IN A MOMENT DICK HAD THE FELLOW BY THE COLLAR AND DRAGGED HIM FROM BENEATH THE BED.
Tip Top Weekly.
(LARGE SIZE.)

If you have not read them, look over this catalogue and you will read a list of stories unexcelled in any part of this world to-day.

Don't fail to read these stories if you have not already.

208—Dick Merriwell's Race For Life; or, The Steady Hand and True Heart.
209—Dick Merriwell's Set-Back; or, Outplayed by the Masked Mysteries.
300—Dick Merriwell’s Ride; or, Foiling the Agents of the Secret League of Spain.
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With Tip Top No. 285 begins the now famous Fardale Series, in which Dick Merriwell has entered the good old school at which the career of Frank Merriwell also began some years ago. Thousands of young Americans will want to read of the fine things that Dick Merriwell has done, is doing and will in the future do.

CHAPTER I.

DICK IS AROUSED.

"Say, you, hold on a minute!"
Dick frowned as he heard the words called after him in an imperious, commanding manner. He was on his way to the gymnasium in search of Hal Darrell, but he stopped and turned about, surveying the fellow who had uttered the call.

He saw a slim, yet supple and well-built lad, who had about him an atmosphere of importance, and who was followed by another boy with a dark, thin face and coal black eyes. This pair were sauntering toward Dick with no signs of haste.

"Were you speaking to me, sir?" demanded young Merriwell, sharply, a flush in his cheeks and his eyes beginning to flash.

"You've guessed it, old man," was the assurance of the important-appearing chap. "I'm Chester Arlington, and I want to speak with you. I hear that you are the fellow who is going to captain the eleven. That's right, is it?"

Dick bit his lip, taking time about answering, while he sized up Chester Arlington and his companion.

Arlington was a plebe at Fardale, as also was Michael Bunol, the dark-faced lad who accompanied him.

"Yes, I have been chosen captain of the eleven," young Merriwell finally answered.

Arlington had stopped with his feet apart and his hands on his hips. Bunol paused a few feet behind him, and there was about his pose a suggestion of something pantherish. There was a yellow tinge to his dark face and a yellow tone to the whites of his eyes. He had a cruel mouth.

Arlington was not a bad-looking fellow, taking
everything into consideration, but it was plain that he considered himself a very superior sort of person, and he regarded Dick with critical loftiness that was intensely irritating.

"I hear you are making up the team," he said.

"That's right."

"I'll play on it, but you must let me have my regular position."

Dick whistled softly.

"Very kind of you!" he observed, with sarcasm that could not be misunderstood.

"I play half-back," continued Chester. "Captained our team last year. We had a hot bunch, too. I think I can show you chaps a few points."

"It's a fine thing for a fellow to have a good opinion of himself, but you seem to be about the limit. It's possible you may be able to make the team if you try."

"What? May be able to make it? Why, you want to put me right on at the start. Miguel here will tell you what I can do. He has seen me play, eh, Miguel?"

"You are the best ever," declared the dark-faced youth, in a low, smooth voice. "I know."

"Possibly that ought to be recommendation enough," said Dick; "but there is only one way for you to make the Fardale team. You'll have to come out with the squad and show what you can do."

Chester Arlington frowned.

"That's all right for ordinary chaps," he said; "but it's different in my case."

Dick was irritated beyond measure, but, having learned to hold himself in check, he showed his feelings only by the flush in his cheeks and the flash of his eyes.

"Although you may regard yourself as something quite out of the ordinary, Arlington," he observed, "you will not be taken at your own estimation here without proof. If you're a good man for the team, you may make it by showing up with the squad; but you'll never get on in any other way. Is that plain enough, Arlington?"

Now it was Chester who showed annoyance.

"What's the matter with you?" he demanded. "I don't believe you know who it is you're talking to! I am the son of D. Roscoe Arlington, the great railroad man, and my father is worth millions."

"It doesn't make a cent's difference whether your father is a millionaire or a hodcarrier, Arlington; you're judged on your own merits here."

Dick knew now that the fellow was a thorough cad, else he would not have boasted of his father's wealth.

Arlington was much disgusted to find that he had not impressed Dick Merriwell in the least.

"You're a fine chap to captain the team!" he exclaimed, hotly.

This was the limit, and now Dick took a step toward the fellow, his eyes blazing.

"Look here, you plebe!" he exclaimed, in a low tone. "You're altogether too fresh! Better be careful, Arlington!"

"I don't like the way you call me Arlington, and I——"

"Wait a minute, plebe. I wish to give you fair warning. When you called to me in the first place, you shouted, 'Say, you!' Following that you were exceedingly familiar with your 'old man!' It is evident that you have yet to be taught your place here. I haven't much time to look after you, but I shall call the attention of my friends to your case, and I think you will be given a few lessons in Fardale etiquette. It will be greatly to your advantage, for you'll be sure to get up against trouble if you go round shouting 'you' to yearlings and getting gay with your 'old man' break. Somebody will run you through the coffee grinder some mild autumn evening. When you wish to speak to me again, be sure to address me as Mr. Merriwell. Further, I want you to touch your cap. Understand? You are to salute every time you speak to me. That ought to be plain enough."

Chester Arlington literally choked with surprise and indignation.

"Well, I'll be—kicked!" he gasped.

"Quite likely," nodded Dick. "If you are not properly respectful I may find time to kick you a few myself. I should hate to waste that much energy on
you, but it might be better for you than a dose of physic."

Miguel Bunol whispered something to himself, while Arlington seemed tempted to strike Dick.

"Confound you!" he exclaimed. "I——"

Quick as a flash, Dick had him by the shoulder.

"Swallow that!" he commanded.

Arlington struck at him.

A second later the fellow's feet flew into the air and he struck the ground so heavily with the back of his head that he was dazed.

Dick had dropped the millionaire's son by deftly kicking his feet from beneath him.

Bunol gave a snarl, his hand darting into his bosom as he started toward Dick.

Again young Merriwell's movements were amazingly swift, and he clutched Miguel by the wrist, jerking his hand forth.

"I thought so!" he said, as he saw a knife gripped in the fingers of the dark-faced lad.

Then he gave Bunol's wrist a twist that wrung a cry of pain from the fellow and caused him to drop the knife.

Dick caught up the knife and gave it a fling that sent it flashing and whirling clean over the roof of the gymnasium.

"Now, get, you miserable snake!" he commanded, in such a manner that Bunol quailed. "If you don't get out of my sight in a hurry I'll kick you clean through the top of your cap!"

Miguel was astounded by Dick's strength and quickness, and he slunk away, nursing his twisted wrist.

Arlington sat up, rubbing the back of his head.

"You can trot along with him," said Dick, grasping Chester's collar and jerking him to his feet.

"And remember the instructions I have given you in Fardale etiquette. Salute when you see me next time, Say 'mister' when you speak to me, and be duly humble and deferential. As for that yellow-faced pup that follows you round, keep him away from me, or I'll send him to the hospital. I'm a peaceable fellow under ordinary circumstances, but you have aroused my bile until it is aboil, and there'll be something further doing if you forget instructions."

Chester Arlington staggered away without a word.

CHAPTER II.

BRAD BREAKS LOOSE.

Dick was busy in those days getting the boys interested in the team. It was his hope and intention to put onto the gridiron a better team than had ever represented Fardale up to date, and he was working hard to attain his object.

But he had found, to his surprise, that there was a feeling that things were not being handled properly. With the withdrawal of Steve Nunn from the captaincy of the eleven Hal Darrell had appeared in the field as a candidate for that position. Later on, Darrell had stepped out in favor of Dick, who had been appointed by the athletic committee.

At first it had seemed that Dick was to have everything his own way, and that the entire school would be behind him in whatever he did.

But it soon developed that there were those who insisted that Darrell had been compelled to step out and let Dick in, and they were trying to arouse feelings over it. They claimed that Dick would be sure to place his favorites on the eleven, for all that candidates were called for from all classes. With Frank Merriwell as coach of the team, they argued that it would be the easiest thing in the world for Dick to be "the whole show."

Successful persons always arouse the jealousy of little minds, and there was no exception in this case. These small-minded ones kept quite still whenever there was a demonstration in Dick's favor, but they worked silently and constantly against him.

Some of the old players on the eleven were surprised because Dick did not immediately notify them that they were to be taken onto the regular team. A few of them did not like it because the new team was to be chosen from the squad that came out for practice, regardless of the past. Of course, they understood that their chances of making the team were better than
fellow who had not played before at Fardale, but that did not satisfy them.

Dick received plenty of advice. He listened to this and then did what he thought best. Experience had shown him that the successful captain is not the one who tries to follow all the advice he receives. He must have a mind of his own, mark out a course, and follow it.

But Dick soon found that he was to have the greater part of his trouble with Abe Gorman, who had been appointed to manage the team.

Young Merriwell had never liked Gorman, and Abe seemed to know this.

Gorman was smooth enough to Dick’s face, but he had “his hammer out” behind the captain’s back. He was fearful that he would be manager in name only, and this fear set him to “knocking.”

Dick had fancied that he might find good material among the plebes. At least, he had hoped for promising substitutes from that class. But he was to learn that the whole plebe class was under the influence of Chester Arlington, who became young Merriwell’s open enemy.

Arlington had plenty of money, and he “blew himself” on every possible occasion. He worked hard to be known as a good fellow, and it did not take him long to reach the position he desired as leader of his class.

Arlington’s particular chum was Miguel Bunol, a Spanish youth, and there seemed something mysterious about the connection between the two. Bunol had very little to say about himself, but somehow the report was spread through the school that he was the son of a Spanish nobleman who had been banished from his native country.

A call was posted for candidates from all classes to appear on the field a certain afternoon; but when that afternoon arrived there was not a single respondent from the plebe class.

Chester Arlington had worked hard to prevent any of the plebes from answering the call, and had been successful. He smiled in a superior manner over this as he gathered with a lot of his friends about him at one side of the field to watch the practice.

Frank Merriwell was on hand, and he started in by setting the boys to painting and catching the ball. He talked to them, one after another, telling them of their weak points and showing them how to correct those weaknesses. It kept him on the jump, and it was amazing how he could see so much that was going on.

Dick was disappointed in the response made to the call for candidates, as barely twenty had turned out, not enough to make up two teams for practice. When he found an opportunity, he told Merry of his disappointment.

“Keep still,” cautioned Frank, “Don’t let any one know you have noticed it. You’ll find plenty of fellows coming out later on.”

Frank had been through it all and knew something of the difficulties with which Dick would have to contend.

Arlington and his set watched the work of Dick in particular and made loud comments on it. When Dick dropped a punted ball after a hard run there came a sudden sound of hissing and laughter from that quarter.

Brad Buckhart heard this, and he lost not a second in prancing over to the group.

“Look here, you spotted horn-toads!” he exclaimed, wrathfully, “whatever is eating you, anyhow? You want to go slow, or you’ll get spanked, the whole howling bunch of ye! You hear me remark!”

“Who are you talking to?” demanded Arlington, haughtily.

“You, by the great horn spoon—you!” shot back Brad. “You’re the burro I’m aiming my conversation at—you and your gang of half-baked plebes!”

“You want to be careful!” said Chester.

Brad placed his hands on his hips and stood with his feet wide apart.

“Now, do you allow there is anything in that gathering of pin-headed freshies to bother any one?” he asked.
"You are insulting me—me!" said Arlington, savagely.

"Who are you?"

"Chester Arlington, son of D. Roscoe Arlington, the great——"

"Say, I made a mistake in calling you pin-headed," said Brad, quickly. "Your head is bigger than a barrel. That's what's the matter with you. You need something to reduce the swelling, and you need it bad."

"You are a low, coarse fellow, and——"

Brad started for Chester, but the plebes surged round him. Then the Texan uttered a whoop and waded into the whole gathering. They set upon him, and there was "something doing" in short order.

Down across the field swept Dick and the squad. He called them about him as he started, and they charged in a mass on the plebes.

There was a collision, and in a moment a struggle was taking place there on the edge of the field.

The plebes fought hard for a few minutes, but it was just hard enough to get up the blood of those lads in football togs.

Right through the whole of it Buckhart flung fellows to the right and left in a vain endeavor to get his hands on Chester Arlington.

"Whoop!" he roared. "Let me put my brand on that maverick who started the mill! I want him! I'll put the bar Z iron into his hide good and hearty! I will, I know!"

But Arlington kept away from the aroused Texan. He urged the others on, while taking good care of himself until at last the ring round him broke and he saw the football players coming at him.

Then Arlington took to his heels, followed by half a dozen of his faithful friends. He dodged out from the struggling lads and shot across the field like a frightened deer.

"Wow! wow!" bellowed Buckhart. "I'm sure going to brand him! If I had a rope I'd pull him down! Run, you coyote, run! You can't leg it fast enough to get away!"

But Arlington was a swift runner, and he cleared the first fence he came to with all the style and deftness of a professional hurdler. He did not pause to look over his shoulder, but headed straight for the nearest strip of woods.

Dick Merriwell followed, but he was laughing in spite of himself. The spectacle was a comical one.

Others of the squad were running down other freshmen, who were trying to escape.

Into the woods plunged Arlington, panting heavily. The wild westerner Buckhart had filled him with fear. It was his first experience with a fellow like Buckhart, and he found it anything but agreeable.

"I'll dodge him here in the woods," he thought, as he ran on.

He paid no heed to the course he was taking, but cut to the right or the left several times. And so, in this frantic manner, he finally ran into a muddy sink-hole, where he floundered until he was caught and held fast.

CHAPTER III.
CAUGHT IN A SINK-HOLE.

In vain Arlington struggled. His efforts seemed to sink him deeper into the clinging mud. As he felt himself going down a frantic fear seized his heart.

"Oh, Lord!" he gasped. "I've heard of quicksands! Have I struck such a place?"

He had read of unfortunate people being swallowed by quicksands and of their mad struggles. Often he had fancied that it must be a most horrible death to die, and now he grew cold and numb with the dread of it.

"It's awful!" he groaned. "What can I do? I must get out! I can't die here like this! Wouldn't it be a terrible thing for me, the son of D. Roscoe Arlington, who is worth millions, to die here like a dog? Oh, it would be awful!"

Looking upward, he saw the thick and heavy limb of a tree which extended over his head. Although it was far beyond his reach, he vainly extended his hands toward it, longing to grasp it in the effort to free himself from the close-clinging mud.
About his feet and legs there seemed a suction force that was slowly and surely dragging him down. He noted that every struggle left him deeper in the hole.

About him were the autumn woods, turning to brown. A squirrel came out on the limb about his head, looked down at him inquiringly, and then chattered an insult. A tree-toad cried sadly from the lonely heart of the swampy forest. Far away he heard faint shouts which seemed dying out in the distance.

"They are going away and leaving me!" he panted.
"That's just what they are doing!"

Then he lifted his voice and shouted for help. The squirrel scampered away in terror, while the tree-toad became silent to listen to the wild cries which rang through the woods.
"Help! help! help!"

He listened, and the silence of the woods seemed deathlike.

"They don't hear me!" came from his dry lips.
"I must make them hear somehow!"

Again and again he shouted, but there came no answer.

A little wind rose and swept through the tops of the trees. A leaf fluttered down like a wounded bird. There was a whispering sound all through the woods, and the frightened lad fancied he saw elvish faces peering out of the shadows and mocking him.

The spirits of the forest seemed astart.

With his blood choked in his veins, Chester dropped over llimply, his hand and arm going down into the mud. When he tried to straighten up he found it no easy task to pull his arm out.

Pale as death, shaking with fear, he observed that he was still sinking.

Through the woods sounded a strange booming that caused his heart to leap. It was a partridge drumming on a hollow tree, but it seemed like the roll of sullen thunder.

Through the branches of the trees the unlucky lad saw the sky growing overcast. The blue was being blotted out, and in the woods the shadows deepened to a density that was almost darkness beneath the thick cedars and pines.

Again, of a sudden, Arlington began to shout in a most frantic manner. He kept it up until his voice failed him entirely, dying away in a husky squeak.
"They can't hear me! They can't hear me!" he sobbed. "I'm done for!"

Then once more came the thought that it was not possible for him, the son of the great D. Roscoe Arlington, to perish in such a wretched manner. It would not be so bad for some ordinary chap, but it was simply frightful for him.

"I must get out somehow!" he whimpered. "Dick Merriwell is to blame for it—he and that big brute from Texas! If I ever do get out of this I'll make them suffer, see if I don't!"

Even in the midst of his terror he entertained revengeful and unreasonable thoughts. He had brought it upon himself, but he did not think so for a moment.

When he was able to still his hammering heart he listened, hoping that he might hear some sound to give him hope and encouragement. But the trees seemed whispering together, and his fancy pictured them as saying, "He's sinking, sinking, sinking!"

It was true that he had sunk yet a little further, and hands of iron were dragging at his ankles.
"If I could get one foot free!" he gasped. "I might get out somehow."

But when he tried to free his right foot his left sunk still further, and he stopped, realizing that he was making it worse by such efforts.
"It's no use! My only hope is for some one to find me and help me out!"

Again and again he made the woods ring with his shouts. The echoes seemed to mock him.

Then he began to swear, but his language frightened himself, and he stopped quickly.

Next he resorted to prayer. But he could not help realizing that there was very little chance for his praying to be of any effect, and he stopped that.

Despair seized upon him, and it turned his heart to ice in his bosom.
The tree-toad was crying mournfully, and the sound seemed the most woeful that he had ever heard.

"Stop! stop!" he choked. "I can't bear it! I can't bear it! Keep still!"

His imagination pictured the end, and he seemed to feel the soft mud creeping up about his throat, his chin, his lips. He would hold back his head to keep his nostrils free, but at last the mud would fill them and stop his breath.

Would they ever learn what had happened to him? Or would it remain a mystery for all time?

"I can't die this way!" he whined, turning his pale, pinched face toward the overcast sky. "I want to live a little longer! I have everything to live for!"

Never had life seemed so sweet as it did then when he began to believe that it was about to be cut short. He had been petted and spoiled by indulgent parents, and never had he fancied that anything serious could happen to him. He was a favored one, and all the dreadful things must befall others. His father was rich, and Chester had been provided with so much money that he never knew the real value of a dollar. With different training he might have been quite a different boy.

One of his great enjoyments had been to look down disdainfully on less fortunate chaps. It had given him pleasure to show them how far beneath him they were. Now he felt that he would give all his prospects in life, all hope of inheriting his father's great wealth, everything, to take the place of the poorest fellow at Fardale.

Then he began to pity himself, and he sobbed tearlessly, his breast heaving.

A sudden sharp scream coming out of the air above him gave him a great start. There was a blue flash from tree to tree, and he knew it was nothing but a bluejay.

But that aroused him to shout again and again. There was a soreness in his throat and a mist before his eyes.

The setting sun, breaking through a rift in the west, flung burnishings of gold against the edges of the clouds. Soon the sun would go down, night would come on, and with the darkness would come the grim monster that is most dreaded by all living creatures—Death!

Where was Miguel? Always the Spanish youth had turned up in a time of trouble, but he was not on hand now.

Still sinking!

"Help! help!"

What was that? His heart seemed on the point of bursting, for he fancied he had heard an answer to his shout. Again and again he cried out.

Yes, there was an answer! Some one had heard him, and the thought filled him with such wild joy as he had never before known.

He continued to utter the cries until he heard a distinct response and knew some one was coming.

"Saved!" he choked. But immediately he was attacked by a fear that the rescuer would arrive too late.

"Help! Hurry up!"

"Coming! Where are you?"

"Here! here! This way!"

He saw a figure pushing through the bushes and coming out of the deeper shadows. It hurried to the side of the treacherous sink-hole and stopped.

"Well, durn my hoofs!" exclaimed the voice of Brad Buckhart, as the Texan discovered the plight into which Chester Arlington had fallen.

CHAPTER IV.

BUCKHART'S TURN.

"Whatever is the matter?" asked Brad, who seemed to be grinning at the unfortunate lad. "You're in a pretty bad scrape, I allow. Stuck fast, eh?"

"Help me out!" begged Chester. "I'm sinking!"

"Well, I don't opine you'll sink much further. You're in about up to the limit now."

"Oh, but I'm still sinking! I've done my best to get out."

"Kind of lost track of you in these here woods when you pranced away like a frightened colt. I will admit that you can run some—when you're frightened.
I can cover ground myself, but I couldn’t get my paws on you.”

“Don’t stand there and talk—don’t! I am sinking all the time, and I—”

“It’ll be right likely to spoil your clothes; but then you’ve got plenty of the needful to buy more, so that won’t do any harm. I can’t figure just how I’m going to get you out.”

Brad leaned against the trunk of the tree in a most exasperating manner of coolness.

“What are you doing?” Arlington almost screamed.

“Hurry up and help me out!”

“Don’t be in such an awful rush,” said the Texan, with a slight drawl. “Chaps who do things in too much of a hurry never do them well.”

“But this is a quicksand, and I—”

“Quick nothing!” returned Brad, contemptuously.

“I know something about quicksands, and that there mud spot ain’t one any whatever. You hear me!”

“But I’m going down every minute! It seems to be sucking me down deeper and deeper.”

“You must have been right scared to jump in there. What made you do it?”

Buckhart’s undisturbed manner infuriated Chester. “I believe you want to see me die here!” he exclaimed. “If you don’t help me, you’ll be a murderer!”

“That’s pretty bad, and I opine I shall have to give you a helping hand. Let me see; if I had a good long pole I might pull you out. I reckon I’ll go look after one.”

He seemed on the point of moving away, but the other lad became frantic at the thought of being left there.

“Don’t go!” he begged. “You might not find me again.”

“Oh, no danger of that.”

“I’m going down fast! I might sink before you got back! Don’t leave me!”

Brad laughed. It seemed a hateful, heartless laugh to Chester.

“You’re a damned sight more frightened than hurt,” said the Texan. “The proper thing to do is to go get some of the fellows, bring a stout rope and pull you out.”

But Chester urged him to do something right away. After a few moments, Buckhart suddenly peeled off his coat and climbed into the tree on the edge of the sink hole. He paid no heed to the questions of Arlington, but drew himself up and crept out on the strong, lower branch which projected over the head of the luckless boy.

Buckhart’s weight bent the limb lower and lower, but he was compelled to get far out upon it before it swayed down until it was within reach of Arlington’s hands.

“Get hold of it,” directed Brad. “Get a good hold and hang on. That’s the way.”

But he was compelled to get out still further to bring the limb down until Arlington could hang onto it firmly.

“Don’t let it slip out of your fingers,” directed the Westerner. “You can pull yourself out, but you want to wait until I get off onto solid ground. It might break under the strain.”

He started to back away. Then something came whistling through the air and struck him squarely on the head. He was stunned so that he lost his hold and dropped from the limb into the mud hole some feet from Chester. He struck on his feet, but plunged in nearly to the knees.

Brad had been hit by a short club that had been hurled at him, and the person who threw it appeared near the foot of the tree.

It was Miguel Bunol.

“Bunol!” cried Arlington.

“Here,” answered the young Spaniard. “I find you after while. You in bad scrape.”

“Yes; but I’m going to get out now!” said Arlington, as he felt himself succeeding in drawing his feet free from the clinging mud.

Hand over hand he went up the limb, which swung up with him, dangling in the air the moment he had cleared his feet. Then he was able to move along the limb toward the trunk of the tree.
But Buckhart was stuck fast, as he discovered when he attempted to walk out.

"Here, whatever kind of a dirty game is this?" he roared. "There will be something doing when I land on solid ground, you bet your boots! I'll sure chew somebody up! I will, I know!"

"Yah!" returned Bunol, mockingly.

"I'll yah, you Greaser, if I get my hooks on you!" promised Brad, wrathfully.

Arlington was near the trunk of the tree, and he dropped to the ground.

"Well, if that wasn't lucky!" he panted.

"Luck!" snorted Brad. "Do you call it luck? I allow I helped you get out of that scrape, and now it's up to you to turn round and give me a lift."

Chester surveyed him sneeringly.

"You caused me to get in there in the first place," he said. "It serves you right! You ought to take my place, and I think it will be just about the proper caper to leave you where you are."

"Well, I'll eat my hat!" exploded Brad. "And this after I helped you out! Say, what kind of an onery snake are you? Or is this yere just a joke?"

"No joke. If it is, you'll find it a mighty serious one. No use for you to struggle. I found that out. It only sinks a fellow deeper. That place may not be a genuine quicksand, but it's just as bad, and I'll bet you'll go down out of sight in less than an hour after we leave you."

"Then you are going to leave me?"

"Sure thing! It pays you back for running me in here. Perhaps somebody may hear you if you lift your voice and howl loudly enough. My throat is sore from yelling."

Brad could not find words to express his feelings.

"You're the limit!" he averred. "I've met up with common low down critters, but you're the limit. You're not worth lead to blow you to Kingdom Come!"

"I fix him!" exclaimed Miguel Bunol, savagely, as he plunged a hand into his bosom and drew forth his knife. "I fix him so he do no shouting! Give the knife flip, it go whiz, strike him in the throat."

Arlington clutched his arm.

"None of that," he said, sharply. "Don't be so confoundedly quick with that knife! You'll get yourself and me into a bad scrape some day if you don't stop it."

"All right," said Bunol, but he returned the knife to his bosom with an air of great regret. "Like to try it on him."

"Well, you are a fine pair of birds!" said Brad. "You're snakes of the worst sort. I see where the pair of you end—up on the gallows!"

"It's not likely you'll be there to see," laughed Arlington, tauntingly. "You'll disappear from Fardale, and they will wonder what became of you. We shall not tell. We'll keep mum."

"I don't allow I'm going to end up so sudden, and when I do get out, keep your eyes peeled! I'll sure settle up some with you two, and don't you forget it!"

"That does not alarm us in the least. Come on, Miguel, it is beginning to get dark. We'll leave him to think it over and howl as much as he likes."

"Hold on!" cried Brad. "Better give me a lift, and we'll call it a joke on both sides."

But they laughed at him, mocked him, and were on the point of departing when Dick Merriwell walked out and confronted them face to face.

CHAPTER V.

ANOTHER FRACAS.

The two young rascals were startled beyond measure by this appearance of Dick Merriwell. They had encountered him before, and knew the sort of fellow he was.

"Let me into this little joke," invited Dick, and the look in his flashing eyes warned Arlington and Bunol that he was fully aroused. "If there is any fun going on, I want a hand in it."

Bunol half lifted his hand to his bosom, but Dick gave him a sharp warning:

"Don't try that trick on me again! If you do, you'll regret it as long as you live!"

"Wade into them, pard!" urged Buckhardt. "Oh,
Moses! wouldn't I like to be out of this where I could help you!"

"What have these prize rascals been doing?" asked Dick.

"Mired me—mired me here!" answered Brad. "Then they were going off and leave me to my lonesome. That after I helped Mr. Chester Arlington out of this same nasty hole."

"That's fine!" exclaimed Dick, looking Arlington over. "But it is just about what I'd expect from a fellow like him! I've been a plebe myself, and I have no great prejudice against plebes in general, but for a cheap plebe this Arlington is the whole limit."

"I won't stand it to have you talk like that about me!" snarled Chester, making a rush at Dick.

"I hoped not!" returned Dick, as he side-stepped and cracked Chester on the jaw.

Miguel Bunol made a spring like a cat, landing on Dick's back with such force that young Merriwell plunged forward on his knees. The fingers of the Spanish boy closed on Dick's windpipe.

"I gotta you this time!" he snapped, in deep satisfaction. "Now I fix you quick!"

Arlington had been upset, and he sat up, rubbing his jaw. When he saw the Spanish boy on Dick's back, he muttered a cry of satisfaction.

"Holy smoke!" snorted Buckhart, struggling frantically to get out of the mud-hole. "I can't stay here and see this kind of business! Thunder and guns! I must get into that rough house somehow! If I can't I'll go plumb crazy! I will, I know!"

But he found that he could not get out and that he was simply sinking deeper. Panting and perspiring, he watched the fight between Dick and his two enemies.

It is possible that Dick had regarded Arlington and Bunol with too much contempt on account of the first engagement with them. At any rate, it seemed that they had caught him foul and were about to do him up.

"Hang to him, Miguel!" cried Chester. "Choke him—choke him hard!"

But Dick somehow reached up and got a hold on the boy on his back, pulling him off.

Arlington ran up and struck Dick on the ear with his fist, but young Merriwell did not seem to mind the blow in the least.

"Hit again! hit again!" cried Bunol.

Then Dick tore those fingers from his throat and wrenched the fellow's wrist so that he uttered a squawk of pain.

Arlington looked about for some kind of a club with which to strike Dick. He saw what he wanted at a distance and sprang for it, catching it up. When he whirled about he was surprised to see Dick on his feet shaking Bunol till the teeth of the youthful Spaniard rattled like dice.

"You dirty snake!" came from Dick's lips. "I'll——"

"Look out for the other snake, pard!" shouted Brad. Dick swung Bunol from him into some bushes, whirling just in time to avoid a sweeping blow from the club in the hands of Arlington.

"Oh, that's your game, is it!" he grated.

"I'll soak you this time!" vowed the millionaire's son, as he lifted the club again.

Dick poised himself lightly on his feet, not a sign of fear in his face or manner.

That look stopped Arlington short. He had fancied Dick would be driven to flight, at least, by the club; but he saw that young Merriwell was looking for an opening, meaning to dash in.

"I ought to knock your head off!" he said.

"Come ahead and do your little knocking act! I am waiting! I'll get in a rap while you are knocking some!"

"Whooppee!" cried Brad. "That's the stuff! Oh, Lord! why am I stuck fast here so that I can't get into that game and play a hand!"

"Go on away, and we'll let you off," said Arlington.

"Very kind!" returned Dick, with sarcasm; "but I decline to be let off. I want all that's coming to me."

He jumped forward, dodged aside and then came under as Chester made an awkward swing with the club.
A second later Arlington felt himself caught up and hurled to the ground. The breath was knocked out of him by the shock, and next he felt something on his back. He was on the edge of the swamp-hole, and a strong hand drove his face down into the slimy water.

“The other snake is coiled, pard!” warned Brad. “Look out! Be lively!”

Dick looked for Bunol, saw the fellow swing back his hand, then dropped flat.

Whizz!

Something bright flashed through the air and went zipping into the bushes.

“The cur threw his knife at you, Dick!” panted Brad.

Dick leaped toward Bunol, but the fellow did not stop. Like a frightened deer he went dashing through the woods.

Dick ran a short distance in pursuit, but soon gave it up and turned back.

When he reached the spot where this second encounter with Arlington and Miguel Bunol had taken place he found the millionaire’s son had improved the opportunity to get away.

“Well, say! you did it to ’em, partner!” declared Brad. “But I should have been in that fracas! I’ll never forgive myself for being stuck here where I couldn’t mix in some. You should have seen Chester’s face when he got up! Oh, wow! It was a sweet picture! But that Dago did throw his knife at you! Say, he ought to be roped and swung to a limb!”

“They didn’t get all that was coming to them,” said Dick. “But we’ll have to let them go now. The next thing is to get you out of that scrape.”

This was not an easy thing, and it was pretty dark in the woods when, with the aid of a pole he had found, Dick finally succeeded in aiding Brad out of his predicament.

Brad explained just what had happened, and the two lads were justly enraged at the dirty conduct of Arlington and his yellow-faced chum.

“Pard, we want to make their lives one long sweet dream in this yere school!” exclaimed Brad. “I’ll agree to do my part toward it. We must give them our politest attention.”

“I’ll leave that to you,” said Dick. “Just now I have my hands full looking after the eleven. That is what bothers me more than anything just at present.”

“I’d like to find that Greaser’s knife, pard,” said Brad. “I reckon I’ll look for it some.”

They searched about in the bushes where Buckhart fancied the blade must be, but it had grown so dark that there seemed little chance of finding it. Dick, however, finally discovered it.

“Keep it, partner,” said Brad. “He shied it at you, and I reckon it was lucky you dodged. I don’t forget that, and I’m going to break his face for it, you bet!”

Dick was indignant enough at the thought that he had been made a target of by the knife-throwing young Spaniard.

“He’s not fit for Fardale,” declared Buckhart, “and I allow he’ll have to get out. If we report this yere business I reckon he’ll get his walking papers.”

“Arlington and Bunol will swear it’s all a lie, Brad. Besides, you don’t want to do too much explaining about this business of running the plebe off here into the woods. You’ll be forced to tell how you happened here, and it will be necessary to acknowledge that you were chasing down a plebe to soak him. That will show you up in a light that will not be very favorable.”

“Partner, I reckon you’re right,” nodded Brad. “Perhaps the best thing is to lay low and keep still. I don’t take much stock in the kind of chaps who squeal anyhow, and we won’t do any squealing. We’ll settle this affair ourselves when the right time comes.”

“That’s the way to do it,” nodded Dick, and they started for the academy.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SPY.

At last, after no small amount of trouble, Dick picked out eleven men to start the regular team, although he felt that it was quite possible some of them
might not make good when put to the test. There was not a plebe among them, for it had not been thought advisable to take Obediah Tubbs on, although he had finally appeared out with the squad and expressed a desire to make the eleven.

Obediah seemed hurt because he was not given a trial.

"Gol ding it!" he exclaimed, in his squeaky voice. "I kin play baseball, an' I jest bet I kin play football, though I don't know nothin' great about it now. I'm willin' to learn. The plebes are goin' to have a team, an' I kin git onter that, but I don't keer a rap about that."

"Come out every day and take part in the practice," urged Dick. "You want to understand that there will be more than eleven men with the regular team, as there must be several substitutes to fill the places of men who get hurt. If you knew the game, I might give you a show at first and put you on later, but your lack of knowledge is against you. Learn all you can."

"All right," nodded the fat boy. "But what's this I hear about a trainin' table?"

"Why, as soon as we settle down to business the men on the team will have a regular course of diet marked out for them, and they will have to stick by it."

"Does that cut on pie?"

"It does."

"Oh, Lors! Then I guess I can't git onter the reg'lar team! I'll never be able to git along without pie. I kin train on pie, but I can't do without it."

Dick laughed at the earnestness of the fat boy, and he was compelled to confess to himself that Obediah had seemed to do very well on pie as a portion of his diet while playing baseball.

Frank did not think it best to interfere much in the matter of making up the eleven, and he left Dick to work out the problem as best he could.

Of course Dick consulted with Gorman and the members of the athletic committee. Gorman was opposed to two men proposed by Dick for the team, while he insisted that Mark Craughters be given a show at the very start.

Dick was suspicious of Craughters, remembering the unpleasantness between Hal Darrell and Mark, so he asked Darrell point blank what he thought about having the fellow on the eleven.

"If you take him, Merriwell," said Hal, "you must count me out of it. I'll not play with a fellow like that."

"Then you do not think he is all right for the eleven?"

"Certainly not."

"He played last fall part of the time."

"That makes no difference."

"It makes a difference to Gorman, who insists that I am trying to put all my favorites on the eleven and crowd the other fellows off."

"That's rot, Merriwell. Everybody knows you want to win, and that you will want only the best men for the team, whether they are your friends or not."

"You know something about Craughters that convinces you he is not a proper fellow for the eleven?"

"Sure, and I rather fancy you know what it is that I know about him. He was Watson's particular friend."

"Look here, Darrell, if Gorman insists in trying Craughters on the team will you refuse to play, even though you know it will make it harder for me?"

Hal shrugged his shoulders.

"I've said I would not play on a team with that chap."

"But you must see the trouble I am having in making up the eleven this year."

"I do."

"I have counted on you."

"You didn't last year," said Hal, with a touch of malice.

"I didn't make up the team. I even had to fight to get onto it myself. You know that?"

Hal knew it, but he could not forget that he had found it even more difficult than had Dick in making the eleven. At one time he had felt sure Dick and Frank were both working against him, and he had been very bitter; but later he learned that he was entirely mistaken, and his feelings had undergone a change.
“Oh, I’m not going to be contrary, Merriwell,” he said; “but I don’t like to play with Craughters, and I think you should stand out against him to the last.”

It proved to be useless for Dick to stand out, as Gorman insisted that Craughters be given a trial, and the athletic committee backed him up.

Craughters had been keeping pretty still after the departure of Watson, who had disappeared from the school rather than face an investigation that might cause his disgrace and expulsion; but he was duly elated when he found that he was one of the eleven men chosen to start the eleven.

“Merriwell isn’t having everything his own way,” he thought. “He won’t be the whole show this fall.”

Then came a challenge from the plebes, who dared the regular team to play them a practice game.

And Chester Arlington had been selected as captain and manager of the plebe team. He was the one who sent the challenge to Dick.

“You won’t notice it any whatever, will you, pard?” asked Brad, when Dick had handed the challenge over to him.

“Yes,” nodded the captain of the eleven.

“You will?”

“Certainly.”

“You won’t accept?”

“On the contrary, I shall.”

“Why?”

“I have not forgotten last year. We challenged the regulars and compelled them to play us. It was that game that put me into the eleven. I believe in giving the plebes just the same show this year.”

“But it’s different now.”

“How?”

“You went out when men were called for, but you couldn’t get a show on the team. This year the plebes have refused to come out at all.”

“Because they have received some bad advice from Chester Arlington. The easiest way to find out what sort of material there is in that class is to play them a practice game. We may discover some timber that we can use.”

“All right,” said Brad; “do things just as you like, but I sure allow this gang of plebes are different from what we were.”

“I suppose that’s the way it always seems to third class men.”

“They’re a fresh lot, and they’re going to get their salting in due time.”

That evening Frank came over to the academy to consult with Dick, whom he met outside the building.

“It’s time we talked over signals and plays, boy,” said Merry. “We ought to have a different code of signals this year. Our code last year was very simple. I think we might try something more elaborate. Let’s go up to your room.”

On their way they picked up Buckhart and Darrell, and the four gathered about the square table in Dick’s room.

“It’s likely our old code of signals is pretty well known by this time,” said Merry. “I believe there were some traitors and spies who made trouble for us last year. I hope you have none of that sort of trouble this season.”

They listened to him as he talked of various plays, which he explained by drawing diagrams on sheets of paper.

“We’ll try to originate some new plays this year,” he said. “You did great work last fall with the ‘ends around’ play, which was something novel and surprising. But first we must practice the simplest kind of football till the team gets to working together. Team work in football is even more important than in baseball. A baseball team may win games now and then without team work, even when against a nine that is fully its equal; but in football it has fewer chances to turn the trick, and the team that works like clockwork is the one that wins in the long run. Now, in regard to our system of signals——”

“Wait a minute, Frank,” said Dick, as he rose.

He walked to the alcove, in which stood his bed. His keen eyes had detected some one hiding beneath the bed, and in a moment he had the fellow by the collar and was dragging him forth.
“Leggo!”
“In a minute.”

The first cry was uttered by the detected spy, who struggled desperately.

Dick gave the fellow the assurance that he would be released in a minute.

Buckhart was on his feet, and he offered to render assistance.

“Let me get my hooks on the varmint!” he cried.

“Keep away!” commanded Dick. “I think I can take care of this crawling thing.”

“Who is it?” questioned Hal, wonderfully.

“Why, it’s that onery coyote, the Greaser!” said Buckhart, in great rage.

It was Miguel Bunol, the particular chum of Chester Arlington.

“Soak him, Dick!” urged Brad; “soak him good and hard!”

“Leggo!” cried Bunol again.

Then he fell to scratching and biting in the most desperate manner. He tried to set his teeth in Dick’s hand, and came very near succeeding.

“You rattlesnake!” exclaimed Dick. “You are the worst thing I ever struck!”

“Don’t forget Hugo Darkmore,” said Hal.

“I’ve not forgotten him. This creature is worse!”

Bunol twisted about and set his teeth in Dick’s arm. Then, of a sudden, he broke the boy’s hold on him and sprang away, standing panting at a little distance, showing his white teeth.

“Did he hurt you much?” asked Brad, anxiously.

Dick shook his head.

“Well,” said the Texan, “we want to give him something that will fix him so he won’t spy again.”

“Keep away!” snarled the young Spaniard. “You touch me ‘gain I make you hurt!”

“What were you doing under that bed?” asked Frank.

Miguel’s lip curled, but he did not deign an answer.

“Why, he was spying, of course!” said Darrell.

“Or he was in this here room to steal,” said Buckhart. “I allow, perhaps, that was his little game.”

“Why did you come in here?” asked Dick. “Tell the truth, Bunol, and don’t try to deceive any one. The best thing you can do is to tell the truth.”

“Yah!” snapped the fellow, who seemed much like a wildcat at bay. “You find out!”

“You’re in a bad scrape,” said Frank. “A chap detected like this in another fellow’s room is pretty sure to get hauled over the coals if he is reported.”

“And this yere gent is about due to get all that’s coming to him!” put in Brad.

“Open the door and I go out,” said Miguel.

“Oh, yes!” exclaimed the Texan. “It will be just like us!”

“We’ll let you go after you explain how you happened to be in this room,” said Dick.

“That’s the simplest way out of it,” put in Frank.

“He’ll lie,” said Darrell.

Bunol glanced from one to the other of them as they spoke, and his eyes were full of contempt and hatred. Those eyes were set close together, and they were black as coals.

“If I lie, then why ask?” he demanded. “Just open door and let go. I go out.”

“That would be an easy way out of it—for you,” nodded Frank. “But we think you ought to make a little explanation.”

“No make anything! I go! Don’t dare touch me!”

He started as if to move toward the door, at the same time thrusting his hand into his bosom.

“Oh, no!” cried Brad. “We know you haven’t got your knife, for we have it right up there over the mantle——”

He stopped suddenly.

“The knife is gone!” exclaimed Dick.

It was true that the knife thrown at Dick in the woods, which he had stuck up over the mantelpiece as a trophy, had disappeared.

And now Dick and Brad understood how it happened that Miguel Bunol was in that room.

The fellow had come there to find and recover his knife.

Bunol grinned a bit when he saw the expression that came to the face of Buckhart.

“Well, I’ll eat my hat!” cried Brad.

“Here! here!” exclaimed Dick, sharply. “I think that little toy belongs to me now!”

“No!” hissed the Spanish boy.

“You tried to give it to me, and I am going to claim it.”

“No give it up.”

“You’re a heap sight better off without it,” asserted Brad. “Some day you’ll cut somebody with it, and
then you'll wish you hadn't, for there is a law in this country that will make you smart for such tricks."

"Yah!" retorted Bunol, again.

Frank was studying the Spanish youth, and he was swiftly reaching the conclusion that for a treacherous, dangerous enemy Miguel Bunol was the limit.

"This fellow can make lots of trouble for Dick, if he tries to do it," thought Merry. "The boy must be on his guard all the time."

Aloud he said:

"Perhaps the best thing, Dick, would be to march him down before Professor Gunn and explain just where you found him."

"That's the proper thing to do," agreed Darrell.

"I no march!" declared Bunol.

"Oh, I think we can find a way to march you!" returned Buckhart, with a smothered chuckle.

"You try to touch me you get it!"

"Come on, Dick!" said Brad. "You freeze to him on one side and I'll fasten to his other wing."

"Look out for his hand!" warned Frank. "He may——"

"You keep off!" snarled Miguel, flourishing the knife, which he flashed forth, while he backed away toward the window, which had been left open. "I soak somebody!"

"Now, what do you think of that, Frank?" asked Dick. "What would you do with a thing like that?"

Merry did not reply, for Buckhart gave a snarl and rushed at Bunol, regardless of the knife.

The young Spaniard had retreated to the window, and now he made a quick move that surprised them all. Like a cat, he went over the windowsill and disappeared out of the window.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Darrell. "Where has he gone?"

"Couldn't drop to the ground," said Frank.

Buckhart had paused in amazement, and so it happened that Dick was first to reach the window and look out. As he thrust his head out something struck past his throat, barely missing. It was the hand of Miguel Bunol, who had slipped to one side of the window coping and was clinging there.

Dick dodged back, and something like an exclamation of disappointment came from the Spanish boy.

Then young Merriwell saw the cat-like creature slip along the coping with perfect ease and disappear noiselessly into the window of the next room, which was also open.

"That explains how he got in here," muttered Dick. "But that is Jolliby's room. How did he get in there?"

He drew back.

"Come on!" he exclaimed. "The fellow has dodged into Jolliby's window."

He darted out of the room and was at Jolliby's door directly.

"Cuc-cuc-cuc-come in!" stuttered Chip, in answer to Dick's knock.

The long, lank fellow was standing ready to salute in case it was an inspecting officer. He looked relieved when he saw Dick and his companions.

"Cuc-cuc-cuc-can't tell what's gug-gug-gug-ging to happen these days," he cackled, his protruding Adam's apple bobbing queerly in his long neck. "Liable to have a nip of a ca-ca-ca-cadet cuc-cuc-cuc-corporal dodge in on you and chalk you up for bub-bub-breathing. Keeps a fut-fut-fellow guessing all the time."

The boys looked around, but could see nothing of Bunol.

"A fellow came through your window a moment ago, Jolliby," said Dick. "Where is he?"

"Hey?" gasped Chip, surprised. "Cuc-cuc-came through my window? Wh-Wh-what're you giving me?"

"It's on the level. He dodged out of my window, slipped along the coping and dodged into yours."

"Well, dinged if I saw him, and I've been sitting right here all the tut-tut-tut-time. Had my bub-bub-back toward the window, but I must have heard him."

"Not this chap. He——"

"Look out!"

Out from behind some portières jumped a form that went across the room like a flash and disappeared through the door, which had been left open.

Miguel Bunol had escaped.

CHAPTER VIII.

A PRACTICE GAME.


* * * * * * *

Craughters Dare Shannon Douglass Jolliby Bradley Buckhart

Q. B. Smart

* * * * *

L. H. B. R. H. B.

* * *

Darrell F. B. Merriwell

* * *
This was the line-up of the regular team when it formed on the field for the practice game with the plebes. There were several things about the makeup of the team that did not suit Dick. He was not satisfied to have Craughters on left end, and he did not believe Hugh Douglass fast enough to play center. Douglass was one of his staunch friends, but that made no difference to Dick, who did not count friendship anything in making up a winning team.

The center of the plebe team was Obediah Tubbs, who had purchased a new football suit and looked gigantic in it.

"Darn my picture, if I don't make you fellows git up and git!" he laughed, as he looked the regulars over.

"This is a game where size cuts some figger."

Chester Arlington, manager and captain of the plebes, had chosen to play half-back opposite Dick.

"Just you watch out," he told his friends. "See if I don't show that fellow up. I have played this game as much as he has, and a great deal more. When it comes down to the fine points, I'll bet that I know more in a minute than he'll ever learn."

Chester had a most exalted opinion of his own abilities.

But not was not one of the plebe team.

"It's a good thing," observed Brad. "He might take a fancy to play the game with that toadsticker of his, and then he'd get kicked into mincemeat."

Frank Merriwell was unanimously chosen to referee the game, which was to consist of two ten-minute periods.

Before the game Merry put the team through some lively warming-up practice.

The plebes drew apart by themselves. First they gathered about Arlington, with their heads close together, and talked. Then they spread out into a circle, and they commenced tossing the ball round from hand to hand in a lively way.

Frank noted this and smiled a bit to himself, for he knew Arlington had seen some college teams start preliminary practice in this manner, and was doing it to impress the regulars.

The plebes followed with some kicking and falling on the ball, and finally Merry blew his whistle as a signal for the game to start.

Every cadet who took any interest in the game had turned out if possible to witness the struggle.

The plebes had gathered in a body to cheer their team, and they were very noisy in their demonstrations even before the contest started.

As the two teams lined up the plebes broke forth into the yell of their class, ending with the name of Arlington.

"Well, wouldn't that freeze your hoofs!" muttered Buckhart. "Hear them yell for that fellow!"

Dick said not a word.

The two teams scattered over the field. The plebes had the kick off, and the wind was with them.

There was a hush, then a sudden burst of sound, for Obediah Tubbs had kicked off, sending the yellow oval sailing far down the field with the wind.

Hal Darrell caught it on the run, slackened a bit and plunged his toe into it, to send it wiggling and squirming along against the wind for a longer distance than the opening drive by the fat boy.

The plebe who caught the ball passed it instantly to Chester Arlington. Chester had his opportunity, and it must be confessed that he improved it handsomely by making a beautiful long kick to Singleton.

Big Bob's good right leg had lost none of its cunning or strength, and he made a smashing kick that returned the ball.

The plebe quarter-back got it and away he darted.

"There they go!" was the shout.

Arlington went past the quarter-back and took the ball on the run, striking straight for the center of the regulars.

This skillful movement had not been fully anticipated and there was something doing when Obediah Tubbs came tearing down the field in advance of Arlington. The first fellow who tried to reach the man with the ball was bowled over by Obediah, whose speed was not slackened in the least. The second met the same fate. That mountain of flesh thundered on.

How the plebes yelled! This was what they wanted to see. Things were coming their way in short order. Their team was "showing up" the regulars. Well, wouldn't Dick Merriwell feel sick when it was over?

Obediah Tubbs seemed irresistible as an interferer. And he could run, a fact which he had demonstrated in more than one baseball game.

It seemed that, aided by the wonderful fat boy, Arlington would go straight through the center of the regular team and make a touchdown. Such a thing would be sure to fill the regulars with dismay. Oh, it would be showing Dick Merriwell up in great shape!

But what was that? A little form had cut in at an
angle on Arlington, had shot past Tubbs, and—the runner was down!

Dick Merriwell had made a flying tackle that brought Chester Arlington to the earth with stunning force.

The spectators cheered. The plebes were silent for a moment, and then, realizing that the ball had been carried far into the territory of the regular team, they opened up again.

The ball was down on the twenty-five yard line, and there the two teams formed nose to nose, ready for the scrimmage.

Arlington had been badly shaken up, and he could not seem to recover quickly. He was not in condition to stand such a shock and not feel it severely.

"I'd make that touchdown if it hadn't been for Merriwell!" he thought, bitterly. "He's the only one who could have stopped me."

Even as this passed through his mind the ball was snapped and passed to the opposite half-back, who tried to go round the right end, only to be brought down by Billy Bradley.

No gain.

"'Ow is that!" cried Billy.

"Good enough," answered Dick. "That's playing a little."

"Hi thought hit was playing a 'ole lot," muttered the Cockney youth, in disappointment.

As the ball was snapped back again Chip Jolliby came through the line and caught it up. But he did not go ten feet before he was downed.

The regulars had obtained the ball, however.

"Now we'll get after them," said Dick. "Let's stop this foolish business and play."

Smart called the signal and Douglass snapped the ball; but Obadiah Tubbs seemed to walk right over Douglass, although Hugh was a sturdy fellow. Nevertheless, Obadiah was not quick enough, and the ball was given to Darrell, who dashed to the right like a shot.

Merriwell cut in the opposite direction, and to many it seemed that the ball was passed from Hal to Dick. Later they were surprised to see Douglass circling the plebes' left end.

It was Arlington who distinguished himself once more by tackling Darrell just as Hal crossed center.

Now the regular team began a series of smashing assaults into the opposing line. It was football of the simplest kind, but it was good practice in the way of forming interference.

Frank was surprised to find that both teams played well, although the plebes were steadily driven back, their defense proving inadequate everywhere except in the center of the line. The center stood like an immovable hill, and it was soon discovered a waste of energy to direct an attack there.

The regulars smashed and bored their way down the field to the thirty-five yard line, but there they lost the ball on a fumble.

The plebes started with an off-side play that was unfortunate for them, as they made an advance of fifteen yards. They were inclined to kick when compelled to lose the advantage thus secured.

For the next few minutes both sides played loosely. At last the ball was secured once more on downs by the regulars.

"First half pretty near up, Dick," said Singleton.

Dick spoke a word to Smart, and not a moment was lost in getting ready to play. The ball went to Merriwell, who seemed on the point of plunging into the center, but went like the wind to the left. Crauthers blocked the plebes' right end a moment, but the fellow got away and jumped at Dick. Dick dodged and ran on till Chester Arlington flung himself forward, tackled and brought the runner down.

Two or three fellows piled up at once.

Dick held fast to the ball, and out of the mass he squirmed in some manner. He was rising to his feet when Crauthers came slamming over the pile up, struck on Dick's shoulders and crushed him to earth.

Then it seemed that the remaining players of both teams fell on them, and the chance for a brilliant run and a possible touchdown was lost.

The whistle sounded, and the first half was declared ended.

CHAPTER IX.

DICK'S DEMAND.

The plebes were almost hilarious with joy. It was a great thing to keep the regulars from scoring. Oh, but Dick Merriwell would be sore!

Arlington was congratulated. He received every compliment with smiling importance.

"Oh, I know I could show those fellows a thing or two!" he nodded, taking all the credit upon him-
self. "Merriwell stopped me from scoring a touchdown, but I got back at him."

"You tackled him all right, but he gut erway from ye, an' I bet a fishhook he'd done some tall stunts arter that if it hadn't bin for Crauthers," said Obediah Tubbs.

"Who's Crauthers?"

"The other side's left end."

"Why, how did he help us?"

"He came down onto Merriwell like a thousand brick jest as Merriwell was gittin up to start ag'in."

"What did he do that for?"

"You tell!"

Arlington did not like to be robbed of any portion of his glory, and he ridiculed Obediah's statement.

"It's not likely one of their own men helped us," he said. "That's all foolishness. Don't give us any more of that!"

But Obediah was not the only one who had noticed Crauthers' strange act and commented on it. Dick was told by several that he would have scored beyond a doubt but for that.

Frank talked to the team during the intermission. He did not tell them that he was much disappointed in the showing they had made, but such was the truth.

Dick also gave his men a little talk.

"We must get right after those chaps in the next half," he said. "Don't give them a moment to breathe. Push them right to the wall. We can't let them show us up like this."

The plebes were hilarious when the second half began. Some of their remarks about Dick and the regular team were really insulting. Dick felt his blood getting warm. He set his teeth and resolved to make them change their tune in short order.

Singleton kicked off. He had the wind with him, and he drove far down the field. Buckhart and Crauthers went down fast under the ball, but the plebe full-back smashed it back.

Darrell returned the kick.

Arlington caught the ball and started with it, but Buckhart downed him before he had made five yards.

Then the real hot work began. The first assault of the plebes secured a gain of three yards, but on their next try the regulars forced them back full seven yards with a whirlwind sweep. Almost before they realized it the plebes were forced to kick.

Arlington smashed the ball, but he was excited now and made a mess of it, the oval barely reaching the center of the field.

Smart got the ball and darted in and out in a twisting course right through the center. Ted was remarkably swift on his feet, and he was doing finely till he found himself confronted by Tubbs. The little fellow tried to get past Obediah, but the fat boy seemed too broad, and he gathered Ted in and dropped him.

"Oh, my!" gasped Smart, as Obediah rolled off. "I like that! You are so light! Do it again, please!"

"Darn my picter if I don't when I git a chance!" said the fat boy.

Dick had decided that it was useless to try to break through the plebes' center. Tubbs was too heavy; he was like a stone wall.

The attack was concentrated on the right wing of the plebes, and it soon proved effective. Dick went smashing through for five yards. Darrell made three, and the work was kept up until the ball was down within four yards of the goal line.

"Over with it, fellows!" urged Dick. "It's easy!"

Smart gave the signal. The ball was snapped and passed to Dick. Dare and Shannock butted a hole in the line, and Dick was going through easily when Crauthers shouldered him straight into the arms of a plebe, who downed him within a foot of the goal.

Dick gave Crauthers a look as he rose.

"What is the game you are playing?" he asked, meaningly.

"Football," was the answer.

"Nobody would ever know it!" declared Dick.

Crauthers growled in his throat and showed his dark teeth. He knew Dick had not wanted him on the team and that he was there in opposition to young Merriwell's wishes.

The plebes were desperate, and they made a stand that held the ball right where it was on the next scrimmage.

Would the regulars be compelled to try a field kick? If so, it would seem something of a triumph for the plebes, even though a goal were secured.

Smart jammed a signal. There was a sudden move, a twisting, writhing, circling mass, a swaying and a fall—but the ball was over.

Darrell, however, had made the touchdown. Crauthers had succeeded in robbing Dick of that satisfaction.

In the struggle Obediah Tubbs had received a
wrenched ankle, and he soon found it impossible to step on that foot. This made it necessary to put another fellow in his place.

From that time on the regulars found no trouble in scoring at will on the plebes. The center proved the weak spot in the line, and the defense of the plebes was torn to pieces with perfect ease. Three touchdowns and as many goals were made in rapid succession, and during the last few minutes of the game the regular team deliberately put itself on the defensive for the practice it would receive in playing that kind of a game. It was demonstrated beyond a doubt that Tubbs was the whole backbone of the plebes, and the halo of glory that had seemed to surround Chester Arlington faded rapidly.

When the game was over Arlington left the field in a most disappointed frame of mind. It seemed to give him little consolation to tell him that his team had done finely in the first half. He knew the removal of Tubbs and what followed had betrayed to everybody where their strength lay.

As the boys trotted off toward the gymnasium Craithers found himself quite alone. Not one of the team approached him or offered to speak to him.

"Expect I made a fool of myself," he muttered; "but I couldn't help it. Did it before I thought. Didn't want to see Merriwell make the first goal."

Not much more than thirty minutes later Dick Merriwell stood before the manager and the athletic committee. He had asked that they meet him to speak of a matter of importance.

"Mr. Merriwell," said the chairman, "I understand you wish to speak of a matter of importance."

Dick bowed.

"I presume, gentlemen," he said, with all the dignity a boy in his position could command, "that you all witnessed the practice game to-day? Am I right?"

They assured him that he was.

"What did you think of it?"

"Well," said Philip Warne, who was chairman of the new committee, "personally I was much disappointed in the first half."

Oliver Stone nodded.

"I thought it very strange that you could not score in the first half," he declared.

"Did you see how we were prevented from scoring?"

"See? Why, I—— What do you mean?"

"I thought you were going to get round the end and make a touchdown," said Anson Day "but you were tackled and prevented."

"I was tackled, but I might have scored, as the tackler lost his hold on me when we went down, and I was getting onto my feet with a clear field in front of me. I was prevented from making another try by one of our own team."

"An accident," said the manager, quickly.

"It might have seemed that way, but it was not."

"What?" cried Hadley Burrows. "Do you mean to claim that one of your team deliberately tried to hinder you from making a touchdown?"

"Yes, sir."

"Be careful!" warned Gorman. "This is a grave charge."

"I know it, and I would not make it on my own account. I think I can fight my own battles, but I do not care to take any chances where the honor and glory of old Fardale is concerned. If there is a tricky fellow on the team who may cause us to lose games by his jealousy, I think he should be removed before he has a chance to do us harm."

"Right," nodded John Warwick; "but we must make no mistake. We must not be too hasty."

"It can't be," said Dick, "that all of you failed to note that, in the second half, as we were trying to slam the ball over the line, I was tackled and stopped by one of our own team. That one was the same chap who stopped me before."

"Possibly another accident."

"If that is true, the fellow loses his head and is not a fit man to have on the eleven."

"There's something in that," agreed Warwick."

"Oh, you can't expect every one of the fellows to play right up to the mark at the very start!" put in Gorman.

"But we can expect something better than we saw to-day."

"I have explained one reason why we did not do better," said Dick. "We cannot be successful as long as that man remains on the team, and I am here to ask permission to fill his place."

"Who is the man?" asked Warwick.

"Mark Craithers," answered Dick, unhesitatingly. Gorman was up instantly.

"Merriwell has been prejudiced against Craithers from the very start!" he exclaimed. "He is not inclined to give the fellow a fair show. I insist that Craithers be retained on the team until he has demon-
strated whether he can play fast enough for that position or not!"

"And I insist that he be removed at once!" said Dick, his eyes gleaming. "I will be held responsible for the success or failure of the team more than any other man, and I am not going to be handicapped in this way. I ask authority to tell him at once that he is no longer on the team."

Dick stood on that flat, and nothing would move him. The committee got their heads together, and there was an earnest discussion. Then followed a vote. Gorman was uneasy, and his uneasiness increased when Warne rose to announce the vote.

"Mr. Merriwell," said the chairman, "we have agreed that you are to use your best judgment in this important matter, and that we will stand by you in whatever you do."

"That's all I want," bowed Dick, reaching for his cap. "I do not think I'll give you cause to regret it."

Then he went out to look for Mark Craughters.

CHAPTER X.

THE WOLF GANG REORGANIZED.

In a little gulley about a mile from the academy three fellows met at dusk. They knew there was little danger that they would be seen in that spot. The three were Fred Stark, Sam Hogan and Mark Craughters. The face of the latter told that he was in anything but a pleasant state of mind.

"Here we are!" said Stark, with some satisfaction.

"But there are two faces missing."

"Poor Tod!" sighed Hogan, with a surprising show of sympathy for a fellow like him.

"Poor Watson!" said Stark, but it was plain that he was not deeply grieved.

"The old gang is broken up," muttered Hogan.

"Perhaps it is just as well. Watson wanted to hold it together."

"What's the matter with you, Craughters?" asked Stark. "You look as if you could eat spikes."

"I feel that way," growled the fellow with the dark teeth. "I never felt uglier in all my life than I do this blessed minute."

"What's the matter?"

"I'm dropped."

"Dropped?"

"Yes."

"What do you mean?"

"Dropped from the eleven! What do you think of that? Dropped before I've even had a chance to play in anything but a little scrub game! And I've been told that I'm not even wanted as a substitute! Wouldn't that jar you some!"

"Dick Merriwell—"

"You've guessed it! He dropped me."

"But Gorman—"

"No use; I went to him. He says the committee is behind Merriwell. I'm out for good."

"My boy," said Stark, "you brought it on yourself. I saw it. I saw you drag Merriwell back and keep him from making a touchdown. You were too hasty. You should have waited."

"Couldn't wait! I did it before I thought what I was doing. Anyhow, I believed Gorman had more power than he has. Merriwell didn't want me in the first place, but Gorman got me onto the team, and I thought I'd stay there. See here, fellows, this Dick Merriwell is going to run things in the same way he did before, only it will be worse. I can't stand it! That's why I wanted to see you fellows and have a talk with you."

"What do you think we can do?"

"I don't know now, but we are three members of the old Wolf Gang. We might reorganize the gang."

Hogan shook his head. He had been filling a pipe. Now he struck a match and lighted the pipe.

"I don't believe it advisable," he said. "There are only three of us, and we couldn't do much against Merriwell and his crowd. Besides, if we were to reorganize, some of the old tricks of the gang might come up against us. It's dangerous."

"I was against it myself in the first place," said Craughters, "but I feel differently now."

Stark was not saying much, and they appealed to him.

"It would be all right if we had two other fellows we could trust," he said, lighting a cigarette. "I think we ought to have five in the gang. Then we could work secretly against Merriwell, and we might cut some ice."

"But where are the other two?" said Hogan.

"Right here!"

There was a rattling of stones and pebbles, and the trio started up in consternation as two human forms came slipping down the steep side of the gulley and landed in their very midst.

"Who in thunder—?"
“Just us,” said Chester Arlington, coolly. “Permit me to introduce my friend, Miguel Bunol. We happened to be sitting up there, and we heard some of your conversation. It interested us, and we listened. I’m glad we did. We have learned that you are not much in love with Mr. Merriwell. Neither are we.”

“Hate him!” hissed Bunol. “Sometime do him up hard.”

“You can depend on us,” assured Arlington, coolly. “We are the very fellows to take the places of your missing members. Reorganize your gang, and count us in. I have money, and I may be able to make even more trouble for Mr. Merriwell than the former member whom I shall represent.”

The three Wolves looked at one another through the dusk.

“Well!” breathed Crauthers. “What do you say, fellows?”

“I’m agreed!” nodded Stark, resuming his cigarette. Hogan held off.

“What sort of business are we going into?” he asked. “I’ve buried the hatchet with Merriwell and smooked the pipe of peace.”

“So much the better,” said Stark. “He’ll never suspect you.”

“Oh, I think we’d better reorganize the gang!” exclaimed Crauthers. “It will be like old times. The Black Wolves will be on the trail again! Look out for us!”

Hogan wavered. In his heart he was unwilling, but they persuaded him at last and he agreed.

Then the five took a solemn oath to stand by one another and to work for the discomfiture and undoing of Dick Merriwell. They clasped hands on it, and once more the Wolf Gang was reorganized.

CHAPTER XI.

BUCKHART IN TROUBLE.

Brad Buckhart had been into town and was returning to the academy. Night had fallen, and the stars were out. Buckhart walked along briskly. While passing through a short strip of woods his foot struck against a rope that had been stretched across the road, and he fell sprawling.

In a moment two fellows jumped out and leaped on his back. Although taken by surprise, Buckhart did not give up easily.

“What kind of joke is this?” he roared. “I reckon you galoots think it a fine one!”

He twisted about and managed to fling one of them off. Others rushed forward, but the Texan rose to his knees with one of his assailants on his back.

“Whoop!” he cried. “Can’t put me down and out so easy!”

“Sok him!” panted one of the fellows. “Give it to him hard! Be quick!”

Buckhart felt that something was coming, and he managed to dodge his head aside to avoid a blow that must have knocked him senseless.

“You onery coyotes!” he snarled. “About a dozen to one, are ye! Well, we’ll make it good and lively while it lasts!”

He got one of the fellows by the throat, and that chap gurgled a cry for help.

“He’s choking, boys. He’s chok—”

“Oh, I’ll squeeze your wozzle some!” came from the lips of the fighting Texan. “I sure will!”

But he flung the fellow aside and got onto his feet. They struck him repeatedly, but the blows did not seem to have much effect.

“That’s one!” he grunted, as he hit one of the crowd and dropped him to the ground.

They were amazed by the fight he put up.

“Get him down!” urged the leader.

“But he won’t stay down for a lot of sneaking duffers like you!” returned the Westerner.

Still he was getting the worst of it, and he felt that the fight could not last long.

He had left Dick in town, and just now he felt that he would give something to have young Merriwell happen along. But he was compelled to fight it out alone.

“I’ll go the whole bunch of you one at a time!” he declared. “Just give me that chance! It’s all I ask!”

One of the fellows who was down caught him about the knees, and over he toppled. Brad rolled over and over, and they followed him up, trying to get hold of him.

“Freeze to him!” urged the fellow who seemed to be the leader. “Don’t let him get away now!”

Buckhart rolled into the ditch, and there was a general mix-up, for his assailants seemed to get in their own way. In the midst of it he rose up and sailed into them hammer and tongs.
"I reckon maybe I'm good for this gang anyhow!" he cried, with his blood aroused and all the ardor of battle on him. "How do you like that?"

His blows were heavy, and for the time it seemed that he would succeed in putting them all to rout.

But one of them came up behind him and struck him with something that again dropped him to his knees. Bright lights seemed flashing before his eyes.

"Done up!" came faintly from his lips. "But I didn't have a show! If I had——"

Then they forced him down, twisted his hands behind his back, pinned him fast and tied him.

They were a panting, exhausted lot of fellows when they had accomplished their purpose. Some of them were pretty well used up.

"You p'isen varmints!" grated the captive. "You're a brave old lot, you are!"

"Better not talk too much!" snarled the leader.

"The less you say the better it will be for you!"

"Oh, I can't say enough! Go ahead with your funeral! My turn will come, and I'll get good and square when it does!"

They wore handkerchiefs tied over their faces, but he knew they were cadets from the academy.

"Somebody may come along any minute," said one of them. "Cut that rope. Let's get away from here in a hurry."

"Better gag him," said one.

When they tried to do it Buckhart got hold of one fellow's fingers with his teeth, and a howl of pain came from the chap's lips.

"Reckon I've marked you so I'll know ye!" panted the Texan.

Then he was hit a blow in the face, and he gave up fighting for the time. They were compelled to carry him, for he refused to walk.

Over the fence and away across the fields into the old cemetery the Texan was borne.

"If he utters a howl, hit him hard with the sandbag," directed the leader.

"I'll come pretty near knowing you by your voice," declared Brad.

In the cemetery was an old vault, and near this they stopped.

"This is the place," said one, and the door of the vault was pulled open.

"Is this where you're going to plant me?" asked Brad.

"That's what," was the vicious answer.

"What's the game?"

"You're Dick Merriwell's friend."

"Sure thing."

"That's enough. We're beginning with you, and we'll doctor his friends one by one."

"Fine game! You ought to be proud of yourselves!"

"Oh, you're still defiant, are you? You'd be begging hard if you knew what was coming."

"Nary beg."

"We're going to throw you into this old vault, close the door and leave you."

"That's a brave piece of business! I congratulate you on it!"

"You'll die in there."

"Perhaps not. I count on being in at the funeral of your whole crowd."

"The vault is airtight."

"That frightens me, not! I know you cowards haven't nerve enough to shut me up in there and leave me to smother."

"Oh, put him in!" urged one. "What's the use to waste words with him?"

When they stooped to pick Brad up he managed to kick one of the fellows on the jaw and send him sprawling. A howl of pain escaped the fellow's lips.

"Look out for his feet," warned the leader.

"You come near enough," invited Brad. "I'd like to get one in on you, but you take good care of your precious hide, Chester Arlington."

"What al's you? I'm not Chester Arlington!"

"Oh, yes you are! You are the worthy son of a great man! Your father will have the pleasure of seeing you hanged some day, and I am betting my pile on that."

"Chuck him in!" was the command.

Brad tried to do some more kicking, but they avoided his feet and dragged him into the vault.

It was dark and musty in there.

"You'll have time enough to think of it over before you croak," jeered one of the five rascals, as they backed off toward the door.

"Go ahead with your dirty work, you curs!" Brad's sand was not gone, as they discovered to their surprise.

"Good-by, Buckhart!" they called. "We're going to close the door."

"Your turn next," asserted the undaunted fellow.

Then the heavy door closed upon him.
TIP TOP WEEKLY.

CHAPTER XII.

THE GANG GETS ITS MEDICINE.

Buckhart was missing from the academy the next day. His disappearance was a mystery, and it caused no end of talk, speculation and wonderment.

What had become of him?

Efforts were made to find out, and some one started the story that he had run away from the academy. There seemed no other reasonable explanation of his sudden disappearance.

Of course, Dick was plying with questions, but all he would say was that he believed Buckhart would turn up all right and explain everything.

That night five fellows met at an appointed place. They were the members of the Wolf Gang, and they chuckled over the excitement they had created.

"Well, we certainly stirred things up a little," said Crauthers.

"But the whelp knew me!" exclaimed Chester Arlington. "He called me by name."

"Oh, he can't prove anything!" assured Stark.

"Your face was covered, like the rest of us. All he can say is that he recognized your voice."

"But he's liable to get me into trouble that way."

"Not much. Your word is as good as his."

"He must be pretty hungry by this time," said Hogan.

"If he isn't dead from fright. We told him the old vault was airtight, and that may have frightened him to death."

"Not much!" exclaimed Crauthers, who was nursing a sore hand. "He isn't the kind that gets scared to death. The whelp nearly bit one of my fingers off."

"And he came near kicking a lung out of me," confessed Stark. "I couldn't breathe for a minute."

"What are we going to do with him now?" asked Arlington.

"Take him out of the vault and leave him beside the road. Some one will come along and set him free."

So they tied the handkerchiefs over their faces and made their way toward the old cemetery. As they approached the vault they listened to see if they could hear any sounds.

"It's pretty still in there," muttered Hogan, standing outside the door. "What if he is dead? Are you sure he would have air enough to breathe?"

"Oh, sure!" declared Stark. "I tried the place, and it is so imperfect that there was not the least chance that he would smother to death."

Still Hogan was uneasy.

"We will be murderers if anything like that has happened," he said, huskily.

They hesitated about opening the door, but finally it was unfastened and swung back. The vault yawned blackly and silent.

"Hello, Buckhart!" called one of them.

No answer.

"Say, speak up! How is your appetite?"

Still no answer.

Hogan was shaking a little.

"It's mighty strange!" he said. "Somebody go in and see if he's there."

They stood back and waited for each other, none of them seeming anxious to enter that place.

At that moment the five rascals were genuinely alarmed.

"Somebody strike a match," suggested Arlington.

This was done, and the lighted match was held up, while they crowded about the door and peered in.

A puff of air blew the match out.

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Crauthers. "I don't believe he is in there!"

"He must be!" exclaimed Arlington. "The door was fastened, and he could not get out. Strike another match."

The order was obeyed, and the fellow who lighted it stepped crouchingly into the vault.

The light showed them that the place was empty! Brad Buckhart was not there!

"He's not in it!" exclaimed Stark.

"But you are!" said a triumphant voice behind the rascally five, and they whirled to see almost a dozen dark figures which had arisen from behind the graves and headstones and gathered in about them.

Exclamations of fear broke from the members of the gang, and they started to try to break away.

"Grab them!" commanded Dick Merriwell, who was
the leader of the party. "Don't let one of them escape!"

There was a short struggle, and one after another of the gang was captured.

Arlington put up quite a fight, but he was subdued after a time. Bunol tried to draw his knife, but a strong pair of hands seized his wrists and held them.

"I reckon this yere is my turn!" laughed Brad Buckhart, grimly. "I allowed it would come, and it has!"

The Wolves were badly frightned, but Arlington forced a laugh, saying:

"Well, it was a pretty good joke, but the laugh is on us now."

"That's what it is!" agreed Buckhart. "And we're going to laugh good and hard, you bet!"

The captives were formed in the center of the party and commanded to march.

"Where are you going to take us?" asked Hogan.

"You'll find out pretty soon," laughed Dick Merriwell.

Away across the fields to the shore of Lily Lake they were marched. When the lake was reached their attention was called to a strange arrangement on the bank.

"Here is a genuine old-fashioned ducking stool," explained Dick. "We had it constructed to-day especially for your benefit."

"And we're going to souse you good and hard," assured Buckhart.

"What a shame!" sobbed Ted Smart. "It pains my tender little heart to see such a cruel thing happen!"

The handkerchiefs were stripped from the faces of the five rascals, and they were inspected by every member of the party.

"Just so we'll know you next time," said Brad.

Arlington was the first one to be seated on the ducking stool. He was shaking, but he refused to beg.

"You fellows will have to settle for this!" he declared. "My father will make you sorry!"

"All right," said Brad. "We'll settle with D. Rose.

"All ready, fellows!"

"All ready!" was the response.

"Let him go!"

Splash!

Down went the haughty son of the great railroad man. Again and again he was ducked, until when they took him off the stool he was limp and almost strangled.

"The Greaser next!" cried Brad.

"I kill you some time!" snarled Miguel, as he was fastened onto the stool.

But that threat did not stop them, and he "got his." The others followed rapidly, no one being favored, and the Wolf Gang was pretty meek and mild when the performance was over.

"Thanks, pard," said Buckhart, as they were walking back to the academy. "You came along last night at just the right time, and your scheme to lay low and give these chaps a polishing off to-night was simply great."

"I heard suspicious sounds over in the cemetery as I was passing," said Dick, "and I took a notion to investigate. I crept up just as they were shutting you in. I think this will be a good lesson to that gang, and we can afford to let them alone until they get at their crooked tricks again."

THE END.

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OR,

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AN INDIANA READER.

By this you have read about our old friends again in the great baseball contest held in the Mad River League. You can get all the back numbers you wish in the original colors.

I have read all the Tip Tops from the time Dick appeared, and some of the "Chatteries." Although I like Dick and Hurd, I am not a great admirer of their work. Dick wins Doris, I believe, because I love her myself. I think that Hal will never be able to win Gracie, and I do not think that the Tip Tops are the greatest published in the country. They are not nearly as good as your magazines, and I do not think that they will be able to hold their good record. Of some half dozen games played so far, only one has been lost. Dick and Gracie are still in the lead.

Dr. Vernon, Ohio.

I was certainly pleased to hear from such an enthusiastic backer of Dick and Doris. Write soon again.

I have for a long time been interested in your Tip Top Weekly, and remember with pleasure some six years ago, when the first numbers were issued. Now, I used to laugh at the laughable antics of Hans, Barney and Biphram, while Professor Gunn and John were wont to give me great trouble in raising my aching sides. My wife and daughter are greatly interested in your magazine, and say, a boy of sixteen, can hardly wait for each number to appear. I am glad to note that you are running the stories in book form, and I will be glad to have a copy of these books. I am a member of the bookshelf of every young man beside Optic, Alger and Henty.

A. B. Y.

Tip Top may well appear on the shelves with Optic, Henty, and the other fine classic writers. Tip Top is the leader of the era of comic books stories of to-day. Your letter is another added commendation which goes to show how highly Tip Top is valued.

I have just finished reading your last number of Tip Top, and can readily say it is the best weekly published. Although a Canadian, I can appreciate, like many others, reading about American school life and especially about the "Boy Wonder." Next to Dick, I like Brad, then Smart. Hans Dunderwurst will come day "Nick Mulloy so that I will have to stay in bed for three weeks," I like to read of Shepperd, Flannagan, spluttering, and Hans. Best wishes to Dick, Street & Smith, and Hurd & L. Standish. I remain.

RUSHING CAN.

Glad to hear from our Canadian reader, who seems of all the week's admirers of the American boys, of whom Dick and Frank are such works of fiction. As our school life differs in many ways, it must awaken a keen interest in our friends on the other side of the line, how far the interest and boys we have similar. Dick and Frank are a couple.

Not having seen any applauses from Toshka, I thought I would tell you but much I like the Tip Top Weekly. Frank and Dick are great; their combination ride and fire for me. I do not think Snowflake Charley is so bad, even if he is a gambler. Yours truly.

Toshka, Kan.

KENTUCKY CURIOUS.

I hear from Toshka. Yes, Dick is proving himself a wonder at our great American game—and his sensational playing is making him a formidable opponent.

I would like to add a word of praise to your Applause Column. I am coming to admire Dick more and more, as I see he is not entirely to espouse Frank, as I feared. Peloea seems to be the girl for Dick, brave, loving little Pocahontas. I was glad Frank chose Lisa, and Bert is certainly no less fortunate than Merry. Frank and Dick, Hurd and Brad are my favorites, but I am not easy to choose favorites from among such a league of "true blue" comrades. Barney and Alphonse, Dick and Judson, and the whole set are just the dullest fellows imaginable. Tip Top seems to be having a tough fight for the Mad River pennant, but the harder the battle, the greater the victory. And, indeed, wishing the greatest success to all connected with Tip Top.

Pecora, Pa.

The admiration of Dick is bestowed on a few examples. For example, that an upright American boy can be, and one who, I am sure, is made of our readers try to emulate. You know already that Tip Top was won in the hard fight for the pennant, and in gaining the glorious victory, the Meredith boys have proved their pluck and skill.

Just a word to tell you what I think of Harriett W. of Providence, R. I., in Tip Top No. 23. He says he thinks that Doris is the girl for Dick and Peloea for Hal. Now, I think any common sense person would have done that after seeing dear little Peloea. But one thing she was not the one for Hal. Of course, she was jealous of Doris, but that you would understand human nature, and how she would not like the fact that she did not receive Dick's love only as a true, loyal cousin, which she surely is. Doris loves Dick and I think that Peloea will let it be known. When she will explain to the gentleman from Providence what he seems to have overlooked.

True Blue to Tip Top.

W. H. T.

It is difficult to say just how these love affairs are to be settled, but two reasons assured that those who love each other most truly will find it out and follow the course of love here.
**TIP TOP BASE BALL TOURNAMENT**

**NOTICE TO ALL CONTESTANTS**

IN THE

Tip Top All-American Base Ball Tournament.

The four prize winners in the tournament will be announced in Tip Top No. 340.

Read the following and see to which of the four leagues your team belongs:

League No. 1 comprises the following States: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont. All teams entered in the tournament from these States are contestants in League No. 1.

League No. 2 comprises the following States: Arkansas, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, New Jersey, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia. All teams entered in the tournament from these States are contestants in League No. 2.

League No. 3 comprises the following States: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin. All teams entered in the tournament from these States are contestants in League No. 3.

League No. 4 comprises the following States: Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming. All teams entered in the tournament from these States are contestants in League No. 4.

Now, then, everybody get ready to play in the second annual Tip Top.

**FOOTBALL CONTEST.**

Coupons for contest will appear in No. 338. Get on the jump, managers. Take time by the forelock and get your coupons in early and often.

**Here Are the Scores for the Week:**

Fardale (Lorin, Cal.): 24; Red Dogs, 0.

Fardale baseball team—Strick, r. f.; Triunfes, c.; Bonner, 1st b.; Morrison, 2d b.; Eriola, 3d b.; McGeer, s. f.; Mincher, r. f.; Dow, c. f.; Washington, 1b.; & Red Dogs—Hernandez, r. f.; Harris, 1st b.; Michels, 1st b.; Preston, 2d b.; Gilbert, 3d b.; Stanley, s. f.; Wright, r. f.; Burns, c.; Flanagan, 1b.; Manager—T. Stroh.

Fardale (Lorin, Cal.): 11; Pohkhorus Jrs., 0.

Fardale baseball team—(Regular team.) Pohkhorus Jrs. baseball team—Hansen, p.; Eriola, c.; Jones, 1st b.; Henson, 2d b.; Williamson, 3d b.; Mason, s. f.; Wibbler, r. f.; Wibbler, c. f.; Larson, l. f.; Manager—T. Stroh.

Fardale (Lorin, Cal.): 24; West Stars, 1.

Fardale baseball team—(Regular team.) West Stars baseball team—Hansen, p.; Eriola, c.; Jones, 1st b.; Henson, 2d b.; Williamson, 3d b.; Mason, s. f.; Wibbler, r. f.; Wibbler, c. f.; Larson, l. f.; Manager—T. Stroh.

Fardale (Lorin, Cal.): 20; Red Stars, 0.

Fardale baseball team—(Regular team.) Red Stars baseball team—Hansen, p.; Eriola, c.; Jones, 1st b.; Henson, 2d b.; Williamson, 3d b.; Mason, s. f.; Wibbler, r. f.; Wibbler, c. f.; Larson, l. f.; Manager—T. Stroh.

Fardale (Lorin, Cal.): 18; Filmore, 18.

Fletcher baseball team—Gorsam, p.; Eriola, c.; Ouel, 1st b.; Paterson, 2d b.; Scoll, 3d b.; Cronin, c. f.; Scoll, 1st b.; Penrose, 2d b.; Hewitt, 3d b.; Cronin, c. f.; Woodard, l. f.; Manager—I. Goran.

Fardale (Lorin, Cal.): 23; L. P. M., R. C. O., 0.


Spring Valley baseball team—(Regular team.) Central A. C. O., 9; Central A. C. baseball team—S. Farrell, p.; T. Cadman, c.; Louis Roland, 2d b.; Sam Cooper, 3d b.; Joseph Camp, s. f.; M. Bunder, r. f.; K. Allen, c. f.; Harry Hitch, l. f.; Manager—W. Harter.

Penn Stars (Washington, D. C.): 15; Crescent, 1.


Penn Stars (Washington, D. C.): 9; Goldenrod, 3.

Penn Stars baseball team—Regular team. Professional baseball team—Frank Burdine, p.; Philip Roeha, c.; Tom Foy, l. f.; Tom Fitzgerald, 2d b.; John Fares, 3d b.; Jose Chisildine, s. f.; A. Neale, r. f.; L. Hudson, c. f.; Elmer Williams, l. f.; Manager—Fred Taffelmey.

Penn Stars baseball team—(Regular team.) Riverside baseball team—W. Parker, p.; H. Morris, c.; H. Hewitt, 1st b.; M. Michell,
TIP TOP WEEKLY.

Young Indians (Indianapolis, Ind.), 26; Columbus, 2.
Young Indians baseball team—(Regular team). Columbus baseball team.
Young Indians baseball team—(Regular team). Reserve baseball team.
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Young Indians baseball team—(Regular team). Reserve baseball team.
30 TIP TOP WEEKLY.

White Stars (Chicago, Ill.), 17; Cuban Stars, 2.

White Stars baseball team—Alexander, p.; Nichols, c.; Bernard, 1st b.; Thompson, 2nd b.; McManus, 3d b.; Johns, s. s.; Arthur, r. f.; Joseph, c. f.; Daniels, I. f.

Chicago (Ill.), 7; Lake City, 0.

White Stars baseball team—Alexander, p.; Bernard, 1st b.; Salt, 2nd b.; Thompson, 3d b.; McManus, s. s.; Daniels, I. f.

White Stars baseball team—Alexander, p.; Nichols, c.; Bernard, 1st b.; Thompson, 2nd b.; McManus, 3d b.; Johns, s. s.; Arthur, r. f.; Joseph, c. f.; Daniels, I. f.

Tipp Top Weekly.

White Stars baseball team—Alexander, p.; Nichols, c.; Bernard, 1st b.; Thompson, 2nd b.; McManus, 3d b.; Johns, s. s.; Arthur, r. f.; Joseph, c. f.; Daniels, I. f.

White Stars baseball team—Alexander, p.; Nichols, c.; Bernard, 1st b.; Thompson, 2nd b.; McManus, 3d b.; Johns, s. s.; Arthur, r. f.; Joseph, c. f.; Daniels, I. f.

White Stars baseball team—Alexander, p.; Nichols, c.; Bernard, 1st b.; Thompson, 2nd b.; McManus, 3d b.; Johns, s. s.; Arthur, r. f.; Joseph, c. f.; Daniels, I. f.

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White Stars baseball team—Alexander, p.; Nichols, c.; Bernard, 1st b.; Thompson, 2nd b.; McManus, 3d b.; Johns, s. s.; Arthur, r. f.; Joseph, c. f.; Daniels, I. f.

White Stars baseball team—Alexander, p.; Nichols, c.; Bernard, 1st b.; Thompson, 2nd b.; McManus, 3d b.; Johns, s. s.; Arthur, r. f.; Joseph, c. f.; Daniels, I. f.

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White Stars baseball team—Alexander, p.; Nichols, c.; Bernard, 1st b.; Thompson, 2nd b.; McManus, 3d b.; Johns, s. s.; Arthur, r. f.; Joseph, c. f.; Daniels, I. f.
Pro. Fourmen: I am sixteen years of age, 5 feet 3 1/2 inches tall and weigh 100 pounds. I have a pulling machine which I can make light or heavy, so I should be able to have good exercises. When you take me and how long at a time? Very respectfully.

Use the light weights for one-half hour, morning and evening.

Pro. Fourmen: I am a reader of the Tip Top Weekly. I looked in the back of a Tip Top Weekly and saw the questions, so the first thing I did was to take a pencil and write down the article on the muscles of the arms, which appears in Tip Top No. 384.

Pro. Fourmen: How is this course of training? In the evening I go to the gymnasium and exercise five minutes with the chest weights, five minutes with the Indian clubs, five or ten minutes on the horizontal bar. Then do a little high jumping. If I can get any body to box with me, I will sail in a few rounds, and then finish up with punching the bag for about five minutes. Is this training a good one? I am fourteen years old, 4 feet 11 1/2 inches tall, and weigh 85 pounds. Do I weigh enough? I have jumped 3-3/4 feet 2 inches on the high jump. How is this? Trusting you will answer all these questions, I remain,

M. A. C.

Pro. Fourmen: You should weigh 95 pounds.

Pro. Fourmen: Some time ago, during pitching practice, I twisted a cord or two in my arm. I was trying a new shot, and in order to accomplish it I had to bring my arm around with a whip. My wrist, shoulder, and upper arm are not affected at all, but my lower arm, from the elbow down, is stained or twisted. I have no strength in my right arm and am unable to throw a ball. Would an elbow bandage be of any use? Or is there some better and more beneficial way to enable me to play? This worries me considerably, as I am unable to take my exercises properly. Hoping that you will give me a little thought in the matter.

Use a rubber bandage, extending from elbow to wrist. Do not put this on too tight. Play more with the training apparatus. Morning exercises are good. I am attached to a rubber arm with alcohol. Send me an answer to this question at once.

Pro. Fourmen: Please answer the following and oblige: 1. How are the following measurements? Age, seventeen years; height, 5 feet 7 inches; weight, 137 pounds; neck, 14 inches; chest, 36 1/2 inches; waist, 32 inches; hips, 35 inches; left calf, 13 inches; right calf, 13 1/2 inches; left ankle, 9 inches; right ankle, 9 inches. 2. How is my weight compared to my height? I am well built across the shoulders, not able to throw a ball on the other hand very well. I would like to know how to cure myself of this. I intend to take a regular course in physical appliances this fall, to have one of the largest and finest-equipped gymnasia in the United States, being 30 feet by 115 feet. Hoping you will answer my questions, and thanking you beforehand, I remain,

THOMAS BUSH.

Pro. Fourmen: I am nineteen years old, weight 130 pounds, height 5 feet 6 inches. My measurements are as follows: Neck, 15 inches; shoulders, 36 inches; chest, 41 1/2 inches; waist, 36 1/2 inches; hips, 35 inches; left leg, 13 inches; right leg, 13 inches; left ankle, 9 inches; right ankle, 9 inches. 1. How is my weight compared to my height? I am well built across the shoulders, not able to throw a ball on the other hand very well. I would like to know how to cure myself of this. I intend to take a regular course in physical appliances this fall, to have one of the largest and finest-equipped gymnasia in the United States, being 30 feet by 115 feet. Hoping you will answer my questions, and thanking you beforehand, I remain,

AN ARTIST TIP TOPPER.

1. You should weigh 145 pounds.

2. This will develop the muscles of the forearm.

3. You should advise punching bag and bell.

4. Good, gentle, riding.

5. It is better to exercise before breakfast in all cases.

Pro. Fourmen: I am nineteen years old, weight 130 pounds, height 5 feet 6 inches. My measurements are as follows: Neck, 15 inches; shoulders, 36 inches; chest, 41 1/2 inches; waist, 36 1/2 inches; hips, 35 inches; left leg, 13 inches; right leg, 13 inches; left ankle, 9 inches; right ankle, 9 inches. 1. How is my weight compared to my height? I am well built across the shoulders, not able to throw a ball on the other hand very well. I would like to know how to cure myself of this. I intend to take a regular course in physical appliances this fall, to have one of the largest and finest-equipped gymnasia in the United States, being 30 feet by 115 feet. Hoping you will answer my questions, and thanking you beforehand, I remain,

AN ARTIST TIP TOPPER.

1. Your measurements are good.

2. This will develop the muscles of the forearm.

3. You should advise punching bag and bell.

4. Good, gentle, riding.

5. It is better to exercise before breakfast in all cases.
RUGBY FOOT BALLS GIVEN AWAY!

SECOND ANNUAL ALL AMERICAN FOOT BALL CONTEST

Conducted by TIP TOP WEEKLY
To decide the Scholastic and Amateur Club CHAMPIONSHIP OF AMERICA

550 Rugby Foot Balls AWARDED AS PRIZES
To the Fifty Teams presenting the best scores at the end of the season. Each player in each one of the winning teams will receive One Regulation Rugby Foot Ball...550 in all...
The Greatest Prize Offer Ever Made in the United States for any Athletic Contest

Now's Your Time, Managers! Don't let this splendid opportunity slip through your fingers. Get your teams in trim at once and get in your coupons for every game during the season.

REMEMBER...
That TIP TOP awarded as the prize in last year's Foot Ball Contest the Complete Foot Ball Outfit for One Entire Team.

REMEMBER...
That TIP TOP awarded as prizes in this year's Baseball Tournament Four Complete Baseball Outfits for Four Entire Teams.

MAGNIFICENT PRIZES
SPLENDID OPPORTUNITIES

REMEMBER...
That TIP TOP now offers 550 RUGBY FOOT BALLS--550 in the Second Annual TIP TOP Foot Ball Contest

Greater Opportunities! Better Chances! More Winners!
This time than ever before. Get aboard when the first whistle blows and keep your places till you land some of the great crop of Foot Balls

FOOT BALL POSTERS SOON READY

Read These Directions. Directions for making out Score Coupons: The manager of each competing team after every game should write the names of his players in the left-hand column of Coupon in such a manner that the positions of the respective players are indicated in the middle column, and then write the names of his opponent's team in the right-hand column. In case Score Coupons of more than one game are to be sent in at the same time, only the Coupons of the first game should have the names of the managers' team. In the left-hand column of the remaining Coupons, the manager should write "Regular Team." Be sure to give the name, town and State of both teams.

SCORE COUPON FOR TIP TOP SECOND ANNUAL FOOT BALL CONTEST
(Cut out on dotted line)

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Positions:
E, T, G, C, L, Q, R, L, P, Manager
THREE CHEERS for Prize Photograph No. 15! It takes the First Prize, and is a winner from the first tier way up to the peanut gallery, where we see our nervy little Tip Top Athlete doing a daring feat. Good for the first tier! Good for the second tier! Good for the Top Tip Topper! And best of all for

F. R. ARCHEBURD
of AKRON, OHIO

who took the picture and wins the prize.

THE FIRST PRIZE CONSISTS OF

a Complete Korona Camera Outfit comprising a folding-box camera of polished cherry, all metal work of brass heavily nickle-plated, bellows of best procurable red leather, let-down, extendible front, coverings of black seal-grain cow-hide, focusing apparatus, a special rack and pinion device, three plate holders, each carrying two 4 x 5 plates, instantaneous lens with bulb shutter, all compact in a fine black sole leather carrying case provided with shoulder strap.

THIS IS CERTAINLY A SPLENDID PRIZE

The winner of the Second Prize will be announced in next week's issue.
Twenty-four consolation prizes will be awarded in addition to the First and Second Prizes. Winners to be announced later.

NOW, THEN, EVERYBODY GET BUSY FOR THE SNAP-SHOT WORK OF

Tip Top's Second Annual Photographic Contest

FALL and WINTER SPORTS

The Best Amateur Photograph of Any Fall or Winter Game or Sport takes the First Prize, which will be

A Full PHOTOGRAPHIC OUTFIT

Our Artist Will Act as Judge in the Contest
A CHANCE FOR EVERYBODY

COME ONE! COME ALL!
Tip Top Foot Ball Series.

First Foot Ball Story of the Season appears in Tip Top Weekly, No. 338.

Are you ready for the kick-off of The Second Annual . . . . .

TIP TOP Foot Ball Contest.

Get on the jump!

BEST EVER PUBLISHED.