DICK INSTANTLY PARRIED THE BLOW AIMED AT HIM AND SWUNG CRUSHINGLY ON THE JAW OF THE INSOLENT AND QUARRELSOME YOUNG FISHERMAN.
TIP TOP WINTER SPORTS CONTEST.

Another Great Opportunity.

There is a good old adage among athletes that says the muscle that does not have something to do all the time grows thin and weak. Tip Top pins its faith to that adage, and, when it has trained its athletes up to a high state of physical development, Tip Top does not intend to let them go back. It is one thing to make an athlete. It is another to keep him there. Tip Top does both.

Here are the latest inducements to keep Tip Top athletes at work and improving.

FIRST.

TIP TOP BASKETBALL LEAGUE.

For the Basket Ball Team having the best average for the season Tip Top offers the following prizes:

1. A Pennant to the Championship Team.
2. A Complete Basket Ball Suit to Each Player of Winning Team, this to consist of:
   - A Basket Ball.
   - A Sleeveless Jersey (any color).
   - A Pair of Running Trunks.
   - A Pair of Ribbed Stockings (any color).
   - A Pair of High Cut Canvas Shoes.

Send in your scores as soon as possible. Tip Top will publish them all.

SECOND.

TIP TOP ICE HOCKEY LEAGUE.

For the Ice Hockey Team having the best average for the season Tip Top offers the following prizes for each player of winning team:

A Spalding’s Shaker Sweater (any color).
A Pair of Hockey Skates (Canadian pattern).
A Spalding’s Hockey Stick.
A Skating Cap (any color).

THIRD.

TIP TOP RELAY ICE TEAM CONTEST.

To the Team of Four boys who skate in the fastest time over Four Miles on Ice, each member of the team to skate one mile of the distance, Tip Top offers the following prizes to each member of winning team:

A Pair of Spalding’s Racing Skates.
A Shaker Sweater (any color).
A Skating Cap (any color).

FOURTH.

TIP TOP CHAMPIONSHIP ONE-MILE ICE RACE.

Tip Top offers three prizes for the three best records established on skates over a one-mile ice course. The skater making the best time to receive the First Prize, which comprises:

A Pair of Spalding’s Racing Skates.
A Shaker Sweater (any color).
A Skating Cap (any color).

The skater making second best time to receive the Second Prize, which comprises:

A Pair of Spalding’s Racing Skates.
A Shaker Sweater (any color).

The skater making third best time to receive the Third Prize, which comprises:

A Pair of Spalding’s Racing Skates.
A Pair of All Worsted Gloves.

COUPONS FOR ALL EVENTS WILL BE FOUND ON PAGE 32.
CHAPTER I.

THE END OF A STORMY LIFE.

"The man is dead!" said the doctor.

Cale Burk seemed to be sleeping. He lay there on the bed with his eyes closed in a peaceful manner, his tempestuous life ended at last. Hidden Cove would know "Old Peg-Leg," the hermit, no more. The old wreck in which he had lived would be abandoned.

Dick Merriwell looked at the bearded face that lay on the pillow in the old farmhouse, and to him it almost seemed that the dead man must feel relief now that he was beyond the reach of his mortal enemy, Captain Jubal, who had hunted him down in such a remorseless manner.

Cale Burk had lived in fear and wretchedness, fully believing that some day Jubal would find him and claim his life or the treasure for which they had struggled years before on that desert island off the torrid coast of Honduras.

Burk had conquered Jubal then and left him with others marooned on that island—left him, as he believed, to die.

But fate favored Jubal, the man of the single eye and scarred face, and he had been taken off the island by a passing vessel. Then he had sworn to spend the rest of his life in hunting Burk down, and recovering the pirates' treasure with which the latter had sailed from the island.

Old Burk somehow found out Jubal had escaped, and then his life became one long nightmare. He sought to hide from his enemy, and for three years he lived on the old wreck in Hidden Cove, a few miles from Fardale.
He armed himself and was prepared to fight to the death when Captain Jubal came. He feared to trust any one, and he permitted no one to visit him on the wreck. Provisions were brought him by a fisherman, who left them on a certain rock at a distance from the old wreck, receiving as payment for his trouble payment in gold, old coins of Spain, taken from the treasure box.

Old Burk had feared that the giving out of such money might arouse suspicions and cause the belief that he possessed treasure, which was likely to bring robbers upon him. This, together with his apprehension concerning Captain Jubal, caused him to seek a secure hiding-place for the treasure.

After a time he fancied he had found what he sought. It was a cavern that could be entered only at low water, the narrow mouth being hidden several feet beneath the surface of the sea at high tide.

It was necessary to enter the cave on all fours, but it quickly grew larger, once the explorer got inside, and it gradually extended upward till a portion of it was above high-water mark.

Within this cave, in a niche in the cramp rocks, the hermit concealed his treasure. There he fancied it would be safe from molestation.

At last, the thing he most dreaded happened. Captain Jubal appeared, and there was an encounter between them, in which the hermit was seriously wounded, but escaped and succeeded in avoiding his foe for the time being.

At this point Dick Merriwell and Brad Buckhart, who were remaining in Farraide during the regular holiday vacation, happened to come upon the old wreck in Hidden Cove and find Burk wounded, weak, nearly frozen and half-starved in the cabin.

The boys did what they could for him. They built a fire, made him coffee, and left him in a fairly comfortable condition, agreeing to return from the village with provisions.

Before they left, the old man gave Dick an oilskin packet, in which were full directions how to find the cave and the hidden treasure.

He did this because he believed Jubal might discover him at any time and destroy him, and he did not wish the treasure to fall into the hands of the man he hated. Dick had befriended him, and, if he died, he wished the boy to obtain the treasure.

On the way back to Farraide Dick had rescued from drowning a man who proved to be Jubal himself. When he leaped into the water, the boy flung off his coat. Afterward, at the village, he discovered the oilskin packet was gone from his pocket. The final conclusion was that it must have fallen out when he flung off his coat.

But a long search failed to recover the packet, and the hermit, when told of this, grew frantic with fear that it had been found by Jubal or one of his men.

His fears seemed warranted when, at low tide that night, the sailors in company with Captain Jubal rowed to the vicinity of the cave and landed there.

But the two boys and the old hermit had reached the spot in advance, and a battle took place at the mouth of the cave, into which Dick, Brad and Cale Burk were finally driven.

Then the enemy tried to smoke them out or suffocate them. They might have succeeded had not Dick found another way out of the cave. Believing they had succeeded and that the trio were overcome with smoke, Jubal and his men finally put out the fire and entered the cave.

Cale Burk had not left the cave at all, and a hand-to-hand struggle between him and Jubal ensued.

The old man was no match for the scar-faced ruffian, and he would have been slain but for the daring of Dick and Brad, who finally drove the surprised ruffians from the cave.

The boys waited for the sailors to attempt some other move, but they waited in vain. At last, the flowing tide closed the first mouth to the cave, and forced the boys to drag Cale Burk out by the exit discovered by Dick.

In leaving, the old man sought to take his treasure away.
Then came a maddening discovery for him. The treasure was gone!
It seemed certain that Jubal and his men had not carried it off, but it was gone.
On getting out of the cave, the boys succeeded with much difficulty in carrying the old man to a house about a mile away, where a doctor was summoned, as it was found that Cale Burk had been wounded again in the encounter at the mouth of the cave.
But the doctor was unable to save the hermit’s life.
 Weakened by loss of blood, and prostrated by the shock of discovering his precious treasure had mysteriously vanished, Cale Burk sank rapidly, and finally died.
His last words were spoken in praise of Dick Merriwell’s bravery and in regret that he had been unable to turn the treasure over to the boy.
And now the end had come.
Dick felt a touch on the shoulder and turned to see Buckhart, his faithful Texan friend, standing near.
“Let’s go out and get some air, Dick,” said Brad, in a low tone. “I reckon you need it. You’re looking right pale, old fellow."
“Wait a minute,” said Dick. “Doctor, if you will do me a favor you shall be well paid.”
“What do you wish me to do?” asked the physician.
“I wish you to get some one to arrange for the funeral of Mr. Burk. I wish him to have Christian burial. There must be prayer, at least. Have an undertaker attend to the body and provide a good coffin.”
“Hum! hem!” coughed the doctor. “We’ll talk about that later. I think the coroner will have to sit on this case. It seems absolutely necessary, the man having died from bullet wounds. This affair must be thoroughly investigated.”
“Nothing that should be done must be neglected,” said Dick. “My brother, Frank Merriwell, who lives in Fardale, will see that all expenses are paid.”
“Are you Frank Merriwell’s brother?” exclaimed the doctor, looking at the handsome lad with new interest. “Why, I’ve heard much about you of late, but this happens to be the first time I have seen you to know you.”
Indeed, there were few people in the vicinity of Fardale who had not heard much about Dick Merriwell, who in a short time had become the wonder of the military academy situated near the village.
“I can take you in my sleigh to the village, if you wish to go that way,” said the doctor. “There will be room enough for your friend, too.”
“Thank you, doctor,” said Dick. “We shall be happy to accept your invitation, for I confess that I am tired, and I believe Brad must be, also.”
“You bet your boots!” nodded Buckhart. “I have taken part in the regular roundup on our ranch more than once, but I’ll admit that this racket has played me out worse than any roundup. I didn’t know I was so dog tired till I stopped to think it over.”
They left the room, and the doctor talked a few moments in a low tone with the farmer who lived in the house. His horse was standing blanketed in a shed near by, and soon they were in the doctor’s sleigh, with their faces turned toward Fardale.

CHAPTER II.
NIGHT AND MORNING.
“Talk about a wild old night!” said Buckhart. “This has been it! You hear me peep!”
“It has been all of that,” agreed Dick.
“Tell me the particulars, boys,” urged the doctor, and they did so as the horse took them swiftly over the road to the tune of jingling sleighbells.
The astonished physician interrupted them many times with questions, and it was plain that he found it hard to believe their remarkable and thrilling tale.
“It’s the most wonderful thing I’ve ever heard of!” he declared. “Why, I’ve been told there was a queer character—an old hermit—living in the wreck in Hidden Cove; but who ever supposed he was the possessor of pirates’ treasure? Goodness, boys! this would make a fine story for a sensational newspaper!”
“If I ever went home and told the truth about this business,” said Brad, “the people out in Texas would allow I’d learned to lie right fast here at school.”

“I have heard in Fardale about the queer Spanish money brought to town by that fisherman,” said the doctor. “Folks were wondering where he got it. This explains the mystery. But pirates, hidden treasure, bullets and bloodshed—all this right here in our peaceful neighborhood! It’s amazing!”

But all his questions did not tangle the boys in the least, and he finally came to believe beyond a doubt that their story was truthful.

“But what do you suppose became of the treasure?” he asked.

“That’s something we’d like to know,” said Dick. “You heard Cale Burk say he wished to give it to me? Of course, if we had obtained it, I should have divided equally with Brad.”

“I opine not,” said Buckhart, at once.

“Why not?”

“Because he gave it to you, and I would not have touched a red of it.”

“Well, we’ll raise no argument about that, for it is quite needless. The treasure is gone, and neither of us can benefit by it.”

“Do you allow Cap’n Jubal got it?” asked Brad.

“Certainly not. Had he obtained it, he would not have fought us to get into the cave.”

“But he didn’t fight to get back into the cave after we drove him out.”

“Because he realized that we could shoot him and his men as they attempted to creep in by the opening. They were certain we had been overcome by the smoke when they ventured in there. It was the greatest surprise of their lives to find us alive.”

“Well, I reckon they found us alive and kicking. But they didn’t get a chance to take the treasure while they were in there.”

“At no time were they near where Cale Burk had hidden it.”

“Maybe they had been there before that and had carried it off.”

“No.”

“Maybe——”

“No. They would not have fought as they did, as I said before. Besides that, they could not have entered the cave previously. The tide would have prevented that.”

“You mean after they found the packet you lost, telling where the treasure was hidden?”

“Yes.”

“Well, that’s so. But, if they didn’t get that treasure, who did?”

“Don’t ask me! You know quite as well as I do.”

“It’s mighty strange.”

“The whole thing is very strange, boys,” said the doctor.

When they arrived in Fardale, Dick went straight to his brother, to whom he told the story of their marvelous adventures. Frank whistled softly, his eyes flashing.

“Look here, you young rascal!” he exclaimed to Dick; “you’ll be getting yourself killed pretty soon, if you keep this up! I did think I had a faculty of picking up more trouble and excitement than any fellow alive, but you take the palm, and I’ll have to retire. At your age, I refrained from frolicking with pirates and gentry of that class, but you seem looking for trouble all the time. I don’t mind paying the funeral expenses of Mr. Cale Burk, but I do object to paying your funeral expenses, and I fear I may have to, if you don’t steady down.”

“Why, I’m not to blame!” laughed Dick. “How can I help it when things will happen?”

“I’m afraid we’ll have to keep you locked up at the academy. Even then there would be something doing. Mr. Burk shall be buried with honors. And now I advise you and Buckhart to bottle up some sleep. You’ll be likely to need it for the next peck of trouble.”

Frank did not doubt a single point of the story, for he knew Dick would not tell him a falsehood. Of course, he was greatly interested, and resolved to visit the cave where the treasure had been hidden.
The boys were put to bed, and they slept soundly for some hours. Buckhart was still sleeping when Dick shook him to rouse him.

"Hands off, Cap'n Jubal!" muttered the Texan, mumblingly. "I'll fight you fair and square—Hey? what is it? Who— You, Dick? What are you doing, confound you?"

"Waking you up," said Dick. "Why, you sleep like a log!"

"Oh, Lord!" said Brad, rubbing his eyes. "I was just having a right smart scrimmage with Cap'n Jubal. What time is it?"

"Pretty near noon."

"Get out!"

"That's right."

"Well, shoot me! You're not dressed? Didn't we put in the sleeps? I should remark!"

"I woke you because I have been thinking of something that makes me want to be moving. I woke up half-an-hour ago, and an idea got into my head. It has been bothering me while I took a shower and rub. Woke you up to tell you about it."

"Let me have it. Fire away."

"Cale Burk may have made a mistake last night in the cave."

"Made a mistake?"

"How?"

"When he went to look for that treasure. He may have looked in the wrong place."

The Texan came out of bed with a leap that took him to the middle of the floor.

"Whoop!" he shouted. "Say, pard, why didn't we think of that before? Great hornspoon! I believe you've struck it! I do, I swear!"

"It's possible."

"Possible! It's probable! You hear me shout! It's almost certain!"

"I do not feel quite that way," said Dick, sitting on the edge of the bed; "but there is a chance that, in the excitement of the time, wounded as he was, the old man made a mistake in the place where he had hidden his treasure. He found another place that was similar to the one he had used, and that deceived him."

"In which case—"

"In which case the treasure may be in that cave now."

"May be?"

"Yes."

"Why, it must be!"

"Hardly that."

"Why not?"

"Cap'n Jubal may have entered the cave again since we left it, secured the treasure and carried it off. It's not likely he gave up thus easily all hope of getting his hands on the gold. He remained outside the cave with his men, thinking that rising tide would surely drive us out, when they would be able to kill us, for it's certain he knew nothing of the other way out of the cave. When the water closed the mouth of the cave, he decided that we would be drowned or must suffocate. He may have remained right there waiting for the tide to fall again. If so, he has made his way into the cave ere this. If the treasure remained there, the directions he found in the oillskin packet have enabled him to find it."

Buckhart sat down heavily on a chair.

"That's so," he said, in a crestfallen manner. "We're done up, Dick. We have been too slow, and that old devil has beaten us."

"It seems likely," nodded Dick; "but still it is not certain. How do we know just what happened? It seems rather strange to me that Jubal gave up as he did. Cale Burk regarded him as a fighter. He was afraid of Jubal. Yet we drove Jubal from the cave with the others."

"Well, you must allow that we gave them a right smart shock when we opened upon them with our guns. They reckoned we had passed in our chips, and it jarred them a little when we began to whoop her up and pump lead in their direction. We were above them, and they may have thought a thunderstorm had burst upon them."

"Still," said Dick, "we heard not a sound from
them after they were driven from the cave. Of course, that may have been a trick to lure us out; but I think it possible that something else had happened."

"What do you mean by something else, pard?"

"Perhaps Jubal was seriously wounded. In that case, it's likely they carried him off to their vessel!"

"Whoop! I reckon you've hit it!" shouted Brad, jumping up again. "If so——"

"It's possible they have not yet entered the cave. Perhaps Jubal is the one who has the directions for finding the treasure. It may be that he dare not trust his men, fearing they would betray him, as did Cale Burk."

Buckhart began to slat himself into his clothes, doing everything on the jump.

"Come on!" he cried. "Get into gear, pard! Wake up, old man! We've got to get going right lively!"

"You mean——"

"The cave! We must be there when the tide goes out next time."

"It will be hours before that happens," said Dick, as he calmly resumed his toilet. "May as well take it easy, Brad. There's time for you to take a shower, if you wish."

"Cut the shower out this morning, Dick. You had one? Well, let that do for both of us. I've got to get near that there cave, or I'll explode."

"What's the use, as long as Jubal cannot enter it again until the tide falls. If he was in there at last low tide, it's pretty certain he has accomplished his purpose, and we are left."

"Say, Dick, it's awful to think that!" groaned Brad, jumping into his trousers. "But perhaps he reckoned there was another way of getting into and out of the cave. Perhaps he hunted for that—and found it! Oh, thunder! If that's so——"

"It's just as bad."

"But he may be hunting for the other place now. Say, Dick, you can bet your sweet life Brad Buckhart, the raging terror of the Rio Pecos, is going to get up on his hind legs and prance over to that there cave right lively. Along with him he will take two guns, a toadsticker and other implements of war. He'll squat right down on that there hole where he got out of the cave, and, so help me shade of Davy Crockett! he'll stay there, warning off all trespassers. If that treasure is there, we're the boys who are going to lift it."

The Texan was earnest enough, and it occurred to Dick that there was a possibility that the cave might be entered by the opening through which they had escaped.

And the only danger would not be from Captain Jubal. The death of the hermit under such circumstances would bring out all sorts of stories, and the entire country might get treasure mad, in which case scores of searchers would be looking everywhere for buried treasure. Should some of these invade the cave, they might find the treasure by chance.

Something of Buckhart's feverish excitement communicated itself to Dick, whose fingers shook a little as he hastened to finish his toilet.

"We'll take Frank with us," he said.

But when they went to look for Frank they were told that Merry was away attending to the arrangements for the funeral of Cale Burk.

They did not stop for a regular breakfast. A hasty bite and sip of coffee served them.

To the nearest livery stable they went, where Dick procured a turnout. They had armed themselves each with a revolver, and soon, Dick driving, they went flying out of Fardale.

CHAPTER III.

A BLOW ON THE JAW.

The day had promised well, but as it advanced the sun disappeared in a grayish bank of clouds, and the wind shifted until it came raw from the open sea. Then a few fleecy flakes appeared in the air, and soon they grew thicker and thicker, driving before the wind. A storm was setting in.

Dick had expected to find Frank at the house
where the old hermit died the night before, or to meet him on the journey, but in this he was disappointed.

He did find, however, that at least twenty farmers and fishermen were gathered there, industriously rolling their tongues over the sensational gossip.

The boys drove into the yard, finding several sleighs standing about, and the owner of the place espied them from the stable door, in which he was holding forth to the eager ones about him.

"There they be!" he exclaimed. "Them's the boys! Them's the ones that brought him here!"

Immediately there was a rush, and the sleigh in which the boys sat was surrounded by eagerly-staring rusties.

One came out slower than the others. On his head he wore a "sou'wester," and his general appearance indicated that he was a fisherman. He was not over twenty years of age, and looked like a hardy, weather-beaten chap.

Dick asked for Frank, and was informed that he had been there and returned to the village.

Then the young fisherman came up. He was chewing tobacco and had his hands in his pockets.

"Are you two ther kids who brought the crazy old man here ter die?" he asked.

Dick flushed instantly, displeased by the man's words and manner. He gave the fellow a piercing look, which was returned insolently.

"We are not kids," he said, quietly. "And, for the other matter, I don't know that it's any of your business."

Perhaps a different answer would have been better under the circumstances, but, truly, there was great provocation in the manner of the young fisherman.

The fellow stared at Dick.

"Wot?" he cried. "Uppish, be ye! Well, you may git some of that taken out of ye. The currenner sets this afternoon, an' you'll have to make it plain jest what you was doin' with Old Crazy an' how he came to be shot ter death. My cousin Bill, wot is drowned, uster buy the stuff over to the village for Old Crazy, an' he said the old man had money hid somewhere. Now, it looks to me as if you kids was round his place to rob him, an' I ain't certain but ye done it."

"Well, confound your picture!" roared Brad, rising up at once. "Chaw me up, if I don't feel like lighting into you with all fours and giving you thunder!"

"You?" returned the young fisherman, contemptuously. "Why, I'd break you in two with one hand!"

"Dinged if you would!" shouted the Texan. "You're older than I am, but I'll eat my hat if I can't wallopp you in style!"

"Git right out and try it!" invited the fisherman. "I'll agree to take care of ye both. Somebody hold their boss and watch me lick 'em."

At this point the farmer in whose yard they were interfered.

"Hold on, right where you are, Lib Dixon!" he exclaimed. "Do you know there's a dead man a-layin' in my house? I won't have no fightin' here! You oughter be shamed to try to pick a fight with two boys!"

"I dunno 'bout that," returned Dixon, sourly. "My cousin, he toted truck fer that old hermit an' never got nothin' to show for it, while ev'rybody says it's likely these boys got the old man's money."

"Whoever says that, lies!" declared Dick, grimly. "But we have a right to the old man's money, if he had any."

"How do you make that out?"

"He gave it to me."

"Bosh! Who believes that?"

"I can prove it by the doctor who attended him and who heard him tell me the money should have been mine. I did not get it, though."

"Why not?"

"Because it was stolen by somebody. Because the old man was robbed."

"That's a purty slick story," said Lib Dixon, with a derisive grin; "but it's almighty thin. If he was robbed, I rather guess you kids know who done it."
Dick leaped from the sleigh in a twinkling and stood confronting Dixon.

"If you mean to accuse us, you lie, sir?" he said, hotly. "And if you do not like that, why——"

With a roar, Lib Dixon struck at Dick.

Now, for some months Dick Merriwell had been practicing the art of self-defense, and a good portion of the time his instructor had been Frank Merriwell. Frank had found his young brother quick as a flash of light, strong far beyond his years and looks, light on his feet and able to hit a blow that would have done credit to almost any man. This being the case, Dick instantly parried the blow aimed at him, and he swung crashingly on the jaw of the insolent and quarrelsome young fisherman, stretching him on the snow.

CHAPTER IV.
A HOLE IN THE GROUND.

"Whoop!" cried Brad Buckhart, laughing with satisfaction. "Wasn't that a jolt for Libbeas! I opine he'll admit that the kid who hit him is the real thing. Did he make some talk about walloping us both? Did he? Well, I wonder what he thinks about it now!"

But the fallen fellow seemed too dazed to think. He sat up, holding a hand to his jaw.

Then the farmer caught hold of Dick, begging him to get into the sleigh and drive away.

"What for?" asked the boy. "I'm not afraid of that big blowhard. He has called us thieves, and he'll have to swallow his words."

But the farmer appealed to Dick in a different manner, speaking of the dead man in the house, and begging him to go away.

"All right," said the boy; "but I shall see Mr. Lib Dixon again. He shall take back his lying accusation."

Then he stepped into the sleigh, and the boys drove out of the yard.

"Well, now, what do you think of that?" exclaimed Buckhart. "That galoot was looking for trouble, and he found it. He did, you know! You cracked him a daisy, Dick, old side partner! Think of the onery varmint accusing us of stealing old Peg-Leg's treasure! Wouldn't that give you cramps?"

The snow was beginning to fall more thickly. Dick did not turn in the direction of Fardale.

"I'm sorry I had to hit the fellow," he said; "but I couldn't stand to have him talk to us that way."

"Well, I should remark not!" burst from Brad.

"If you hadn't climbed him, you bet your boots I would! Where are you heading now, pard?"

"To the nearest house. Was going to leave this team where we just stopped and go over to the cave, but events did not make it convenient to do so."

"We've managed to stir up quite a rustling among the dry bones, Dick. I allow the coroner will be looking for us to testify this afternoon."

"Well, let him notify us. We have received no notification."

"I suppose they thought they'd be able to find us any time. How far is it to the next house?"

"Can't be far."

It proved to be about a quarter of a mile, and the team was left there, being turned over to a boy of thirteen, who said his father was away, but agreed to look after the horse and sleigh ready enough when Dick put fifty cents into his hand.

"When will you be back for it?" he inquired.

"Can't tell just when," said Dick. "But we may return in an hour or two."

"And we may not," muttered Buckhart, as they left the yard, passed round the barn and set off for the distant shore.

The snow was not deep, and they did not find it difficult striking across the fields.

The boy left the horse standing in the barn floor, and ran out to the corner of the barn, where he stood watching them until they were lost in the ever thickening fall of snow.

"That's Dick Merriwell," he said. "I knew him the minute I set my eyes on him, 'cause I saw him play football and ice-hockey. He's a jolly good one, too. I'd like to be as smart as he is, I would."

The sound of sleigh bells caused the boy to look round. A man was turning into the yard, and beside him sat Lib Dixon.

"Hey, bub!" called Dixon, when he spied the boy; "did them fellers stop here?"

"What fellers?" asked the boy, at once taking a dislike to Lib. "I ain't seen nobody."

"How long have you been out here?"

"Oh, two-three minutes."

"An' ye ain't seen two young chaps go by in a sleigh?"

"Nope."
“You ain’t seen northin’ of them?”

“Nope.”

At this moment the barn door swung slowly open, and the horse and sleigh were seen inside.

“You lyin’ young scamp!” cried the young fisherman, jumping out. “There’s their hoss an’ sleigh now!”

“Well, it didn’t go by, did it?” flung back the boy.

“You asked if I saw it go by.”

“I asked if you’d seen anything of them youngsters. Where are they, in the house?”

“Nope.”

Dixon started for the boy.

“Look here!” he snarled; “you tell me where they’ve gone, and tell me now, or I’ll shake you out of your skin!”

“Why, I dunno where they’ve gone—honest I don’t!” declared the boy. “All I know is that they went round the barn here and set off that way.” He pointed in the direction the two boys had taken.

Lib Dixon saw the tracks, and knew the lad was telling the truth.

“All right,” he nodded. “That’s what I wanted to know.”

Then he went back to the sleigh and hurriedly said something to the man who had driven him there. Directly the man turned about in the yard and drove off.

The boy watched Dixon curiously.

“What be you goin’ to do?” he asked.

“Never you mind what I’m goin’ to do,” answered Lib, as he tenderly touched his jaw with one hand.

“I know what I’m goin’ ter do.”

“Well, you better not bother Dick Merriwell,” said the lad, wagging his head. “’Cause if ye do you’ll wish ye hadn’t.”

“Oh, is that so! Why, he’s northin’ but a kid.”

“Yes, but my cousin Tom says he’s smarter than chain-lightnin’, and there ain’t many men worth a cin can git the best of him.”

“Your cousin Tom may think so, for all I care.”

Without further words, Dixon started round the corner of the barn, following the tracks of Dick and Brad, who could no longer be seen through the driving snow.

The boy watched him as he plodded away after the two unsuspecting boys.

“I wish they knew he was follerin’ them,” muttered the boy by the barn. “I don’t like his looks, and somethin’ makes me think he’s goin’ to do somethin’ he hadn’t oughter do.”

He stood there until the dark form of Dixon had been enveloped by the gray veil of flying snow.

Dixon was revengeful.

“Hit an’ knocked down by a kid!” he muttered, as he plodded along in the tracks left by Dick and Brad. “But I’ll make him sorry he done it! I’ll fix him!”

When he was sure he could no longer be seen from the house or the road, he reached beneath his short, thick coat and felt the handle of a knife that rested in a sheath attached to his leather belt.

“I may need that,” he said. “If they both set on me together, I may be forced to use it in self-defence.”

Then he grinned viciously, took a plug of tobacco from his pocket and twisted off a chew with his yellow teeth.

After a while he could hear the murmur of the sea along the rocky shore. At this point he said:

“They’re headin’ straight for the cave; but the tide’s up, an’ they can’t git inter it if they want to. It’ll be after dark before any one can git inter the cave.”

He was destined to encounter a surprise. Ahead he finally saw the sea, looking dull and heavy through the falling snow. Then he came to the top of a high cliff above the spot where the mouth of the treasure cave was exposed at low water.

Suddenly he started back, a low exclamation of surprise escaping from his lips.

Ahead of him, beside a large round stone, was a hole in the ground large enough to readily admit the body of a man.

The tracks of the two boys he had followed, led straight to this hole, but did not go beyond it.

All about on the snow were scattered the ends of burned matches.

The boys were not to be seen.

“Great codfish!” muttered Dixon. “What’s this mean. Must be almost right over the cave. Can it be a way of gittin’ inter the cave? I’ll bet anything it is! Then them boys are in there now!”

CHAPTER V.
ENTERING THE CAVE.

Entirely unaware that they were followed, Dick and Brad had made their way straight to the spot
where they had forced their way out of the treasure
cave when trapped there the night before, and nearly
suffocated by the smoke of the fire built at the regular
entrance. They found the place without difficulty.

"Here it is!" exclaimed Dick, as he paused and
stood gazing down at the opening beside the large
round stone.

Then came the thought of the agony he had en-
dured while trying to force his way out of that place.
He remembered how he had felt the damp ground
all round him, and longed to push and tear at it in an
aimless fashion. The horror of those moments came
back to him now, and he shrugged his shoulders, a
slight shiver running over him.

"I'll bet a horse I know what you're thinking
about!" exclaimed Brad. "Wasn't it terrible! Dick,
I wonder my hair did not turn gray last night!"
Dick laughed.

"It was rather fierce," he admitted. "I wouldn't
like to go through that often."

"What if we had not found this opening?" said
Brad.

"What if the ground had not been a mere shell
here, so I could tear it away?" said Dick. "When I
thrust my hand out through into the snow, the open-
ing was not six inches in circumference. If I had not
been able to make it larger, we must have been over-
come by the smoke. It is really remarkable that we
were not anyhow."

"Then we had a right jolly time getting Old Peg-
Leg out," said Brad. "It was a case of push and
pull, for he was pretty nearly helpless."

"Where did you leave the lantern?" asked Dick.

"On a little shelf of rock down there."

"Burning?"

"Yes."

"Then all the oil must have been burned out of it.
Too bad. If we had it now, with plenty of oil, I'd
like to go down in there."

Brad started to back into the hole at once.

"What are you going to do?" asked Dick.

"Going after that lantern."

"What for?"

"Oh, just because I want to. Wait a minute."

The Texan lowered himself into the opening,
finally disappearing from view, while Dick crouched
above, and peered down into the darkness.

Pretty soon a muffled voice called from the hole:

"I have it!"

Pretty soon Brad came scrambling back, and Dick
helped him out.

The Texan brought the lantern.

"Let's take it," said Dick.

He shook the lantern near his ear, and heard some-
thing slop inside.

"Why, there's oil in it!" he exclaimed.

"Then why did it go out?"

"Don't know; but I'll bet anything there's oil in it."

"Will you bet the treasure that may be waiting for
you down below?" asked Buckhart.

"Yes, I'll bet that."

Brad took the lantern and shook it, listening for
any sound it gave forth.

"Well, I won't take you," he said. "There is some
kind of liquid inside, for she sloshes."

Dick struck a match and tried to light the lantern.
After repeated efforts, it was found the wick would
not burn.

"Now, what do you make of that?" asked Brad,
perplexed. "There is oil—or something—in the old
thing."

"The only explanation seems to be that the wick
is short. I think that must be the trouble. It does
not touch the oil."

"Great head, pard! That's it, I'll bet my scalp-
lock! But I don't see but we're just as bad off as if
the old concern didn't have a drop of oil in her."

"I think not," said Dick, as he put the lantern
down and brought from his pocket a metal drinking
cup, such as is carried by hunters and bicyclists. "I
believe we can fix that all right if you have plenty of
matches."

"Oh, I have any amount of them; but hang me if
I see how you are going to lengthen the wick."

"I'm not!"

"Then what are you going to do?"

"I'll raise the oil to the wick."

"You will?"

"Sure thing, Brad," smiled Dick, as he filled the
cup with snow. "If it was convenient to get down
to the shore from this cliff it would save us some
trouble; but I fancy it's simpler to melt the snow.
I will hold the cup, Brad, while you light matches
and hold them beneath it so that the flame will heat
the bottom of the cup. In that way we'll soon have
some water."

"All right," said Brad; "but I hope to die if I see
what good water is going to do us. We can't burn water in the old lantern."

"No; but with enough water we can get the oil up to the wick. All we have to do is to pour the water in with the oil."

Buckhart still looked doubtful.

"You may know what you're doing," he said; "but it seems to me that you're daffy. The water'll spoil the oil so it won't burn at all."

"Hardly," laughed Dick. "You ought to know that water and oil will not mix, and that oil will always float on water. Such being the case, when we pour the water in with the oil, it will go to the bottom and the oil will rise round the short wick. Then, I think, we'll be able to light the lantern."

"Dick, you're all right!" exclaimed Brad, heartily. "I'd never thought of anything like that. You've got a great head, pard! You have, I know!"

They followed Dick's plan, melting the snow with burning matches, and finally pouring the water into the lantern. When they had poured in considerable, Dick suggested trying to light the lantern.

At first the wick burned feebly, the flame threatening to go out, but it grew stronger, and Brad uttered an exclamation of satisfaction.

"It works, by the great horn spoon!" he exploded. "We can see with that all right, Dick. Are you for going down below?"

"I am," nodded Dick, as he thought of the treasure that might still be concealed in the cave.

The same thought was in the minds of both lads, and the desire to begin searching for the treasure immediately made them ready to face almost anything.

"Pass the lantern down to me, Brad," said Dick, as he backed into the opening. When he was almost out of sight, he stopped, and, kneeling on the edge of the hole, with his hand against the huge round bowlder beside it, Brad handed the lantern down.

Then the Texan followed Merriwell.

CHAPTER VI.
THE CAVERN OF DEATH.

Eager as they were to search for the treasure, the boys felt a chill creep over them as they descended into that damp, dismal cavern, where but a few hours before a sanguinary battle had taken place, and at least one human being had met his death. They thought how Old Peg-Leg, hidden behind a rock, had risen before Captain Jubal and fired at him, only to see Jubal drop in time to avoid the bullet, which lodged in the breast of the man behind him.

And Dick did not forget that Cale Burk had said just before dying that a curse seemed to rest on the coveted treasure—a curse that reached every one who had anything to do with the pirate gold.

But there is a strange fascination about searching for treasure of that sort, and when the fever seized a person it takes hold of him with amazing violence, making him ready to suffer almost any hardship, or face any peril in the prospect of finding the coveted wealth.

This fever was upon the two boys, and they lowered themselves into the cave, burning with the desire to hunt everywhere for the old Spanish coins brought to that place from the torrid island lying near the coast of Honduras.

The passage quickly grew larger, and they were able to let themselves down over the rocks, aided by the light from the lantern.

It was warmer in there than outside, but the air seemed heavy and oppressive.

"A fellow wouldn't live long shut up in a place like this," said Brad.

His voice sounded so strange that it startled him. Somehow it was smothered, yet surprisingly loud.

"No," said Dick, "he'd not live long, even if given sufficient air to breathe, food to eat and water to drink. The horrors would get hold of him down here and kill him."

"The tide has turned, hasn't it?" asked Brad.

"I don't know," admitted Dick. "I don't know just what time it is now, but low tide will come an hour later than yesterday."

"That will bring it some time after dark."

"Yes."

"Well, we cannot remain here until then. The coroner sits this afternoon, you know."

"And we have not been properly notified to be present."

"Still——"

"I think it is well for us to be there. We do not wish any false impressions to be given out concerning the affair of last night. If we did not appear——"

"I'll allow some fools might think we had a hand in killing Old Peg-Leg."
“Probably, although the doctor could testify that our relations with the old man were friendly.”

“But all sorts of lies might be concocted about us. Mr. Lib Dixon had started in arousing suspicion.”

“It was not that I was thinking about. It struck me that we would be called on to tell everything we knew about this cave, with the result that a hundred men would be seeking here for the treasure at the earliest possible moment. We must do our best to find that treasure before we have to tell about it.”

“Sure as shooting,” agreed Brad, letting himself down over the slippery rocks.

The lantern threw black shadows on the walls of the cave—shadows which seemed like hobgoblins dancing round them. The rocks were slimy and treacherous, and the smell of the sea filled their nostrils.

Pretty soon Dick stopped.

“Here is the ledge from which I fired when I knocked the knife from Cap’n Jubal’s hand,” he said.

Brad was at his elbow now.

“That’s right,” agreed the Texan; “and here is where I stood when I blazed away at the rest of the gang, who were creeping in by the mouth of the cave.”

“We can’t go much further. See.”

Young Merriwell held the lantern out at arm’s length, and its poor light fell on the water, that had flowed in by the regular opening and half-filled the cave.

“Where was it that Cale Burk looked for his treasure?” questioned Buckhart.

Dick moved along the shelf and let himself down still lower to some rocks at the very edge of the water.

“Here’s the place,” he said, holding the lantern so its light fell on an opening in the rocks. “Here is the stone that hid the opening.”

Buckhart thrust his hand into the place and felt about.

“No good,” he finally said, in a tone of disappointment. “The place is empty for sure.”

“Did you think it wasn’t?”

“Well, I thought perhaps the old man had made a mistake in his hurry. I’ll allow I wasn’t thinking about treasure then half as much as I was about getting out of this hole as soon as I could.”

Dick also satisfied his curiosity by feeling into the hole.

“Now,” he said, “the only explanation of the failure to find the treasure here is that it had been removed, or Cale Burk failed to locate the exact spot where he concealed it. We must look around for another hiding-place.”

They began the search together, carefully looking for another hole in the rocks, where the gold might have been secreted.

It was slow work, as the light of the lantern was not at all satisfactory for the purpose, but they made the search thorough as far as they went.

While it did not seem likely that Old Peg-Leg had climbed higher over those slippery rocks to hide his gold, the boys were agreed that it appeared most probable that he had sought to conceal it above high water mark.

For nearly an hour they searched, the result being nothing but disappointment.

Of a sudden, Buckhart uttered an exclamation and clutched the shoulder of his friend.

“Look there!” he whispered, pointing with one hand toward the surface of the water.

Dick looked, but saw nothing at first. Then, shifting somewhat, the lantern light showed him a human face, contorted, ghastly, with wide-open, staring eyes that seemed to look up at him with a glassy stare—the face of a dead man! It was there close by the edge of the water, in which it floated.

“That’s a pleasant sight!” muttered Brad.

Of course the boys were startled, but Dick regained his nerve in a moment, saying:

“It’s the sailor of Cap’n Jubal’s party, who was shot by Cale Burk. He was behind Jubal when Burk fired. Jubal dropped to the ground, and escaped being hit, but that poor fellow got the bullet. It finished him.”

“Thunder!” muttered the Texan. “I allow the thing did give me a jump. I don’t like to look at it. Seems to me it’s getting mighty close in here, pard. What do you say if we go out and swallow a few mouthfuls of fresh air?”

“I don’t see that we can do anything more here now,” said Dick. “The treasure must be gone.”

“Anyhow we can’t find it. We can make another hunt when the tide goes out.”

They started up the rocks, Buckhart in advance.

When the drew near the opening above, from which the daylight shone a short distance into the narrow passage, Brad suddenly paused.
“Did you hear anything, Dick?” he asked.
“Hear anything? I don’t think I——”
“There——”
“I heard it then! It seems that some one must be near the opening.”
“What if it’s Cap’n Jubal?”
“Then we’re in a bad trap; but it’s not at all likely it’s Cap’n Jubal. Go on, Brad. Let’s get out just as quickly as possible.”
They started forward, forcing their way along the passage, which became narrower and narrower.
Suddenly at the narrow opening a human head appeared. The owner of the head must have known they were approaching, for he cried:
“I’ve got you kids trapped! I’m goin’ ter keep ye trapped, too! One of ye struck me, but Lib Dixon always gits square fer anything like that. Want ter come out, do ye? Well, I’ve fixed it so ye won’t git out this way, an’ I’ll be ready for ye at the other place when the tide goes out.”
Then there was a grating sound, followed by the rattle of dirt and pebbles that came showering down about them, and a thud. At the same moment the light of day was shut off ahead of them.
“What’s happened, Brad?” asked Dick, who had been unable to see well on account of Buckhart’s body filling nearly the entire passage.
The Texan did not answer at once, but he finally said:
“That onery varmint you thumped, pard, has trailed us here, and I reckon he’s done us a bad turn. I’ll find out in a minute.”
He made his way to the point where the upper mouth of the cave had been, but he found it closed. In vain he felt about for an opening. Within three minutes he was certain that they could never get out that way.
Behind him Dick’s muffled voice called again to know what was the matter.
He began to retreat, forcing Dick to do likewise.
When the passage was large enough he turned about and faced his companion, the light of the smoky lantern showing that their faces were very pale.
“Old man,” said Buckhart, chokingly, “we’re in a right tight box, and that’s no joke. We’re shut in here by that onery, measly, pesky galoot you thumped on the jaw. I couldn’t see, for my body shut off the light from the lantern; but I think the skunk has managed to roll that big round boulder over the opening, in which case we couldn’t get out this way in a week of Sundays. You can get past me here, so you take the lantern and creep up and see.”
Dick proceeded to do this, and it took very few minutes for him to learn that Buckhart was right.
They faced each other again.
“This is somewhat more than we bargained for, Brad,” said Dick, coolly.
“Well, I should say so!” muttered the Texan, gloomily. “What are we going to do?”
“We’ll have to make the best of it. We’ll have to wait until the tide goes out, and then escape by the other opening.”
The pesky galoot says he’ll be there when we try to do that.”
“Let him. We have a revolver each, and we can make it warm for him.”
“Maybe the air will get foul in here, and we’ll suffocate before the tide falls.”
“In that case,” said Dick, “when we find the air is getting too bad to breathe, we’ll have to strip off and attempt to dive down and swim out through the mouth of the cave under the water.”
“Oh, thunder!” gasped Brad, in dismay. “Then we’d freeze to death before we could get to the nearest house. Say, pard, this is the champion scrape of my life. It is, I swear! And you—well, I opine you’ll not appear at that there inquest this afternoon. Hardly! While they are holding that we’ll be enjoying ourselves here.”
He was startled when Dick began to laugh. It seemed so strange, but the boy with the dark eyes laughed heartily, the sound making the cave echo.
“Say, don’t do that!” gurgled the Texan. “It makes my hair stand, for it seems like you’re going mad. What’s the joke?”
“If you could see your face you would not have to ask,” asserted Dick. “It’s more than a yard long. Oh, but you are a sad-looking object, Brad!”
“Well, take a good look at me now,” advised the Westerner, “for you’ll not see me five minutes from now.”
“Won’t see you? Why not?”
“Because the thundering old lantern is going out, and we’ll be here in darkness thick enough to cut in chunks with a knife five minutes from now.”
In truth the lantern was going out, as Dick saw
instantly. The flame was beginning to splutter and die down.

Dick stopped laughing now, and the boys sat there, staring helplessly at the perish ing flame.

“We must get down as far as we can while it lasts,” Dick suddenly breathed, picking up the lantern and carrying it carefully. “We want to be ready to go out of the cave just as soon as the tide falls.”

He carried the lantern gingerly, as every movement threatened to give the flickering flame excuse to go out.

Gingerly the boys descended to the very edge of the water, where the lantern was placed on a flat rock.

The first thing noted was that the failing light showed them the ghastly face and dark figure of the dead man in the water.

Then, with that unpleasant object near at hand, they sat down on the damp rocks to wait.

The flame of the lantern sunk lower and lower, while the heavy, terrible darkness closed in about them like a monster seeking to crush its intended victims.

It seemed an effort to speak now, and the awful silence of the place was oppressive.

The circle of light grew smaller about the lantern. The face of the dead man in the water faded till the open, staring eyes could no longer be seen, then slowly it vanished. Inch by inch the blackness crept upon the lantern, and the boys near it.

Their thoughts were far from pleasant.

A bit of a flame burned at the end of the charred wick, and they kept their eyes on that. The beating of their hearts sounded like the strokes of hammers.

The tiny flame flickered with a dying gasp, being scarcely sufficient to illumine the smoke-stained globe of the lantern.

Then, at last, it went out, leaving a charred bit of the wick to glow redly and send forth smoke. Even this soon faded from view, and they were plunged in utter darkness there in the cavern of death.

CHAPTER VII
WHEN THE TIDE FELL

It is useless to try to describe the wretchedness of those long hours in the darkness of that uncanny cave. Patiently the two boys waited for the tide to go out, so that they might escape. Sometimes it seemed that the air became heavy and foul, but this was more imagination than anything else, and they knew fresh air must creep into the cavern from some point.

They kept close together and waited. When they had entered the place it seemed that the cave was warm. The blowing wind, raw from the sea, and the beating snow had been shut off, and the change seemed agreeable. But after long hours the cold and damp had crept into their bodies, chilling them to the bone, and adding to their utter wretchedness.

They could not help thinking of the dead man in the water so near at hand. Sometimes they fancied they saw his eyes staring at them through the Stygian blackness.

There were other thoughts, scarcely less agreeable, and occasionally they spoke to each other in subdued tones. Once Buckhart whispered, huskily:

“Do you believe in ghosts, Dick?”

It must be confessed that young Merriwell was a trifle startled, but he promptly answered:

“No, I do not.”

“Um!” said Brad.

“Do you?” questioned Dick.

“Well, I don’t take much stock in them,” averred the Texan. “But, if there are such things—mind, I say, if there are—then this place ought to be haunted.”

To this Dick agreed, and Brad went on:

“In all the stories I ever read about pirate treasure there were ghosts.”

“But those were stories,” said Dick. “This is no story; it’s altogether too real.”

“It seems like a nightmare more than anything real,” declared Buckhart. “If there were ghosts they’d be here for sure. Think of the people that may have been murdered gathering that treasure. They should haunt it.”

“They are not all.”

“No; there’s Old Peg-Leg—surely his spook would hover round the treasure, if there were spooks.”

“To say nothing of the man he shot when he fired at Cap’n Jubal—the one in the water here.”

“Woo!” breathed Brad, getting a bit nearer Dick.

“Don’t speak about him!”

“Let’s talk about something more cheerful. I don’t believe we’ll see any spooks.”
Finally they could pass out by the opening from the cave, being forced to get down on all fours before they emerged into the open air.

Outside the black mouth of the cave they stood up and drew in deep breaths of free air.

The storm had passed, but still there was no moon. The sky, however, was sprinkled with millions of burnished stars. The sea had ceased its moaning along the shore.

"It was a bluff," said Dick, as he looked around and saw nothing of Lib Dixon. "The fellow tried to frighten us by saying he'd be here. In a few minutes the water will recede enough so we can walk round that point of the cliff, and find a way along the shore."

"Rampaging buffaloes!" said Brad, assuming his swagger again. "I'll allow, partner, that we've had a high old time, but I'm not looking for it every day. I'd rather stack up against grizzlies and redskins than be shut in a hole like that."

As the water receded before their feet, they walked out to the point of the projecting bluff, and passed round it.

And they walked straight into the hands of several men, who seemed to be waiting for them there.

CHAPTER VIII.

DICK'S NERVE.

It was a complete surprise.

Before he was prepared for anything of the sort, Dick felt himself clutched by a strong pair of hands, while a voice growled:

"Hold on, youngster! We want you!"

Other men grasped Buckhart, advising him not to make trouble.

"Whatever is this?" cried the Texan.

"Hands off!" burst from Dick, as he attempted to draw the revolver he carried.

"Now, don't be a fool, youngster!" hoarsely said one of the men, while another caught his wrist. "If you try that kind of a game we'll have to thump you on the head."

"Who are you?" demanded the boy. "What right have you to molest us?"

"What right? Ho! ho! Well, Cap'n Jubal takes the right."

"Cap'n Jubal?" gasped the boy, in startled amazement.

"That's me," said one of the men.
“Great thunder!” palpitated Buckhart. “Why, we thought you——”

“Had gone, eh?” said the man who announced himself as Captain Jubal. “Well, you see your mistake. I am here——very much here.”

Dick was staring at the face of the man, dimly shown by the starlight. He saw the huge black mustache and the scar that ran down one cheek, and then he muttered:

“It is Cap’n Jubal!”

A short distance away a boat lay on the wet, sandy shore, that the falling tide had uncovered. Instinctively, Dick turned his eyes toward the starlit bosom of the sea.

The leader of the treasure hunters seemed to divine the reason for this, and he said:

“You can’t see my vessel, because she is beyond the point yonder.”

“What are you still here?”

“Do you think I’m foolish enough to go away without the treasure? Hardly, boy! It belongs to me, and I will have it. They tell me Cale Burk is dead.”

“That’s true.”

“Well, I’m sorry! I enjoyed meeting him socially once or twice. One of you youngsters kept me from finishing him last night, and then——”

“And then you took to your heels,” said Dick, in derision. “We drove you out of the cave, and you didn’t come back.”

“Boy, you did cause me to get out, and I didn’t come back because these doggone cowards wouldn’t come with me. I thought you’d have to come out before the tide closed the opening, and we waited for you.”

“That was where you fooled yourself,” said Dick, with a laugh.

“Just so,” nodded Jubal, easily. “I put a guard on the cave, and when the tide fell again we went in there, but the treasure was gone, and we found the hole by which you had taken it out of the place. Now, boy, that treasure belongs to me, and I’m going to have it. You must give it up, if you value your life.”

Dick laughed once more in the face of the man.

“You have come to the wrong chap,” he said. “I know no more about that treasure, captain, than you do.”

“Don’t lie to me!” cried the man, in a terrible voice. “It will do you no good.”

“I am not lying.”

“You must be. You helped Cale Burk get the treasure out of the cave.”

“We did nothing of the sort.”

“Then what became of it?”

“We do not know. It was gone when Burk uncovered the hole in which he had left it.”

“A fine lie!” sneered the man with the scarred face. “You can tell me that now,” said Dick, hotly, “because your men are holding my hands. If I were free——”

“What?”

“I beg you to set me free in order that I may show you,” urged Dick.

“Why, you’re a mere boy! I have killed men twice your size.”

“Were they sleeping?”

“You insolent brat! No man dares talk to Cap’n Jubal like that! I’ve a mind to slit your windpipe open!”

With a sudden move he flashed out a long knife, and held its keen edge close to the boy’s throat.

“Go ahead,” said the lad, calmly. “Then you can boast that once you killed a boy—while his hands were held!”

It was a nervy defiance, and Brad trembled for Dick’s safety; but the nerve of it was what pleased Jubal, who cried:

“Blow me stiff, but you’ve got grit, youngster!”

The confession of this man that he had not secured the treasure and was still searching for it, caused both lads to feel not a little mystified, for, up to then, they had thought it possible that the coveted gold had been taken away by Jubal.

“I don’t know why you fought for Cale Burk,” said the chief of the treasure-seekers, “but I suppose it was because he promised you a share of the treasure.”

“Then you suppose wrong. He did not buy us that way.”

“But you got it, just the same.”

“Not a dollar of it.”

“See here, boy,” said the man, impatiently, “you may as well know now the folly of this lie. I have hunted Cale Burk for years, swearing to find him and wrest the treasure from him. Do you think I am a man to give up now? Do you think I’ll permit any one else to deprive me of that treasure? It’s
mine—rightfully mine! I'll have it if it is necessary to wade through blood to get it!"

"All right," said Dick; "go ahead and take it. But you are barking up the wrong tree when you try to get it from me. I know no more about it than you do."

"You know it was removed from that cave?"

"No; I know nothing of it. I tell you the truth and nothing but the truth, when I say Cale Burk failed to find it where he said he had hidden it in the cave."

"I'll swear to that," put in Brad, but he was sternly ordered to be silent.

Captain Jubal did not believe Dick.

"You saved my life yesterday, boy," he said. "I haven't forgotten that."

"I wish I might," said Dick. "It is plain that I made a great mistake."

"I hate to hurt you," the man went on, ignoring the words of the lad; "but I'll force you to tell where the treasure is if I have to wring it from your lips with the tortures of the pit! Cap'n Jubal keeps his word."

"You can't wring from me what I do not know, even if you do torture me."

"I shall take you on board my vessel," said Jubal. "There I'll be able to make you tell. Come, men."

He turned toward the boat.

At this moment the sound of voices came from above, and then, a little later, several dark figures appeared on the edge of the cliff.

"The cave must be somewhere in this vicinity," said one of the party on the cliff.

A cry broke from the lips of Dick Merriwell, for he had recognized his brother Frank!

"Help, Frank!" he shouted.

"Shut up!" hissed one of the men, as Dick and Brad were hustled toward the boat.

With a sudden movement, Dick broke free. An instant later he struck one of the men, sending him staggering. The other turned on him, but the boy kicked him in the pit of the stomach, doubling him up.

Then the starry heavens seemed to fall on Dick's head with an awful crash, and he plunged forward, struck senseless.

CHAPTER IX.

LIB DIXON'S CONFESSION.

When consciousness returned to Dick Merriwell he was a captive in the cabin of the Sea Wolf, Captain Jubal's vessel.

Of course he did not know where he was at once, and the pain in his head prevented him from caring for a time. But he saw others in the cabin and heard a would-be cheerful voice exclaim:

"Hooray, pard! Glad to see you open your lookers—I am, I swear! You kept them closed so long I was beginning to get worried about you."

It was Buckhart.

Dick looked round. A few feet away Brad was sitting on the floor, with his back against a locker, his hands behind him.

Then, when young Merriwell tried to stir, he found to his surprise that his hands were tied, and he could not even sit up. A rope passed round his body, and it was tied fast to a ring in the floor.

Opposite Buckhart sat another person, in a similar position.

It was Lib Dixon! The Texan saw the expression of wonder on the face of his friend, and hastened to say:

"I reckon we're mighty lucky to be living, pard. But we're trussed up tight and can't wiggle."

Dick's wits had not fully returned to him, and so he asked:

"Where are we?"

"On Cap'n Jubal's vessel, old man."

At this moment the motion of the vessel indicated that it was under sail.

"I—I did my best," said young Merriwell. "But something happened—I don't know what."

"You soaked one of the galoots a dandy," nodded Brad. "And the way you kicked another one in the bread-basket gave me great satisfaction. Then I saw another one bump you on your coco with some kind of a jigger. I tried to get into the game, but it was no go. They had us dead to rights. You were dumped into the boat. I reckoned I'd just as lief he with you, and a little rather, and so I let them put me in without much more trouble. The old boat was pushed off just in time, for Frank came tearing down to the beach; but old Jubal was off so far that there was no way to stop him, and here we are."

TIP TOP WEEKLY.
"What is he doing here?" asked Merry, looking toward Dixon.

"Oh, he got into the soup by lingering around the cave after he did that smart trick in rolling that boulder over the hole. I opine he's the varmint I heard them talking about as they were pulling off to the vessel. Said they'd just drop him over, and let him swim after getting out to sea."

Dixon squirmed uneasily, his face betraying that he was greatly disturbed.

In truth Brad had not heard the sailors say anything of the sort, but he wished to make the young fisherman as uncomfortable as possible, having quickly discovered that Dixon was in great distress of mind over his predicament.

Dick eyed the captured fisherman closely, beginning to wonder at his actions from the first. Why had the man shown such animosity toward them, endeavoring to make it seem that they knew something of the whereabouts of the lost treasure? Had he truly believed that they knew what had become of the gold?

A strange suspicion began to dawn in Dick's brain, and he was startled by it. Swiftly the suspicion developed, until it was almost a conviction.

"Your game didn't work, did it?" he said, looking straight at the fellow.

"What game?" muttered Dixon, thickly, his eyes shifting before the piercing gaze of the boy.

"The game to throw suspicion on us—to make people believe we were the ones who had carried off the treasure."

Dixon started to speak, but Dick went on swiftly:

"Then you thought it would be a fine thing to get us out of the way. At the same time you could secure revenge for the blow I struck you when you accused us of robbing Cale Burk. But you are in a worse fix than we are, for Cap'n Jubal is a man who'll not hesitate a second in cutting your throat or in making you walk the plank. When I tell him that it was you who found the treasure in the cave, and removed it to another hiding-place, he'll apply to you the most fiendish tortures until you reveal where you have hidden the gold. Then, having secured what he wants from you, he'll dump you overboard just the same. You are doomed!"

The fellow had grown pale through his coat of bronze, and Dick was satisfied now that he had struck the truth.

Buckhart was amazed, for he had not thought of connecting Dixon with the disappearance of the treasure, and the words of young Merriwell came as the greatest sort of surprise to him.

But the Texan was shrewd enough to see that Dick had hit the nail on the head, and he felt like uttering a whoop.

"Great blizzards!" he mentally cried. "What do you think of that for a long head? I'd never tumbled to that in the world, but Dick just seemed to look right through the fellow, and read him like an open book. Oh, say! no wonder Dick's a corker! It's just things like this that makes him get ahead of other chaps."

For a moment after Dick ceased speaking, Dixon seemed too agitated to say anything, but, of a sudden, he wilted.

"For heaven's sake, don't tell him I know where ther treasure is!" he begged. "I thought he was goin' ter kill me just 'cause I was near the cave. He'll kill me sure if he finds out I took the treasure away!"

It was with difficulty that Buckhart refrained from uttering a yell of satisfaction.

"Dick, you're a trump!" he ejaculated, in keenest admiration.

There was a flash of satisfaction in the eyes of young Merriwell, but he held himself well in hand.

"Why shouldn't I tell?" he said, coolly. "You accused me of robbing Cale Burk, and all the while you were the robber. Why should I hold anything back? If I tell, Cap'n Jubal will reward me by letting me go free. I saved him from drowning not many hours ago, and he will be grateful to me if I aid him in recovering this treasure, which he claims as his own. On the other hand, you have no claim on the man, and it will infuriate him to know you touched the treasure. There is no reason why I should protect you."

Already thoroughly cowed, Dixon became abject.

"Please don't tell him!" he begged. "I'll do anything for ye if you won't tell!"

"What can you do?"

"I'll divide the treasure with ye."

Dick laughed.

"That's kind!" he said, sarcastically. "You'll divide what does not belong to you, for not a coin of that treasure is yours, and you know it."
“What do you wish me to do?” whined the fellow. “I’ll give ye two-thirds of it.”

“And it is rightfully mine—mine as much as it is anybody’s. I have proof that Cale Burk gave it to me. You propose to divide with me what really belongs to me!”

“Then you shall have it all—all!” panted the young fisherman. “I wish I’d never touched it!”

“It might have been better for you. Do you know what Cale Burk said happened to all who touched that treasure? He said a curse fell on them. The curse is on you.”

Dixon writhed.

“I was a fool!” he confessed. “But my cousin told about ther money he received from ther hermit of Hidden Cove. That made me think the old man must have money somewhere. I spent a hull month watchin’ the wreck in the cove an’ doggin’ the hermit before he led me to the cave. One night I followed him there. I saw him go in when ther tide was low. Then I felt sure I had found ther place where his treasure was hid. Ther next day I went in there an’ searched. I didn’t find where it was concealed for a hull week, but I found it at last, an’ I took it away. I got it buried all safe, an’ you shall have every bit of it if you don’t tell that man—and we ever git free.”

The mystery of the disappearance of the treasure was explained.

“You see what your meddling has brought us all to,” said Dick.

“It’s a blamed tight old/scrape,” said Buckhart. “But we can get out of it by telling Cap’n Jubal the truth, Dick.”

The young fisherman continued to plead, making all sorts of promises; but Dick told him he could not be trusted, and the fellow was in a cold perspiration when the door opened to admit Captain Jubal himself.

CHAPTER X.
THE SLIP OF A KNIFE.

The light from the cabin lamp fell on the face of Captain Jubal, giving it a fierce look. The livid scar stood out in a ridge on his cheek, and his eyeless socket was repulsively red.

“So you’ve come round, have you?” he exclaimed, as he saw Dick looking up at him. “I’m glad of that, for I have no time to waste on you.”

He closed the door behind him, and again turned to the lad.

“The end of my patience has come,” he said. “I have been balked and baffled long enough. Do you know where you are?”

“On your vessel, called the Sea Wolf,” answered the boy, in a cool manner.

“That’s right,” nodded the scarred captain. “The anchor is up, and we’re puttin’ out to sea.”

“It’s very kind of you, captain, to take us for a sea voyage,” said young Merriwell. “Of course the way you did it was rather unusual and unconventional, but conventionality is tiresome, you know.”

The man frowned and looked at the boy in perplexed surprise.

“What are you talking about?” he growled.

“The pleasant surprise to which you are treating us—this delightful sea voyage.”

“That’s not all I’ll treat you to, unless you come to time in a hurry, and tell me where you have taken the treasure Cale Burk stole from me. I’ll treat you to some medicine like the cat-o’nine-tails, which will cause your blood to move lively in your body.”

“I think, sir,” said Dick, “that the sea voyage is quite all the medicine I require. Of course I know you are deeply grateful to me for risking my life to save you from drowning, but I am unwilling to let you put yourself to so much trouble to repay me for that little act.”

Brad Buckhart came near snickering. Never before had he seen Dick in such a mood, and the nonchalance impertinence of the boy was a revelation to the Westerner. This was a side of the lad’s character that had not been betrayed to Brad before, but it caused the Unbranded Maverick to glow with admiration for Dick.

Lib Dixon, on the other hand, was shaking with fear, expecting Dick to expose him immediately.

“You’re a cool duck,” said Jubal, sitting on the locker, where he could look Dick fairly in the face. “But you can’t bluff me. I own that I don’t want to hurt you, though I usually don’t care a hang who or what I hurt. But you did pull me out of the water, and I’ll let you go if you own up at once where you have taken the treasure.”

Dick glanced round, seeing that Dixon was watching him in fear and trembling.

“Cap’n Jubal,” he said, “you’re talking straight to me, so I’ll do the same with you. I don’t know just
where that treasure is. If I did, I wouldn't tell you. Now, we're right down to plain business."

Jubal grinned in a ghastly way.

"You don't know just where it is?"

"No."

"That's the same as saying you know pretty near where it is."

"Is it?"

"Of course it is. Now, all I want you to tell is what you know, but you've got to tell that, or, by Neptune! I'll order you taken out, tied to the mast and lashed till your hide is cut open!"

"You are very violent, aren't you, cap'n? You would have made a medium sort of pirate in the good old pirate days."

The ghastly grin left the face of the man to give place to a black frown.

"You seem to have an idea that I am fooling with you, boy," he said. "If that is the case, I'll soon drive the idea out of your head."

"Don't he hasty, cap'n," urged Dick, as the man rose. "Moderate your movements. If you are hasty, you may do something you will afterwards regret."

A violent exclamation burst from the man's lips.

"We'll see if you can't be brought to sing a different tune in a few minutes," he said, striding to the door and flinging it open. "Higgins," he called up the companionway—"Higgins, come here, sir."

"Ay, ay, sir," was the answer from above, and down the companionway came a man, who stepped into the cabin. He was at least six feet tall, broad-shouldered, thick-necked, and brutal in appearance.

Captain Jubal pointed at Dick.

"That's the boy," he said. "Take him out on deck, strip him to the waist, bind him to the main-mast, and make ready to give him the cat."

"Very well, sir," said Higgins, with a grin of satisfaction. "What'll we do with the others, sir?"

"They are of no consequence," was the answer. "We may drop them over the rail when we get well out to sea."

Then the captain of the Sea Wolf turned, and left the cabin.

"I'm sorry for you, Higgins," said Dick. "Hey?" said Higgins. "Sorry fer me?"

"I am, indeed," sighed young Merriwell.

"Why, what ails yer? What ye sorry fer me fer?"

"I know it grieves your gentle soul to carry out such a brutal order. I know you will writhe in agony as you apply the lash to my bare and bleeding back. I know that every blow will be felt by you as keenly as by me."

"The devil you do!" exploded Higgins. "Wal, you know a hanged sight more than I do."

"Perhaps that is true," admitted Dick. "It's nothing surprising. How your heart will quiver in sympathy for me! How you will flinch when you have to wield the cruel lash! Too bad, Higgins! I'd spare you this pain if I could."

"Oh, would ye? Well, it's plain you think this is a joke. You'll soon git over that. There ain't no joke about it, an' I'll bet you'll be hollerin' an' beggin' fer me ter quit before I've hit ye the second welt."

"I am opposed to gambling, Higgins," said Dick; "but I'll bet you whatever small change I happen to have about me that you're wrong. More than that, I'll bet that I don't beg you to quit at all. Do you wish to make a small wager?"

The brawny sailor stared at the lad.

"Say, you're a good un!" he exclaimed. "But it's plain you don't know just what's comin' ter you."

Then he knelt down and started to unknot the knot that held the boy fast to the ring in the floor.

"It's a howling shame, pard!" exclaimed Buckhart, who was in great distress over the prospect of what was to befall his friend. "Old Cap'n Jubal ought to be hanged to his own yard arm!"

"I'll tell him you said so," grinned Jubal, "and I think he'll permit me to give you some of the same medicine I'm goin' ter give this chap."

"I'd like to have you out in the Rio Pecos country a short time!" exclaimed Brad. "I'd give you something!"

Higgins was fussing at the knotted rope. Finally he uttered an exclamation of anger.

"What thundering land-lubber tied them knots!" he exclaimed. "He oughter have the cat-o'-nine himself!"

From his belt he took a knife, with which he slashed at the ropes. The keen blade severed them, but slipped and also cut the rope that had held the boy's hands.

Quick as a flash, Dick Merriwell rolled over and over, giving a strain at those ropes. In a moment he jerked one hand out, and he was on his feet when the astonished sailor straightened up to face him, knife in hand.
“Here, here, you slippery young rat!” roared the
man, who was not at all alarmed, although astonished
by Dick’s quickness and readiness to act. “Don’t
try any foolish business! You can’t git er way.
We’re out at sea.”

But even as Dick rolled over and over he had felt
something in his pocket. This something was the
revolver with which he had armed himself before
leaving Fardale.

It may seem strange that he had not been relieved
of the revolver, but the explanation lies in the man-
ner of his capture, and the fact that he was brought
off in an insensible condition and bound securely be-
fore recovering consciousness. When set upon by
Jubal and his men neither Dick nor Brad had found
an opportunity to try to draw a weapon, therefore
the attention of the ga’ogy had not been called to the
fact that both were armed. Even if they were armed,
when they were bound in such a helpless manner,
there seemed no chance that the weapons would do
them any good, and there was plenty of time to
search their clothes later on. That search had not
yet taken place.

To Dick’s right wrist clung a dangling piece of the
rope, but with that hand he reached for his revolver.

Higgins started for him with the knife.

Out came the revolver, which was leveled straight
at the head of the big sailor, while young Merriwell
grimly exclaimed:

“Stand where you are, or, by Heaven, I’ll drill
you!”

CHAPTER XI.

FACING RUFFIANS.

There was no bandying of words now. There was
no persiflage in the boy’s manner. There was noth-
ing but grim, deadly determination. The time for
bantering had passed, and the time for action had
come.

“Oh, great horn spoon!” gasped Brad Buckhart,
tugging at the rope that held him fast. “Oh, suffer-
ing badgers! Why aren’t my paws free? Oh, Mar-
iah! how I would enjoy mingling in this!”

Higgins uttered an oath.

“Put down that pistol, kid,” he grunted. “What do
you think ye can do with it?”

“I can blow the top of your head off,” returned
Dick, “and I swear to you on my word of honor that
I’ll do so instantly if you do not drop that knife!”

Never in all his life had young Merriwell been more
in deadly earnest. His black eyes were gleaming, and
the look on his boyish face was enough to make that
huge sailor pause.

Only an instant.

Then Higgins started to leap forward.

Brad Buckhart was able to lift a foot and trip the
man, who went down with a crash.

Buckhart saved his life, for, believing himself
driven to it, Dick had kept his promise to fire, and the
revolver spoke.

But the boy knew he had missed, and he looked for
Higgins to rise.

Instead of that, the man rolled over with a groan,
and the staring trio saw that, in some manner, he had
fallen upon his own knife, which had been buried in
his side.

“He’s done for!” exclaimed Buckhart, huskily.

Dick knew that when he saw the man pull the knife
forth and drop it from his nerveless fingers.

But there was not a second to be lost, for the shot
would alarm the others on the vessel, and they would
come flocking to the cabin. Although not relishing
touching the knife, Dick did not hesitate to catch it
up and use it to set Buckhart free.

There was a rush of feet on the deck, hoarse voices
calling, heavy steps on the companionway, and then
the door opened to let Captain Jubal in, with others
behind him, their fierce faces being seen over his
shoulder.

And Captain Jubal found himself face to face with
a black-eyed boy who had a revolver leveled straight
at his heart.

“Stop right there!” cried Dick clearly,

In his other hand was a bloody knife, while Higgins
lay dying on the cabin floor.

No wonder Jubal and his men were dazed by the
sight.

How had this boy, who was securely bound a few
minutes before, succeeded in getting free and killing
Higgins, the biggest and strongest man of the crew?

The question flashed through the mind of Jubal.

Seeming to read the thoughts of the captain, Dick
said:

“You see what has happened to him,” with a
motion toward Higgins. “He was warned. Steady,
cap’n! I’ve got the drop on you, and, by the Lord
Harry! I’ll send you to join your toil Higgins if you
make a move to draw a weapon!”
There was something thrilling and magnificent in the manner of this dauntless lad. At the same time, that wild crew were awed by what they beheld.

Up at Dick's side rose Brad Buckhart.

"Whoop!" he roared, also producing a revolver. "I opine I'll take a hand in this game! I've got a gun, and I can shoot it some, you bet your boots! Shall we open fire on the varmints, pard? Just say the word and see me strew 'em around on the stairs."

The ruffians behind Jubal began to retreat, actually awed by the defiant boys.

But Jubal's voice sounded harshly:

"Hold, men! Stay where you are! We've got these boys in a trap, for all of their pistols. They can't escape from the vessel."

"If that's right, we can provide a whole lot of funerals," said the Texan.

"You fools!" sneered Jubal. "You have simply made it worse for yourselves! I might have let you go after you revealed where the treasure is hidden, but now you must die! Your lives must pay for the life of Higgins!"

"Ay!" roared the men behind him.

"If so," said Dick, coolly and steadily, "your life, Cap'n Jubal, will end before we go under!"

"You bet!" nodded Buckhart.

"My gun points straight at your heart," answered Dick.

"And mine straight at your brainpan," put in Brad.

"If I crook my finger," Dick added, "you go down with a bullet clean through you. Don't think I'd miss you at this distance. I learned to shoot in the West, and Old Joe Crowoot, an Indian with the eye of a hawk and a hand of iron, was my instructor. I wouldn't miss you, Jubal. I'd kill you dead with the first bullet."

Dick felt that it was necessary to impress these men, were such a thing possible, and this was his manner of doing so.

"That's on the level," said Buckhart, "and I reckon I can get two or three of you right after Dick, so we'll pretty near wipe you out, if you provoke us to try the trick."

"What do you think you can do if we back out and leave you here?" asked Jubal, sneeringly. "You'll still be trapped."

"The others may back out," said Dick; "but you will remain. We want you with us, cap'n."

"Correct," agreed Brad. "We yearn for your fascinating society. Hey, pard? That's right, isn't it?"

"Well, what can you do then?" asked the man. "You're still on board my vessel."

"We'll think about that later. We will talk it over with you, and I believe we can induce you to instruct your men to take us into the port of Fardale and land us there. Now, cap'n, kindly order your men to retire, while you remain."

Jubal hesitated, enraged at the thought of being compelled by these boys to do anything of the sort. He longed to duck and leap at Dick, thinking it possible to take the lad off his guard.

"You can't do it," assured young Merriwell, as if reading the thoughts in the man's mind. "If you try to, I'll shoot the moment you make the first move."

The master of the Sea Wolf muttered something under his breath. He knew that submission to the lads would weaken him in the estimation of his men, yet he felt certain there was not one chance in twenty of escaping death if he made an attack. He was on the verge of obeying Dick, when one of the men behind him, who had drawn a pistol without being observed, fired over the captain's shoulder.

If the bullet was intended for Dick, certain it is that the aim of the man was bad, for it flew high and cut down the lantern that had illuminated the cabin. The lantern crashed to the floor, and Captain Jubal seized the occasion to make a spring for Merriwell.

In the darkness Dick had leaped aside, believing he might save himself in that way.

Into the cabin poured the men, and a fearful struggle in the darkness began, the ruffians being unable to distinguish friends from foes.

But it did not last long, for, of a sudden, came a great shock that threw them in a writhing, cursing heap, while through the vessel ran a crunching, grinding, creaking groan.

All knew what it meant.

The Sea Wolf had struck one of the many dangerous hidden ledges that lay along that coast!

CHAPTER XII.
THE LAST OF THE SEA WOLF.

The shock told plainly that the vessel had struck heavily enough to break a hole in her, and they knew what that meant. Indeed, she had plunged full and
fair upon the treacherous ledge, which stopped her progress at once, and there she lay, with a great hole in her hull, through which the water poured in a torrent.

Out of the cabin rushed the sailors, abandoning all thought of overcoming the boys who had defied them. Uttering language I will not repeat, they yelled for the man who had been at the helm. This "man," however, was a mere boy who had been left in charge of the wheel by the regular helmsman when the crew was drawn to the cabin by the shot, and he crouched under the gunwale, shivering and in terror over what he had done.

Captain Jubal was among the sailors, and he gave orders to get the boats ready for lowering. The sailors sprang to this task at once.

When the ruffians rushed out of the cabin, Dick called:

"Brad, where are you?"
"Here," was the answer.
"Hurt?"
"I reckon not, though I did get mixed up some in that there skirmish. How are you?"
"All whole."
"I opine the old coop ran into something?"
"By the shock I should say she struck a rock."
"Well, I wonder how bad she's dented, pard."
"Bad enough," said the voice of Lib Dixon. "For the Lord's sake, set me free! I'm almost dead! Them fellers stepped on me, jumped on me, kicked me an' everything else. This boat'll go down inside of ten minutes, or I'm no judge. She struck hard enough ter take her whole bottom out."

"Well," said Dick, "I think perhaps she struck just in time to save us from being made into mincemeat!"

Buckhart struck a match, by the light of which Dick found the knife of Higgins, who lay dead on the floor. With the bloodstained blade the boy set Dixon free.

"The old coop's going down fast," said the Texan.
"I allow I can feel her settling."
"We must git out!" panted Dixon. "We'll be drowned!"

Up the companionway they hastened, and the spectacle that they beheld was fearsome. In the east the moon was rising, and by its light they saw the Sea Wolf was heeled far over to port. Some of the sailors had lowered one boat, and were rowing away. The other boat was being lowered.

Captain Jubal had not yet left the vessel. Now he turned toward the cabin and saw the three figures at the head of the companionway.

"Come on, boy with the black eyes!" he cried. "The vessel will go down in a minute. But I'll take you off in this boat with me."

"No you won't, cap'n," returned Dick. "I know what you want. You're willing to take me off, so that you can make good your threat to force me to tell where the treasure is. But I cannot make you believe the truth, which is that I have no knowledge of the whereabouts of the treasure, so I decline to go with you and be tortured. Go on. We stay here!"

Then Lib Dixon sprang past Dick and rushed toward the sailors, wildly crying:

"I know where the treasure is! Take me off! I'll tell you where to find it!"

The vessel gave a lurch and settled still further. Immediately, Captain Jubal started to swing into the boat.

"Let me git in! Let me git in!" screamed Dixon, rushing up.

With a savage exclamation, Jubal struck the fellow to the deck. Plainly, he did not believe the fisherman, but thought the fellow was lying in order to get them to take him off in the boat.

Jubal swung over into the boat, which started to pull away.

Getting up, Dixon shrieked for them to wait, again protesting that he knew where the treasure was. As they paid no heed to him, he flung himself headlong over the rail of the vessel into the sea.

One of the men in the boat lifted an oar and struck Dixon on the head with the blade.

Immediately the fisherman sank from view.

"There goes the treasure, pard!" exclaimed Buckhart, in great regret. "Somehow, I don't feel so blamed bad about Mr. Dixon as I do about the treasure. It's a bowling shame to lose that."

"It's possible we'll not get away from here ourselves," said Dick. "Therefore, the treasure may as well remain where it is."

"Dick," the Texan, soberly, "I reckon Cale Burk was right when he said there was a curse on that treasure and it fell on everybody who had anything to do with it."

The boys looked about for life-preservers, which they soon found and fastened about their bodies. By that time, however, Dick called Brad's atten-
tion to the fact that the vessel did not seem to be sinking any deeper in the water. Pitched over on her port side, she lay there with the waves beating upon her.

“What do you make of it?” asked Buckhart.

“She’s fast on the ledge,” said Dick, “and she may not go down for a long time. Perhaps she’ll stay here for hours, or till the tide takes her off.”

“That being the case, there is no need to rush.”

But now they discovered something that surprised them not a little. The last boat to leave the vessel had stopped at some distance to watch her, evidently expecting she would go down in a few minutes. Finding she did not do so, the boat turned about and was coming back.

“Here’s trouble, Dick!” exclaimed Buckhart.

“Keep low,” was Dick’s advice; “let’s see if they really mean to return aboard.”

It was not long before they discovered that such was the intention of Jubal and the men in the boat.

Then Dick hailed them.

“On board the boat!” he cried. “We’ll have to warn you that it is dangerous to come nearer. We’re armed, and we shall open fire on you.”

“Don’t be a fool, youngster!” shouted Captain Jubal. “You saved me from drowning, and I don’t want to leave you there to drown. We will take you off.”

“Thanks!” flung back young Merriwell. “I know just about how interested you are in me, and again I warn you to keep off. You dislike to give up that treasure, but you lost it when one of your men struck Lib Dixon with an oar. Dixon was the one who found the treasure in the cave and removed it. He followed Cale Burk there one night, and discovered it in that way. I have no more idea where that treasure is now, Cap’n Jubal, than you have yourself, and that is the truth.”

Following this there was a muttering among the men in the boat, which was kept head to the waves. Gradually the wind and tide took it further and further away. At least thirty minutes passed, and then the boys saw the sailors fall to rowing again. This time they were once more pulling away from the doomed Sea Wolf.

“They’re going, Dick,” said Buckhart.

“Let them go,” came from the lips of the other boy.

They watched the boat until it faded into the white mist of moonlight that lay on the face of the sea.

* * * * * *

Never again was Captain Jubal and his men seen in the vicinity of Fardale, and Dick often wondered what became of them after they rowed away into the misty moonlight that tragic night.

Dick and Brad got together enough floatable things to buoy them comfortably, and, on finding that the tide and waves were lifting the vessel so that she was in danger of sliding from the ledge at any moment, they set out from her side. They were not more than thirty rods away when the Sea Wolf, suddenly and without further warning, slid stern foremost into the sea and peacefully sunk from view.

In the morning the boys were picked up by a steam launch, which Frank had chartered as soon as possible to go in search of them. They had wrapped themselves with oilskin garments found on the vessel, and, although benumbed by the cold and scarcely able to speak, they rapidly recovered on being properly cared for.

- The story they had to tell added another thrilling chapter to that brought out at the inquest over the body of Cale Burk. Of course, the boys were believed, although their yarn was so remarkable that it seemed almost beyond the bounds of possibility.

“Say, pard!” exclaimed Buckhart, as he came into Dick’s room at the academy on the following day. “The next time I stay at Fardale to spend a quiet vacation I won’t stay at Fardale at all! You hear me chirp! I’ve been chawed up by grizzly bears, shot full of holes by Injuns and chopped into ribbons by Greasers, but blow me if I ever before was yanked baldheaded silly by pirates! That’s the limit! It is, I swear! Vacations around here are too much for my delicate constitution. When the next one comes I’m going out into the Rio Pecos country, where people are civilized!”

Dick laughed heartily.

“We have had a lively time,” he admitted; “but somehow I fancy I’ve enjoyed it.”

“Confound your skin! you’d enjoy dodging blue lightning in a thunder shower if it was trying to hit you every crack!” roared Brad.

THE END.

The next number (304) will contain “Dick Merriwell’s Peril; or, Left to Die in the Flames.”
critics, as well as boys, and no gentleman should call any lady a fool. Do you think they should? What those three boys (or gentle- men?) need is a roasting for insulting the ladies. They should read and be gladys w. Wollmuth's letter in Tip Top, and then go and lay down for a while. I will close, wishing good luck to all the flock, especially Dick, and also to yourself.

Karl G. Livingston.

Bellow's Falls, Vt.

Bart's friends will never allow this letter to pass unnoticed. I anxiously await results, and think I see the smoke of battle ahead. Well, fight fair and never give up. My best wishes for old Bart, whom I personally think is O. K. and a yard wide.

In No. 297 I see that a reader who is afraid to sign his name makes another cowardly attack upon Frank Merriswell's truest and best friend, Bart Hodge. This reader, who signs himself R. J. H., gives no reasons for his criticism, simply saying that he should be ostracised from Merry's flock; and he also says that he does not think that Merry's friends should defend him (Bart). This shows how capable our friend from North Carolina is to take a hand in an argument. If Bart's friends have no right to defend him, have his enemies the right to traduce him? If this fellow who signs himself R. J. H. has any reasons for wanting dear old Bart put out of the flock, why didn't he state them, and give Bart's many loyal friends a chance to de- fend him, and prove him to be Frank's true, loyal friend? As a proof of Bart's love and devotion to Frank, let him read No. 291 where he was in, among all of Frank's friends, who had the courage to dash into the burning hotel, to rescue Merry from an awful death? Who fought his way through flame and smoke to the spot where Frank lay unconscious? Who was it that in the midst of deadly peril on the third floor of a burning hotel, with the walls swaying and floors trembling, thought of preserving Frank's life and hands from the flames through which he would have to fight his way, with his unconscious friend? Who exclaimed in his heart: "Frank, my dearest friend, if I can't carry you out, we'll die together"? Who but noble Bart? Who but Bart is ever ready to risk his own life in de- fense of Frank? Bart Hodge is Frank Merriswell's truest and best friend, and no cowardly enemy can prove him anything else. Friends of Bart, rally to his support, and crush his few cowardly defamers! I remain, ever a firm friend of Bart Hodge.

D. B. Barn.

Bellevue, Ky.

Such loyalty is surely commendable, and, as facts are facts, Bart's so-called enemies will necessarily see things in their proper light, and realize his good qualities and friendship for Frank.

I have never written to tell you how much I like the Tip Top. First comes Frank, and closely afterward come Dick, Bart and Dick's chum, the Texan. I think that Hal will become one of Dick's friends. I think Dick ran a great risk in stopping the runaway automobile. Three cheers for Frank and Dick Merri- well! Hoping to see this in the Tip Top soon.

L. F. H., or N.


Good! Glad you like DICK MERRISWELL so much. He's a fine fellow. Just the sort you'd expect Frank's brother to be.

I have read a great many of the Tip Tops, and I delight in the Applause Column. I am very indignant over Mr. G. W. McNeil's letter, but I concluded he must be hysteric or a fool—most likely the latter.

The gentlemanly C. C. B., of Syracuse, has made me hopping mad, as they say. He must be crazy, in his unprovoked attack on Bart Hodge. Dear Bart! What has he done, to deserve all this criticism, all this scorn? Is it because he has declared his love for Elsie? Where are his friends? Frank, his best friend, who should never have said to his worst enemy? Now, I think that the three boys from Nevada, Mo., who said: "that every one who said that Bart should be out of the flock were fools" are wrong. Neither are they gentlemen, for they must remember that there are girl
to be like his wonderful brother, Frank. I hope Hal Darrell and Dick are friends.

I think that Constant Reader, Hal Filbert and many others are a little hot-headed. I agree with John Leute, Jr., in his defense of dear old Bart. Wishing a long life to Street & Smith, Burt L. Standish, Frank and Dick Merriswell, and all of Bart’s friends.

W. G. W.
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Good words and true. You see the truth and know how to tell it. DICK MERRISWELL is the genuine article, and a thorough-going, manly boy.

I have written you once before, but if you will give this one a place in your paper I would be glad for you to do so. I have just finished reading book No. 265. I was glad when I read in book 294 that Jabez Lynch was expelled, for I was afraid that he would do Dick some bodily harm. Now, if he would make Hal Darrell his friend, I think that would be all of his enemies.

I am glad that Frank and Inza and Bart and Elsie are engaged, and hope Dick and Doris will be good friends. I think that it is a foolish notion in the parents to plan to have Doris and Hal marry when they come of age, without their having a say so at all. Hal and Zona ought to become friends, and let Dick have Doris. Well, I will close for this time with three dots for Burt L. and Street & Smith.

EDWARD SPILLAN.
Roanoke, Va.

Without exception, you’ve got some of the most sensible ideas about the way things ought to go—never read better ones! You appear to be willing to play DICK MERRISWELL. Well, just keep right on in that course, and you’ll make no mistake.

For many years it has been my privilege to have been a constant reader of your worthy magazine; therefore, I thought that it was high time that some one from this city, the second in importance in Florida, should be writing to you and telling you of the great favor in which your paper is held in Pensacola and West Florida. When I say that I believe yours to be the best publication of its kind printed anywhere in the United States or in the world, I say so with the fullness of my heart. I say it because I believe that it is so, and also because that I think it is my duty to say so. In the late numbers of the Weekly you gave the results of various football games played by Tip Top readers all over the country, and I was very much interested in the results. Hoping that the life of Tip Top will be a long and eventful one, I remain, an ardent admirer of Tip Top.

A. T. PORTER WHALEY.
Pensacola, Fla.

Come right along, Florida. Send us your kind words of praise. They will be more appreciated than if you sent up several orange groves. So come right along! By the way, what do you think of DICK MERRISWELL?

I have been reading Tip Top a long time, and think it is all right. I have also been reading the letters the readers send to you. I have not taken part in the scrap, but, seeing Frank J. Mercer getting down on Bart Hodge makes me mad. I wish Mr. Mercer would come here. We would put him on the bun. He would have a sweated head, and think he had better “go way back and sit down.” If he did not, we would try to make him. If we could not, I think Mr. A. M. Hamilton will help us. We fellows would give him a hot time here.

A. S. A.
Lewiston, Me.

I would not advise Mr. Mercer to visit Maine until your wrath had cooled down, as I fear no more letters from him would figure in our columns, if he should.

Not seeing many letters in your Appliance Columns of late from us, we, the undersigned, request our president to let you hear from us.

We have formed a Tip Top Frank Merriswell Club, and have several times written to you.

We all have read the Tip Top, from its beginning to date, and have not one point in the Merry Flock to criticize. Dick is all right, but he is getting to be more popular than Frank was when he was at Fardale. Don’t let Dick get to be greater than our dear old Frank. Let us hear more of Frank and his Flock. Where are Barney, Hans, Gallup, Bink and Danny? Let us hear of our old friends. We admire Dick and his chums, but we think we must learn to keep our old friends in a position. We cannot forget what Frank is to us, and our old friends. Let us not forget them. Dick is a splendid fellow, taking him in his true light. Doris is a fine girl, and I hate to see Hal lose her, but if she thinks more of Dick, he is the one to have her. The Elsie and Inza question was solved all right; that is, it satisfied the majority of our members. We took a vote on the Elsie-Inza question, to see who was the best girl for Frank, and we found that Mr. Standish knows what is best for his readers. The vote was as follows: Elsie 8; Inza 11. We have twenty-five members, and six voted for neither Elsie or Inza. Wishing Street & Smith, Burt L. Standish, Dick and Frank all kinds of good luck, we are, yours.

TIP TOP FRANK MERRISWELL CLUB.

H. JACKSON, President.
A. BAKER, Vice-President.
C. BAKER, Secretary and Treasurer.
R. JERKSON, Library Superintendent.
H. STRALE, Athletic Instructor.

Three cheers for your club; and may its prosperity be unparalleled. Many thanks for your kind wishes.

In reading over the Applause Column I see that another gentleman has shown his true colors. It seems natural that he and that other idiot are in the same town, for birds of a feather, etc. Talk about your manhood and honor! Any one who attacks such a character as Bart Hodge has not got as much of it as any rag doll baby. It is that kind that are a disgrace to the Stars and Stripes, and are daily ending their days in asylums and penitentiaries. I’ll guarantee they are all cigarette snuffs or are addicted to some other bad habit, which has robbed them of the little brains they had—if it is possible for such things to have brains. No doubt, Bart Hodge was once a little wild. However, let bygones be forgotten. And, before any one else make themselves ridiculous, let them think of the Bart Hodge of to-day. If those who have spoken ill of Bart have one grain of self-respect left, they will apologize to the one who is their superior in every respect.

“May his joys be as deep as the ocean.
And his sorrows as light as its foam.”

Is the sincere wish of a friend.
PAUL O’CONNOR.
Harrisburg, Pa.

- You’re just right. Bart Hodge is all right.

I am again going to write and tell you what I think of the Tip Top Weekly. It is the best book of its kind that ever was published, and I do not miss a single number. I was glad to see that Dick went to Fardale, and do not think he is too young to make a fine fellow; but I hope Mr. Standish will not drop Frank altogether. I obtained all the back numbers from a friend that I got acquainted with through the Tip Top, and am very much interested in reading them. I join in with the rest of my fellow readers in giving this “Constant Reader,” as he calls himself, a good calling down. He must be crazy to say that dear old Bart should be dropped. Bart has his faults, the same as everybody else, but he has been a very true friend to Frank. I think this “Constant Reader” had better go away back and sit down. I hope to soon again hear from Frank’s old friends. I am especially interested in Rattleton, Browning, Hodge, Badger and Inza. The Physical Culture Department; it is the best thing going, and has done goods of old.

The tip-top success to Burt L. Standish and Street & Smith. I remain,

LEE W. HARRIS.
Tacoma, Wash.

Thank you for your very pleasant letter. Glad you think so highly of the Physical Culture Department. Every boy would do well to follow Prof. Fourmien’s advice.
Equipments for Hockey.

For many reasons the quality and species of the skate is a most important consideration to the hockey player. The hockey skate should be just high enough to prevent the plate or sole of the boot from touching the ice when turning or cutting corners, because a low skate is not so straining on the ankle and quick one. The blade should be long enough and sufficiently flat on the ice to admit of great speed, but should not project at the toe or heel so much as to trip the skater on any occasion, and should be curved slightly in front and behind in order to allow of quick turning. Although it should be so pointed as to enable a player to begin a rush by running on the toes, these should not have a distinct, projecting point, but should be so shaped that they will admit of this start, because a sharp projection is often the cause of a nasty fall and also of a dangerous cut to the wearer of the skates or to one of his opponents.

A good hockey skate should be a combination of great strength and lightness of weight. It should be strong because the thousand twistings and turnings of a player strain every inch of the blade, each plate and every rivet; it should be light because the lightness of the skate adds to the swiftness of the skater, and because a heavy skate is tiring. To again refer to the length of the skate, the blade should project about an inch in front of the toe of the boot and an inch or a little more behind the heel, and the width of the bottom of the blade should retain the same thickness from toe to heel, or rather on that part of blade that touches the ice when a skater maintains a standing position. The two ends back and front should taper slightly in width, becoming thinner toward the points.

A player's clothes should be light enough to be of no perceptible weight, and warm enough to insulate him against catching cold. A moderately heavy sweater, pants padded at the hips and knees and heavy stockings with a suit of light underwear are the necessary articles of clothing for a hockey player. Hats are not needed if the hair is allowed to grow moderately long; in fact, they are an unnecessary extra.

Gloves, thin enough to permit the player to retain a firm, sure grasp of his stick, are used to prevent the hands from being cut on the rough ice after a fall. It is advisable to wear shin guards and any other appliances that afford protection. Unless a player's ankles are weak, or his boots too large, straps should not be used, because they are of no other value than to strengthen the ankles, which, with practice and well-fitting boots, do not, or should not, need support.

The hockey stick is the requisite next in importance, but as it will be treated in another chapter no further mention of it will be made here.

Points of a Good Player.

Coolness, in hockey parlance, is the power and practice of taking time to think out a move. A player must be cool-headed to a degree that verges on slowness, because, so fast a game is hockey, that an expert player, an experienced team, should take advantage of every opportunity that the changing plays present, and this to do, even in the quickest rushes, the swiftest combinations, the fiercest "mix-ups," it is necessary that one should remain as cool as the proverbial cucumber.

As a hockey axiom, it might be said that "it is better to think more and rush less, than to rush more and think less." The cool, collected, calculating player is worth more to a team than the two or three of the class whose main object seems to be the possession of the puck for a "big" rush down the ice. If any man among your opponents is to be feared, let it be the one who thinks out each move, who makes no useless plays, who wins for the goals only when there is an opening, because "such men are dangerous." Many a game is lost, many a chance is missed by the man who will not, cannot take time enough to think out a play.

Another requisite is confidence, both in your assistants and in yourself. Just as that regiment whose soldiers rely upon one another is a better one than another in which the members have no confidence in their comrades, so, in a hockey team it is absolutely necessary that each player should be able to depend upon his confreres.

A team should feel that it can defeat any seven that opposes it, and each individual man of a team ought to believe that, if necessary, he can pass any one of his adversaries. A team that goes on the ice thinking that defeat is probable is already beaten; a player who fears that he cannot elude certain of his opponents is a factor of success.

Basket Ball.

Basket ball is more popular this year than ever before, and the Winter Sports Contest is receiving entries thick and fast. Some very interesting games have been played this week. Keep your eye open and try to pick the league winner.

Ashland High School (Ashland, Pa.) vs. Ashland Reserves.

Ashland High School—Wallauer, forward; Granger, forward; Landefield, center; Dence, guard; Garner, guard.
Ashland Reserves—Benehnum, forward; Steward, forward; Betz, center; Reed, guard; Vanglin, guard.

Adelphi Academy Midgets (Brooklyn, N. Y.) vs. Clarendon Midgets.

Adelphi Academy Midgets—E. A. Leslie, forward; P. McCormick, forward; F. M. De Selding, center; C. W. Dingee, guard; E. A. Keiser, guard.
Clarendon Midgets—S. A. Forsay, forward; R. T. Jones, forward; E. S. Quin, center; A. C. Worthington, guard, B. F. Miles, guard.


Keystone—Carlins, forward; Atkinson, forward; Troy, (capt.), center; Portmann, guard; A. Schafer, guard.
Levant Juniors—Mullins, forward; Riley, forward; Rupp, center; Haag, guard; Cliff, guard.
Winner—Keystone A. C. Final Score—40-o. Manager—Carlins.
Orioles (Baltimore, Md.) vs. Boltons.

Orioles—H. Merriman, forward; W. Scott, forward; J. Farquer, center; P. Bascom, guard; R. Brown, guard.
Boltons—W. Andrews, forward; W. Bower, forward; T. Rand, center; R. Livingston, guard; M. Dunham, guard.


C. I. Juniors—J. Croghan, forward; J. Drury, forward; F. Howell, center; J. Quinnian, guard; A. Smith, guard.
C. I. Intermediates—J. Kramer, forward; E. Lear, forward; F. Moriarity, center; T. Bones, guard; A. Rickenbacker, guard.

Mohawk A. C. (Westminster, Md.) vs. Liberty A. C.

Mohawk A. C.—D. Shunk, forward; E. Butler, forward; W. C. Shunk, center; G. W. Wentz, guard; H. C. Graham, guard.
Liberty A. C.—R. Rodgers, forward; W. Smith, forward; J. B. Smelser, center; P. Beckwith, guard; J. Smith, guard.
Winner—Mohawk A. C. Final Score—46-0. Manager—G. W. Wentz, Westminster.

Riverview (Janesville, Wis.) vs. Beaver A. C.

Riverview—J. Roberts, forward; R. Tiff, forward; D. Wright, center; R. Clarke, guard; S. Brink, guard.
Beaver A. C.—W. Thomson, forward; A. Stevens, forward; J. Williams, center; J. Jones, guard; W. Holmes, guard.

Ice Hockey.

The ice hockey teams are also on the jump, making the game fairly ring with their fast work. Look out, look out! Here they come hard enough to shoot the puck ten miles into space. Here are the games of the week:


Annex Juniors—F. Gordon, goal; W. Cushing, point; J. McGinn, cover point; V. McGinn, forward; G. McDonald, forward; J. Kelley, (capt.), forward; Wallace, forward.
Annex Stars—W. Singleton, goal; W. Gordon, (mgr.), point; J. Jordan, cover point; F. Roper, forward; J. Charnly, forward; W. Clough, forward; F. Groves, (capt.), forward.

Marbleheads (Marblehead, Mass.) vs. Bluebirds.

Marbleheads—H. Lane, goal; H. Kann, point; S. Davis, cover point; H. Ballard, forward; F. Stearns, forward; C. Roundy, forward; J. Bridge, forward.
Bluebirds—H. Smith, goal; E. Englis, point; J. Bartlett, cover point; M. Dusey, forward; J. James, forward; E. Johnson, forward; A. Swift, forward.
Winner—Marbleheads. Final Score—7-0. Manager—S. Davis.

Montford A. C. (Baltimore, Md.) vs. Fayette A. C.

Montford A. C.—H. Hofmeister, goal; C. Hofmeister, point; May, cover point; D. Deaver, forward; H. Hofmeister, forward; L. Leonard, forward; C. Campbell, forward.
Fayette A. C.—D. Downey, goal; M. Meyers, point; M. Mills, cover point; G. Gregory, forward; J. Johnson, forward; H. Hill, forward; J. Hooper, forward.
Winner—Montford A. C. Final Score—12-0. Manager—H. Hofmeister.

Montford A. C. vs. Emerald A. C.

Montford A. C.—C. Hofmeister, goal; H. Hofmeister, point; May, cover point; D. Deaver, forward; L. Leonard, forward; H. Hofmeister, forward; C. Campbell, forward.
Emerald A. C.—W. Williams, goal; J. Green, point; S. Mills, cover point; F. Green, forward; S. Smith, forward; D. Burke, forward; M. Miller, forward.
Winner—Montford A. C. Final Score—2-0. Manager—H. Hofmeister.

Montford A. C. vs. Fayette A. C.

Montford A. C.—H. Hofmeister, goal; C. Hofmeister, point; May, cover point; D. Deaver, forward; H. Hofmeister, forward; L. Leonard, forward; C. Campbell, forward.
Fayette A. C.—H. Hill, goal; D. Downey, point; M. Meyers, cover point; J. Johnson, forward; G. Gregory, forward; J. Hooper, forward.
Winner—Montford A. C. Final Score—10-0. Manager—H. Hofmeister.

Ice Relay Contest.

Only one ice relay team has entered the contest. Come on, boys. Don't be slow, and here's just the chance you need to show how fast you can go. This is the work of one fast team.
Name of Team—Riverview A. C., Janesville, Wis.
Members of Team—R. Roberts, W. Tiff, and M. McGhee.
Time for Four Miles—15 minutes 30 seconds. Manager—J. Noonan.


Keystone—C. Larison, goal; A. Atkinson, point; T. Troy, (capt.), cover point; F. Fronman, forward; B. Bad, forward; S. Schuler, forward; W. Wallace, forward.
Rutledge High School—Shaw, goal; Darragh, point; Rylatt, cover point; D. Duncan, forward; E. Evans, forward; H. Haines, forward; C. Cadwallader, forward.

One Mile Ice Championship.

Come on! Come on! Now you're off! Right into the stretch you go, and how's this for fast time:
Name of Contestant—E. Fitzgerald, Boston, Mass.
Time for one mile straightaway—3:2 minutes.
Everybody put on skates and let go at full steam ahead. Come one, come all! The race is on!

Tip Top All-Star Scholastic Football Team.

The following recommendations for positions on the Tip Top All-Star Scholastic team were received during the week:

FOR JAMES ROBERTS.

I believe that James Roberts, who plays left half on the Riverview A. C. football team, of Janesville, Wis., is entitled to a place on the All-Star team for the following reasons:
He is a fine runner, a good line back, a fine punter and drop-kicker, and an excellent man on defense. Yours truly,
MANAGER H. H. BRINK.

FOR W. A. CUSHING.

I believe that W. A. Cushing, who plays left tackle on the Annex Junior Football Team of Providence, is entitled to a place on the All-Star Team for the following reasons:
He is the best halfback on the Annex Juniors' eleven. He has played for two years on our team. He helped us win the championship of Providence.
MANAGER FRED GORDON.

FOR WILLIAM NEIL.

I believe that William Neil, who plays right guard on the M. A. A. Football Team of Massachusettis, is entitled to a place on the All-Star Team for the following reasons:
Being a wonderfully swift runner, endurance, strength, and being an all-round athlete. Respectfully yours.
MANAGER JOHN FOLEY.
Professor Fourmen's advice, through this department, to young athletes has proven so beneficial that Street & Smith have engaged the good and learned professor to continue the department so long as there are young men and boys in this country who are anxious to develop themselves, or ambitious to become athletes. So our young athletes may continue to seek Professor Fourmen's advice, which we and they know to be of the best, through this department. "If there is anything you want to know about yourself write Professor Fourmen."

PROF. FOURMEN:

Being a devoted reader of your Tip Top Weekly, I write to ask you a few questions. I am 19 1/2 years old, 5 feet 4 inches in height, but my weight is only 105 pounds. 1. Will bicycle riding and bag punching decrease weight? 2. Are my measurements good? A Tip Top Admirer.

1. Not necessarily. 2. You should weigh at least 15 pounds more.

PROF. FOURMEN:

I have read the Tip Top Weekly off and on for the last four years, but since Frank had found his brother, Dick Merrivell, it is more interesting to me than ever. Dick is nearer my age, and I am proud of him. I like Frank and all his friends—Bart Hodge especially. I have never trained with dumbbells, etc so I give you my natural measurements. I wish to be in the next contest. How can I strengthen the muscles of the fingers, wrist and forearm? I want the Frank Merrivell grip.

W. G. W.

The spring grip dumbbells will help you wonderfully. If you cannot procure those, try the exercise of opening and closing the hands, at the same time bending the wrists.

PROF. FOURMEN:

Would you kindly tell me through the Tip Top what I must do to straighten round shoulders and also what is the best exercise for the arms, chest and back. I have been an ardent reader of Tip Top for over a year. I think you have done more for young America than any man has done or ever will do. I would like to know what you think of my measurements: Weight, 155 pounds; height, 5 feet 8 inches, and age, 15 years. With best wishes to Frank, Dick, Mr. Standish and yourself.

G. A. CONRAD.

1. You must try to stand erect. Keep this constantly in mind, as I knew of nothing better than that to straighten round shoulders. Try chest weights and use dumbbells. A punching bag, too, will help to develop you wonderfully. You should weigh 10 pounds more.

PROF. FOURMEN:

Please answer the following: 1. I take plenty of exercise, and have a good appetite, but gain in weight very slowly. 2. I do not think I train too much, either. My weight fluctuates greatly, some days showing gain and others show loss. I have been training about 7 months, with 1 1/2 pound dumbbells. What is the average number of times one should repeat the various movements? I repeat 45 times. Is that sufficient? 3. What is another way of developing neck, other than with neck weights?

Mr. Franck...

1. Fluctuating weight does not mean anything in respect to health and development. 2. Too much exercise is worse than none at all. A repetition of 10 to each movement is quite sufficient. 3. By clasping hands behind your head and pushing the head backward, at the same time holding back with the arms. An increase of one-half to an inch always results in a very short time.

PROF. FOURMEN:

1. I am a boy 15 years old. Am 5 feet 7 inches tall and weigh 155 pounds. How are these measurements for a boy my age? 2. I can chin myself 20 times, can run 100 yards in 11 seconds flat and a quarter mile in 53 3/5 seconds. Are these records all right? I do not wish to brag about my records. I would simply like to know what kind of a standard my athletic attempts have reached. 3. What weight dumbbells would you advise? Are a 2-4 pounds too heavy or too light? Is skating as good an exercise for the legs as riding a bicycle? I wish you would write an article on skating and put it in Tip Top, for I am crazy about it, and know only a few figures that look well on the ice.

MARTIN HILL.

1. Your measurements are good. 2. Your attainments are above the average. Don't try to overdo. 3. Light dumbbells (about 2 pounds) used carefully are universally advised. 4. Skating is one of the best of exercises. It doesn't over-tax the heart like spurtting on a bicycle.

PROF. FOURMEN:

I have read the Tip Top Weekly from No. 200 to the present number. My weight is 72 pounds, and I am 12 years old. Should I not weigh about 90 pounds? Is bicycle riding good for weak legs? Are boxing and punching the bag good exercises?

FRANK CLARK.

Yes, you should weigh nearly 100 pounds—at least 95. Bicycle riding, boxing and punching the bag are all fine exercises, the former being particularly beneficial to any one with weak limbs.
PROF. FOURMEN:

Will you please answer my questions through the Tip Top? Judging from my measurements given below, how much more could I weigh and still be well built? How can I develop my neck, arms and legs? Where are your articles on baseball, football, etc., published? I am 16 years old and weigh 124 pounds with my clothes on. These are my measurements: Height, 5 feet 3/4 inches; neck, 13 3/4 inches; chest, 33; expanded, 58; waist, 27; shoulders, 37 1/2; biceps, right, 9 1/4; left, 9 1/4; contracted—right, 11; left, 10 3/4; forearm, right, 9 3/4; left, 9 1/2; wrist, right, 6 1/4; left, 6; thigh, right, 19; left, 18; calf, right, 13; left, 12 3/4; ankle, right, 8; left, 7 3/4. Hoping to see my questions answered soon, I am,

FRANK CONLAN.

1. You could weigh 5 pounds more and not be too stout for your height and age, but not much more than that. 2. Read my article on "General Training for Young Athletes." 3. The articles mentioned are all published in Tip Top Physical Culture Department.

PROF. FOURMEN:

Would you please answer the following questions in the next Tip Top? 1. What is breakfast at 8:30 a.m., followed by a short walk, too early? 2. What would strengthen my chest and shoulders? 3. Is skating a good exercise for my legs?

KID MERRILL.

1. No. Walk on your hands a little while each day, and use a punching bag, also a Whitely exerciser. 2. Yes.

PROF. FOURMEN:

I would be greatly obliged if you will answer through the Tip Top Weekly the following questions: 1. How long to exercise on the punching bag? 2. On the dumbbells? 3. Do you recommend the "Whitely" exerciser as an all-round trainer, especially for chest and muscle building? Thanking you in advance for your kindness, I remain yours respectfully,

JEROME T. CANNING.

1. Twenty to thirty minutes daily. 2. About the same time twice a day. 3. Yes.

PROF. FOURMEN:

I am a constant reader of the Tip Top, and I would like to have you please answer a few questions: I am 14 years 9 months old, 5 feet 8 1/4 inches tall, weight, 137 pounds. Is this not good size for me? Chest is 34 inches; expanded, 57 inches; waist, 29 inches; thighs, 20 inches, 21 1/2 inches; calf is 14 inches; 1/2 inches; forearm, 11 1/2 inches; arm, 11 1/2 inches. Is this good for a boy of my age? I use dumbbells night and morning before eating. I have started in punching the bag for about 20 or 25 minutes at first. Is this all right? I put the 16-pound shot about 29 1/2 feet fast fall. I ran the 100-yard dash in about 11 3/4 seconds without training for it. I am a good baseball player and football player. I think these are good exercises for the muscles.

CHAS. ROBERTS.

Your proportions are fine. Your regime is a very good one, and in a short time you will be amazed at your athletic progress.

PROF. FOURMEN:

I am a constant reader of the Tip Top Weekly, and have been for nearly two years. I am 17 years old and weigh 128 pounds, am 5 feet 7 inches tall. Are my proportions good?

L. T. M.

You should weigh 5 to 10 pounds more.

PROF. FOURMEN:

As you are so kind as to answer questions I will take the liberty to ask a few: 1. I am 15 years and 6 months old and am 5 feet 6 inches tall. How much above the average is this?

PROF. FOURMEN:

2. I weigh only 112 pounds. How does this compare with my height and age? 3. How can I increase my weight? 4. What exercise will develop large legs?

1 and 2. Your height and weight are about right. 3. There is no way to increase your weight. 4. Raising on the toes will enlarge the calves of your legs greatly.

PROF. FOURMEN:

How are my proportions? 1. I am 15 1/2 years old and weigh 119 pounds, am 5 feet 6 inches tall and am 32 inches around the waist. 2. Is handball a good exercise or not? Yours,

N. R. L.

1. You could easily weigh 5 pounds more. 2. Yes.

PROF. FOURMEN:

Please answer the following questions in the Tip Top. They would be of great benefit to me. I have a weak heart and would like to know if there is any exercise that will help it. Also is there anything I should or should not eat, drink or do?

DICK.

A weak heart is often the result of too violent exercise. Go through the exercises described in my article, "Training for Young Athletes" very slowly and stop before you become tired.

PROF. FOURMEN:

I would like to ask you a few questions through the Tip Top Physical Culture Department. 1. Is alcohol good to rub on the muscles after exercise? 2. Is skating a good exercise for the legs? 3. I am 15 years old, weigh 115 pounds and am 5 feet 5 inches in height. How are my proportions? Wishing you a happy New Year.

W. M.

1. Yes. 2. Yes. 3. Your measurements are very good indeed.

PROF. FOURMEN:

I would like to enter in the contest of the one-mile ice skate race and would like to know the best way to train for it. Wishing the Tip Top success and a happy New Year to you.

J. MCA.

My article on "Training for Young Athletes" describes fully everything you ought to know to become competent in every branch of sport. Running is especially good for skating.

PROF. FOURMEN:

I am 14 years old, weigh 116 pounds with my clothes on, and am 5 feet 5 inches high. I am very round-shouldered and would like to straighten my shoulders. 1. Could you tell me how to do so? By so doing you would do me a great favor.

A CONSTANT READER.

Keeping your shoulders up and back and taking long deep breaths will help to straighten and strengthen your shoulders.

PROF. FOURMEN:

Please tell me what is the best exercise for me. I have ordered one punching bag, one pair Indian clubs and one pair of dumbbells, and a Whitely exerciser, and I ride a bicycle every day, and some days riding twelve miles on a stretch. I wish you would tell me how many pounds the Indian clubs and dumbbells should weigh.

PETER C. SCHNACK.

If you conscientiously use all the athletic apparatus you now have on hand you will in time become a great athlete. Keep up the bicycle riding. It is fine exercise. The dumbbells should not weigh more than two pounds each, and the Indian clubs about the same.
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### BASKET BALL COUPON.

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<th>Name of Team</th>
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<th>Opponent's Name</th>
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Winner: ___________________
Final Score: _____________
Manager: _________________

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### ICE HOCKEY COUPON.

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Winner: ___________________
Final Score: _____________
Manager: _________________

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### ICE RELAY COUPON.

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Time for Four Miles: __________
Manager: _________________

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### ONE MILE CHAMPIONSHIP COUPON.

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Time for One Mile Straightaway: __________

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### ALL-STAR SCHOLASTIC TEAM COUPON.

I believe that ________________, who plays on the ________________ Football Team of ________________, is entitled to a place on the All-Star Team for the following reasons:

Manager: _________________
REPRODUCE this week the pictures of two speedy and able football players, Odell Clark, of St. Louis, Mo., and Hezlep H. Clark, of the Shortridge High School, of Indianapolis, Ind. As all Tip Top readers know, it has been the aim of our weekly to encourage team play in the utmost; for we, as all experts do, recognize that team play is the keynote of success in football. If, for instance, you find a team upon which there are one or two stars who can play the game full speed ahead, but whose support from the rest of the team is ragged and poor, ten to one that team will be beaten by one upon which there is not a single star, but in which every player works like a part of a well co-ordinated machine. But much as we encourage team work, we must not neglect our stars. A star who can work in perfect harmony with his firmament is the greatest acquisition any team can make. Stars, however, are apt to feel that they can win a game by their unaided efforts. This is a grave mistake, and has sent the hopes of many a young player tumbling. But here are two stars who are not so dangerously ambitious. Throughout the season they have recognized the prime necessity of "team play." Their star qualities have shown out to greater advantage for this very reason, and we must congratulate them upon their success. As right-half-back for the Shortridge High School Team, Hezlep Clark has distinguished himself as a hard-hitting line man, particularly good on the defensive, and with a fine speed for end work. Odell Clark is a brilliant runner, and his dodging has been greatly admired by his fellows.

NOTICE Everybody will want to see the latest pictures of the Varsity Teams of 1901. Tip Top Football Gallery will soon reproduce photographs of the Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and West Point Teams.
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