hello! Hello! This is Mr. Gibson.... What say?... Gibson!...”



“Hello! Hello! This is Mr. Gibson.... What say?”

The Duke, stealing softly down the corridor, heard no more. At the doorway he cast a fleeting glance back at the booth. Then he slipped from sight. Halfway back to the field he paused and did an erratic breakdown, with much snapping of fingers and many loud chuckles. Then, pulling his features back into their former innocence of expression, he went on. He reached the gridiron at an

exciting moment and had seated himself between Gerald and Harry before his fellow-conspirators realized his return. Then,

“All right?” whispered Gerald.

The Duke, supremely interested in the game, closed one eye slowly and portentously. Gerald grinned. Harry hugged a foot ecstatically. “Like a sheep to the slaughter,” whispered The Duke gloatingly. “Oh, *what* do you suppose he’s saying to Central?”

“How long will he stay there?” asked Harry.

“Until he gets out. There’s no one in the Office on Saturday afternoons. Anyway, they couldn’t hear him—unless he broke a window and yelled like sixty. Did you tell Perky?”

“Yes, and they’ve worked a couple of the new plays already.”

“Tried to, you mean,” corrected Harry gloomily. “They didn’t gain much.”

“Anyone scored?” asked The Duke.

“Not yet. No one’s had a chance. Kendall tried a placement from the forty-five yards and missed by a yard. Too bad. He had the wind with him, too.”

“Pete made a rotten pass, though,” said Gerald. “Simms had to scramble for it. It’s a wonder they got the kick off at all. There’s the whistle. Half’s over.”

As the players seized their blankets and trotted off the field Davis hurried up to the trio beside the rope.

“What did you do with him?” he asked in a hoarse whisper.

“Do with him? With who?” asked The Duke innocently.

“Gibson.”

“Perky, you jump to conclusions,” returned The Duke calmly. “If anything has been done to Mr. Gibson you shouldn’t lay it to me. I

have nothing but the kindest, sweetest sentiments toward the gentleman.”

“Oh, chop it! Is he—is he *safe*?”

“Oh, I do hope so!” replied The Duke. “Don’t tell me that anything has happened to him, Perky!”

“Quit kidding,” begged Davis. “I want to know. Can we go ahead with the new plays, Duke? Will he be back?”

“Blessed if I know. I know he isn’t here now, but there’s no telling how long he’s going to stay away. Tell you what, Perky. I’ll stand at the entrance and keep watch. If I see him coming back I’ll pass the word to you and you can tell Payson.”

“All right. I’ll tell Payson that. Don’t miss him, though.”

“Nary a miss, Perky!”

The Duke, followed by Gerald and Harry, went to take up a position at the corner of the grand stand and Davis scurried off to the gymnasium in the wake of the team. The Duke, hands in pockets, wandered outside and viewed the path. But save for the players trotting up the steps of the gymnasium and Davis speeding to overtake them no one was in sight.

“Look here,” said Gerald, who had been studying the situation in his mind, “what that fellow will do is to tell Central that he’s locked up in the booth. Then Central will telephone to Merle or Clarke and they’ll let him out. We didn’t think of that.”

The Duke frowned. “That’s so,” he acknowledged. “And it’s dollars to doughnuts Central will get Collins on the ’phone and then there will be the dickens to pay!”

“Thunder!” breathed Harry.

“Just so,” agreed The Duke. “Well, I’m in for it now, so there’s no use worrying and getting a wrinkle. After all, it was a patriotic deed

and my conscience is at peace. I done it for the good of my fellow critters.”

“I don’t see how Collins will know it was you,” said Harry hopefully. The Duke viewed him with a pitying eye.

“Merely because I paraded up and down in front of the grand stand yelling my little heart out for Mr. Gibson, Harry. Collins may be dense, but I think he will be able to follow that clue; what?”

“He will get you,” acknowledged Gerald sadly. “The question is _____”

“The question is what will I get! Well, never mind. What’s done is did. And here comes the team again and Mr. Gibson is not in sight. What I should have done after getting him in there was cut the line!” He looked longingly up the hill. “Maybe it isn’t too late yet,” he added musingly.

“Then you *would* get it!” said Gerald. “I guess you’ve done enough, Duke.”

“Sure; too much is plenty! Anyway, if Mr. Gibson doesn’t get back before the game’s over I’ll be satisfied.”

The Yardley team came piling through the entrance, Merriwell in the lead, Coach Payson and Davis following. As he passed Davis lifted his eyebrows questioningly and The Duke returned a reassuring shake of the head. Davis whispered to the coach and the latter smiled demurely as he passed on to the field.

“You fellows,” said The Duke presently, “had better get away from here. If they see you sticking around with me they’re bound to think you had a hand in it.”

“So we did,” replied Gerald.

“So you didn’t! What did you do, I’d like to know. Move on now, move on! Don’t block the sidewalk!”

“Oh, who cares?” asked Harry. “It’s only a joke, anyway. They can’t do anything to any of us.”

“Besides, Gibson won’t make a fuss,” said Gerald. “He won’t want to confess that he came over to spy on the team.”

“Well, suit yourselves,” replied The Duke with a shrug of his shoulders. “If you must have trouble, have it. They’re kicking off.”

The three saw the game, or as much of it as they could, from their post, at the same time keeping a sharp watch for the reappearance of Mr. Gibson. The third period proved conclusively that Yardley still had much to learn about offense. Her attack in the middle of the field was fairly strong and at times showed flashes of brilliancy, but once past the thirty-yard line her play slowed up and all the “punch” vanished. Forest Hill, although light, was remarkably quick and decidedly “scrappy.” She had many defeats to atone for and when the third period ended, like the previous ones, without a score against her it was evident that she had come to the conclusion that here was the opportunity to obtain vengeance. She started the fourth quarter with a dash and vim that startled the spectators and staggered the Blue team. Her back-field, working together beautifully, fooled Yardley time and again and made short and steady gains until the ball was well down in the Blue’s territory and Simms was imploring his men to “stop them!” It was only the Blue’s secondary defense that stood between Forest Hill and a score, for the Yardley line was too slow and played too high and the Forest Hill backs sliced through it almost at will. Payson made two changes when the ball was down on the Blue’s thirty-two yards, putting in Jackson for Fales and Jensen for Stark. And later, just before the end of the game, Best relieved Girard at center. The rest of the team, however, played the contest through, and that without gaining much credit. Yardley captured the ball on her twenty-five-yard line, worked a double pass for a slight advance and then punted out of danger.

But Forest Hill came back desperately. Her quarter led a glorious attack and what had been on the point of happening for two periods finally happened. An on-side kick was recovered by a Forest Hill back, Metz and Crandall each missed a tackle and the runner after tearing off nearly twenty yards, was finally downed by Simms on the Blue's seventeen yards. The ball was well over toward the side of the field when the two teams lined up again and a skin-tackle play gained two yards and brought the pigskin nearer the center of the field. The full-back trotted to the twenty-five-yard line and, although the angle was severe, it seemed that a drop-kick might put the ball over. But Forest Hill, smarting under many defeats, disdained a victory so simply bought. The ball went back to the outstretched arms, but the full-back didn't kick. Instead he dashed off across the field, with the two teams trailing after him, found a chance to turn in, eluded one player after another while the Forest Hill supporters on the stand shrieked their triumph, and, finally, dragging two Yardley players after him, staggered and crawled across the goal line!

That touchdown spelled defeat for Yardley and even the staunchest supporter of the Blue realized it. Even though Forest Hill failed at the goal the lead was too big to overcome in the two or three minutes that remained. But Yardley went desperately to work again. It was agreed afterward that had she played during the first of the game as she played then there would have been a different tale to tell. Using every play he knew, Simms, when a lucky fumble gave Yardley the ball after the kick-off, hurled his backs and tackles against the weakening Forest Hill line. From their own forty yards to the enemy's thirty-five they went, gaining their distance at times by only an inch or two, but always gaining it. And there, with the timekeeper proclaiming forty seconds left, Kendall was sent back to the forty-five-yard line, while the stand held its breath, took the ball breast-high from Best, dropped it lightly to earth and sent it spinning as straight as an arrow over the very center of the cross-bar!

Let us be thankful for small favors. Five to three was better than five to naught, and Yardley cheered philosophically and rose up in the grand stand and called Kendall blessed. And at the entrance The Duke, casting one final glance up the hill, derived what satisfaction he might from a plot well carried out.

Forest Hill, all smiles, hurried off with the captured football, and Yardley, rather glum and very tuckered, wrapped her blankets about her and trotted back to the gymnasium under the stigma of her first defeat.

Gerald and Harry were inclined to dejection, although Kendall's brilliant goal from the field was a mitigating ray in the surrounding gloom of failure. But The Duke, with the fine bravado of one on the way to the guillotine, refused to be downcast.

“Who cares?” he demanded. “What's Forest Hill to us? She showed us we weren't as good as we thought we were and that ought to help. It's Broadwood's scalp we want, fellows, and to-day's little setback will do us a lot of good. Besides,” he chuckled, “our friend Gibson is returning empty-handed. Let us rejoice and make merry, O my comrades, for to-morrow we die! At least, I do!”

CHAPTER XII

COTTON MEETS A FRIEND

Mr. William Gibson, of Broadwood Academy, really deserves no place in this narrative, yet I hardly see how we can keep him out inasmuch as his trip to Yardley that Saturday afternoon proved to be the first link in a chain of events involving many of the principal actors in our little drama. For if Gibson had not come to Yardley he would not have been ignominiously imprisoned in the telephone booth, and if he had not been shut up in the booth he would not have run across Charles Cotton, and—but I am getting ahead of the story.

The practice of detailing players or coaches to attend games played by a rival school or college in order to gain information that may aid in defeating such rival is a questionable one, in spite of its prevalence, and I have no intention of defending it. At the same time I very much doubt if William Gibson—over at Broadwood they called him Billy—considered that he was doing anything out of the way. I am willing, even eager, to attribute the highest patriotic motives to Mr. Gibson, up to the time he met Charles Cotton. For what happened subsequently I offer no excuses. Even the most rabid patriotism will not explain it.

Gibson had purposely attired himself to look as little like a student as possible. That is, he had donned a derby hat instead of the usual cap and a rather dressy light overcoat, hoping perhaps to give the impression of being a young gentleman of mercantile pursuits, say a youthful but promising bank clerk or a budding broker. Unfortunately, Billy's countenance and figure, once seen, were nearly unforgettable. The countenance was heavy and pugnacious and the figure broad-shouldered and massive, massive even for his eighteen years. He had never actually attained a first choice position on the Broadwood eleven, but he was a good player and an

excellent substitute guard, and he had more than once opposed Yardley during his football career. He had taken pains to arrive early at the field and was in his seat before the teams came on the field, and it is probable that his presence would not have been discovered by the enemy had not Davis's eyes gone roaming over the Forest Hill contingent in search of an acquaintance. Gibson saw that he was recognized; the hostile stares of the group below told him that; and he was disappointed. However, there was no help for it, and, as he was there, he might as well remain. Even if Yardley failed to show any new tricks it was still possible to get a line on her formations in attack and defense and get a general idea of her ability. When The Duke summoned him to the telephone Gibson had no suspicions. It was quite possible that the Broadwood coach had thought of some feature of Yardley's playing that he wanted information on. He hesitated for a moment to show himself, thinking that perhaps his presence might be resented. Then, realizing that he had already been recognized and that to disregard the summons would look strange, he answered it. It was only when, cooped up in the telephone booth, he learned from the Greenburg operator that there was no record of any call for him that it began to dawn upon him that he had been made the victim of a hoax.

Very angrily he slammed up the receiver and pushed at the door. A minute or so later his anger had visibly increased. It was too dark in the booth to examine the latch with any hope of discovering the trouble. There was nothing for it but to raise his voice in a demand for release, which he did. Unfortunately, however, it is very doubtful if there was a living soul from one end of Oxford Hall to the other. Eventually, perhaps ten minutes after he had unsuspectingly entered the booth, the plan of breaking open the door occurred to him. He tried it. The telephone company, however, had caused that booth to be constructed of exceedingly strong materials, and finally Gibson, very warm and breathless, gave up the attempt. Next he considered breaking the glass. There were several panes and he could take his choice. But while he had not hesitated to try to force the lock or wreck a panel the idea of

breaking glass struck him as peculiarly destructive and he paused to consider. And at about that time it occurred to him that a very simple way of escape confronted him. He snatched down the receiver and explained his predicament to a sympathetic Central.

“I will call up the Office,” said the operator.

But the Office was empty and no one answered her ring. So she tried Clarke Hall and was successful. The telephone in Clarke was in the study of Mr. Collins, the Assistant Principal. Ordinarily Mr. Collins would have been out at this hour of the afternoon, but it so happened that a slight cold had suggested to him the advisability of remaining indoors and taking a nap. The imperative ringing of the telephone bell put an end to the nap, and, some five minutes later, having discarded dressing-gown and slippers in favor of outer clothing and shoes, Mr. Collins, none too pleased with the necessity, strode down the corridor of Oxford and liberated a strange, perspiring youth from his cell. Gibson, failing in the dimness of the hall to recognize authority in the slight, medium-sized person before him, immediately gave vent to his wrath.

“Say, what kind of a fool thing is that?” he demanded. “I’ve been suffocating in there for twenty minutes!”

Mr. Collins viewed him gravely.

“Wonder you wouldn’t have that latch fixed! It would have served you right if I’d bust the glass out of it!”

“It pains me deeply to learn of your discomfort,” replied the Assistant Principal dryly. “Perhaps if you had telephoned to Central at once you’d have been released sooner. May I ask who you are and how you happen to have been using the booth?”

Gibson, having now discovered that he was talking to neither a student nor the janitor, changed his tune. “My name is Gibson. I—I came to see the football game. A fellow sung out that I was wanted on the telephone and showed me up here. When I asked the operator she said no one had called me. Then I tried to get out and couldn’t.”

“Hm,” said Mr. Collins. “We have reported the matter to the company and they have agreed to send up and fix that latch. As a matter of fact, I presumed that they had done so. I am very sorry, Gibson. I don’t understand, however, why the messenger should have deceived you. Some mistake, doubtless.”

“He—he did it on purpose,” blurted Gibson, still too angry to be discreet. Mr. Collins looked surprised. They had reached the steps and now the Assistant Principal viewed the boy thoughtfully.

“Why?” he asked.

“I—I don’t know,” muttered Gibson. “It doesn’t matter, though. I—I’ll be going. Thank you, sir.”

“One moment, please. You live in Greenburg?”

Gibson hesitated. Then, “No, sir, I—I’m at Broadwood. I just came over to see the game.”

“Really?” Mr. Collins raised his brows. “Your Broadwood team doesn’t play to-day, then?”

“Yes, sir, they play Nordham.”

“At home?”

“Yes, sir.”

“You, however, preferred to see this game, eh? I see. Now this boy who brought you up here, Gibson; what was he like?”

Gibson, rather uncomfortable under the other’s sarcastic gaze, thought a moment and at last gave a very excellent description of The Duke. Mr. Collins nodded again. Then he smiled. It was a fleeting smile, but Gibson saw it.

“He knew I’d get locked up in there,” he declared aggrievedly. “He closed the door after me himself!”

“I find no difficulty in crediting that, Gibson,” replied Mr. Collins gravely. “I think I know the young gentleman and I’ll have

something to say to him. Good-day, Gibson. I regret exceedingly that you have missed seeing so much of the game. Perhaps, however, it is not yet entirely over.”

But whether it was or wasn't Gibson had no idea of returning to the field. He remained on the steps a moment, watching Mr. Collins out of sight around the corner of the old stone building, and then, thrusting his hands into his pockets, set off with a frown down the drive. He had almost reached the entrance gate at the foot of The Prospect when he saw a boy walking rapidly toward him from the direction of the village. Gibson wasn't at all interested in the other pedestrian and gave him no more than a thought. But when they drew abreast he glanced up casually. Recognition was mutual.

“Hello, Cotton, what the dickens are you doing here?”

“Hello, Gibson! What are *you* doing here?”

“Me? Just came over to see the game. Say, you aren't at school here, are you?”

Cotton nodded. “Yes, I entered this Fall. I don't like it, though.”

Gibson grinned none too kindly. “You don't like it anywhere very long, do you? I thought someone said you were at school somewhere down South.”

“I was last year. But I'd rather be up North.”

“Gee, did *they* fire you, too?” laughed Gibson.

Cotton colored. “No,” he answered shortly, “I didn't like it. So I didn't go back.”

“They didn't like you, you mean! How you getting on here?”

“All right,” replied Cotton, ignoring the statement in favor of the question. “It's a punk school, though. Not half as good as Broadwood.”

“Wonder you didn't behave yourself when you were with us, then,” said Gibson. “You're a bit of a mutt, Cotton, I guess. Well, I

must be getting on. How far is it to Greenburg?"

"Oh, twenty minutes, maybe. Is the game over?"

"No, judging by the sounds it isn't. I've had enough of it, though. You've got a rotten team here this year, Cotton."

"You bet we have!" assented the other eagerly. "That's what I tell them. You'll lick the stuffing out of them, Gibson. Are you on the team this year?"

"Me? Not exactly. I'm running Browne pretty hard, though. I may get on next week. Why aren't you at the game?"

"I had to get a letter off on the three o'clock mail and the only way to do it was to take it to Greenburg. They only have two collections a day up here. It's a rotten place. I wanted to see the game, too. That's why I was hurrying back."

"Well, don't let me keep you."

"Oh, that's all right. They'll get licked, anyway."

Gibson, who had turned to go on, paused and observed Cotton attentively, speculatively. "You don't seem to love your team, Cotton," he suggested.

"Oh, they're a great bunch of snobs," replied Cotton bitterly. "If you haven't got some sort of a drag you can't get any show. It's that way with everything here. Now, at Broadwood——"

"Your admiration for your dear old alma mater is touching," sneered Gibson. "I suppose you tried for the team and got chucked, eh?"

"I didn't have any pull. They don't care how well you play. If you don't know the fellows——"

"Hm," said Gibson thoughtfully. "Well, say, if you aren't crazy to see the end of the game, Cotton, why don't you turn around and walk back to Greenburg with me? I'll treat to a soda, if you like, and we'll have a chin."

“Sure! I don’t care about the game. It must be almost over now, anyway. But what were you doing over here, Gibson?” Cotton frowned his perplexity.

“Me? Oh, just watching.” Gibson winked slowly and meaningly.

“By Jove!” Cotton smiled delightedly. “That’s your game, eh? Did you get anything?”

“Think I’d tell you if I did?” laughed Gibson, taking the other boy’s arm.

“Oh, shucks!” said Cotton. “You can trust me, old man; you know that.”

“Well, come along and I’ll tell you about it.”

CHAPTER XIII

THE DUKE STARTS SOMETHING

The day after the Forest Hill defeat was warm and languid, more like a November day. Gerald had gone to Sound View the evening before, as was his custom when his father was at home, and Kendall, having attended church in the forenoon and eaten a dinner at the training table for which he had had little appetite, was at a loss how to spend his afternoon. There were fellows whom he might look up and who would doubtless be glad to see him, but somehow he didn't feel very sociable. For one thing, he had been through forty-eight minutes of hard play the day before and felt lame and battered, although there were no scars to show. Perhaps, too, the weather induced a feeling of apathy; it was too warm. He wrote his Sunday letter, taking a good deal of time over it, and managing to fill six pages. But after that was sealed and addressed there seemed nothing left to do. Gerald had suggested that he might come up after dinner and take him to ride in the automobile, but evidently Gerald had changed his mind. The dormitory was quiet and probably pretty well deserted, for it was no sort of a day to stay indoors. Kendall finally reached that conclusion himself and, pulling a cap on to the back of his head, he sauntered along the hall and down the stairs and so out into the afternoon world, wincing now and then when his sore muscles protested and dimly oppressed with the emptiness of existence. Kendall's condition of mind was, had he but known it, no uncommon one for the football player the day after a hard game and a defeat. One cares very little for bruises and weariness after a victory, but a defeat takes all the glory from them.

There was a handful of fellows on the steps as he came out and he spoke to them, but had no wish to join them. There were other groups in front of Whitson and Oxford, and several boys were lolling on the grass near the flag-pole on The Prospect. One or two

had books, but it was a noticeable fact that none was reading. Even the effort of holding a book was too much on such a day. Kendall nodded now and then, refused an invitation to join the group on the grass and skirted Oxford with a dim idea of walking down to the river. But back of Merle he heard a hail and, turning, saw The Duke waving to him across the yard. The Duke was resplendent to-day. There was a suit of blue-gray flannel, a vividly pink shirt, dark blue socks, tan shoes and a green tie. And The Duke seemed in high feather. Kendall sat down on the step of Merle and waited for the gorgeous one to join him. He had not seen The Duke since shortly after the game the day before and now he wondered whether that youth had got into difficulties over the affair of Mr. Gibson. He certainly didn't have the appearance of a fellow in trouble! One would have thought, seeing him coming along the path, hands in pockets, whistling cheerfully, that he hadn't a care in the world.

“Greetings, O doughty warrior!” saluted The Duke.

“Hello,” replied Kendall apathetically. “Where’s the party?”

“Party? Oh, you refer to my chaste get-up.” The Duke viewed his apparel approvingly. “Some togs, what?” He seated himself beside Kendall. “There’s no party, Sir Knight. I have merely dressed myself according to my mood. My mood to-day is one of triumph and joy. Where’s Gerald?”

“Home,” replied Kendall moodily.

“He’s a lucky chap to have a home around the corner. Be it never so humble there’s no place like home. What’s the matter with you to-day? Got the dumps?”

“N-no.”

“Meaning ye-es? Perk up! Observe the cerulean sky and the waving tree tops, the bright sun and the—the——”

“It’s a beast of a day.”

“*What?* It’s a wonderful day! What do you want? Rain? Snow? Hail? Well, if the things I’ve mentioned don’t cheer you, look at my shirt! That ought to drive away any case of blues!”

“It looks sort of pink,” said Kendall, smiling with an effort.

“*Sort of pink!* Sort of *pink!* Man alive, it’s the quintessence of pink! It’s the pinkest thing that ever happened. That’s why I bought it. Got it cheap, too. They’d had it in the store for years and years. No one would buy it. No one had the courage to. But pink suits me, you know. Goes well with my shell-tint complexion.”

“But why the green tie?”

“A happy conceit of mine own, O Youth of the Festive Toe! I am impersonating a carnation. The dash of green represents the leaves. Get me? Pretty thought, what?”

“Very. And the rest of the—the things? Blue socks——”

“Contrast, dear boy, contrast! Also variety. Also gladness and joy and triumph. Come on!” The Duke jumped up gayly.

“Where?” asked Kendall with no enthusiasm.

“Where? Anywhere! Who knows? Let us start out in search of adventure. This is no day to mope and pine. I am consumed by a desire to start something!”

“You started something yesterday, didn’t you? How did you come out? Did Collins get after you?”

“Oh, that?” The Duke smiled carelessly and brushed an imaginary speck from his sleeve. “That is too trifling to speak of.”

“What did he say?”

“Say? What was there he could say? I had merely to explain the circumstances to him, Burtis. After all, he is reasonable—for a faculty. Or mayhap I spoke convincingly. In any case”—The Duke waved a hand magnificently—“we parted with sentiments of mutual respect and esteem. If you will join me in a stroll toward yon

purling stream I will regale your ears with a brief narration of the event.”

“All right.” Kendall pulled himself up with a sigh and they moved on.

“We met by appointment,” continued The Duke gayly. “Collins made the appointment. In his study. He suggested eight o’clock as a time convenient to him and, as I am noted for my good nature, I agreed. Also, as I have ever held punctuality to be the soul of wit or the thief of time or the shortest way home or something—I forget the exact quotation—I was there on the stroke.”

“I’ll bet you were!” agreed Kendall grimly. The Duke smiled.

“On the very dot, O Wisdom Personified. And then—we talked. At first he did most of it. It seems”—The Duke interrupted the narrative to chuckle—“it seems that our friend Gibson had the brilliant thought to call up Central and tell his troubles. Central thereupon called up Collins. I could speak harshly to Central about that, but as it has all turned out satisfactorily I won’t. Well, Collins formed himself into a rescue party and trailed over to Oxford. Having liberated our prisoner they passed the time of day and in the course of the conversation Mr. Gibson, let us hope inadvertently, gave a description of my physical appearance and Collins, being a great friend of mine, recognized the portrait, or thought he did. Hence the appointment. Of course I don’t know just what those two said to each other, but I have a strong hunch that Collins wormed out of Mr. Gibson the fact that he was a Broadwood unfortunate and surmised the fact that he was, to put it courteously, over here to rubber at our splendid team of football heroes.”

“What time is it?” asked Kendall.

“Time? I don’t know,” replied The Duke, fumbling at his watch-fob. “Why? Got something on?”

“No, I was only thinking that if you didn’t get started pretty soon it would be supper time.”

“Oh!” The Duke laughed. “You have a dry wit, my friend, a dry wit and a ready. Well, to cut out the non-essentials and the rhetorical effects, Burtis, Collins asked me if I had enticed Mr. Gibson to the ’phone. Of course I ’lowed as how I had. Then he asked me why. ‘Because,’ quoth I, ‘he was over here to spy on the team and Payson wanted to try out some of the new plays for the Broadwood game.’ ‘But you told him that he was wanted at the telephone,’ says Collins. ‘Wasn’t that a lie, Wellington?’ ‘No, sir,’ I retorted, ‘not at all. We wanted him at the telephone so he wouldn’t see what was going on at the field.’ Whereupon Collins said ‘Um’ in two or three different tones, and looked kind of funny at me. Of course I was looking as nearly like an innocent little George Washington as I knew how. ‘But still, Wellington, hardly truthful, eh?’ he asked. I considered. ‘Perhaps not strictly, sir,’ I said, ‘but we had to do something, and what else was there?’ Well, I had him stumped there! He opened his mouth a couple of times, but he couldn’t answer. There *wasn’t* anything else, was there? Of course not. Collins saw it, too, after a minute, but he wouldn’t say so. He hemmed a few hems and hawed a few haws and smiled in his funny dry way. And finally he said, ‘Wellington, if you applied some of your ingenuity to mastering your studies you’d be better off.’ I said, ‘Yes, sir.’ Then he frowned and waved his hand, you know, like that. ‘You may go,’ he said. And I thanked him and went. Only when I got to the door he stopped me. ‘Mind you,’ said he, ‘you’re not to think that I approve of what you did, Wellington, because I don’t. It smacks too much of deceit. It would have been better had you gone to a telephone and really called him up!’ ‘I never thought of that!’ I said. Then he grinned a little, and I grinned and came out!”

Kendall laughed. “The next time we’d better consult Collins, I guess! I suspect he was just as pleased as we were that Gibson got left.”

“Probably. Aside from being a member of faculty he’s fairly human. Anyhow, I got off easy. Hence my mood of triumph. Let’s

go for a paddle.”

They had reached the boathouse. The porch and float were well sprinkled with fellows and the river as far as they could see was dotted with canoes and skiffs.

“I don’t know how to row,” Kendall demurred.

“Who wants to row? Can you paddle?”

“Less than I can row.”

“Well, you go as ballast then. I’ve got a canoe in here somewhere if it hasn’t fallen to pieces. Haven’t been in it since Spring. Come on.”

Kendall followed the other into the boathouse and helped him lift a battered green canvas canoe from the rack. When it was outside The Duke viewed it dubiously. “Looks sort of leaky, doesn’t it?” he asked. “Guess we’d better take a bailer along. Hi, Lin, got something I can bail out with?”

Lin Johnson picked up a tin can from the bottom of the canoe he was disembarking from and tossed it across. The Duke caught it deftly, dropped it in the bottom of the green canoe and pushed the latter into the water. In a minute they were afloat, Kendall facing The Duke from the bow and watching rather enviously the skill with which the latter managed a paddle from the blade of which a good two inches had been splintered. They went up the little river, meeting other craft and exchanging greetings. Once The Duke remarked laughingly:

“Funny how tickled everyone is to see me to-day. It pays to travel in good company.”

“How do you mean?” asked Kendall innocently.

“Why, don’t you see how cordial the fellows are? That’s because you’re here, O Mighty Warrior. If I were alone they’d just nod and say ‘Lo, Duke!’ Now they nearly fall out of their canoes being polite!”

“Nonsense!” said Kendall, blushing a little. “Why, lots of those fellows we’ve passed hardly know me.”

“That’s only because you won’t let them. They’d all be tickled to death to be in my place. Why, my stock will go up a hundred per cent this afternoon!”

Kendall smiled doubtfully. “I guess they’d a good deal rather know you than me,” he murmured.

“Think so, my Modest Violet? You miss your guess, then. I wonder if you’re as innocent as you seem, Burtis.”

“Innocent?”

“Yes. You’re really a school hero, you know, but you don’t seem to be on to the fact. You could put on all sorts of lugs and the fellows would stand for it, but instead you hardly notice anyone and go around looking as humble as—as a worm! Of course I’m not saying it isn’t a clever scheme, because the less you seem to want to know fellows the more anxious they’ll be to have you. Get me? And being modest is a good game, too. Lots of fellows in your place would be swaggering all around the shop, patronizing us lesser mortals. We’d stand for it all right enough, but we’d resent it a bit, too, and if you ever came a cropper, fell down in the big game, you know, or something of that sort, how we’d jump on you! No, a fellow can have a swelled head and get by with it if he’s making good, but you don’t love him any more for it. Your way is much better, Burtis.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” said Kendall a trifle indignantly. “I’m not a hero and don’t pretend to be. I don’t want to be and I’m not trying to be!”

The Duke grinned. “Of course not. I understand. You’re not one of our star players on the football team and you don’t win games for us by the niftiest kicking that’s ever been seen in these parts. You seem to, but you don’t. Appearances are against you.”

“You’re an idiot,” grunted Kendall.

“Oh, certainly!”

“Besides, it’s silly to say I don’t want to know fellows. I do. There are lots of tip-top fellows I’d like awfully well to know, but I can’t butt in the way—the way——”

“The way I do,” suggested The Duke helpfully.

“The way some fellows do.”

“I really believe you mean it!” marveled The Duke. “Why, you poor benighted heathen, don’t you realize that there’s hardly a fellow in school who wouldn’t be proud to paddle you up and down the river all the afternoon just for the glory of being seen with you?”

“No, I don’t,” replied Kendall shortly, “and neither do you. And I wish you’d stop kidding me, Duke.” Kendall was looking red and embarrassed, and The Duke, observing, took pity on him.

“All right,” he said soothingly. “You’re a mere worm after all, Burtis. No one loves you. And when a fellow falls into the river trying to be polite it’s just because he wants me to notice him. But will I? I will not! They can drown before I’ll give them a glance!”

“You’re an awful idiot,” said Kendall smilingly.

“You said that before and so there must be something in it,” was the cheerful response. “And now here is the island, and with your approval I suggest we get out and find a nice warm spot and lie on our backs and think great thoughts.”

So the canoe was pulled up on the little strip of beach at Flat Island and the boys threw themselves down on the bank in the sunlight. It was getting toward four o’clock and a slight chill was making itself felt. But in the lee of the trees it was still comfortably warm. The Duke put his hands under his head, cocked one foot over his knee and gazed up into the peaceful blue sky. Kendall followed his example and for the space of several minutes nothing was said. Finally, though, Kendall broke the silence.

“Did you—did you really mean any of that stuff you said awhile ago in the canoe, Duke?” he asked.

“What stuff?” asked the other drowsily.

“About—about fellows being willing to know me.”

“Of course I meant it. You, my shy and retiring friend, are one of our notables. We’re proud of you because you play good football and won the Broadwood game for us last year. And because you kept Forest Hill from shutting us out yesterday. We’re proud of any fellow here who does what he’s set to do and does it well, but when a fellow wins a game from Broadwood for us we put our heads in the dust and say, ‘Walk on us, O Conqueror!’”

“That sounds silly,” objected Kendall.

“Then it’s the way I say it. It really isn’t silly. Look here, didn’t you want to run out and hug Dan Vinton last Spring when he hit out that two-bagger that tied the Broadwood game? Weren’t you proud of him? Didn’t you think he was about the finest thing that ever played baseball?”

“You bet!”

“Well, there you are! You did the same thing, didn’t you, last Fall? And you’re still doing it, aren’t you? That’s why you’re some pumpkins here, old scout; why the Prep Class youngsters get in your way and stare at you soulfully until you fall over them. Then they get together and show the toe you stepped on and boast how much it hurts! That’s why fellows try to be nice to you, even if you don’t see it, and why dozens of them will be as sweet as candy to me for days because I know you well enough to go paddling with you. And that’s why I’m here now. It isn’t because I care a cent about you; you bore me to death, but I want the other fellows to see me with you. Reflected glory. Get me?”

Kendall looked startledly at The Duke until the latter began to grin. Then he smiled and looked relieved.

“I never thought of that,” he murmured. “I—I’m glad.”

“Well, don’t think of it too much, now,” cautioned The Duke. “Perhaps I oughtn’t to have said anything about it. I guess the reason we all like you so well is partly because you—because you’re so unconscious of it. Don’t spoil it, Burtis.”

“I’ll try not to. I don’t more than half believe it, anyway, I guess,” he answered shyly. “I’d like to think, though, that—that fellows did like me a little.”

“You may, O Startled Fawn! And if you take my advice you’ll be a trifle more—more—what’s the word?—responsive. It’s a good thing for a fellow to have friends. It helps here and hereafter. If you go up to college you’ll find that having friends there will make a lot of difference. I’ve never been to college, but that’s what they tell me. And in the meanwhile if there’s any little thing you’d like—a place on the hockey team or the baseball nine or next year’s class presidency or the presidency of your society—what are you, by the way? Oxford, aren’t you?—just mention the fact quite casually. It’s a good time. Maybe you won’t get all you want, but it’s a good plan to let fellows know.”

“I don’t want a thing,” replied Kendall in an alarmed voice.

The Duke laughed. “All right; you needn’t get scared, though. I just mentioned it. There’s Jensen and Jim Hough coming down the placid stream. Just for fun, now, let’s see what they do when they catch sight of us here. Would it be quite convenient for you to sit up?”

“What for?”

“So they can recognize your charming countenance, of course. It’s dollars to doughnuts they’ll come ashore.”

“I’d rather not,” said Kendall hurriedly.

“Oh, all right. It isn’t necessary, anyhow. I guess they’ve seen you, for they’re headed this way. And behind them come Perky

Davis and Whitehall. Know Whitehall?"

"I've met him. He's the editor of the paper, isn't he?"

"He is. Whitehall is our one best high-brow. He's an awful bore, but he's a good-hearted chap for all that. Yes, here they come. Hello, Jim! Come ashore and hear the birdies sing. Greetings, Jensen, you old Dutchman. You fellows know Burtis, don't you? Hello, Perky! Well, well, if it isn't our old friend Horace Greeley Whitehall! Wonders never cease! Step ashore, Horace, and join the crowd! You're just the fellow I've been wanting to see. I've been telling Burtis that he ought to get out and try for the *Scholiast* next term."

"Really?" asked Whitehall, turning eagerly to Kendall. "By Jove, Burtis, I wish you would, you know! We need fellows of your kind on the paper!"

"That's what I tell him," said The Duke mendaciously. "He hasn't decided about it yet, you know, but he's terribly interested, aren't you, Burtis?"

"Why—why—why, I think it would be very nice," stammered Kendall. "Do you think I could do anything?"

"I don't know who could if you couldn't," responded Whitehall.

CHAPTER XIV

KIRK EXACTS A PROMISE

Kendall returned to his room a half hour before supper time in a condition of mental amazement. He had practically agreed to “go out” for the *Scholiast* after Christmas recess and had made the startling discovery that an editorship on the school weekly was just what he wanted! Whitehall had kindly and almost apologetically explained that at first, “just for a while, you know,” Kendall would have to do reporting so as to learn the ropes. But none of the group on the island had seemed to doubt for a moment that Kendall would ultimately succeed to the position of editor-in-chief! When he had spoken modestly of his lack of experience the fellows had waved the thing aside as of no consequence.

“That will be all right,” Davis had declared. “It won’t take you any time to get the hang of it.” And there had been a most flattering emphasis on the “you.”

Only Jim Hough had seemed unenthusiastic. Jim had expressed doubt that a fellow could be on the *Scholiast* and give the proper amount of time and attention to football. Whereupon had ensued an argument between Jim and Whitehall as to the comparative importance of football and journalism, the latter making the absolutely absurd claim that journalism was the greater pursuit of the two! In the end they had appealed to Kendall for his opinion and he had put an end to the dispute by smilingly suggesting that they allow him to defer judgment until he knew more about journalism, a suggestion that seemed to impress everyone with its marvelous wisdom. Or everyone save The Duke. The Duke had grinned like the Cheshire cat all the time and had more than once favored Kendall with a surreptitious and knowing wink, thereby adding to Kendall’s embarrassment.

For it was embarrassing. To discover suddenly that instead of the nonentity one supposes oneself to be one is in reality a public character, a person of prominence, in short a quasi-hero, is bound to be both embarrassing and disturbing. But once having had his eyes opened, Kendall could not doubt that The Duke had spoken truly. He had only to observe how attentively the others listened to what he said, how eager they seemed to have him express opinions, how stoutly they believed in his ability to make the *Scholiast* and succeed at the work. But it was pleasant, almost intoxicatingly pleasant, and Kendall went back to Clarke Hall in a mood far different from that in which he had left. The world no longer seemed dull or empty. It was, indeed, a very wonderful world, filled with many likable people and teeming with possibilities! Kendall's feelings were reflected so plainly in his countenance when he entered Number 28 that Gerald, who had unexpectedly returned for supper and was entertaining George Kirk, viewed him in surprise.

"Hello," he exclaimed, "what's happened to you, Kendall? Anybody left you a fortune?"

"Not that I know of," replied Kendall after greeting Kirk. "I—I've been on the river with The Duke. We had a bully time."

"With The Duke? What the dickens did you do?"

"Oh, nothing much. Just paddled up to the island and sat there. Some fellows came along and we talked."

"And that's your idea of a bully time!" marveled Gerald. "George, observe our young friend and take a lesson from him. Forget that Broadwood beat you yesterday. Paddle on the river and cheer up!"

"Did they really beat us?" asked Kendall.

Kirk nodded gloomily. "They simply slaughtered us."

"Don't get him on the subject again, Kendall," begged Gerald. "I found him moping on the steps and brought him along to brighten him up. He's wailed and bewailed for half an hour and I can stand

no more of it. Let's find a cheerful subject of conversation, such as supper."

"I'm awfully sorry," said Kendall sympathetically.

"Let it go at that, then," said Gerald. "You'll start him off again if you aren't careful. What lovely weather we're having, George!"

Kirk laughed. "Well, we'll get back at them in the Spring," he said hopefully. "I wish you'd try for the team, Burtis."

"I don't think I'd ever make a golfer," replied Kendall. "You know I tried last year, Kirk."

"I know you did. And did mighty well, too. All you need is practice. I wish you'd think it over. It's so hard to get good fellows for the team!"

"Maybe I will, if you want me to," said Kendall. "I like golf very much, only I don't believe I'd ever become much of a player."

"I think you would," replied Kirk earnestly. "Any fellow who can do as well in football as you're doing, and has such a dandy sense of directions and distance as you must have to kick those goals, ought to make a good golfer."

Kendall smiled, and, seeing the inquiring look on Kirk's face, explained. "I was thinking of something Ned Tooker said last year. Ned said that a good football player couldn't be a good golf player; that the one spoiled him for the other; I forget just why."

Kirk laughed. "Well, Ned was the best golfer we've ever had here, but he didn't know everything. And, besides, Ned was fond of saying things just for the sound of them!"

"A common failing," grieved Gerald as he splashed and gurgled at the stand. "Alas, how"—gurgle—"few of us"—sniff! splash!—"consider the sense"—sniff! sniff!—"of our utterances! Where's that towel?"

"Then it's a promise, is it, Burtis?" asked the golf captain eagerly.

“Why—er—yes, if you like. At least, I’ll give it a fair try, Kirk.”

“Good stuff! We’ll have some games together after the Broadwood game’s over. Well, I’ll run along. ’Bye, Gerald.”

“’Bye,” answered Gerald from behind a towel. “Call again, Georgie.”

“Perhaps I will some day. By the way!” Kirk stopped at the door. “What sort of a chap is that Cotton? I mean the fellow who rooms with The Duke. All right, is he?”

“All right?” echoed Gerald. “I’d say he was pretty much all wrong. There’s no harm in him, though, I guess. Ask Kendall. He’s a great chum of Kendall’s. Thick as thieves, they are!”

“Oh, well, I guess he’s all right, then,” said Kirk. “I asked because——” He stopped, looked thoughtfully puzzled a moment and then, nodding, went out.

“Wonder what Cotton’s done to him,” said Gerald cheerfully. “If I were a punster I’d say it was evident Kirk doesn’t cotton to him. But I’m not, and so I won’t. Did I hear you murmur your thanks?”

“Eh?” asked Kendall blankly.

“Well, where have you been? Still thinking of what a wonderful time you had on the river?” Gerald seemed a little disgruntled over that.

“No, I was just—just thinking.”

What he had been thinking was that if he succeeded in making the *Scholiast* and the Golf Team, he would be a pretty busy chap the rest of the year!

Just how the trick played on Gibson of Broadwood got out is not known. Neither Gerald nor Kendall divulged it, and The Duke refused to own to having spoken of the matter. But get out it did, for by Monday the whole school knew about it and was laughing delightedly. Even the *Scholiast*, most dignified of school

publications, could not forebear a fling and the next issue contained at the bottom of a page this brief note:

“The Broadwood Academy Press announces for early publication ‘Personal Recollections of Booth’; by Gibson.”

Football practice on Monday was hard and long. Several second string players were temporarily promoted to the First Team, for a number of the regulars were still showing the effects of Saturday’s game. Kendall played two periods and then yielded his position to Fayette and was sent off. On Tuesday, however, strains and bruises were healed and the First Team lined up as on Saturday, with the exception that Adler was in place of Metz at right end. Oliver Colton, a former Yardley captain, arrived on Tuesday and stayed until the end of the week, putting in three days of hard coaching. Under his tuition the guards and tackles improved perceptibly. The first serious accident of the season happened Wednesday, when Lin Johnson, center of the Second Team, broke a shoulder blade and did it in such a messy way that there was no question of any more football for him that season. Ireland, who had been playing full-back on Hough’s team, took Johnson’s place, but he didn’t make much of a center and the First, when it wanted a gain through the middle of the opposing line, spoke of taking “a short trip through Ireland.” But the Second struggled on gamely and, if it was no longer able to score touchdowns on the First, sometimes got a field-goal over.

The mass-meetings began Thursday night. Everyone piled into Assembly Hall on the top floor of Oxford and listened to speeches by Mr. Payson and Captain Merriwell and Mr. Bendix, Physical Director, and sang the old songs and experimented with new ones, and cheered themselves hoarse. The Banjo and Mandolin Club provided the music, assisted by Perky Davis at the piano, and its efforts to master some of the tunes offered by enthusiastic amateur composers occasioned much merriment among the audience below the stage. Afterward Kendall, who had promised himself an hour’s tussle with algebra that evening, went back alone to Number 28,

Gerald and Harry wandering off with Pete Girard to the latter's room in Dudley. To Kendall's disgust, when he reached Number 28 he found the door ajar and Charles Cotton seated at the table apparently deeply immersed in calculations with pencil and paper. Kendall disguised his surprise and disappointment and greeted the visitor politely if without overmuch enthusiasm. Cotton, however, seemed to notice no lack of warmth.

"Just the fellow I wanted to see," he announced, without rising from Kendall's chair. "Saw you at the meeting, but lost you outside. I want you to see what you think of this scheme, Burtis."

"What is it?" asked Kendall, tossing aside his cap and leaning over the other's shoulder. On the table lay a square of paper rudely scrawled with circles and figures. "I'm not much good at puzzles, Cotton."

"Oh, this isn't a puzzle. It's something new in football signals."

"You don't say? What's the idea?"

"Well, look here. Have you got another chair? Bring it up, like a good fellow. I'm awfully interested in this and I want you tell me what you think of it. Now then," he continued when Kendall had drawn a chair to the table and seated himself, "here's the idea. You know the signals they use now are dreadfully complicated."

"Are they?"

"Well, aren't they? Take the Yardley system, for instance. We have two sets of signals, like this." Cotton indicated his diagram. "Here are the holes numbered from 1 to 8. Then the two ends, the two tackles and the four backs are numbered from 1 to 8. Now that's confusing, isn't it?"

"I don't see why," Kendall objected, getting interested now. "We use three numbers, the first a fake, the second indicating the runner, and the third the hole. That's not hard."

"Then we have special plays numbered, too."

“Yes, a special play is called by tacking its number on to 500 and when Simms calls that he calls it right after the fake. You can’t get mixed up there, can you?”

“N-no,” replied Cotton doubtfully. “I suppose not. Still—now suppose left half was to take the ball through guard-tackle hole on the right. How would you call that?”

“We haven’t any such play. If we had, though, Simms would give us, say, 22, 76, 36.”

Cotton studied his diagram. “That sounds harder than need be. Your 22 is your fake, your 76 is your runner, the second numeral of the number indicating left half-back, and the 36 is the hole, the 6 meaning between right guard and tackle. That’s it, isn’t it?”

“Of course.”

“Have I got the positions numbered right?”

“Not quite. You’ve got quarter numbered 7; should be 5.”

“That so? Well, you draw a diagram for me, will you? I’m a lobster at it. Got another piece of paper?”

Kendall drew a pad toward him and quickly made a row of circles for the forwards and added four more beneath for the backs. Then he numbered the holes and the players. Cotton nodded approvingly.

“That’s fine and neat,” he commended. “Now suppose you were to punt, Burtis; what would be the signal for that?”

““Burtis back; 24, 49, 16.””

“Nine means kick, doesn’t it?”

“Yes, and the 16 means nothing. When you get to the 9 you know it is to be a kick and pay no attention to anything afterwards. Same way with special plays, Cotton. For instance, ‘75, 506, 102’ means that the play is to Play Number 6. The 102 means nothing; it’s just tagged on to fill out.”

“Well, that isn’t as complicated as it seemed at first,” owned Cotton. “As long as I was on the team we used only hole numbers, you know, and the quarter indicated the runner with his fingers on his hip.”

“Yes, the Second does that still, I think. It’s not a bad way if all the backs can see the quarter’s fingers. What is this scheme of yours, though?”

Cotton frowned a minute. Then he shook his head. “It doesn’t seem so good now,” he confessed. “My plan was to use numbers for the holes and letters for the players. It seemed to me it would be easier to remember.”

“That’s not new,” smiled Kendall. “They used to use letters altogether sometimes, I’ve heard. Used to take a word with ten or eleven letters, no two the same, of course, and let a letter stand for the hole and the player, too. I guess the number codes are better, though.”

“I suppose so, or they wouldn’t use them,” replied Cotton thoughtfully folding up the paper. “Still, I think a fellow might figure out a simpler scheme than the one we use.”

“Try it,” laughed Kendall. “If you hit on anything good I guess Payson will be glad to use it.”

“I suppose the best thing about the number signals is that they can be changed easily. Now I suppose these signals won’t be used in Saturday’s game.”

“Yes, they will. But they’ll be changed for Broadwood.”

“I see.” Cotton absently dropped the sheet of paper in his pocket as he stood up. “Well, I’m going to have another go at it, anyway. I’ll bet I can beat this scheme. I hope I haven’t been in the way. Were you going to do anything?”

“Only grind a little,” replied Kendall. “There’s plenty of time yet. So long, Cotton. Let me know how you get on with that.” He

nodded toward the pocket in which lay the paper.

“I will.” Cotton patted his jacket as though he wasn’t at all sure where he had placed the sheet, and nodded. “Good-night.”

Kendall, hunting his books, reflected that Cotton wasn’t so bad, after all. Why, to-night he had been quite human! Of course, he shouldn’t have taken possession of the room in the absence of the occupants. There was an unwritten law at Yardley that if a fellow was not in, you went no further than the threshold unless you happened to be a particular friend and had permission to make yourself at home. However, Cotton had behaved so amiably that Kendall was ready to forgive the breach of manners. He had almost liked the fellow to-night!

CHAPTER XV

THE *NEWS* PREDICTS DEFEAT

Gerald sat on the lowest step in front of Oxford. It was Friday morning and a chilly, depressing gray fog was driving in from the Sound. Somewhere in the distance a whistle buoy was moaning and at intervals a steamer, creeping along off shore, bellowed hoarsely. It was twenty minutes before first recitation hour and Gerald had the entrance to himself. A copy of the morning's Greenburg *News* was held in front of him, getting damper and limper every minute, and Gerald was perusing the football column. The *News* chronicled each day the progress of the Yardley and Broadwood teams, and as the game between the rival schools approached the *News* devoted more and more space to them. To-day the football specialist of the paper came out flat-footed with the prediction that Broadwood would win the contest. The *News* had of late years shown a strong partiality to Yardley and this prediction troubled Gerald the more for that reason.

"It's some time," said the *News*, "since the Green has defeated the Blue and lots of people around here have begun to wonder whether she is ever going to repeat. Even the longest road has its turning, though, and the luck has to change some time. And it looks very much now as if the change would take place a week from tomorrow when Broadwood and Yardley meet in their fourteenth annual contest. In fact those who have seen both teams in action don't hesitate to hand the victory to the Green right now. This may sound rash, but they have plenty of good argument to support their verdict with.

"On the season's showing Broadwood is undoubtedly ahead. She has met teams equal to those Yardley has played and has survived every battle without a defeat, whereas Yardley fell an easy victim to Forest Hill last week. In total of points made, Broadwood leads her

ancient rival by 88 to 67, not a wide margin certainly, but sufficient to prove Broadwood's greater scoring power. Broadwood has been scored against twice for a total of 8, Yardley as many times for a total of 10. Taking the work of the two teams last Saturday as a basis of comparison, the Green is still in the lead. She piled up a score of 11 points against a worthy opponent and was scored on herself by a goal-from-field. In the last two quarters Broadwood played solely on the defensive. Meanwhile Yardley had the utmost difficulty to keep from being shut out ignominiously by Forest Hill, a much weaker team than Nordham. Forest Hill found the Yardley defense easy, and, especially in the third period, did about as she wanted with it. She should have had at least one more touchdown on the showing made. Yardley secured her three points when play was almost over, the infallible Burtis toeing a very pretty field-goal from the forty-five yards. It will be interesting to see how Yardley performs against Nordham to-morrow, by the way, for there is a strong sentiment on the hill in favor of beating Nordham at any cost, in view of the defeat which the latter institution handed to the Blue last year.

“But comparative scores don't always tell the truth. Nor does a team's showing up to the moment of her final game mean very much. Many a team has gone through an unfortunate season and then turned in and taken the measure of its rival in fine style. Yardley, therefore, may surprise us by showing a reversal of form to-morrow and piling up a bigger score against Nordham than did Broadwood, in which case those who are predicting a Broadwood victory a week from to-morrow would have cause for thought. But there are other things to be considered besides the season's showing of the two teams and their comparative scores. Broadwood looks better on the field and in action as well as on paper. She has a hard-playing, powerful team which will outweigh Yardley three or four pounds to the man at least. Her back-field will average five pounds heavier. And, unlike heavy teams of previous years, this season's Broadwood aggregation is fast, fully as fast as Yardley's. With a dry

field and no favor Broadwood's team should be worth at least one score more than Yardley's.

“In style of play the rivals are much alike. Both depend largely on line plays to gain ground, although Yardley, with Burtis in the line-up, will naturally do a good deal of kicking. That phenomenon, by the way, although practically a new man this season, has come at a fast clip, and those who consider him only as a brilliant punter and drop-kicker are in for a surprise. As a dodging back he has no equal on his own team and will suffer but little by comparison with Captain Raynor of Broadwood. The Green is ahead at present in the matter of team-play. She seems to have got together earlier in the season than usual, and both defense and offense are running smoothly. On the whole, the Green has a big, powerful team this year, one at least twenty-five per cent. better than that which suffered defeat last year by the narrowest of margins. On the other hand, it can't be said that Yardley is a whit better off than she was last November; rather, it is doubtful if she is as well off. She has had to build almost a whole new team, having suffered badly by graduation, and so far whatever there is in the team hasn't shown to be dangerous. It may be that in the few practice days remaining before the big show Coach Payson, who is one of the cleverest men handling a school eleven to-day, will manage to work a miracle. If he doesn't we can't see but what there will be cause for rejoicing in the Broadwood camp at sunset of the 17th—a rejoicing likely to be worth seeing because so long delayed.”

Gerald lowered the paper thoughtfully. “If you believe that,” he murmured, “we're beaten this minute. I guess Broadwood is pretty good this year; everybody is saying so. I'd hate to have the school get beaten my last year, though.” He shook his head. “I wonder if Payson has anything up his sleeve. Kendall says he's developing end run plays to beat the band. Maybe that's the answer. Broadwood can't be so terribly fast if she's as heavy as this fellow says, and perhaps Payson expects to work the ends and try field goals. Seems to me that would be his best plan. There's no denying that our back-

field is weak on line-plunging. They showed that Saturday.” He took up the paper again. “Let’s see what the games are to-morrow. Yale plays Brown. That’ll be a cinch. Harvard plays Cornell——”

“What are you muttering about?” asked a voice. Gerald looked up to find Harry beside him. “What are you trying to do, Gerald? Get rheumatism and pneumonia and a few other things?”

“No, I’m doing this for my complexion,” replied Gerald with a grin. “They say fog is great for the complexion.”

“Brrr! I’d rather go without the complexion. Come on inside, unless you’re doing penance out here.”

“Seen the *News* this morning?” asked Gerald, as he followed the other up the steps.

“No, anything in it?”

“A column or so about the teams. We’re going to get licked. It says so.”

Harry smiled untroubledly. “You’ll have to show me,” he said. “Why, what does the paper know about it?”

“You’d think it knew everything about it to read it,” answered Gerald sadly. “Who *is* going to win, anyhow?”

“Little old Yardley,” replied Harry unhesitatingly. “Cheer up! You’re full of fog. Isn’t this a peach of a day?”

“Fine!” They laid their books on a radiator near the entrance and backed up to the warmth. “What are your reasons for thinking so?”

“Thinking what? Oh, about the game? Why, we always do win, don’t we? What’s to keep us from doing it again?”

“The luck has to change,” answered the other unconsciously quoting the *News*. “They say Broadwood has a dandy team this year.”

“Of course; she always has. But what of it? So have we.”

“The *News* says we haven’t.”

Harry seized the paper and dropped it behind the radiator. “If you wouldn’t read such stuff you wouldn’t be worried. They have to fill the paper up with something, and they might as well say one thing as another. How’s Kendall?”

“Blooming. Have you noticed anything about him the last three or four days?”

“No, what? I haven’t seen very much of him.”

“Well, he seems—different, somehow. Has more—more assurance. Why, I came across him yesterday talking with Perry Whitehall, as thick as two thieves. And Wednesday he actually got into a discussion with Simms about something and threshed it right out with him and made Simms back down. Something about some formation in football. And he looks different, too.” Gerald frowned thoughtfully at the bust of Pallas across the corridor. “Looks as though he kind of thought more of himself.”

“Well,” laughed Harry, “there’s no harm in that. But what about the campaign? Do we make progress?”

“We surely do; but a whole lot depends on what Kendall does in the next two games. If he will do a star act or two he can’t help getting the captaincy. I’ve been sort of sleuthing around, Harry. None of the fellows seem to have picked a candidate yet. There’s talk of Crandall, but it’s only talk. What I’m wondering is whether it wouldn’t be a good idea to casually suggest Kendall’s name to one or two of the football bunch; just offhand, you know.”

“I suppose it would. Only the fellows mustn’t think we want him for captain. It ought to be done mighty carefully.”

“Yes, and I guess it would be a good idea to wait until after tomorrow’s game and see what happens then. If Kendall kicks a couple of field goals or distinguishes himself any other way perhaps we won’t have to say a word.”

“He won’t, though,” answered Harry. “Just because we want him to, he will get hurt at the beginning of the game and have to be laid off. You see if he doesn’t! That’s the way things happen.”

“Who’s full of fog now?” laughed Gerald. “You’re as pessimistic as an owl. And you’re all wrong, too. Something tells me that we are going to win to-morrow and that Kendall is going to make a blooming hero of himself. Still, if he doesn’t it will be up to us to start the ball rolling. We might each drop a hint, you know. Who do you know best on the team? Charlie Merriwell?”

“No, Pete or Bert, I suppose.”

“Well, you go for Bert, then. You could just say something about it’s being pretty near time to think about a new captain, and wonder who he will be. Then you could say that you think Kendall would make a pretty good one. See?”

“Ye-es. But, say, Gerald, have you thought how we’d feel if they did make Kendall captain and he didn’t turn out to be the right fellow, after all?”

“No, because he will be the right fellow. What’s the use of considering things that aren’t so? Dan picked Kendall for the place, and Dan knows.” The corridor was filling with students, and Gerald dropped his voice. “I had a letter from him the other day, and he particularly asked about Kendall. Come on, it’s nine o’clock.”

Harry groaned. “What do you suppose we have recitations for?” he asked. “Life would be so much nicer without them!”

CHAPTER XVI

COTTON WRITES A LETTER

That afternoon the fog changed to a soft drizzle that puffed in from the Sound on a southwest breeze and cast a pall of gloom and moisture over the school. Luckily there was no outdoor practice scheduled, for the field was soft and slippery and just in condition to produce a crop of sprains and bruises. Instead, there was a solid two hours of signal drill and talk in the gymnasium. The plays selected for the morrow were drawn on the blackboard and explained again by the Coach, after which the players were “quizzed” on each and afterwards were made to go through them, first at a walk and then at a trot, until they went off smoothly. Toward the last the lights had to be turned on, and the players, their rubber soles patting the boards, moved back and forth, two squads of them, with their foreshortened shadows dodging and leaping about the floor with strange effect. The voices of Simms and Holmes, the first high and sharp and the latter like an angry growl, called the signals, the centers shot back the balls, the poised players broke into seeming confusion, there was the sound of pattering shoes on the floor, of hurried breathing, and then quiet again as the teams reformed, quiet broken by the even voice of Coach Payson.

“Cousins, you started too soon. Wait until quarter turns. Your duty is to make the play safe. If there had been a fumble you’d never have got the ball. Try that again, please. And, Burtis, keep your head straight. If you turn it you may give away the play. Remember that, everyone. Don’t indicate by a look or movement where the ball is going or where the attack is to be made. Same play, Simms.”

At the edge of the shadow cast by the running track a half-dozen substitutes watched and awaited their turns. With them were Davis, making interminable notes in his book, and Andy Ryan, the little

red-headed trainer, his sharp eyes following the players' every movement. Finally it was over, and the fellows trooped down the stairs to the showers, the edict "Ten o'clock bed, fellows!" ringing in their ears.

Meanwhile Gerald was leading a dozen or so scantily attired youths over the cross-country course, plugging up the slippery hillsides and splashing through puddles, with the rain soaking their running clothes and squish-squashing in their spiked shoes, and all for the glory of Yardley. And, although no one knew it, far out on the golf links, a solitary figure in the rain-swept landscape, George Kirk was tramping doggedly along in the wake of a wee white ball. The golfing days were growing fewer and fewer and, although it would be a good six months before he could lead his warriors against Broadwood again, he must miss no chance to prepare for a victory. And this, too, was for the glory of Yardley.

By supper time the drizzle had turned to a driving rain that beat against the front windows of the halls and filled the walks with unexpected puddles into which you walked unseeingly. It was what The Duke, sprinting back from the library after supper—even The Duke had to look up a reference occasionally—termed to himself "a dark, dank, drooly night." He reached the entrance to Clarke out of breath and somewhat damp, but his spirits were not affected. It took more than that to affect them. Even the fact that authority in the person of one Edmund Gaddis, instructor in English, familiarly known as "Old Tige," had decreed that The Duke should hand in a theme before Saturday noon, and that Saturday noon was less than seventeen hours away, cast no spell of gloom over his gayety. When, having reached the head of the first flight, he descried Adler coming along the corridor, he immediately stationed himself against the newel post, clapped a hand to an imaginary sword hilt and scowled silently at the approaching figure. Adler, sighting his foe at the same moment, placed a quick hand on his own weapon and, hugging the further wall, advanced cautiously, with an insolent expression. No word was spoken. Eyeing each other intently,

haughtily, they met and passed. The weapons were not drawn. Adler, circling at a safe distance, reached the stairs and, with a last malevolent glare, which was met and returned, passed from sight. Whereupon The Duke dropped his hand from his sword hilt and proceeded upstairs, three steps at a time. Just why the two went through this procedure they did not know, but they always did, wherever and whenever they met. Doubtless it added spice to life.

Cotton was writing at the study table when The Duke flung open the door of Number 47. At sight of his roommate Cotton quickly turned the written sheet face downward and drew a blotter half over it, afterward pretending to trace figures on the blotter with his pen. The Duke observed him disgustedly.

“Oh, chuck the mystery, Cotton! I don’t want to see what you’re writing. Every time anyone comes around you you hide something like a silly conspirator. Why the dickens don’t you write something you aren’t ashamed of, eh?”

“I’m not ashamed of anything I write,” replied Cotton with intense dignity. “But I don’t want fellows to read my letters, do I?”

“You do not! Nor does anyone want to read your old letters. I’ll bet a dollar and seven cents no one *could* read ’em!”

The Duke had seized a towel and was vigorously mopping the rain from his face and hair. Cotton scowled.

“If I couldn’t write better than you I—I’d use a typewriter!”

“Is that impossible?” scoffed The Duke, tossing the towel aside and slicking his hair with a pair of military brushes. “Sweet youth, I wouldst tell thee something an thou willst hearken. My name is Lester S. Wellington, and the S stands for Spencerian. I, O Colossal Lump of Ignorance, invented the art of writing!”

Cotton said “Humph!” in an unflattering tone and gathered up his writing. The Duke, feeling better after his burst of confidence, pulled a slip of crumpled paper from a pocket and smoothed it out. It contained the notes written in the library. He had started for his

room with his mind made up to sit down at once and compose that English theme. But now he viewed the notes distastefully. The virtuous impulse was dying fast. Besides, how could a fellow do anything with Cotton there? An English theme—especially to The Duke—was something requiring ideal conditions of quiet and vast concentration. And it was absolutely impossible to concentrate when Cotton was scratching his pen or shuffling his feet at the other side of the table. Besides, there was still to-morrow morning. He would arise early and do the theme before chapel. One's faculties are always at their best in the early morning. The Duke slipped the notes between the pages of a blue book and smiled relievedly. He even viewed his roommate with a forgiving smile.

“Coming over to Oxford?” he asked.

“What for?” growled Cotton, not so ready to make up.

“Why, for the mass-meeting, O Flower of Chivalry!”

“What do I care about the mass-meeting?” inquired Cotton with a scowl. “A lot of idiots howling and some more idiots making speeches! What does it amount to?”

“Why, you unpatriotic sinner!” exclaimed The Duke. “I honestly believe you'd rather see us beaten than not!”

“We're going to be beaten, whether I want it or don't. Besides, there'll be plenty of fellows there to make a noise without me.”

The Duke viewed him with deep disgust for a moment. Finally, “Cotton, at times I experience a most frantic temptation to kick you out of the window. Isn't that strange? Can you explain it?”

“You'd better try it,” replied the other belligerently.

“No, I shall try to resist,” answered The Duke, shaking his head gently. “You just say that so I'll spoil a perfectly good window and get in trouble. I don't think that is very nice of you, Cotton. In fact, I think it shows a mean spirit. No, when I do kick you, O Delectable One, it will be through the door, with the door open.”

“You—you——” began Cotton angrily.

“Don’t ask me!” interrupted The Duke, holding up a hand. “I’d like to oblige you, Cotton, but I will *not* kick you out the window. You must try to be reasonable about it. Put yourself in my place, Cotton. As much as I love you, O Joy of My Heart, I will not sacrifice a good window merely to satisfy your selfish whim. No, no, Cotton, it must be the door! You must be satisfied with the door. Not another word, I beg of you! I am adamant!”

And The Duke, smiling sweetly but reprovngly, passed out, leaving Cotton sputtering with indignation and rage. By the time The Duke’s footsteps had died away in the corridor, however, his roommate’s wrath had wasted to grumblings.

“Silly fool,” muttered Cotton. “Stuck-up idiot! Thinks he’s so beastly clever, does he? Huh!” He caught sight of the paper The Duke had slipped into the book, and he reached across the table and drew it out. “Notes, eh?” he murmured. “For his theme, I guess. Well, he can go and get some more, he’s so smart!” And very deliberately, grinning the while, Cotton tore the sheet into tiny pieces and, opening the window, let them flutter out. Then, chuckling, he returned to the table, uncovered his letter, dipped his pen and began to write again:

“And as near as I can find out they won’t learn the new signals until about Tuesday. I guess I can find out what they are. I’ll try anyway. If I do I’ll let you know right away. It looks like they’d get licked to-morrow, and I hope they do. Two or three of the fellows are overtrained, they say, but I don’t know if it’s really true. Look for a letter Wednesday or Thursday. Best regards.”

He didn’t sign his name. Folding the letter he slipped it into an envelope and addressed it to “William Gibson, Esq., Broadwood Academy, Greenburg, Ct.” Then, putting it into his pocket, he

slipped quietly down the stairs and across, through the rain, to the letterbox in front of Oxford. Although there was no one in sight Cotton took no risks of being seen, and the way in which he extracted the letter from his pocket and slid it through the slot was a marvel of dexterity. Then, as a sudden burst of cheering reached him from upstairs, he passed into the hall and sought the meeting, just as, in spite of his declaration to the contrary, he had intended to do all along.

CHAPTER XVII

A FUMBLE

The morning of the Nordham game dawned gray and cold and cheerless. The rain still continued and water lay in pools along the drive and walks. What the field would be like in the afternoon no one cared to predict. There was talk of canceling the game, and rumors to the effect that Andy Ryan had called on Mr. Bendix, the court of final appeal in such cases, to ask him to declare the game off, were rife about the school in the morning. It was explained that the trainer was afraid of injury to the players on such a slippery field. Perhaps had there not been such a desire to obtain revenge from Nordham for last year's defeat the contest might have been canceled. But it wasn't. There was a conference at eleven o'clock, attended by Mr. Payson, Mr. Bendix, Captain Merriwell, Manager Davis and Andy Ryan, and during its progress the school at large held its breath in painful suspense. When the result of the conference was announced there was both relief and joy. In spite of Andy's advice, the game was to take place, the only alteration of original plans consisting of a shortening of the playing periods from fifteen minutes to twelve.

Yardley flocked to the field at two o'clock clad in raincoats and rubber hats. The attendance from outside the school was naturally small, although perhaps a hundred and fifty or two hundred townfolk came up to pick their way across the soggy grass under bobbing umbrellas and view the game from the water-soaked seats. Nordham sent over some twenty or thirty devoted supporters, who managed to make a large amount of noise considering their number. Two First Class fellows, detailed by Gerald on request of Mr. Manager Davis, stood at the entrance and watched for the appearance of inquisitive Broadwood gentlemen. None sought admission, however, which was fortunate, since the guards would

have been powerless to exclude them. Practice was cut short to-day, and after one or two dashes about the field and a few kicks of the wet ball the two teams retired to their respective sides and the captains met to decide the choice of goals. It was raining steadily, but not so hard as during the forenoon, and optimistic ones predicted that the weather would clear before the game was finished. The field was soft and slippery, and here and there held shallow pools of water. In the stand, Gerald, seated between Harry and The Duke, was retelling an old joke called to mind by the condition of the field.

“You fellows may have heard it,” he said. “It’s rather a classic.”

“Cut out the apologies,” begged The Duke. “They’re going to start in a minute.”

“Well, once when Pennsylvania and Princeton used to play football together——”

“That must have been in the dark ages,” murmured Harry.

“—there was a Thanksgiving Day game in Philadelphia. It had snowed during the night and when it came time to start the game it was raining, and the field was covered with slush two or three inches deep. The Princeton captain won the toss. ‘Do we have to play in this fluid?’ he asked bitterly. ‘Of course you do,’ they told him impatiently. ‘Come on, now; you won the toss; which end do you want?’ The Princeton man looked around over the waste of gray slush and shook his head. ‘Well,’ he said finally, ‘I guess we’ll kick with the tide.’”

“That’s what we’re going to do,” laughed Harry. “We’ve won the toss.”

Nordham was spreading out over her end of the field and Fales was trying to make a tee with the soft mud. “I wonder,” said Gerald, “if he wouldn’t like Kirk to drive off for him.” The whistle blew, Fales stepped forward and the ball took flight. Nordham at once tested the field, trying to get a back away around Adler’s end, but

the attempt was a failure. There was no such thing as quick starting to-day, and the runner was tackled before he had reached his own line. Nordham kicked then and the ball went to mid-field. Marion tried the center of the Nordham line and netted two yards, Crandall slid off right tackle for two more and Simms kicked. A red-stockinged Nordhamite caught the pigskin near his twenty yards and dodged back to the thirty-five before he was downed. Then came a forward pass that failed, followed by two attempts at the right of the Yardley breastworks. The Red missed her distance by a scant half-foot, and Yardley took the ball away. Kendall secured three yards outside left tackle on a double pass, and made three more through left guard. Simms ran back and passed to Cousins, who was tackled where he caught. It was first down again. Crandall and Kendall, alternating, worked the tackles for gains until the ball was on the Reds' twenty-six-yard line. There Simms fumbled the slippery ball and a Nordham forward fell on it.

Nordham kicked on first down, getting off a fine long punt that went over Simms' head far down the field. The Nordham ends were on him by the time he had secured the ball and Simms went down in the mud. An exchange of punts secured five yards for Yardley and then Marion banged through for twelve and laid the oval on the fifty-yard line. Another attempt, however, failed of gain and Kendall fell back to punt. Girard made a wretched pass and Kendall had to fall on the ball to save it. With twenty-three yards to gain Simms sent Kendall back again as if to kick and himself took the ball through the Nordham center for ten yards and would have got away for the necessary distance had he not slipped and fallen. Nordham tried a forward pass that netted fifteen yards and then worked a delayed pass for five more, the entire Yardley team being fooled on the play. The whistle blew with the ball in Nordham's possession on Yardley's twenty-five yards.

So far neither team had shown much strength in attack and neither had reached scoring distance of the opponent's goal. In

weight Nordham was perceptibly lighter than Yardley, while her better speed was handicapped by the slippery field.

In the second period Nordham ripped open the Blue line on two tries for a first down, bringing the ball to the twenty yards. An end run was spoiled and a fake kick with an attack on the center of the line netted but two yards. Then Nordham's full-back retired to the thirty-five yards and the quarter knelt in front of him. The ball was almost in front of the goal and it looked as though a score was to follow. But the Blue forwards smashed through in time to spoil the place-kick, the ball thumping against Girard's upstretched arm and bounding away toward the side of the field, where it was secured by Kendall.

From her twenty-eight yards the Blue began a series of plays directed at the tackles that soon worked the ball past the middle of the field. Stark, right tackle, was drawn back frequently, and Marion and the two half-backs had their turns. The Red team was weakening, it seemed, her secondary defense especially making poor work of stopping the advance. On the stand the Yardley supporters were shouting lustily for a touchdown, and it looked as though the Blue was well started on a triumphant journey. With some three or four minutes of the half remaining, and the Red line allowing gains at every attack, it seemed that Yardley might well cross that last white line. But near the thirty-five yards there was a mix-up on signals and Crandall was thrown for a loss. Simms raged and stormed and Kendall took the ball for a wide end run. Across the field he raced, protected by fair interference, watching for a chance to turn in, and finally, just when it seemed that his chance had come and he had a clear field between him and the opposing quarter-back, an intrusive Nordham man dodged by the interference and made a flying tackle that fairly lifted Kendall off his feet and hurled him to earth.

Away bounded the pigskin. A Nordham player, foiled a moment before, was in the path of the ball. Those who saw the incident declared that the red-stockinged chap hardly had to stretch out his

hands, that the ball actually bounced into his arms! In any case, having got it, he knew what to do. Off he went on a wild effort to cover the seventy-odd yards between him and Yardley's goal. Behind him the Yardley players, aghast at the sudden turn of fortune, trailed in desperate pursuit. Fayette led the pack, and for a time it seemed that he might reach the runner before the last white streak was crossed. But twenty yards from the goal Fayette gave out and was passed by Plant who, in turn, for a moment raised Yardley hopes. But Plant was heavy, and the streak down the field told on him before he could reach the Nordham runner, and the latter staggered over the line, reeled behind a post and fell on top of the ball in the very middle of the goal, subsequently turning calmly over on his back and losing all interest in events for a minute.

The tackle that had dislodged the ball from Kendall's grasp had been a terrific one, and even the most disappointed spectator grudgingly acknowledged that to have clung to a wet pigskin after such collision with the ground would have been almost impossible. Breathless and dazed, with his left arm filled with tearing pains, Kendall climbed to his feet in time to see the Nordham runner settle into his stride. Doggedly Kendall joined the pursuit, but a dozen steps was all he could manage. Having by then reached a nice pool of water he sank down into it, clasped his left wrist with the other hand and came so near fainting that it almost turned him sick. For a moment no one noticed his collapse. Then Pete Girard went to his assistance, somewhere a whistle blew, and Andy Ryan, the water pail slopping beside him, raced on. A big wet sponge was swashed over Kendall's face and he opened his eyes. Girard, kneeling across his thighs, was pumping his arms, and at every moment the left one hurt excruciatingly. Kendall tried his best to keep his lips tight, but in spite of him a moan got by, and Andy's eyes flashed hither and thither and his cunning fingers began a quick search over the boy's ribs.

"Where does it get you?" demanded Andy.

Kendall shook his head. Merriwell and some others had come up, and Kendall could hear their hoarse breathing.

“Can you stand up?” demanded Andy suspiciously.

Kendall doubted it, but he nodded. “I—I’m—all right,” he whispered. Girard and another lifted him, and again Kendall winced. Andy, watching, pounced upon him again.

“Hold up, boys,” he said quietly. “Something’s wrong.” He felt of Kendall’s collarbone, working clever fingers like lightning along the back of his neck. “Hurt?” he asked. Kendall shook his head. Andy’s fingers slid down along the left arm, his little green eyes watching Kendall’s face sharply. The boy held his breath and gritted his teeth. The awful fingers reached the wrist, closed——

Kendall felt the blood ebbing away from his face, already pale, but he returned the trainer’s gaze unflinchingly. Andy’s fingers stopped kneading, lingered inquiringly at the wrist. Then his eyes left Kendall’s and Kendall, following the trainer’s gaze, saw a white lump on the back of his hand.

Andy grunted. “Come off,” he said.

“It’s nothing, Andy, really!” pleaded Kendall. “I—I don’t even feel it!”

For answer Andy laid a compelling hand on his shoulder. “Sure, I know. ’Tis rather pleasant than otherwise, maybe. But just the same you’ll come along with me, Burtis, me boy!”

Payson awaited them on the side-line. “Dislocated wrist,” announced Andy.

“Sorry, Burtis. Fayette! Fayette! Right half, and hurry up!”

“I may go in again, mayn’t I, Andy?” begged Kendall as he lowered himself to the bench.

“Maybe. I don’t know. Hold your arm out. One o’ you boys put your arms around his chest. That’s it. Hold steady now.” Slowly

Andy pulled at the hand and pressed against the white lump. There was a squirmish, gritting sort of jar as the bone fell into place again. “All right. Hold it so a minute.” Andy reached into his bag for splints and bandage just as a shout of satisfaction traveled across the field. Kendall, glancing quickly toward the Yardley goal, saw the pigskin dropping to earth beyond the farther upright. Nordham had failed at goal!

With quick hands Andy wound the bandage. The shooting pains had already gone, but there was a dull, throbbing ache at the wrist, and Kendall viewed the white-swathed member scowlingly. “I wonder——” he began.

“What?” asked Andy as he tied the knot.

“I wonder if I hurt that before I dropped the ball, Andy.”

“Sure you did! You likely got it doubled under you when you went down.”

“Did I? That’s not so bad, then, is it? I mean there might be more excuse for fumbling, mightn’t there?”

“No man on earth would have held the ball after getting that,” responded the trainer, nodding at the hand. “Don’t bother your head about it, son.” He fashioned a sling of a broad strip of gauze and placed the arm in it so that the fingers lay over Kendall’s right chest. “Keep it so. We’ll have the doctor see it later. Time’s up! Get the blankets ready, boys!”

CHAPTER XVIII

KENDALL GOES BACK

Kendall, trotting awkwardly with one arm out of commission, followed the team and substitutes up the hill to the gymnasium. Feeling sadly out of it, he found a seat in a corner and watched the others. The rubbers were busy as soon as the doors had swung shut, and the air was already redolent of arnica and witch hazel. There was a rush of water and a babel of voices. Andy was busy at his store of rubber anklets and bandages. Fales had twisted his knee and Crandall had a cut over one eye that gave him a particularly wicked and disreputable appearance. Payson was talking with Captain Merriwell, the latter stretched at full length on a table with a rubber massaging his back. Payson was frowning intently as he talked. One by one the fellows came over to ask Kendall about his injury. They all seemed really sorry; even Fayette, who had profited by the other's misfortune, expressed concern in tones that sounded genuine! After awhile the coach began to talk and the room quieted. What he said was not very different from what coaches have said at such times from the beginning of football. He pointed out mistakes and explained how to avoid them. There was no scolding. At the end he said gravely:

“The school wants you to win to-day. Just keep that in mind. You've been outplayed so far by a team that's no better than you are; not quite so good, I think. You're no more handicapped than they are by the wet field and wet ball. There's no reason why you can't make a touchdown in each period, fellows. But you've got to do better than you have done. You've got to play together and put more snap into it. Perhaps you've forgotten what Nordham did to you last year. Or perhaps you don't care. If you don't care, go on playing as you've been playing. If you do care, go back there and show them how to play football!”

On the way back Payson sought Kendall. "I'm sorry you got hurt, Burtis," he said kindly. "Take care of that wrist, though, and we'll have you playing next week. Andy says he will have you in shape by then." He nodded and moved ahead.

"Next week!" muttered Kendall. "That means I don't get back today! I could, though, if it wasn't for this silly sling around my neck." He removed his hand and lowered it. It began to hurt as the blood flowed down into it, and Kendall scowled. "Gee, but it's mean luck! First I went and fumbled the ball and they scored a touchdown, and then I had to bust my wrist and can't play any more!" He worked his fingers experimentally. They hurt some, but he decided that he could manage to hold a ball with them in spite of the splints if they'd only give him a chance. He looked about for Andy Ryan as they trotted on to the field to the long cheers of the stand. The trainer was busy, and Kendall waited until he was for an instant alone. Then—

"Andy, you said I could go back," he charged.

"Go back? Do you mean play football?"

Kendall nodded.

"I said that, did I?" Andy grinned. "Was I snoring at the time?"

"You know you weren't," answered Kendall indignantly. "And you did say maybe I could——"

"Maybe! Sure I said maybe, Burtis. But what would you be doing out there with one arm in a sling——"

"I don't need to keep it in a sling, Andy!"

"You don't, eh? Listen, son. Do you keep your hand where I put it and take care of it. Then maybe you can play next week. If you don't——"

"Maybe!" gasped Kendall in dismay. "Is—is there any doubt of it?"

“There is,” replied Andy dryly. “All ready, men!”

Kendall, staring blankly before him, turned to find a seat on the bench, and heard his name called. Gerald was leaning across the barrier with an anxious countenance.

“What did you do?” he called. “Break anything?”

“Dislocated,” answered Kendall, tapping the bandaged wrist. He moved nearer to Gerald. “They say I can’t play any more to-day, and—and——”

“Of course you can’t,” agreed Gerald frowningly. “You’ve got to take care of it. Isn’t it mean luck, Kendall?” One might have thought that it was Gerald who had injured himself instead of Kendall. The latter nodded gloomingly, waved his well hand and found a seat between Metz and Jackson. Metz was not very cheerful company these days, since he had but lately been deposed from right end in favor of Adler and was not yet viewing the matter philosophically. Jackson, who was a substitute guard, a big, raw-boned chap with lantern jaws and eyebrows that met companionably above his nose, glanced at Kendall’s injury and asked laconically:

“Broke, Burtis?”

“No, just a dislocation.”

“Too bad ’tain’t broke. They say breaks heal quicker’n dislocations.”

“My, but you’re a cheerful comforter,” muttered Kendall, as he turned to watch the kick-off. Merriwell had elected to give that honor to Nordham. There was no advantage attached to the possession of either end of the field to-day, for there was no wind. The rain still descended, but it was more like a heavy mist now. Nordham booted the ball far down the field, and Simms got it near his own ten-yard line and by a wonderful effort that brought the onlookers to their feet carried it past mid-field. By that time the Yardley back had dodged and fought his way past the entire Nordham team save its quarter and seemed well on his way for a

touchdown. Having outstripped his interference, Simms ran directly at the Red's quarter-back at full speed. But that youth was not to be fooled. He approached Simms slowly and cautiously. Just as the runner swerved to his left the red-legged player made a diving plunge at Simms and brought him down, the two sliding through mud and water for yards after the tackle.

Yardley hammered the center for small gain and then slid off the tackles and made her distance. A fumble was recovered and an end run lost ground. Simms tried a quarter-back kick, and Nordham got the ball near her thirty yards. An exchange of punts gave no advantage to either side, and Nordham tried the Yardley center and squeezed through for two short gains. Crandall got the punt and trailed off twenty-odd yards before he was pulled down. Yardley went back to her former tactics of direct attack, plugging the guards and tackles and now and then trying a wide end run. In this manner the ball was carried down to Nordham's twenty-three-yard line. Marion got through for three, Crandall made five on a skin-tackle play, and the pigskin rested squarely on the fifteen-yard line. There was a pause here, Simms and Merriwell holding a consultation. Kendall guessed that they were discussing the chances of making that needed two yards. To try a field goal then seemed absurd.

Finally Fales dropped out of the line and went back as though to kick, and, although there were one or two cries of "Fake!" Nordham seemed pretty well convinced that a try-at-goal was to be the play. She pulled her wings in a little and made ready to break through. This left the Yardley ends free and Kendall, noting the fact, wondered whether Simms meant to chance a forward pass. The ball went back to Fales and the big guard stepped forward and swung his long leg. The Nordham forwards came crashing through with upstretched arms, leaping and stumbling. Fales, however, had not kicked. With the nearest Nordham players almost upon him he side-stepped and hurled the ball straight over the center of the line toward where Cousins awaited it. There was an instant of suspense, of wild scrambling on the part of the defenders, and then the ball,

aimed too high, went over Cousins' head, struck an upright of the goal and bounded back. A dozen bodies threw themselves after it. But under the rules it went to Nordham for a touchback and a groan of disappointment arose from the stand. Nordham kicked from behind her goal line and Crandall made the catch on Yardley's forty-three yards. From there Yardley hammered out two yards and then the whistle blew for the end of the third period.

As the players separated to don their blankets and change positions Coach Payson strode over to Andy Ryan. Kendall, watching, saw the trainer swing around and look at him. Payson's gaze followed. Kendall's heart leaped into his throat. For a moment the two talked. Once Andy shook his head slowly. Once he shrugged his shoulders. Then Payson was calling.

"Burtis!"

Kendall sprang from the bench and hurried to the side-line.

"Do you think you can go in and kick if you have a chance?" asked the coach hurriedly. "If you're to go in at all I've got to put you in now. You may tell Simms not to use you except for kicking."

"Yes, sir."

"Take your sling off," said Andy, "but keep your arm up all you can. And keep out of scrimmage, too."

"Yes, you needn't rough it up any, Burtis. All I want you to do is punt when necessary, and if we get inside their thirty yards try a goal unless Simms is pretty certain of making a touchdown. You tell him that. Tell him he's to use you only when necessary, and to try for a field-goal inside their thirty yards unless he's sure he can make it by rushing. Send Fayette out. Go ahead!"

The teams were already forming at the farther end of the field as Kendall sped on. A cheer burst forth from the stand, and then another as Brinspool raced after Kendall to relieve Marion. Kendall made for the referee.

“Right half,” he panted. “You’re off, Fayette. Let me have your head-guard.” Then he drew Simms aside and whispered the instructions. Captain Merriwell joined them and listened. Neither he nor Simms seemed very well pleased.

“A goal from field won’t do much good,” muttered Simms. “We’ll have to have two to even tie the game.”

“He’d better have left Fayette in,” said Merriwell. “Well——”

“Ready, Yardley?”

“All ready, sir!” Simms trotted to his place. Brinspool snatched Marion’s head-guard and sent that youth dejectedly off. The whistle blew.

CHAPTER XIX

9-6

Nordham had made three changes, one in her line and two in her back-field. With only twelve minutes left to play she was hoping to stave off a Yardley score and when, on the second play, Brinspool dropped the ball and she recovered it on her forty-yard line, she kicked on first down and sent the pigskin twenty yards into the Blue's territory. Undismayed, Yardley took up the journey again. Nordham put all her skill into defensive playing, and twice Yardley made her distance on the third down only by inches. Then the middle line was crossed. Crandall swung far around right end for a seven-yard gain, and Brinspool banged his way through right guard for two more. Plant was drawn back and made four yards off left tackle. Then Simms concentrated the attack on the left of the Nordham line and found a weak place at guard. But the Red's secondary defense played fiercely and stopped the runners almost as soon as they were through. Brinspool had found his pace, however, and went through time and again for two- and three-yard gains. Twice play was stopped while the distance was measured, but each time the Blue had an inch or two to spare. Then the thirty-yard line was reached and Kendall, who all this time had never once been given the ball and had done no more than interfere for the runner, observed Simms anxiously. But that youth was not ready to try a field-goal yet. Plant and Brinspool hammered the left guard and slid off the left tackle, Crandall made a slight gain on an end run, and the twenty-yard line was under foot. But then Nordham, desperate, made a stand. Crandall sliced through between right guard and tackle for two yards and Brinspool made four straight through center. But with four to go on the third down the prospect didn't look encouraging. Merriwell whispered to Simms and Simms nodded.

“Kick formation! Burtis back! Hold that line, fellows!”

Kendall trotted back to the thirty yards and the defense for the kicker grouped in front. Whether he could catch the pass Kendall didn't know. That splinted hand seemed terribly awkward to him. But when the ball came back, breast high, his hands closed upon it automatically, and he stepped forward, dropped it, swung and sent it high and straight over the bar!

A burst of cheering swept across the field, and Crandall was patting him on the back. “One more like that, Kendall, and we'll have 'em tied!” he shouted.

Seven minutes remained as Nordham brought out the ball and lined up for a scrimmage. Two tries netted her six yards, and then again she punted. This time the ball went out at the fifty-five-yard line, and there was no chance to run it back. Yardley started again toward the Red's goal with an end run by Simms that tore off twelve yards. Then Crandall, taking the ball on a delayed pass, swung around the left end of the Red's line and secured nearly fifteen yards before he was brought down from behind. In the tackle his knee was badly wrenched and, although he got into the next play, his usefulness for that day was at an end and Greene took his place. Payson also seized the opportunity to relieve Girard and Captain Merriwell, Best and McKesson going in. Plant plowed through for four and Greene made three. Kendall, by this time forgetting his injured hand, was in every play, and it was after Brinspool had staggered around right tackle for enough to make the distance, with Kendall putting out the opposing end, that the latter had cause to remember that left wrist. Brinspool, following him closely, lurched against him as he staggered by, and the full weight of the big fellow came against that injured arm. For an instant Kendall wanted to crumple up on the soggy turf and forget everything. But he didn't, and the pain soon passed.

A fumble by Greene on the next play set them back five yards, Kendall falling on the ball in a puddle just ahead of a frantic

Nordham tackle. Brinspool failed to gain at center, Plant got four yards through the right side, and, with six to gain, Kendall punted. By this time the ball was soaked through to the rubber and was pretty “dead,” and the punt carried only thirty yards. The result was that the Nordham quarter had to run forward for it, and just as he reached it the treacherous ground took a hand in affairs. The pigskin went through his arms as he recovered his stride, bounded along the wet turf, throwing a spray behind it, and then rolled toward the side-line. Adler, who had been put out of the running by a Nordham back, had got to his feet again and was coming down fast. The other Yardley end, Cousins, had overrun. Adler, without easing his pace, swung sharply toward the right, slipped, recovered himself and dived a good ten feet for the ball just as a Nordham half-back raced by. The two came together and the water spouted as they rolled in the mud. But Adler had the ball, and it was down on Nordham’s twenty-eight yards, and the Yardley supporters, who had by this time abandoned the stand and were clustered deep along the rope, set up a triumphant frenzied shout.

“Touchdown! Touchdown! Touchdown!” they clamored.

Holmes raced on with waving hand. “Quarter, sir!” he called. “You’re off, Simms!”

“Oh, get out of here!” snapped Simms.

“Payson’s orders,” answered Holmes.

“You’re delaying the game, Yardley,” came the warning. Simms looked at Holmes indecisively. Then his head went down and he walked away.

“Now then, fellows,” called Holmes. “Get into it! You’re not playing! Brace up, Stark, brace up! Let’s put this over in six plays, fellows!”

Brinspool got a yard and a half through center and Greene followed with four yards past left tackle. Holmes darted through right guard for the distance, squirming and fighting.

“First down!” The referee waved his arm to the linesmen.

“Line up quick!” roared Holmes. “Over with it! Let’s try their left, fellows!”

And Holmes actually sent Greene against the left wing, but gained less than a yard. Brinspool tried the other side and got past for four.

“Kick formation! Burtis back! Hold hard now!”

But the ball went to Holmes and he passed to Brinspool, and the big full-back charged into the line like a steam engine and went through with half the Nordham team hanging about him. There was an anxious moment while the ball was hunted, but when it came to light it lay a good two feet beyond the tenth yard. Only nine yards away was the goal line. Across the trampled field the Yardley supporters were shouting incessantly. Holmes raised an imploring hand and comparative quiet fell. The Nordham captain was begging and scolding up and down his line:

“Now stop ’em, men! Don’t give ’em another foot! Throw ’em back! Into it hard and *watch the ball!*”

Holmes barked his signals. Kendall dashed at the guard-tackle hole on the left, Brinspool followed him, Greene darted across, took the ball at a hand-pass and, followed by Holmes, squirmed between guard and tackle on the other side for two yards. Seven yards to go!

“Kick formation! Burtis back! Now hold them, fellows!”

“*Block this kick!*” shouted the Nordham captain.

Holmes shouted his signals.

“Fake!” yelled the Red’s captain. “Watch it! Watch it!”

And a fake it was, the pigskin going to Plant, who had dropped back of the line. The tackle swung to the left and darted at the opposite tackle. But Nordham was there, and he went down as though he had run against a wall.

“Get up! Get up!”

“That’s the way to hold ’em! We’ve got ’em now! They don’t dare to kick!”

“Third down! Six to go!”

“Line up, fellows! You’ve got to put it over! Get down there, Best! Kick formation! Burtis——”

But Holmes paused, for Kendall was whispering to him.

“A field goal will only tie it, Holmes,” said Kendall eagerly. “They’re looking for a kick. Let me try a run around the left end. Their ends are away in. I can do it! Fake a kick, Holmes, and let me try it!”

For an instant Holmes hesitated. Then, with a flash in his eyes, “All right! But I’ll get the dickens if we lose the ball, Burtis. You’ve got to make it go, remember!”

“I will,” answered Kendall grimly.

“Kick formation! Burtis back! Do your best, fellows! Remember last year!” Then came the signals and Kendall saw the sudden look of surprise in Greene’s face as he shifted a few inches nearer the play. Cousins edged out a step, the opposing end eyeing him doubtfully. Then Best shot the ball back and Kendall, standing near the twenty-yard line, caught it. Snuggling it close in his injured elbow, he darted to the left. Then the field was in movement, the two teams racing between him and the goal. Luckily the Yardley line had held firmly, and in the second between his catching of the ball and the discovery of the play by the opponents Kendall had gained three good strides. The interference formed a moving wall between him and the pursuit as he pounded across the slippery turf. The only thing he feared was to miss his footing.

“In! In!” shrieked Holmes, sending a Nordham man sprawling, and Kendall, swinging to the right, made for the goal-line. A red-sleeved figure sprang in front of him, and Kendall’s right arm went

out, there was a shock and the red sleeves slipped from view. One more white line passed under his feet. The air was filled with shouts. One of his own men stumbled into his path and went down. Kendall sprang over him, slipped, found his stride again, and looked into the wild, wide eyes of the Nordham quarter. Out went the straight arm again, but the quarter darted aside and sprang. His hands clutched at Kendall's hips as the latter pivoted. The quarter's hands slid from the slippery, rain-soaked canvas and closed like a vise about one leg. Kendall, gasping for breath, struggled on, that dead weight sliding behind him. He had lost all sense of location and had no idea how near to the goal-line he was. His only thought was to go on and on, somehow, as long as they would let him. Then a long red arm shot across his chest, a body banged against him, and he fell to one knee, clutching the ball desperately with both hands. He struggled to rise again, felt himself being pulled backward, resisted to the limit of his strength, and finally squirmed forward, burying his face in the cold, wet grass just as the whistle shrilled.

Someone pulled him over onto his back and wrested the ball away from him. For a moment, with closed eyes, he fought for breath. Then, conscious of a numbing pain in one arm and of a sound that beat upon his ears like breakers on a beach, he opened his eyes. The first thing he saw was a shock of red hair, then something brown and dripping, and, when the sponge was gone, leaving him gasping and half-blinded, a white-painted post so near that he could have stretched out his arm and touched it. Slowly his gaze traveled up the post until it found a bar set at right angles with it. He smiled satisfiedly. "It's—over, isn't it?" he asked weakly.

"A yard over," answered Andy's voice. "And now you'll come off."

"No, I must kick the goal," Kendall demurred.

"Here, boys, get him out of this," was Andy's reply, and Kendall found himself being lifted to his feet.

"All right," he muttered. "I can walk. Let me go, you fellows."

But when they let him go he staggered and reeled and Andy had to hold him up. After that he went off to the bench quite docilely between two substitutes, regarding the faces that forever got in his way, faces with blazing eyes and wide-open mouths, through a haze of perplexity. Somehow, there was a great deal of noise going on!

Presently, blanketed, his arm once more in a sling, he was leaning back against the stand, quite satisfied with the world. From where he sat, quite alone save for Andy, he could see only the backs of the crowd, a crowd gone suddenly silent. He knew then that someone, probably Fales, was preparing to try a goal, and would have got up and gone to see had not Andy pushed him gently back into his seat.

“Be easy, can’t you?” he grumbled. “How do you think that wrist is going to get well if you don’t take care of it? If I’d had my way you’d never gone back there to-day. It’s a wonder you didn’t snap it out again.”

“All right, Andy,” replied Kendall happily. “I just wanted to see if we’d get the goal.”

“No matter if we do or we don’t,” said Andy, snapping his bag shut. “We beat ’em anyway, don’t we?”

“Yes, but—but what *is* the score?”

“Nine to six, and that’s good enough. How do you feel?”

“Oh, I’m all right, feeling fine. Nine to——”

“No goal!” someone cried, and “No goal!” ran the verdict as the throng broke up to follow the ball back to the center of the field.

“Who kicked?” asked Kendall, as Jensen, substitute tackle, came by trailing his blanket in the mud.

“Fales. Missed it by only a foot, I guess. That was a great run, Burtis.”

“Can you walk all right?” asked Andy. Kendall got to his feet and tried it, finding that the dizziness was gone. “Then go on up before

the crowd starts,” directed the trainer. “Get your duds off and take a hot tub. I’ll look after you when I come up.”

“Couldn’t I see the rest of the game?” begged Kendall.

“You could not,” answered Andy shortly. “Do as I tell you to do for once. First thing you know them howling hyenas will be wanting to lug you around on their shoulders and you’ll get hurt again. Off with you now. Go slow, but keep going!”

“All right. Will you find my sweater for me?”

“I will. Get out!”

So Kendall, feeling rather as though he had had a skyscraper fall on him and had been kicked by a mule, trudged out and up the path to the gymnasium, the clamor of shouts and cheers and the piping of the whistle lessening as he went. Halfway to the gymnasium, warned by a sudden burst of triumphant cheering, he turned and looked back. They were diving under the ropes and flooding onto the field. The game was over. Kendall, smiling blissfully, hurried on.

CHAPTER XX

HARRY REMEMBERS

“Broadwood had a little team,
It couldn’t play at all,
And ev’ry time it tried to pass
It dropped the blooming ball!
The ball, the ball, the ball, the ball,
It dropped the blooming ball!

“It tried to play with Yardley once,
And, oh, it was a shame
To see the way old Yardley went
And took away that game!
The game, the game, the game, the game,
And took away the game!”

“Some range, what?” asked The Duke, slapping Harry Merrow on the shoulder as they clattered up the last flight in Clarke. “Honestly, I don’t see how grand opera’s got along all these years without me! ‘The game, the game, the game, the game; And took away the ga-a-me!’ Get that chord? Kind of bad, what? Sometimes I have to pity Caruso and Scotti, old man.”

“Why, they don’t have to hear you, do they?” asked Harry innocently, as The Duke flung open the portal of Number 47.

“Good thing for them they can’t! They’d swallow a couple of solos and commit suicide. Sit down and be miserable. For once that Fido of mine isn’t here.”

“That what?” asked Harry, mystified.

“Pardon me; I should have said fidus, fidus Achates. Get me? Honestly, old man, I don’t know how I’m going to go on living with

him. Here it is only the middle of November, and I'm worn to a string. My health is giving way under the strain. If I was only certain about one thing——”

“What's that?” asked the other, as The Duke paused thoughtfully.

“Whether he's a skink or a bombyx. If I knew that I'd be able to get on better.”

“What the dickens is a—a skink?”

“A skink? Well, it's something like a grus, only not nearly so intelligent.”

“You're a silly chump,” laughed Harry.

“Worse than that, O Discerning One! I'm crazy, absolutely crazy! So would you be if you had to live with Cotton. Look at that table! See the mess! It's always like that. I, personally, am naturally neat and tidy, Merrow, but Cotton—well, see for yourself! He—he annoys me!”

“Things do look a bit messy,” acknowledged Harry.

“Messy! My word! Messy, say you? That's no name for it. It takes half my time keeping this place picked up. Well, let's forget my troubles and talk about yours.”

“I haven't any, I guess. Except that Kilts is down on me just at present and I'm having a bad time with math.”

“Well, you heard about me, didn't you? Had a terrible falling-out with Old Tige; he got quite—quite insulting Saturday. You see, I—er—neglected to hand in a theme, and he said I'd have to do it by Saturday noon. And I really meant to because, of course, he was quite within his rights, you know. So Friday evening I went over to the library and worked and worked and delved and delved in the—the musty archives getting notes for one of the nicest little themes you ever saw! Oh, I must have worked for ten or fifteen minutes! Armed with my notes I returned here fully intending to sport my oak, as we say in dear old England, and do that theme. But here was

Cotton scratching away with his old pen and shuffling his silly feet and making noises in his throat. It was quite impossible to write a theme under such circumstances. So I—well, I didn't. Says I to myself, I will arise betimes in the morning and do it. Which I did; that is, fairly betimes. But where were my notes? I ask you, Merrow, as man to man, where were my notes? Flown! Decamped! Utterly vanished! So, as there was no time to get more notes, I started in to write a theme on the simple little subject of Walter Scott. It was a—well, a hurried effort, and as it turned out I got Sir Walter mixed up in my mind with Thackeray. Result, disapproval on the part of Mr. Edmund Gaddis; disapproval and hard words. I was patient with him, Merrow, but it was difficult, for he said things no gentleman should say to another. We parted—well, scarcely friends. And I've got two themes now hanging over my head instead of one. And only until to-morrow evening to do them." The Duke sighed and shook his head. "But such is life!"

"Too bad," murmured Harry sympathetically. "And the dickens of it is that this is no time to push a fellow's nose to the grindstone. No fellow can do decent work just before the Broadwood game; it isn't fair to expect it."

"I wish that silly game was over with," said The Duke fervently. "Honest, I get so excited and nervous and stirred up about it you'd think I was going to play quarter-back. By the way, Duffey—he rooms with Bert Simms, you know—Duffey says Bert is all up in the air over the game; doesn't sleep for calling signals all night, and can't eat."

Harry looked incredulous. "Why, I saw Simms this morning and talked to him, and he seemed as untroubled as you please."

"That so? Well, it's only what I heard. How is Burtis's arm getting on? I haven't seen him since Sunday."

"All right. They're having a leather cuff made that's to fit right over the wrist. I didn't know a simple dislocation could be so bad."

“What’s the difference between a dislocation and a sprain?” demanded The Duke.

Harry shook his head. “I don’t know. I suppose that when you sprain your ankle you just pull the tendons, don’t you, or the ligaments? And when you dislocate it you throw the bone out of joint.”

“I’m glad we don’t have to take an exam in physiology right now,” said The Duke.

“Yes, lucky for us,” laughed Harry. “They say the trouble with Kendall’s wrist is that he’s likely to dislocate it again very easily if he isn’t careful. Payson has let him off practice for the rest of the week, Gerald says.”

“Good stuff! After the way he played Saturday they’d ought to let him do as he pleases. I certainly thought they had us beaten there for a while!”

“Me, too. What do you think about Broadwood? Think we have any show, Duke?”

“If Payson plays the right sort of game, yes. If he keeps those heavy beef-eaters eternally on the jump by hitting their ends we may tire them out enough to get within kicking distance. When we do we want to let Burtis do the rest, for we’ll never get a touchdown by straight line-plunging. Did you see the score they rolled up on Forest Hill?”

Harry nodded. “Twenty-seven to six. Forest Hill scored, though.”

“On a forward pass that ought never to have worked. They can say what they like about Broadwood being fast, and maybe they are fast for their weight, but they can’t be fast enough to stand a running game very long. Payson ought to send our backs around their ends, try forward passes and all his bundle of tricks, Merrow. Just plain, old-fashioned football won’t make a dent in that team!”

“That’s what I think. And they say he’s got a lot of good plays outside tackles. But the trouble is that our own team isn’t so all-fired fast, Duke.”

“It’s the slowest Yardley team I ever saw,” replied The Duke. “If Payson doesn’t get some jump and ginger into it between now and Saturday we’re goners.”

“And as this is Tuesday and there wasn’t much jump yesterday, I guess we are!”

“Oh, you can’t tell by yesterday. Monday’s always a bad day. There ought to be a difference by to-morrow, though. He’s got nothing to do except put pep into them and teach the new signals, as I understand it. I suppose they’re learning signals to-day, and that’s why practice is secret, eh?”

“I suppose so. To-morrow’s is to be secret, too, I hear. The only time we’ll see them in action again before the game will be Thursday. Oh, well, we’ll hope for the best.”

“And fear the worst! By the way, I understand there’s talk of making Burtis captain next year.”

“What?” exclaimed Harry. “Who says so?”

“Well, it seems to interest you! Why, I don’t know just where I heard it; someone said something about it yesterday; said the players had been talking about it since Saturday’s game. I suppose Burtis made rather a hit with them Saturday.”

“He made a hit with all of us, I guess! It was mighty plucky to make that touchdown with his wrist all banged up. I wish they would give him the captaincy.”

“Well, I don’t know. Yes, I’d like him to have it if he wants it, because I think he’s a mighty nice, straight sort. But whether he’s got the stuff in him that leaders are made of——”

“I know. I’ve wondered about that myself. And here’s what I’ve concluded, Duke. I’ve concluded that Kendall Burtis is the sort of

chap who doesn't show goods until they're called for. I mean that while he seems very quiet and easy-going and not especially brilliant, just put responsibility on him and he sort of blazes up. See what I mean?"

"I get you, O Solomon! I guess you're right, too. Look at Saturday. He was the man of the hour then, wasn't he? And, anyhow, he's as promising as any of the other fellows who are eligible. Goodness knows, Pete Girard or Fales wouldn't make a captain. Howard Crandall might do. It's too bad Holmes isn't going to be with us another year."

"Yes, he'd make a good one. Hello, I didn't know you were interested in postage stamps, Duke." Harry had taken a yellow covered pamphlet from the table and was reading the inscription on it: "Parkinson's Bulletin for November—Rare Stamps for Collectors." "Stamps used to be a hobby of mine. I've got a couple of thousand of them at home."

"That isn't mine, that's Cotton's. He gets more truck like that than you can shake a stick at. He collects the foolish things, he says. Got me cornered one night and babbled about 'cancellations' and 'watermarks' and 'perforations' until I had the earache. He says—— Say what's the matter with you? Feel ill, do you?"

"Wait!" replied Harry sharply. He was staring intently, scowlingly at the window. Suddenly his face cleared and he gave a laugh of triumph. "I've got him!" he cried. "I've got him!"

"Hooray! Who have you got?"

"Cotton!"

"You may keep him," declared The Duke with enthusiasm. "And I don't care what you do with him!"

"Look here," exclaimed Harry eagerly. "Do you remember some time ago my saying I was certain sure I'd seen Cotton before somewhere?"

The Duke shook his head doubtfully. "I don't remember. Maybe. Well?"

"I was positive I'd seen him, even talked to him. It bothered me a lot. I used to stare at him in class and cudgel my brains about it, but I couldn't place him. But I was right all the time, and this gave me the clue." He tapped the stamp catalogue on his knee. "And when you said he was a stamp collector it all came back to me like a flash."

"Well, go on; where did you meet him?"

"Do you remember two years ago when some of the fellows went to Broadwood one night and put a sign on the campus?"

"Sure!"

"Well, I don't know whether you ever knew who the fellows were, but I did. And one day I got a letter from a fellow named Charles Cotton, at Broadwood——"

The Duke whistled.

"——asking me to exchange stamps with him; duplicates, you know. We arranged a meeting in Greenburg, at Wallace's, and we got together there and chinned awhile. I think we made one or two swaps, but I don't remember for certain. Anyway, it turned out that what Cotton really wanted was to find out the names of the fellows who had played the trick on Broadwood. You remember how mad they were over there? Well, Cotton had a stamp—it was a blue Cape of Good Hope—that I wanted terribly. I offered him a lot of revenues for it—he was rather keen on revenues—but he wouldn't let go; wanted four or five dollars cash, I think. Finally, though, he as much as said that if I'd tell him the names of the fellows who had been at Broadwood that night he'd make me a present of the stamp. But I got suspicious and finally went away. You know they did learn who one of the fellows was." Harry paused, darting a doubtful glance at The Duke.

The latter nodded. "I remember. You had a grouch with Thompson and squealed on him. If I'd been Thompson I'd have broken your neck."

"I deserved it," replied Harry. "I must have been an awful little brute then. But I didn't realize what I was doing, and I was good and sorry for it afterward, Duke."

The Duke nodded again. "We always are when it's too late. But never mind about that. You and Thompson made it up all right. So that was Cotton, was it? By Jove, I can well believe it! It's just the sort of thing I could imagine him doing. If I wanted a piece of dirty work done, Merrow, I'd ask Cotton to do it. That's the way he's impressed me all along. And to think that I've got to have him on my hands the rest of the year!"

"But why do you suppose he doesn't own up to having been at Broadwood two years ago?"

"Probably ashamed of it. Maybe he left under a cloud. It's a fair wager he did, too. I'm blessed if I'm going to have him in here with me, Merrow. He will have to change his room. If he won't, I'll make it so hot for him he won't want to stay here! You don't mind if I make use of what you've told me?"

"N-no, I suppose not. I don't want to make trouble for the fellow, of course. As long as he behaves himself here——"

"You don't have to put up with him all day," growled The Duke. "I can be as charitable as the next chap, but charity begins at home, and I don't see why I'm required to room with a fellow like Cotton. I hate a sneak, anyway!"

"Maybe I oughtn't to have said anything," doubted Harry, "but when it came to me who he was I couldn't help blurting it out. Funny I didn't remember him before. His face was so familiar all the time that it worried me to death. I seemed to be always on the point of remembering, but never did."

“I’m going to find out why he left Broadwood,” said The Duke resolutely. “I know a chap over there—Billy Deemer—I’ll write and tell him to let me know.”

“Well, I wouldn’t tell it around,” said Harry. “After all, Cotton never did anything to me.”

“He’s never done anything to me, either,” replied The Duke grimly, “and I’m going to see that he never has a chance to! All I want is to get him out of here. After that he can do as he pleases. I’ll write to Billy this evening. Let’s get out of doors, Merrow. By Jove, do you know it’s almost four? Let’s walk over to the gym and see the team come in.”

CHAPTER XXI

KENDALL MAKES A SPEECH

Yardley was in the final throes of excitement, an excitement that approached the border of hysteria as Saturday drew nearer and nearer. Rumors of all kinds filled the air. Furniss, Broadwood's clever left-end, who, it was generally agreed, would cause more trouble to Yardley's end-running game than any other member of the rival team, was down with mumps and wouldn't be able to play. Furniss was not down with mumps; at least, not that Furniss; it was a younger brother in the Junior Class who was ill. Broadwood had gone all to pieces after the Forest Hill game; had played too hard and was in the middle of an awful slump. Broadwood had showed up better at practice on Wednesday than any day all season. Simms was a nervous wreck and wouldn't begin the game Saturday. Simms never felt better in his life, and was as cool as a cucumber. Burtis was out of the game, inflammation having set in in his broken wrist. Burtis's injury was doing finely and he would at least start the game for Yardley. Stark was having trouble with the Office and might not be allowed to play against Broadwood; his case was to come up at faculty meeting Friday night. Stark was all square with the faculty and anyone who said otherwise didn't know what he was talking about!

And so it went, one rumor crowding on the heels of another until it took a good part of one's time keeping up with the gossip! Tuesday's practice was held in secret and so was Wednesday's. Most of the time was devoted to familiarizing the team with the new signals and smoothing out the plays to be used on Saturday. Those two days were hard ones and everyone was kept on the jump every minute. The actual scrimmage was short and often interrupted. On Wednesday night there was a signal drill in the gymnasium. The doors were closed more as a matter of habit than anything else,

since it was a well understood thing that none save the team, the coaches and trainer were to enter. Consequently when, toward the end of the blackboard instruction, Manager Davis suddenly sprinted across the floor and up the stairs to the running track and spent ten minutes poking around in corners for spies he was well laughed at.

“But I did see him,” protested Perky excitedly. “I saw his head right up there at the curve of the balcony. Had some sort of a cap on and he was peeking over the railing!”

“You imagined it,” said Merriwell. “Anyhow, if you did see someone where the dickens did he get to?”

Davis couldn't answer that, though, and finally he acknowledged that he might have been mistaken; that since the Gibson affair he had had spies on the brain, so to speak.

The Duke was in the throes of composition that evening, having at last settled down to the writing of the themes, when Cotton, who had disappeared a half-hour before with a vague mention of the library, returned unostentatiously with a book. The Duke glanced up incuriously, his mind on his work, favored Cotton with a brief and somewhat hostile stare, and was in the act of returning his gaze to the paper before him when a detail of the other's attire caught his eye.

“Did you know you'd torn your coat there at the pocket?” he asked.

Cotton pulled his coat quickly around and looked at the rip.

“Yes, I—I did that this morning,” he answered carelessly. “I caught it on a door knob.”

But The Duke was already immersed again in his labor, scowling at the sheet and muttering as he wrote.

The next day the janitor found a small round window in an alcove off the running-track in the gymnasium swinging open. Not having

heard of Davis's hallucination, however, he merely fastened it again and thought nothing of it.

The weather turned mild on Thursday, and when in the afternoon the team held open practice and the school lined the ropes and cheered and sang for a full half-hour, the warm sunlight and gentle southerly breeze suggested baseball rather than football. Later the fellows crowded about the front of the gymnasium and cheered some more, cheered every member of the team individually, cheered Coach Payson and Andy Ryan and Manager Davis and the two rubbers, and cheered long and loud and repeatedly for "Yardley! *Yardley!* YARDLEY!"

In the evening there was a grand mass-meeting, the supreme gathering of the season, with the whole team seated about the platform and the musical clubs grouped behind them, with Mr. Payson and Mr. Collins and Mr. Bendix for guests of honor and Andy Ryan peeping out from a corner, and with the President of the First Class, Mr. Gerald Pennimore, acting as master of ceremonies. The Assembly Hall was filled long before the hour set for the meeting. The audience was in high feather, and while it waited for the proceedings to formally commence it sang and cheered and stamped and indulged in mild "rough-house" to its heart's content.

Promptly at seven-thirty the team and the musical clubs filed on to the platform, followed by the head coach and the faculty members, and Gerald held up a hand for silence. As the fellows were busily cheering the players, Gerald had to stand there patiently several minutes before he could make himself heard. Even then he had to wait while a cheer was given "for Pennimore, fellows! And make it good!"

Gerald's address was short and earnest. He asked for the loyal support of the team, whether in victory or defeat, and introduced Mr. Collins. The Assistant Principal, trim and smiling, said about what he usually said on such occasions, was duly applauded, and yielded to Captain Merriwell. Merriwell was very earnest, but, not

being a fluent speaker, made poor going and relied more on repetition than variety. However, the spirit of his discourse met with enthusiastic approval, and after he had returned to his seat it was some time before Coach Payson found a chance to have his say. The coach started out in a rather jocular mood and told two or three stories that set the audience shouting with laughter. In the end, however, with a sudden change to gravity, he said: "I'd like to be able this evening to assure you all that we are going to win on Saturday, fellows, but I can't. Frankly, to my mind this year's contest is more in doubt than any contest for two years. I don't know whether we'll win or lose, fellows. Broadwood has a far better team than she had last year. She's farther advanced, is playing together well and is powerful. In weight she has the better of us. So far, her record beats ours. On the other hand, we have a team that has not yet played as well as it is able to play——"

A shout of approval broke forth.

"——and a team that has strong possibilities. It isn't a great team to-day judged by Yardley standards, but it may be a great team on Saturday. It's a well-rounded team, a team of hard-working, willing players, every one of whom is ready to do his utmost—and a little more—for the school the day after to-morrow. And now it's up to the school to help the team, fellows. I want you all to believe in it, to stand back of it, to encourage it by thought and action every minute between now and the last whistle on Saturday. (Cheers.) We're going to play the game on foreign soil, so to speak, but whatever handicap that proves to us can be offset by your support. During the game let the team know that you're there and right with them all the time. Don't cheer just to make a noise, and don't cheer just to rattle the other fellow, but cheer because you want your team to win and want to tell them so. And don't stop cheering if the luck goes against them. If they find themselves losing they'll play all the harder. Do the same, fellows; if the team gets in a hole, cheer all the harder—until it's out!"

The applause was so loud and prolonged that the coach had to wait a minute before he could go on.

“I guess that’s about all I have to say. I want to thank you all on my behalf, just as Captain Merriwell has thanked you on behalf of the team, for the way you’ve stood behind me all the season, just as you’ve stood behind me so many seasons previous. It’s a great thing for a coach to feel that the school has confidence in him. There are always moments of discouragement, and at such moments the loyalty of the school is what helps most. Saturday will show whether our team is a great team or merely a good team, fellows. But whether we win or lose it will still be *the* team just the same!”

In the midst of the cheering that followed, the Banjo and Mandolin Club started “Fighting for Old Yardley,” and the Glee Club took it up and presently the whole hall was singing:

“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 banner blue,
Cheer for comrades staunch and true;
We are here to die or do,
Fighting for old Yardley!”

The second verse followed, and by this time the instruments were quite drowned out by the voices that roared the words of the song. At the end Gerald arose and, with upheld hand, smilingly begged silence. When, finally, the appeal was heeded he called on Mr. Bendix, and the Physical Instructor made a rather dry little speech, fortunately as brief as dry. Then someone called “Simms! We want Simms!” and the meeting took up the cry with laughter and approval. Simms, very red of face, shook his head in grinning embarrassment, but the demand increased, and Gerald went across and held out his hand to the quarter. Simms, however, thrust his own hands in his pockets and shook his head vehemently. The meeting

laughed, but persisted. Gerald was seen to bend down and speak to Simms, and at last the quarter rather indignantly jumped up and strode to the front of the platform. The shouts died suddenly, and a couple of hundred of smiling faces confronted him.

“I can’t make a speech, and you fellows know it,” said Simms accusingly. “But Pennimore says I’ve got to say something to shut you up. So I’ll just say that if you make half as much noise Saturday when you cheer as you have to-night ragging me we can’t help winning!”

Simms nodded and strode back to his chair, while the audience laughed and cheered and stamped. Then someone demanded, “Andy! We want Andy Ryan!” and eventually Andy had to stand up at the back of the platform and make a bow. But the cries of, “Speech, Andy! Speech!” fell on deaf ears. The Glee Club leader consulted with the leader of the Banjo and Mandolin Club while the turmoil continued, and the musicians began to pick at their instruments. But evidently the meeting was not yet ready for songs. “We want more speeches!” declared a voice in front. “A-a-ay! More speeches!” agreed the hall at large. Feet began to stamp in time to the refrain: “Speeches, speeches, we want speeches! Speeches, speeches, we want speeches!” Suddenly a voice at the left of the room, and it sounded a lot like Harry Merrow’s, cried, “Burtis! Burtis! We want Burtis!”

A howl of approval thundered forth. The clamor took on new strength. “Burtis! Burtis! We want Burtis!” declared the assembly. Feet stamped wildly, and fellows at the back of the hall stood up in order to shout louder. Gerald turned and searched with his gaze for Kendall, who, sitting in the second row, had slunk down behind the broad back of Pete Girard. “Burtis! Burtis! We want Burtis!” clamored the throng. Finally Jensen and Marion, who were seated on either side of Kendall, strove to drag him to his feet. The audience applauded them. Girard arose and dragged his chair away, revealing Kendall, red of face, striving mightily to escape publicity. Gerald spoke to him, and Kendall got up and bowed awkwardly and

sank into his seat again. But the school was not satisfied. “Speech, Burtis! We want a speech!” “Kick us a speech, Burtis!” Kendall, smiling wanly, was seen shaking his head at Gerald, who was bending over him and evidently trying to persuade him to say something. The turmoil continued, gathering in volume rather than diminishing. Gerald had Kendall by his well arm now, and was pulling him out of the chair. Reluctantly Kendall allowed himself to be conducted to the front of the platform. Gerald, smiling, waved his hand and stepped back. The hall quieted quickly, and a most appalling silence succeeded the tumult. Kendall, no longer blushing, but white-cheeked from fright, began to speak. None, however, save those in the front rows could hear him, although the hall was so still that one might have heard a pin drop. Finally, “Louder, please!” called a distant voice. “You’re misjudging the distance!” There was a laugh at that and even Kendall smiled rather tremulously, and when he went on his voice had gained strength.

“I’ve been saying that I never made a speech before,” he said, “and so you’ll please excuse me now. I—I hope we will win the game, and I’m sure we fellows on the team will do the best we know how. Thank you.” He bowed and turned. At that moment a small Prep at the back of the hall piped up:

“How’s your arm, Burtis?”

Kendall turned back, looked in the direction of the voice and replied quite naturally: “Getting along nicely, thank you.”

A howl of delight and laughter arose as Kendall, blushing again now, fairly scuttled to his seat and disappeared from sight, while a deep voice down front was heard to proclaim, “Anyway, he doesn’t kick with his arm!” At which the laughter increased.

The demand for more speeches began again, but Gerald sprang to the edge of the platform and asked for a cheer for Yardley. It came with a will. Then the players were cheered one after another, beginning with Captain Merriwell and ending with the last

substitute, and Coach Payson was cheered, and Andy Ryan, and, finally, “The team, fellows! A long cheer, and get into it!”

Afterward the music began, and they went through the half-dozen songs selected for the game, finally ending up with “The Years Roll On,” every fellow on his feet, many of them a little choky as they sang. More cheers then, somewhat indiscriminate, a scraping of settees and feet, and the meeting was over.

Gerald and Kendall met in the corridor and walked back to Clarke together. In front of Oxford some fifty or sixty fellows were still singing and cheering, declaring at intervals that “We want a parade! We want a parade!” When Gerald and Kendall reached the steps of Clarke, Mr. Collins was doing his best to persuade the throng that it wanted nothing of the sort, that what it really wanted to do was to go to its rooms and behave itself. From the fact that the singing gradually died away it may be inferred that Mr. Collins was right.

“Why did you make me get up there and try to talk?” demanded Kendall aggrievedly as the two climbed the stairs.

“Good practice,” replied Gerald imperturbably. “It’s a handy thing to know how to make a speech.”

“I guess I’ll never have to make many,” returned Kendall.

Gerald smiled knowingly. “You never can tell,” he said.

CHAPTER XXII

TWO SHEETS OF BUFF PAPER

The warm weather continued on Friday. Between recitations The Prospect and entrances of the halls swarmed with boys, all intent on the discussion of just one subject, the morrow's game. There was a wide difference of opinion as to the outcome of it. Fellows who two weeks ago had predicted a Yardley victory were now shaking their heads gloomily and talking defeat, while others, erstwhile pessimists, were now jubilantly prophesying a glorious triumph for the Blue. Perhaps there was somewhere a fellow who managed to put the game out of his thoughts and attend to his duty in the form of study, but if so he wasn't in evidence. Yardley frankly consigned lessons to the limbo of things left undone, and the faculty wisely shut its eyes.

In the afternoon the Cross-Country Team trotted over the course for the last time before the race, and the Football Team held what was expected to be and what would ordinarily have been its final signal drill. But to the surprise of the fellows who gathered in the gymnasium that afternoon the coach announced that it had been decided to make a change in the signal code. Payson said he regretted the necessity, but made no explanation of the reason.

"I'll make it as easy as possible, fellows," he said. "There isn't time to learn thoroughly a new set of signals, and so we will change the code by making the second number the fake instead of the first. That is, the second digit of the first number will indicate the man, the second number will be a fake, and the second digit of the third number will indicate the hole. Thus 28, 76, 93 means that full-back carries the ball for a plunge through guard-tackle hole on the left, the 76 being the fake number. In the same way, on a kick the signal will be 'Kick formation, So-and-so back; 59, 107, 22, the first number, 59, holding the kick digit, 9, and the other numbers being

fillers. Just remember that the first number indicates the player instead of the second, that the second is the fake, and that the third indicates the hole. Now, as to special plays. The key number has been any number over 500 for those, given as the second number in the signal. We'll change that, I think, and make the key number any number over 200 and have it the first number in the series. Thus the signal for the delayed forward pass to the left will be 217, 21, 175, the last two numbers being merely fillers. You'll have to study this, fellows, between now and to-morrow afternoon, for there mustn't be any mix-up on signals. There'll be another drill here this evening at eight o'clock. And between now and then I want every one of you to plot out on a sheet of paper one or more plays. Indicate each position with circles or squares, label each one with letters, as 'R. E.' for right end, and so on, trace the progress of the ball, show how the interference moves, and underneath give the correct signals for the play. Also be sure and sign your name in the upper right-hand corner of the sheet. Don't neglect this matter, if you please. I want to know that each one of you is familiar with the signals. Bring the papers here this evening and hand them to Mr. Davis. All right now; let's see those plays!"

There was much speculation and not a little dissatisfaction among the fellows after the drill was over. Simms especially was bitter and sarcastic, but Simms's nerves were pretty taut just then and he may be excused some show of annoyance.

"Just when we get the signals down pat he goes and changes them," said Simms in the locker room later. "And what for, I'd like to know? Putting the fake number in the middle is a fool piece of business, I think."

Captain Merriwell, to whom Simms addressed his remarks, was noncommittal. "I suppose Payson has a good reason for it," he replied. "It isn't likely he'd do it unless he had, Bert. You can bet he doesn't want to risk a mix-up on signals to-morrow unless it's absolutely necessary."

“Well, the only reason for changing signals at the last hour that I can think of,” muttered Simms, “is that the other fellow has got on to them; and I don’t believe that!”

“I think he will explain this evening or to-morrow,” said Merriwell soothingly. “Meanwhile we’ve got to make the best of it and learn the new signals.”

“That’s well enough for you,” replied Simms bitterly. “You haven’t got to have the whole thing at the end of your tongue to-morrow. If I make a mistake I’ll get blamed for it.”

“Then don’t make any mistakes,” answered Merriwell quietly.

Simms stared at him a moment, outraged, and finally said, “Humph!” and relapsed into silence.

But Coach Payson didn’t explain that evening, or ever; at least, not to the team at large. After the evening’s session, however, he and Merriwell and Davis went over to the captain’s room, and there the only member of the trio who was in ignorance of the reason for the eleventh-hour change, Manager Davis, was enlightened.

“Now,” said Payson, when they were seated, “let’s see those papers, Davis.”

One by one he looked them over, comparing each with a much-creased sheet of buff paper which he extracted from his bill-book and laid beside him. Davis looked on curiously. Now and then Payson paused as he turned the papers over and glanced doubtfully at the buff sheet. Finally, when he had reached almost the bottom of the pile, he said “Hm!” very softly. A second sheet of buff paper was in front of him and he was studying it attentively. Presently, as though satisfied, he handed it to Captain Merriwell, following it with the creased sheet. The latter had been folded several times and was soiled, as though it had passed through many hands. Merriwell, frowning, compared one sheet with the other. Finally he nodded.

“I can’t believe, though, that he’d do a thing like that, sir,” said Merriwell troubledly.

“I can scarcely believe it myself,” replied the coach, “but there is the evidence. Show them to Davis. Davis, should you say that those two diagrams had been made by the same person?”

“Certainly,” replied the manager after a brief survey of them. “There can’t be any doubt of that, can there?” He looked at the name written in the corner of the fresher sheet. “But when did Burtis do this other one, sir?”

“That’s what we don’t know. Have you got that letter there, Merriwell?”

For reply Merriwell opened a drawer in the table, searched a moment and then handed a folded sheet of writing paper across to Perky. The latter opened it and read as follows:

“MR. CHARLES MERRIWELL,
“Yardley Hall School,
“Wissining, Ct.

“Dear Sir:

“There’s been a leak over at your place and some dirty work over here. The enclosed sheet, which, as I understand it, is supposed to be an explanation of your signals to be used Saturday, has just come into my hands. I’m sending it to you thinking that perhaps you will be able to find the sneak who sent it. We had nothing to do with it here. The fellow who obtained it did so without authorization on his own hook. I’m sorry about it, but I guess the only thing for you to do is to change your signals for the game. Let me know whether this reaches you. I don’t think it has been seen by more than three or four people here, including the fellow who received it, our coach, and myself, and we haven’t made any study of it. Nevertheless, you’d better protect yourself by changing your signals before the game. We’ll look after the fellow at this end, and I

hope you'll find the traitor at your end and give him what he deserves. You fellows can't say we haven't always played fair and you mustn't blame us for this business. I hope we'll have a good day for the game and a dandy contest.

“Yours truly,

“WILLIAM L. RAYNOR.”

Davis laid down the letter and stared in bewilderment.

“Merriwell got that this morning,” said the coach. “We decided that the best way to trace the authorship of that document was to get all the players to make similar diagrams. There's one peculiar thing about that first paper, Davis. You'll notice that Burtis—supposing he did it, and I can't see any reason to doubt it—labeled the positions with small letters. See what I mean? He has written, or, rather, printed, 'l. h. b.' in what printers call lower case, instead of 'L. H. B.' in capitals. Now, if you look through all the diagrams submitted to-night, and every fellow handed one in, you'll find that Burtis is the only one who does that. Then, too, there is the evidence of the paper. Both sheets apparently were torn from the same block. The paper is the same, a deep buff in color. There's one other paper there that is buff—I think it's Brinspool's—but it is lighter. Now, two and two usually make four, Davis.”

“Yes, but—but why should he do it? Why, the fellows were talking of him for captain!”

“Too bad! It's beyond me; I can't see any motive. The only explanation I can think of is that some Broadwood fellow got hold of him and fooled him. I'm not willing to think that Burtis did this realizing what it meant. It—it's absolutely contrary to my conception of the boy's character, Davis.”

“It was Gibson!” declared Perky. “I'll bet you anything it was that fellow Gibson! You remember the day he came over to spy on us?”

We fooled him then, and so he got back at us. But I didn't know Burtis knew him."

"It's a funny affair," said Merriwell thoughtfully. "Anyway, there's no use raising a fuss until after the game. We're in a bad enough fix as it is. We've got to work like the very dickens to win to-morrow, and if we let this thing get out the team will be upset, probably, and we'll get licked as sure as shooting. You aren't going to say anything to him about it now, are you, sir?"

"No, I think not. Better let him alone. I don't believe he is morally guilty, fellows. And we need him to-morrow if we ever did."

"There's one thing that puzzles me," observed Davis. "It doesn't seem as if the writing was in the same hand as the printing."

"Yes, I noticed that. But very often a man writes differently with a pen than with a pencil. Besides, you can't very well compare printing with writing. Anyway, whoever did it managed to give a very pretty exposure of our signal code. They've even got two special plays down there."

"It's a rotten piece of business," exclaimed Davis. "And I'll bet you anything that chap Gibson is at the bottom of it. Look here, Mr. Payson, suppose you let me have a talk with Burtis. Maybe I could find out about it without letting him know."

But Payson shook his head and Merriwell dissented with a frown.

"Better not," said the coach. "Wait until after the game. There's enough to contend with now, Davis; don't let us have any more upsets. We'll let Burtis play his game to-morrow, giving him the benefit of the doubt, and ask an explanation later. It's a good thing we are all agreed that he isn't really guilty, fellows, for if we weren't we'd have no right to let him play; and if he didn't play"—Payson shrugged his broad shoulders—"we'd be in a hole, to say the least. Merriwell, you keep this truck until it's wanted. Put it

away somewhere where it won't be seen. Great Scott, I wish this hadn't happened!"

"So do I," muttered Merriwell.

"Will the fellows know the new signals all right, sir?" asked Davis anxiously.

"I think so. The change is slight. You see, I'm taking Raynor's word for it that they haven't tried to profit by that document. If I thought they had I'd have changed the whole code over; made a new set of signals right through. As it is, I've only altered them enough to safeguard us. Well, I must be off. Get to bed, Merriwell, and try to forget the whole thing. After all, we're no worse off than we were, or but very little. I must drop in on Simms a minute. He's the one who is probably having fits. Good night. Good night, Davis. Not a word about this!"

"Not a word, sir. Good night."

"Look here, Charlie," said Perky, after the door had closed behind the coach, "I just don't believe he did it!"

"Burtis?" Merriwell shrugged his shoulders wearily. "There's the evidence." He nodded at the littered table.

"Then he was fooled; someone got at him! He—he isn't that sort, and you know it. Look here, they can't make him captain with this thing hanging over his head, Charlie!"

"I don't think he had a show anyway, Perky. Crandall's the man for the job. I shall propose Crandall."

"We-ell, yes, Howard's all right, but——"

"But what?"

"Well, there are a lot of the fellows want Burtis," replied Perky frankly. "It's too bad."

"Oh, never mind about who's the next captain," exclaimed Merriwell crossly. "What we've got to do now is to win to-

morrow's game! Good night!"

CHAPTER XXIII

“NO GOAL!”

At last! The day of the game!

Many a boy awoke that morning to blink sleepily for a moment and then, full consciousness sweeping upon him, to experience a sudden tightening at the heart and a resultant shortness of breath. The moment he had been looking forward to for fifty-odd days was at hand! The greatest event of the school year was rushing toward him! It was enough to make any fellow feel a bit queer, a bit scared, too, for that matter. By evening he would be either triumphant and proud and happy or sickeningly disappointed, with the feeling that everything had dropped away from under him! So much depended on those short two hours of the afternoon!

The morning had a keen nip to it. The warm spell had taken its departure. The sky was blue, with an occasional slowly sailing cloud, and the sun was warm in sheltered places. But there was a frosty tang in the air, and Winter seemed just over the hills, ready at a moment's notice to pounce down upon the Autumn world. A light breeze came out of the northwest and forbade loitering in shaded places. It was an ideal day for the game, with a dry field assured and small favor to either end of it.

In the forenoon Yardley got her first taste of victory, Gerald's Cross-Country Team simply running away from Broadwood and winning 22 to 83. Yardley finished five men ahead of the first Broadwood runner, and then brought her sixth man in in eighth place and her seventh in ninth. Harry finished in fourth position, two minutes behind Gerald, who easily led the field all the way and trotted over the line smiling and seemingly fresh after his three-mile journey.

Later there was an early dinner in commons, and at a little past one o'clock the boys began to depart for Broadwood. Every sort of conveyance that the town of Greenburg afforded was on hand. Gerald piled his big automobile full of friends: Harry and The Duke and Lin Johnson, still in bandages, and others we haven't met. The First Team journeyed to the scene of the game in a long barge drawn by three horses, and the Second Team had chartered a similar vehicle and followed close behind, in a cloud of dust and a holiday mood. The game was to begin at two-fifteen, and by half after one Yardley presented the appearance of a deserted village. I doubt if there remained behind more than three or four of the faculty and "Mr. McCarthy," the janitor.

For details regarding the two teams which lined up against each other that afternoon we can do no better than consult the *Greenport News*. Here, then, is what the *News* published:

HOW BIG PREP SCHOOLS WILL LINE UP TO-DAY

YARDLEY							BROADWOOD	
Player	Age	Height	Weight	Weight	Height	Age	Player	
Cousins, l.e.	19	5.10	161	165	5.11	20	r.e., Thurston	
Plant, l.t.	18	5.10	174	193	5.08	19	r.t., Scott	
Fales, l.g.	18	5.11	176	191	6.00	19	r.g., Browne	
Girard, c.	19	5.10	189	151	5.08	19	c., O'Brien	
Merriwell, r.g.	19	5.08	162	174	5.10	18	l.g., Smith	
Stark, r.t.	17	5.11	176	185	5.11	20	l.t., Peebles	
Adler, r.e.	16	5.07	153	167	5.09	17	l.e., Furniss	
Simms, q.b.	18	5.08	152	157	5.09	17	q.b., Saunders	

Crandall,	17	5.09	163	167	5.10	18	r.h.b., Reid l.h.b.
Burtis,	16	5.08	153	159	5.09	17	l.h.b., Raynor r.h.b.
Marion,	18	5.10	172	173	5.11	18	f.b., Gordon f.b.
Average weight of line, 170 lbs.				Average weight of line 175 ¹ / ₇ lbs.			
Average weight of back field, 160 lbs.				Average weight of back field, 164 lbs.			
Average weight of team, 166 ⁵ / ₁₁ lbs.				Average weight of team, 171 ¹ / ₁₁ lbs.			

Officials—A. D. Stone, Brown, Referee; Chas. Parent, Princeton, Umpire; H. I. Morris, Yale, Linesman.

Time—15 minute quarters.

By two o'clock Yardley had taken possession of its section of the small stand and was overflowing all along the ropes on the west side of the field. Blue flags, white lettered, were abundant. Across the gridiron Broadwood massed her cohorts and waved her green banners. Fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, aunts and cousins, faculty and townsfolk were present in numbers, while Old Boys of both schools swaggered about, patronizing, resplendent. The cheering began when the two teams trotted on from opposite corners, and it continued with only brief pauses until the final whistle sounded.

Broadwood won the toss and chose the north goal, Yardley kicking off to Saunders on his ten-yard line. The Green's quarter ran back to the thirty-eight yards before he was smothered. The same player immediately fumbled, and Plant fell on the ball after it had rolled to Broadwood's forty-seven yards. Two plays gained little,

the Green line showing wonderful defensive powers, and Kendall kicked to Broadwood's five-yard line. Saunders caught and ran back seven yards before he was downed. A Broadwood back fumbled, but the Green recovered the ball just inside the goal-line. Yardley was cheering like a band of wild Indians. A plunge at the line netted two yards, and then Reid kicked from behind his line, the ball going to Crandall in mid-field. Yardley was set back fifteen yards for holding on the first play. A forward pass went wrong and Kendall punted to Broadwood's twenty yards, the ball going out. Broadwood got started then, and after three tries secured her first down of the game. The Yardley line showed weakness at the left of center. The Green worked a fake kick for twelve yards around Cousins' end and followed it with two plunges at Fales which netted another first down. Fales braced then and Broadwood's heavy full-back was pushed back for a loss. Saunders punted and Simms caught on Yardley's thirty-two yards and was thrown in his tracks.

Yardley opened up with her end plays and Crandall and Kendall reeled off enough around Furniss to make her distance. Simms tried a forward pass again, and Adler got the ball for a small gain. A fumble by Simms, and the pigskin rolled ten yards back before Crandall recovered. Stark was caught holding, and Yardley was again put back fifteen yards. A try at right end failed, and Simms kicked from position, Cousins recovering for Yardley on his fifty-yard line. Two tries at tackle netted eight yards, and Kendall failed to make the distance through the left of center. Broadwood hammered the Blue line for short gains, and worked to Yardley's thirty-five yards. A penalty for off-side set her back, a skin-tackle play put her on the Blue's twenty-eight yards, and Saunders tried a goal from placement. The kick went short.

Yardley kicked off and Raynor caught and reeled off fifteen yards before he was thrown. Time was called, the Broadwood captain having been hurt in the tackle. Broadwood now made a desperate assault on her enemy's defenses and twice made her distance. Fales and Plant were both playing high. Broadwood was caught using her

hands and set back. Saunders punted, and Simms caught on his fifty-yard line and ran back twelve yards before he was thrown. The Broadwood line held firm, and after two tries at it Simms ran around his right end and made his distance. Marion went straight through center for six, but failed to gain on a second attempt in the same place. Kendall tried a wide run around his own left, but was thrown for a loss and the pigskin went to Broadwood. Concentrating on Yardley's left wing the Green made eight yards in two tries. Fales was taken out, and Jackson went in. Gordon, of Broadwood, stole four yards around Stark, and the quarter ended.

So far Broadwood had shown better defensive power than her rival, and Yardley had exhibited a rather more varied attack. Simms was running the team too slowly, however, and seemed at times uncertain of his signals, although he had made no mistakes.

The second quarter opened with the ball in Broadwood's possession near the center of the field. Two plays gained little, and Broadwood put in a substitute for Gordon. On the first play the ball went back to the new full-back, and the latter reeled off twenty-three yards through a broken field before he was finally run off at Yardley's twenty-seven yards. After the ball was brought in Broadwood twice tried Plant and gained only four yards. Reid again tried a place kick, but Yardley's forwards broke through and the ball bounded from Merriwell's head and rolled to the forty yards, where Saunders fell on it for the Green. Broadwood now began to rip through the Yardley line between tackles and soon had the pigskin back within scoring distance. Girard was weakening fast, and on the eighteen yards Best was sent in for him. Broadwood's backs were proving wonderful ground-gainers. Faking another try-at-goal from placement, the Green's quarter took the ball for a run around his own left end. Kendall brought him down after a three-yard gain. With the ball on Yardley's twelve yards Broadwood concentrated on Merriwell and made seven yards in two tries, a quick double-pass play being difficult to fathom for Yardley. With the pigskin on the five-yard mark and three to go on third down, with Broadwood

thundering for a score and Yardley's cheerers imploring the Blue to "Hold 'em! Hold 'em!" a touchdown seemed inevitable. The Green's full-back took the ball and plunged at the guard-tackle hole on the right. For an instant the Blue yielded, but the secondary defense piled in to the rescue and when the whistle blew and the pile-up was untangled Broadwood had failed of her distance by six inches.

Kendall fell back between his goal-posts and got off a wonderful punt of fifty yards that Saunders found difficult to handle. The ball got away from him and rolled up the field, and by the time he had fallen on it on his fifty-yard line both Yardley ends were pinning him to the ground. Broadwood took up her journey again, but lost fifteen yards for holding, and finally punted from the Blue's forty-five yards. The ball went over the line and Yardley put it in scrimmage on her twenty-five yards. End runs gained twice, and a forward pass took the ball to the Blue's forty-eight yards. Marion found a weak place at the Green's left wing and plunged through for seven, Kendall following this with a hair-raising run outside of tackle for twelve more. Yardley's supporters howled their delight and went frantic a moment later when Simms took the ball on a trick play and dashed straight through the enemy's center for ten yards. Someone, however, had been off-side, and the ball went back. Another end run went wrong and Kendall punted. Saunders caught, dodged Cousins and Stark, and came back fourteen yards. A fumble by the quarter was recovered for a loss. Broadwood failed to gain through the line and Reid punted. Simms ran back ten yards and was thrown. Kendall and Crandall worked a double-pass, and the latter got five yards around the Green's right end, Thurston for once being caught napping. The half ended with the ball near the middle of the field in Yardley's territory.

The teams trotted back to the gymnasium, and the rival camps sang their songs. Yardley had had the worst of it thus far, but her supporters were far from acknowledging the possibility of defeat.

“Wait until we get the ball where Burtis can try a goal,” was the frequent prophecy. “Then you’ll see something!”

Fales was back at left guard when the third quarter began. Broadwood kicked off. Simms caught on his ten yards, and on the first line-up brought the Yardley students to their feet when, on a fake kick play, he dashed around Broadwood’s right end for twelve yards. A forward pass failed, Marion made three through left guard and Kendall booted. Broadwood came back desperately from her thirty yards, and in ten plays planted the pigskin squarely on the fifty-five-yard line. A plunge at the center gave her her distance. Stark was hurt, and after being patched up went back. But a minute later he was taken out and Jensen took his place. With two yards to go on a third down, Broadwood was thrown back and it was Yardley’s ball on her forty-three yards. Broadwood’s left end was negotiated twice, and it was first down for the Blue. Furniss was taken out and a red-headed, rangy youth took his place. But the gains still continued there, and, with Crandall and Kendall and Simms carrying the ball, four and five yards were torn off at a time. Marion provided variety by crashing through twice between right guard and tackle. Simms was running the team faster now and no longer seemed bothered about signals. There was one mix-up, however, which set the Blue back a good six yards. But this distance and two more yards was regained by Kendall, who sliced past left tackle. Broadwood was on the run and along the west side of the gridiron the blue flags waved triumphantly. Past the forty-yard line went the ball, past the thirty-five, Yardley still making her distance on each three tries. A mighty plunge by Crandall through left guard set the pigskin on Broadwood’s thirty yards. But Crandall was badly injured in the play and had to give place to Greene. Greene celebrated his arrival by immediately fumbling, and the ball went to the enemy on the threshold of her goal!

But Fate played fair for once. Two attempts at the Yardley line netted the Green six yards and Reid fell back to punt. There was a poor pass, Jensen got through and Reid was thrown, the ball

bobbing out of his hands and across the field to where a half-dozen players of both sides scrambled for it. Plant was the fortunate one, and it was once more Yardley's ball on Broadwood's twenty-five yards. Marion tried the center and got two and Greene shot around the enemy's left for three more, bringing the pigskin nearly opposite the goal-posts. Yardley waved and howled along the side-line as it saw Kendall walk back up the field. He pulled a handful of dry grass and tossed it into the air to study the wind. Then, with feet well apart, he raised his arms for the pass. The clamor died to silence and Simms's signals came across the field sharp and brittle:

“99-17-11!”

Back shot the ball, the two lines heaved and struggled, the big Broadwood forwards plunged through, a tackle brushed Greene from his path and leaped with upstretched arms at the kicker. Too late, though! Calmly and slowly Kendall's leg swung forward, the ball tapped on the ground, a foot met it squarely and it started upward and forward for the bar. A dozen hands strove in front of it, but it cleared them all. A veritable babel of triumph arose to the sky from the Yardley side, faltered, failed and died away as a volume of sound crashed from across the gridiron.

“No goal! No goal!” shrieked Broadwood.

CHAPTER XXIV

AROUND THE END

The blue-clad players were walking disconsolately back to the other end of the gridiron. The ball had passed under the bar instead of over; Kendall had missed goal by a foot only, but missed it he had. Murmurs of disappointment traveled along the west side of the field. For a minute the blue flags trailed discouragedly. But the teams were at it again, and there was still a good four minutes left of the quarter. Yardley advanced and lost the ball on a fumble. Broadwood made one first down and was forced to kick. Greene made a startling run after the catch, getting twenty-odd yards before he was stopped. Marion made two desperate plunges at left tackle and slid by each time for a short gain, and Kendall made the rest of the distance through right guard. Then came a penalty for off-side playing, and Kendall punted on the second down. Saunders caught and was downed, and the whistle blew for the third period. And there was still no score.

Payson sent Crandall back when the last quarter began, and made two other changes. Holmes took Simms's place, and Brinspool went in for Marion. Fifteen minutes remained in which to conquer or lose, and as the two teams, each showing the effects of the struggle, faced each other again on Broadwood's thirty-eight yards it was still anybody's game.

Broadwood secured six yards on two plays, and then Reid, starting as if to round Yardley's right end, suddenly stopped, turned and aimed a well-directed pass at the red-haired left end. The latter was quite alone and made a good catch, and in an instant he was streaking down the field. Only Holmes was between him and a touchdown, and Holmes was well over on the further side of the gridiron. Ten yards, fifteen yards, and the green-jerseyed youth was still running. Past the center of the field he sped, Holmes closing in

on him cautiously, the rest of the enemy trailing along desperately in the rear. On Yardley's forty-five yards the runner swung to the right as though to pass inside of Holmes, but the latter was wary and refused to follow. Another ten yards and the two met. The runner dodged to the left as Holmes dived, but the quarter's tackle was sure, and after three struggling paces the Broadwood runner came to earth. Thirty-five yards he had reeled off, the ball was on Yardley's twenty-seven and Broadwood cheered frantically. It was now or never for the Green, and all seemed to realize it. Yardley was for the moment disorganized, and her defense crumbled. The Green swept through for eight yards on the first play, gained her distance on the next and stood victoriously on the Yardley sixteen-yard line. A conference followed. Evidently Saunders was for trying a field goal, while Captain Raynor wanted a touchdown. Broadwood went back to her line-plunging. Holmes and Merriwell pleaded and threatened, and the Yardley line braced. Two yards was all Broadwood gained on her first attack, a yard and a half on her second. There seemed nothing for it then but a try at goal. Reid paced back and took kicking position. Saunders fell to his knees behind center. "Hold 'em now! Hold 'em! Get down, Smith! Stop that man, Peebles!" cried Saunders.

"Break through, fellows!" implored Holmes hoarsely. "Block this kick! Block it!"

Back went the ball, but not to Saunders. That youth flattened himself out of the way, and Reid was running to his right. A cry of warning broke from Holmes.

"Watch a pass! Watch a pass!"

But too late! Adler had been drawn in, and far to the right of the Yardley end the red-haired youth stood poised for the pass! Frantically a half-dozen Yardley players strove to reach Reid before he could throw. But already he had stopped, turned and was taking aim. Then away shot the ball, arching gently across the field to the waiting Broadwood end. Adler and Kendall rushed down upon him,

but the ball descended into his hands on the five-yard line and he was away on the instant. Three strides and he was over the last lime mark and heading in toward goal. Simms pulled him down before he had centered the ball, but the damage was done. Broadwood had scored! On the blackboard at the end of the field appeared an ominous white figure 6!

The punt-out was caught but Saunders failed to kick the goal, and Yardley took what comfort it might from that. Eleven minutes of playing time still remained, and the Blue's supporters refused to give up hope. Yardley had only to score a touchdown to tie, while a goal from the touchdown would win the game. The blue flags began to wave again half-heartedly, and the cheering started anew. The cheer leaders, their blue megaphones gyrating, did their utmost, but for a time the responses were weak. Broadwood took the defensive immediately after the kick-off and held to it. Yardley played desperately and every trick in her bundle was tried. Twice end runs were started that seemed destined to change the complexion of the game, but each time the runner was stopped before he could quite get away. From one forty-yard line to the other the play went back and forth, Broadwood punting on second down if not first and Yardley coming back with her end and tackle plays, punting only when forced to. And so nearly ten of the remaining eleven minutes passed away and Broadwood's title to the contest grew momentarily stronger. The linesman had announced two minutes left and Yardley had just failed to gain on her second down near the Blue's trampled forty-five-yard line. Holmes tried a quarter-back kick, and it worked, Cousins getting the ball on the Blue thirty-five yards. He was immediately tackled, however, and downed. Near at hand the blue flags were tossing ecstatically, and hundreds of throats were roaring an imploring chorus of "*Touchdown! Touchdown! Touchdown!*"

It was a time for desperate measures. The seconds were ticking off fast. Holmes hurried the line together.

"Come on! Come on! Signals! 38-107-45! 38-107——"

Back went the ball, thudding against Brinspool's stomach as he dashed forward. Merriwell and Jensen opened the hole and Brinspool staggered through, twisting, panting, the ball clutched tightly. The sound of rasping canvas, of bodies straining together, of grunts and cries, of panting breaths! A wild confusion of lunging, struggling forms, of grasping arms, of wide, anxious eyes, of white, tired faces, dirt-streaked and convulsed with effort! A faint, grumbling cry of "*Down!*" and the shrilling of the whistle! And Yardley had wrested four yards from the enemy!

"Line up, quick!" howled Holmes. "Get into this! We've got 'em going, fellows! They can't hold us! Signals! Right tackle over! 98-16-107! 98-16——"

It was Brinspool again; he was playing to-day as he had never played before all season; it was Brinspool between his tackle and end at the right, Brinspool taking the ball at a short throw and crashing past the Broadwood tackle for another three yards! Then the whistle again, and Merriwell, staggering out toward the side-line, asking the time, and Holmes begging him to come back and never mind.

"We've time to put it over," he cried. "Line up, fellows!"

"Forty seconds!" called the linesman.

Holmes faltered and passed a hand over his face. Broadwood, jubilant, broke into exultant cries. "Hold them, Broadwood! It's their last play! Stop this! Throw them back! Get under 'em!"

"Signals!" growled Holmes. "Kick formation! Burtis back!" He turned and viewed the positions. Greene and Brinspool were crouched already at the right, and Kendall, white-faced but steady, was raising his hands. "Get this, Burtis, and make it good, boy! Signals! 17-11-21!"

"Signals! Signals!" shrieked Greene, as Kendall's heart leaped. Holmes darted a look of murder at the offending Greene.

“Signals!” he cried again, chopping out the numbers with hoarse barks. “17-89-31! 17-89——”

“Block this kick! Block it!” shrieked Broadwood.

Back swept the ball from between Best’s wide-set feet, back to Kendall at head-height. Up went his hands, out swung a leg and then, with the ball tucked in the crook of his left elbow, he was plunging across the field to his left, while shrieks and cries filled the air. It was the play that had won the Nordham game, a simple run from kick formation, a play easy to stop if expected, but likely to gain if not. And in this case Broadwood had looked for a kick, reasoning that Yardley had given up all idea of trying to win by rushing, that in the few seconds remaining she would try to mitigate her defeat by securing the three points that a goal from field would yield her. And Broadwood was napping on the right of her line. The brilliant Thurston who had made himself feared all through the game, who had spoiled more than one attempt at his end of the line, had crept in and up, desperately determined to get inside of the Yardley end and spoil the kick. It was Broadwood’s right half-back, Reid, who first scented the danger and started to intercept Kendall. Saunders pounded behind him. But the Yardley interference was well formed, well spaced and desperate. Reid went down with Holmes, and Greene blocked Saunders. At that instant Kendall turned in and leaped toward the goal-line, his right elbow locked and his arm stretched out to meet the foe. Six white lines lay between him and the goal. He crossed two in safety, Greene speeding beside him. Then the enemy swept upon him. Greene threw himself in the path of a frantic foe and went down, and Kendall ran alone.

Three white streaks danced before his eyes now. A form leaped at him, all blue-clad arms, and Kendall’s open hand flattened against a face and he was still free. Two lines more now, only two! A shock almost threw him from his feet; hands were clutching at his hips; he whirled on one heel, staggered and broke away; a form dashed in front of him, hands stretching upward; Kendall leaped and went

over the falling foe; the last line was under foot! One stride—another!— Many hands fell upon him, dragging him down! He tried to shake free, but they were too many for him! He fell to his knees, something crashed against him, driving the remaining breath from his body, and he toppled over on the turf, the old injury paining horribly and his lungs bursting for air.



“Something crashed against him, driving the remaining breath from his body.”

They led him away to the side-lines, for the leather harness had failed him and the bones had slipped out again. And while the spectators held their breaths, Fales tried to kick a goal. Victory for the Blue depended on his efforts, and he knew it. Weary and panting, he directed the poising of the ball, stepped forward and kicked. The pigskin rose erratically, turned lazily over and dropped weakly to earth in front of the charging Broadwood line. And Fales sat down on the turf, rolled onto his face, buried his head in his arms and wept!

Said the scoreboard: Broadwood 6; Visitors 6.

CHAPTER XXV

KENDALL IS MISTAKEN

Kendall sat in a corner of the barge as it rattled its way through clouds of dust back to Wissining. They had pulled his wrist into place again, bandaged it and put it back in a sling. Every bump of the barge's weak springs made it throb painfully. But it was not his injury that Kendall minded. It was the knowledge that he had failed his fellows and the school. That was what hurt. He had lost the game, he told himself miserably. It had needed only that goal from the field to win, and he had missed it. He still wondered how it had happened. He had dropped the ball as well as he knew how, had kicked at the right instant, his instep had met it squarely, he was convinced that he had made no miscalculation of the distance. And yet, by some unhappy chance, the ball had barely cleared the bar underneath instead of sailing over. Since the whistle had blown he had avoided the glances of his teammates, was avoiding them now. He knew that by to-morrow they would find excuses for him, the kinder-hearted ones at least, but now they must all loathe him; and he didn't want to read that loathing in their faces. So he kept his eyes on the roadside all the way back to school, only occasionally conscious of his aching wrist, and was very unhappy and weary and sore.

Here and there some of the fellows were conversing jerkily in tired voices, but there was no joking to-day, no bantering, no laughing, no singing as the team went home. It seemed to them all that the tie had been a defeat. For the moment they had lost sight of the fact that Broadwood had outweighed them and that in playing their rival to a tied score they had perhaps gained some glory after all. Yardley had grown accustomed to victory on the gridiron, and anything less than a victory spelled disgrace to them. They were thankful, each and every one of them, that until the barge reached

Yardley they would not have to face their fellows. Now and then a lighter vehicle passed, and the occupants leaned out and shouted and waved their flags as they went by. But the players made no response. Perhaps one or two grinned stoically; perhaps here and there a fellow's face worked and his throat choked up. To-morrow—even later this same evening—they would begin to see things less pessimistically, but now, thoroughly tired, aching and sore, it seemed to them that they were little better than pariahs. The bottom had just dropped out of everything and they were left dangling in space!

When the barge rolled up the drive to the front of Oxford a crowd had already gathered about the steps, a throng of nearly a hundred, and the returning warriors were met with cheers that were hearty and loyal. A look of dull surprise overspread some of the faces in the barge; some of the fellows smiled a little; others grew frankly tearful. All shouldered their way through the crowd and sought their rooms, avoiding the hands that would have detained them and the questions that met them. Afterward, as other vehicles returned and emptied their loads, the gathering grew and the cheers became louder and louder, and when, finally, some two hundred voices took up the strains of the school song and sang it through proudly and lovingly and even exultantly, you'd never have guessed that Yardley held herself defeated!

Number 28 was dark when Kendall reached it. Gerald was not there, and he was very glad. He didn't light the lights, but crossed to the window-seat, after he had taken off his coat and cap, and threw himself down among the cushions to think it all over again. Thinking, however, made it no better. It seemed to him that he was disgraced; that even his usefulness to the school was over. He hated to think of the morrow when he would have to face the fellows and read the verdict in their faces. He could imagine the whispers as he went by. "That's the failure that lost the Broadwood game for us!" Of course, there would be some who wouldn't let it make any difference. They'd be disappointed in him, but they'd try not to let

him see, and they'd be loyal still—Gerald, for instance, and Harry and, yes, probably The Duke. And perhaps one or two others. And maybe after a while he would get over it. Perhaps by the time the Winter term began it would be half forgotten and he could hold up his head again.

Once it occurred to him that had Fales kicked the goal after the touchdown they would still have won a victory. But he was charitable toward Fales. Fales had been worn out, almost ready to collapse, and it was no wonder he had missed. Besides, Fales was not supposed to excel at goal-kicking. With Kendall it was different. He was first of all a kicker, he had been given his place on the team because they believed he could be depended on to score from the field. And he had failed at the one most important moment of the season! Kendall groaned and turned his head as though to get away from his thoughts.

The world outside the windows got blacker and blacker. He knew that in the next building they were gathering for the banquet and the election. But he had no intention of going. He didn't want to face them yet, while as for eating, he didn't care if he never saw food again! Now and then a voice or a strain of whistling or a bar of song came up to him as fellows passed under the window. Once there was a long burst of cheering from commons. One of the Old Boys, perhaps a former football hero, had entered the dining-hall probably. Well, they'd never cheer him that way; never, unless—yes, there was another year coming, after all. Perhaps they'd give him a chance to retrieve, to make up then! For a moment he felt better. But then the thought that if he failed to win his scholarship this year he wouldn't be likely to get back again sent his spirits down once more. And so for another hour he lay there in self-abasement and self-accusation and got a little tearful at times and felt pretty miserable. And finally, tired out physically and mentally, he fell asleep and only awoke when someone thumped on the door and called his name loudly. He sat up, with a wince as his injured arm was jolted, and rubbed his eyes.

“Burtis! You in there?” demanded the caller imperatively. The knob rattled, but Kendall had turned the key and the door denied admittance. For a brief instant Kendall clung to his desire for seclusion. But then, as there came a kick which threatened to drive a panel in, he answered:

“Hello! Who is it, please?”

“Simms! Open the door, you silly chump! What time do you think it is?”

Kendall crossed the room in the darkness and turned back the key. The door was pushed open, admitting a flood of light from the corridor. Simms stared in at him.

“What the dickens are you doing?” he demanded. “Been asleep?”

“Yes, a little while,” answered Kendall.

“Well, find your cap and come on. We’re half through dinner! We’ve been looking for you for an hour.”

“I—I don’t think I want to go over there, thanks,” murmured the other. “I—my arm’s pretty sore, and I’m tired——”

“What of it? Don’t you think the rest of us are tired, too? And sore? Gosh, I haven’t a bone in my body that isn’t yelping! Besides, we’ve got to elect a new captain pretty soon.”

“You won’t need my vote,” Kendall demurred. “I’d vote for Crandall if I was there. You could tell them that, couldn’t you?”

“Crandall! Well, say——” Simms paused and chuckled. “Just the same you’d better come, Burtis. They sent me for you, and I can’t go back without you. Get your cap, like a good fellow.”

“They sent for me? Who, Simms?”

“Why, the lot of them, the whole push, of course,” replied the quarter impatiently.

“Do you mean—that they—really want me?” faltered Kendall.

“Really want you? Say, what’s the matter with you, old man?” Simms looked curiously into the other boy’s face. Then he whistled softly. “So that’s it, eh?” he asked, as though of himself. He put one hand on Kendall’s shoulder. “Look here, Burtis,” he said affectionately, “you’ve got some fool notion in your head, haven’t you? Feeling sore, I guess, about that goal you didn’t make. Is that it?”

“Why—why, of course, I feel pretty rotten about it,” answered the younger boy. “And I thought—perhaps the other fellows——” His voice dwindled away into silence.

Simms laughed cheerfully. Then his fingers closed reassuringly on Kendall’s shoulder. “Poppycock, Burtis! Poppycock, my son! No one’s holding that against you! How could they? Great Scott! haven’t we all made mistakes to-day? You don’t think *you* lost the game, do you? Well, you didn’t! No more than I did, or Merriwell or Fales or any of the rest of us—alone! We all had a hand in it, Burtis. Besides, Payson’s been giving us a whole earful of guff about what a little band of heroes we are! Why Payson says we never had any show for that game, by rights! Says we only tied ’em because we didn’t know we were licked!” Simms’s voice dropped. “Burtis, don’t be a silly chump. Get your cap and come along. There’s a seat by me you can have. Come and see for yourself whether we want you there!”

It seemed too good to be true, and as he turned away to dash a sponge across his face his eyes got leaky again, and it took him a long time to get through with the towel and find his cap. Then he was following Simms down the stairs and along the walk and through the entrance to Whitson, alive with students awaiting the result of the election. As the two pushed their way through, the fellows fell back for them, cheering and shouting, laughing and joking. Kendall followed the quarter as in a daze. The big door opened, and he saw the long table spread in the middle of the hall and lined on each side with the fellows. There was Merriwell at the head and John Payson at the foot, turning at the sound of the

opening door, and Perky Davis, and, yes, Andy Ryan, too, and all the other fellows between, talking and laughing as though Yardley had really won!

Kendall faltered at the door, but Simms dragged him on. “Got him, fellows!” he announced, pushing Kendall forward into the flood of light about the table. “Found him sound asleep, and almost had to kick the door in!”

“Hello, Burtis, you old top!” shouted Girard.

“Everything’s eaten up, Burtis!” cried Marion.

Kendall found himself pushed into a chair between Simms and Adler. Everyone was talking at him, laughing at him, it seemed, and, wonder of wonders, every face was kindly! If an expression of doubt crept now and then into Merriwell’s countenance as he glanced at the newcomer, Kendall didn’t see it. Nor did he discern that Coach Payson was viewing him in a half-puzzled way. For a space, in fact, he saw very little. Eager hands passed him things and piled his plate high and Kendall pecked at the viands, too happy to really eat.

But after a while he began to hear what was going on about him. They were still talking over the game, but the former despondency was all gone. Rather, they were slightly boastful now! Plant, in high spirits, was explaining loudly what would have happened if one tiny, infinitesimal thing—Kendall couldn’t make out just what it was—had been different. “Why, in that case, we’d have knocked the green sawdust out of ’em!” declared Plant. And he appealed to Mr. Payson for confirmation. The coach smiled and nodded. Holmes was already predicting the horrible fate that awaited Broadwood next year. “Next year” seemed the keynote now. Simms and Adler talked in front of Kendall, and had a hot discussion over some unimportant happening of the day, and threatened each other with fruit knives. There was much noise and confusion, all very jolly and happy. Kendall drank a cup of coffee and nibbled a banana that someone thrust at him, settled contentedly back in his chair,

stretched his tired legs under the table and began to see the world through a wonderful mellow, golden haze.

Then, it must have been a half-hour later, when the last spoon had been laid reluctantly aside, although many diners were still sipping their second or third cups of black coffee, Captain Merriwell arose and hammered the table for attention. One by one the voices died away and the captain made his speech. He thanked them all for the bully way in which they had stood by him and the school, for the great game they had put up to-day; and he thanked Coach Payson for his patience and hard work and——

But the rest was lost in the sound of cheers and the tinkling of silver against goblets and the thumping of feet.

And now it remained to choose a captain for next year, Merriwell went on. It was customary for the retiring captain to make the first nomination, but he wasn't going to do that to-night. He was going to let them make their selection without any suggestion from him, knowing that whoever they chose would be the right man! And nominations were in order!

More cheering then, and some laughter, and finally a quieter mood, while the fellows glanced curiously around the table and waited. Cousins pushed back his chair and stood up, smiling as the fellows began to clap.

“I can't make a speech, fellows, and I don't need to. We've got plenty of fellows on this team who would make good captains, and for my part I say it's hard to choose (Applause and cries of “That's right!”). But in my opinion I think there's one in especial that deserves the position. He's played three full years on the team, he's a fellow we all like—I might say love—and—well, I think he's the captain we want. Fellows, I place in nomination Howard Crandall.”

Lots of cheering then, and lots of kindly looks toward the blushing Crandall. Simms and Fales, who sat on his other side, had their heads together. Then Simms started up, but Stark was ahead of

him. Stark was saying nice things about Pete Girard, and Pete was struggling to throw a napkin at him and repeating, “Sit down, you big chump! I don’t want to be captain!” much to the amusement of the table. But Pete got his meed of applause when Stark finished, and then Simms sprang up.

“Fellows, we’ve had good names put before us. Crandall, bless his old hide, would make a good captain! So would Girard, if he could keep awake! (Sit down, Pete!) Either one of them would do to lead us—I mean the rest of you fellows, because some of us will be out of it next year—to lead you to victory. But, fellows, there’s one here who hasn’t been named yet, and I know you’re waiting for it. We’ve got a fellow here who would make the sort of captain we want, the sort we love to follow, the sort that Chase was in the old days before we came here, and that Vinton was, and that Merriwell has been. He hasn’t served his three years, fellows, but that can’t be helped. It isn’t his fault, it’s our misfortune. He’s only been two seasons on the team, but in that time he’s yanked one game out of the fire for us and saved us from defeat in the other! And, fellows ——” Simms paused and seemed debating with himself. Then: “Fellows, when the rest of us were feeding our faces here to-night and jollyng up, this chap was staying away because he thought he’d failed us to-day and that we didn’t want him here! Fellows, I nominate for the captaincy of the Yardley Hall Football Team for the Season of 1911, Mr. Kendall Burtis!”

CHAPTER XXVI

GERALD IS SURPRISED

Simms must have been right when he said they were waiting for that name, for such a burst of applause went up as to set the fixtures shaking above the table. Napkins waved and goblets rang. Kendall, staring bewilderedly, told himself that it was a dream; that he had not heard aright! And yet they were all looking at him and waving at him and crying his name! He gazed about, the color rushing into his cheeks, and showed such a terrified countenance that the cheers grew into laughter. Merriwell was rapping for silence again. "Are there any more nominations?" he asked, trying to make himself heard. It seemed that there were not. "Then please come to order, fellows. You have three candidates to vote on——"

"Leave me out, Charlie!" called Pete Girard. "I decline the honor!"

"Then two," began Merriwell again. But Crandall was on his feet.

"I want to thank the fellows who nominated me," he announced, "but I withdraw, too, please. And I'd like to make Burtis's nomination unanimous!"

In the confusion of cheering that followed, Merriwell had hard work making himself heard. Finally, though: "Those in favor of the election of Kendall Burtis will stand up," he announced. Every chair was pushed back save those of Merriwell, who was already standing, of Coach Payson and Andy Ryan, who had no voice in the proceedings, and of Kendall himself. Marion mounted a chair and called for "Three cheers for Burtis, fellows! Let her go!" The cheers came with a will and were followed by cries of "Speech! Speech!" Kendall, his eyes on the table, and his well hand nervously employed in the manufacture of bread pills, felt himself being lifted to his feet. It was an awful thing to have to say anything, for his

voice was nowhere to be found at first; and when it did come it was so shaky and low that for a moment no one could hear it.

Finally, however, his halting words reached them.

“—Awfully afraid you’ve made a—a most horrible mistake,” he was saying, “and I wish you’d change your minds, fellows. Honestly—” and he looked appealingly about—“I don’t think I could do it, fellows!”

A howl of delight and derision went up. Kendall faltered again.

“I—I’d like you to excuse me, please, and——”

“Not on your life! You’re elected, Burtis!”

Kendall turned questioningly, pleadingly, to Simms. Simms, laughing, shook his head. “No use,” he said. “You’re it!”

Kendall gulped, smiled wanly, started to sit down, reconsidered and went on: “Then all I can say is that I’m awfully much obliged and that I—I’ll do the best I know how. But I hope you’ll all help me a lot, because—because I don’t know much about my job!”

Merriwell, looking worried, went down the table and for a minute conversed in whispers with Coach Payson. The coach frowned and, nodding, finally arose and walked to the side of the room. Merriwell tapped Kendall on the shoulder.

“I say, Burtis, just come over here a minute, will you?”

Kendall, wondering, accompanied the other to where the coach stood. The rest of the team followed them with curious eyes.

“Burtis,” said Payson, pulling a folded sheet of paper from his pocket, “have you ever seen this before?”

Kendall looked at it in surprise. Then, “Why, yes, sir, I think so. I drew that diagram, but I didn’t do all that writing.”

“How did you happen to make the diagram?” asked Merriwell.

“Why, a fellow came to my room one night, and we got to talking about signals; the different systems, you know; he had some scheme of his own and wanted to know what I thought of it. I didn’t think much of it, though.”

“Who was this fellow?” asked Payson.

Kendall hesitated. “Is there—is there any trouble about this?” he asked.

It was Payson’s turn to hesitate, and he looked uncertainly at Merriwell. Finally: “Yes, this has made some trouble, or very nearly.”

“Then I guess I’d better not say who the fellow was,” replied Kendall.

“I’m afraid you’ll have to, Burtis. This sheet of paper contains a full explanation of our signals for the Broadwood game, the original signals, you understand. It was sent to someone at Broadwood and got to the hands of the captain. He returned it to Merriwell. Now you see some explanation is necessary, Burtis.”

“But I only made the diagram. It was before we learned the new signals, Mr. Payson.”

“This other chap, whose name you won’t tell, took this paper away with him when he left?”

“Yes, sir. I never thought——”

“And you did not tell him afterwards about the signals for the Broadwood game?”

“No, sir. We never spoke of the thing again.”

“And you say this is not your writing?”

“No, sir; it isn’t.”

“And you know nothing more of this than you’ve told us, Burtis?”

“I really don’t. I’m awfully sorry I made that diagram, but—he said——”

“This other fellow?”

“Yes, sir. He said he wanted to work out a better system, and asked me to explain the one we were using then. That was all there was to it, Mr. Payson.”

Payson frowned. “I’m very much inclined to believe you, Burtis,” he said kindly, “but you must see that until this matter is cleared up you can’t—er—very well accept the captaincy. If I were you I’d see that other fellow right away and get him to tell what he knows, Burtis.”

“Yes, sir. And—and am I to—to tell them that I can’t be captain, sir?”

“No, that isn’t necessary. I think—Hello, Davis! Want to see me?”

“Why, yes, I guess so, Mr. Payson. Are you talking about that business of the signals? Because if you are I can clear that up in a jiffy.”

“Well, for goodness sake, do it!” ejaculated Payson. “What do you know?”

“I know the whole story,” replied Perky importantly. “Here’s how it was. Cotton got Burtis to make that diagram for him. Then he sneaked into the gym that night we were having signal drill—I told you I saw someone, but you wouldn’t believe me!—and got the signals. Maybe he was there another time, but he doesn’t own to it.”

“Then he acknowledges this?” asked Merriwell.

“Sure! He had to; I made him!”

“How did you get hold of it, Perky?”

“Did a little detective work. Got a clue from George Kirk just by accident. Kirk saw Cotton and that fellow Gibson together in

Greenburg the day he came back from the golf match with Broadwood. I put two and two together, found that Cotton was at Broadwood two years ago, and then went and told him I knew all about it. He thought I did and 'fessed up.”

“Where is he now?” asked Merriwell angrily.

Perky shrugged his shoulders. “Search me,” he said. “He left here this morning. That’s all I know!”

A half-hour later Kendall opened the door of Number 28. Outside there were still faint echoes of the cheering that had greeted the announcement of the election. Gerald, who had dined at home that evening, was in the room, and with him was Harry Merrow. Had Kendall been especially discerning just then he might have told from the expressions on their faces that they had heard the news. But he wasn’t; he was too excited for one thing. And, being excited, he tried not to show it. He said, “Hello” restrainedly, laid his cap down and took a chair.

“Hello,” responded Gerald carelessly. “Been to the banquet?”

Kendall nodded.

“Did they elect a captain?” asked Harry gravely.

Kendall nodded again. There was a silence. Finally and rather sheepishly Kendall said:

“What do you suppose those fellows did, Gerald?”

“What fellows?” asked Gerald, suppressing a grin.

Kendall nodded vaguely in the direction of commons. “Those fellows, the—the football team.”

“Oh, I don’t know. Raised rough-house, I suppose. What did they do, Kendall?”

“They—they”—Kendall found himself blushing—“they made me captain!”

“*What!*” Gerald turned and viewed the grinning Harry in wild amazement. “Why, I was never so surprised in all my life!”

THE END

THE LATEST BOOKS FOR BOYS

Around the End By Ralph Henry Barbour

Author of “For Yardley,” “The Half-Back,”
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Change Signals By Ralph Henry Barbour

Author of “The Half-Back,” “For Yardley,” “Forward Pass!” etc. Pictures in colors by C. M. Relyea, Large 12mo. Cloth, \$1.50.

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Another splendid story of the school known as St. Mary's. Bartley, the hero, is elected captain of the nine; and Mellen, the defeated candidate, is so disgruntled that he tries every possible way to prevent Bartley from having a successful season. Mellen's attempt to decoy away a crack player on the eve of the big game, and Bartley's wild ride on a bicycle to frustrate the attempt, bring about the climax of the story. The book has lots of snap to it and a goodly dash of "inside" baseball which will appeal to boys.

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Batter Up

By Hawley Williams

Colored Pictures and Colored Inlay on cover.
12mo. Cloth \$1.25.

This is another story of Lansing Academy, a companion book to "Quarterback Reckless." Chester Hall is again the hero. "Ches" loses his place on the 'Varsity nine and is called a coward because he appears to be afraid of the rival pitcher. The coach does not know that the same pitcher has once knocked "Ches" unconscious with a "bean" ball, and "Ches" doesn't tell. The story then tells of "Ches's"

great fight to get back on the nine, a fight in which he is aided greatly by a professor who was a star pitcher at Princeton in his college days. These two stories are splendidly told, and are sure to find a large circle of boy readers.

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By Joseph A. Altsheler

Author of “The Scouts of the Valley,” “The Border Watch,” etc. Pictures in color by Hutchinson. Large 12mo. Cloth, \$1.50.

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D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK

Transcriber's Notes:

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, except as noted.

Accepted possessive "s" variants (e.g. Simms' vs. Simms's, Holmes' vs. Holmes's, etc.) were retained.

Archaic and variable spelling has been preserved.

Variations in hyphenation and compound words have been preserved.

[The end of *Around the End* by Ralph Henry Barbour]