The Maplewood pitcher was no slouch.
CHAPTER I.
THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

"Well, boys," said Frank, standing with his hands thrust in his pockets and surveying the faces of his companions, the members of his baseball team, who were assembled in his room, "have you enjoyed yourselves?"

They were at the Hotel Imperial, New York, to which they had returned the day following the game with Yale at New Haven.

Up rose Jack, Ready, his cheeks glowing, and, with his habitual queer little flirt of his head, he replied:

"Having exhibited my radiantly beautiful countenance in New York, Boston and New Haven, I am fain to reply that I've enjoyed myself with the keenest relish. Wherever we have traveled I have been the object of unspeakable admiration. How could I help having a good time?"

"Of course we've enjoyed ourselves!" exclaimed Bart Hodge.

"Never since my first oceanic voyage, when I commanded the eleven hundred thousand ton barkentine Slaprizzle manned by a hundred and thirty-seven trusty tars, have I experienced greater felicity," said Capt. Wiley.

"How could we help having a good time, Merriwell?" cried Diamond. "Haven't we trimmed three of the fastest college teams in the country?"

"You bet your boots!" laughed Brad Buckhart.

"Why, beating Yale was more sport than busting a broncho!"

"Correct, partner," nodded Buck Badger. "But the Yale crowd certainly did treat us O. K."

"I've had more than a good time," asserted Bertrand Defarge. "Merry, I owe you——"

"Nothing," smiled Frank. "On the other hand, I owe you all for responding to my call and backing me
up as you have. The thing is over. Our trip is done, and the time has come for us to break up."

"Wait a moment!" cried Ready. "I've lost my handkerchief. Some one lend me a handkerchief to dry my tears."

"The thing I most regret, boys," continued Frank, "is that this has come so soon. Could we hang together longer and continue to play it would give me the greatest pleasure."

"Same here!" cried the others.

"But it can't be," declared Merry, shaking his head. "There's not one of you who could possibly enjoy it more than I. But the time has passed when I can permit baseball to consume all of my attention for more than a brief period. My business interests will not permit it. Sometimes I feel that I should meddle with it at all. Then the old fever gets into my blood and I can't resist the temptation to have a little whirl at the sport."

"I sure was beginning to hope you might keep her up a while longer," said Badger. "I know I ought to be hiking back to the ranch, but still I would have stuck by you another month."

"It's impossible," said Frank. "Both Bart and I must return West to look after our mining interests. We've made arrangements to leave day after to-morrow. Badger will make part of the journey with us. Diamond starts for Virginia in the morning. This is the last occasion when we will all be together to speak of these things. To-night our team disbands. When you leave this room it will exist no more."

"Capt. Wiley," cried Jack Ready, in choking tones of grief, "will you kindly bring me a bedspread from the next room? This handkerchief is already dripping wet."

"This short trip and the sport I've enjoyed with my old-time friends will always remain a pleasant memory to me," said Frank. "I feel that I can get back to hustling now and go at it earnestly. I am satisfied that this thing has done me good. A man needs relaxation and recreation occasionally in these times of hustle and bustle and dig, in order to keep from wearing out. I sincerely hope this is not the last time we may all be together and enjoy ourselves thoroughly. Let's not become lachrymose. Ready has shed enough mock tears for us all."

Jack Diamond stood up.

"When I came over the pond," he said, "I had no idea so many of us would get together and have such a racket, for racket I call it. I don't think it has hurt any of us; I know it hasn't hurt me. In one way it has given me a lot of satisfaction. I have made a discovery. Columbus, when he crossed the pond, discovered a new continent. I have discovered a new Merriwell. The continent Columbus discovered has developed into a corker; the Merriwell I have discovered is certainly something of a corker now, and I expect he will develop into a still greater one. Gentlemen, the satisfaction of seeing Dick Merriwell go into the box in New Haven when Frank was taken ill and Old Eli down the way he did is something that will stick by me as long as I live. No wonder Yale waits with breathless expectancy, the day when he shall enter the gate. Then she will once more rise to her old-time glory on the diamond and gridiron. It will be a great day for the blue. If at that time I am in London, if I am in Siberia, if I am in the heart of darkest Africa, I propose to pull up stakes and turn my face toward New Haven just to watch a while and see the doings. They will be great."

"You bet!" cried Badger. "We'll all be there! I opine there'll be a grand reunion of the old gang the day Dick appears on the diamond wearing a Yale uniform."

Through this speech by Badger, Frank had watched his brother and had seen his cheeks flush with modest confusion. And now, as they all seemed regarding him, young Merriwell felt that he was called on to say something.

"Of course," he began, hastily, "I am—I am mighty glad my brother's friends seem to think so well of me; but, all the same, I can never fill Frank's place at Yale. No one can ever do that. I shall do my best, that's all."

"And that will be good enough!" roared Badger.

"That's right! that's right!" exclaimed the others.

"Boys," said Merry, "this thing makes me feel decidedly good. Just now I think I'm one of the most fortunate chaps in the world. For years I didn't even know I had a brother, and when I found him out under the Rockies he was an impulsive, hot-headed, rebellious, defiant young rascal. But somehow I believed the right stuff was in him. His temperament and inclinations made him rather hard to handle. He was as fiery as a young colt that needed to be tamed. At the same time, in taming him I saw that it was necessary to have a care that his spirit should not be broken. I never used force. I fancied I saw a better way, and I am proud to say the result is satisfactory."
“Hold on!” cried Dick. “Let’s talk about something else!”

All laughed at his confusion, and then followed a general chatting, during which they talked freely of their plans for the future. More than an hour was spent in this manner, but at last the time came for them to separate. They shook hands all round, sang two or three old college songs and then passed out, until only Frank, Dick and Brad Buckhart remained.

As Brad was about to go Merry produced a letter.

“Wait a moment, Buckhart,” he said. “You may be interested in this. I want Dick to hear it.”

He then read the following letter:

“MR. FRANK MERRIWELL:

“Dear Sir: It’s possible you do not remember me, but I and all Maplewood remember you very well. Of course you will remember Maplewood, for some years ago you were captain and manager of a baseball team here. At that time Maplewood sought to enter the Trolley League, which the previous season had been made up of three teams, Rockford, Seaslope and Torrentown. These places fancied Maplewood too small a village to support a successful ball team and objected to admitting us. Through Mr. Bartley Hodge you were induced to bring a ball team here, and by defeating the three original teams in the league you compelled them to admit Maplewood. With that, in spite of everything, in spite of the fact that the salary limit was exceeded by the other places, in spite of opposing teams made up of professionals, in spite of opposition and dissension in our own ranks, you played the season through, making a gallant fight, finally landing Maplewood at the top, winners of the pennant. Under the circumstances it was a great and surprising thing to do. The following year Maplewood played without you and finished at the bottom.

“Temporarily that was the end of the Trolley League, for the four teams wound up the season deeply in debt, and it appeared that baseball in this region had received its death blow. Now, however, although it is late in the season, a new league has been organized to include Rockford, Seaslope and Maplewood. This league was gotten up hastily, but, at the meeting to organize, it was understood the three places should put into the field teams made up mainly of local players, in order to keep the expenses down. Not more than two outside players were to be hired by any team. This thing was favored by Maplewood, and Rockford agreed to it. Within the last day or two we have learned that Rockford intends to break the agreement, which, unfortunately, was not made in writing. We’ve discovered that beyond question Rockford will put into the field a team made up almost entirely of semi-professional players—men hired and paid a regular salary to play baseball. Naturally this aroused our indignation, and a meeting of the backers of the team was held to decide what should be done. Some were for withdrawing and having nothing to do with the league. The majority, however, favored meeting Rockford on her own ground. At that meeting one man announced that he had positive information which satisfied him that Seaslope was following in Rockford’s footsteps. Now, although both Rockford and Seaslope are much larger places than Maplewood, as you are aware, a number of very wealthy summer people come here regularly to stay during the warm weather. We have succeeded in interesting several of these, with the result that money has already been pledged sufficient to back any sort of a team we wish to engage. We have a local team all ready for the field, but we know it’s not strong enough to meet the other two towns.

“In casting about for a man who could be secured to manage our team and land it at the top in the pennant race, your name was mentioned. It created enthusiasm, and a vote was taken to communicate with you with the idea of inducing you, if possible, to come here and bring a ball team. You are no longer in college, and, therefore, it could make little difference to you if you received a stated salary. We are ready to pay you any price you see fit to mention, and you have the privilege of engaging the members of your team, likewise at such salaries as seem proper to you. I sincerely hope you may think well of this and decide to come. If you do so, lose no time, for the league opens next week. We hope to open it with a Merriwell in command of our team. Wire me as soon as possible after receiving this communication.

“Sincerely yours,

“HENRY DUNCAN.”

CHAPTER II.

QUICK WORK.

“That’s the letter, Dick,” said Frank. “What do you think of it?”

“Why, how can you do it?” Dick exclaimed. “Are you really thinking of accepting his offer?”

“No.”

“Then, why—。”

“Oh, I just thought I’d read it to you. I spent a delightful summer at Maplewood. It’s a fine little town, and I confess that when I read this letter I was seized by a desire to go back there. Of course, I knew it was impossible. I have been thinking the matter over to-day before saying anything to you about it, and another scheme has entered my mind. You will spend your summer vacation somewhere. Why not at Maplewood?”
Dick gave a great start, while Buckhart suddenly hit his knee a crack.

"Why—why, Frank," faltered Dick, "do you mean——"

"That's it," smiled Merry. "I can't accept Mr. Duncan's offer, but I can send him a Mrerrwell if you are willing to go. Do you think it possible you might get together some of your friends and make up a team?"

Dick's dark eyes were shining with excitement.

"I don't know," he answered. "Perhaps I might. I can try it."

"Whoop!" cried Buckhart. "That's the talk, pard, let's get together a bunch and hike down Maplewood way. I am certain in for it a whole lot."

"But I thought your father——"

"Oh, yes; he sent for me, but I opine I can fix it with him. I'll wire him the whole facts if it costs forty dollars to send the message. I'll explain it up to him complete and ask can I stay with my pard. Bet a good horse he says yes."

"Your team is started, Dick," nodded Merry. "You have your battery. You need another pitcher—perhaps two; but you can find them, I fancy."

"Do you wish me to do this, Frank?"

"I leave it to you. I know you will enjoy yourself and have lots of sport."

"Do it, pard! Do it!" entreated the Texan.

"But a battery doesn't make a team," said Dick.

"It takes nine men, at the very least; and any team should have one or two extra men on the bench."

"I realize," admitted Merry, "that the notice for getting up a team is decidedly short. Had you known about this before you might have fixed it much more easily. You may not be able to get the right sort of a team together, but you can try it."

"Sure—sure as shooting," said Buckhart.

Dick felt the same enthusiasm, but tried to hold himself in check.

"If I had known this before leaving Fardale——" he said.

"Can't you get word to some of your Fardale friends?" asked Merry. "Can't you wire them? It will be expensive, but you can explain the whole thing fully, so there will be no misunderstanding."

"Brad, what do you think?" exclaimed Dick. "Who shall we go for? It's not likely we can get all of the fellows of the school team."

"Try for them, pard—try for them," urged Buckhart. "There's Gardner—he's a dandy."

"A mighty good man," nodded Dick. "Square as a brick and thoroughly conscientious. I have yet to find anything wrong with Gardner."

"And Jolliby," suggested the Texan.

"He's another. I'll try for him."

"Bradley," Buckhart went on.

"Good! I cried Dick.

"Bob Singleton."

"Hope we can get him."

"Obédié tubs."

"I will try for him."

"That makes five," said Brad.

"Seven with ourselves, in case we are lucky enough to get them all."

"Who's the next man, Dick?"

"Well, Ted Smart is not so bad. I don't know of any more we can get, do you?"

"Well, I opine I know of another, but we don't want him."

"Who is it?"

"Why, Arlington; but, of course, we won't have him on any condition."

Dick shook his head doubtfully; but at once Frank spoke up:

"If you'll accept a suggestion from me," he said, "I'd advise you to try for Arlington. You may fail on some of the others, but Arlington is situated so he can come if he wishes, and you know he can play the game when he is at his best."

"But he certain is too onery," said Buckhart. "I wouldn't trust the galoot as far as I can throw a steer by the tail."

"Boys," said Frank, "you might do a worse thing than to take Chester Arlington. "You know that I am aware of all he has done, yet I believe at times he has been thoroughly sorry; and Dick tells me that toward the close of the term at Fardale Arlington acted quite decent. Give him a show this summer. You will have a chance to see if there's really anything in him. Of course, you can't be sure he'll accept your offer, but something tells me he'll be glad to."

"All right!" growled Brad. "I'm not setting myself up in opposition. Just the same I want to make a little prophecy, which is that in case we have that galoot along with us he does us dirt."

They continued to talk the matter over, becoming more and more earnest and enthused. While thus engaged, the door unceremoniously opened and Cap'n Wiley teetered in on the balls of his feet.
“Excuse me,” he said. “I can’t retire to my downy couch and resign myself to the arms of old Morpheus without once more bidding a fond adieu to the greatest pitcher who ever percolated the atmosphere with a dollar-and-a-quarter Spalding. Mr. Merriwell, although I may soar to the heights of international fame as a ball toster and have a head on which a number eight hat will look like a wart, I will always stand ready to salute you as my superior.”

“Thanks,” laughed Frank. “By the way, Dick, here’s a man for you.”

Immediately Wiley was made aware of what was taking place and showed his interest.

“Will you come along with us?” asked Dick.

“My boy,” said the sailor, “although I have this day signed a contract with the New York Americans, I will jump it and freeze to you for fair. You may count on Little Walter, who will paralyze the Trolley Leaguers——”

“When he is not paralyzed himself,” muttered Buckhart.

Wiley gave the Texan a resentful look, sadly shaking his head.

“I fain would escape from the unsavory reputation which seems to have attached itself to me,” he said. “It seems that even my friends fancy my only ambition in life is to dally with a longnecker. I hate the stuff. Smile not in that sarcastic manner, for truer words were never articulated. I confess that on one or two occasions I have fancied it my ambition in life to settle the temperament question by removing from the country all the corn juice and extract of grape it contained, but at last I am aware that my efforts are vain, and, hereafter, I remain firmly seated on the watering cart. I have signed the pledge, and it’s my intention to become worthy chief of all the Good Templars. Don’t doubt me. To doubt me is to rend my tender heart with anguish.”

“All right, Wiley,” said Dick, “we will depend on you. At least, we have three men for our ball team.”

“And now,” suggested Frank, “let’s hustle down to the Western Union office and get off these messages to the others.”

This they did without delay.

That night before being able to close his eyes in sleep Dick tossed about for a long time, thinking of the project and wondering if it would succeed. At an early hour he rose and dressed and hurried down to see if there were any messages in answer to those he had sent.

Frank was awakened by Dick, who came dancing into the room, waving a number of yellow telegrams and followed closely by Buckhart and Wiley.

“It’s all right, Frank!” Dick cried. “Greatest luck in the world! Reached them all, and they answered right away. Just listen to this:

Then he read the messages, nearly all of which were very brief.

"‘Count on me. Robert Singleton.’

"‘I’ll be there. Earl Gardner.’

"‘It will give me the utmost pain to accommodate you, but I can’t help it. Ted Smart.’

"‘Sure thing. Chip Jollivy.’

"‘I can’t help it. William Bradley.’

"‘If you furnish plenty of pie, dear my picture, I’ll do it. Obediah Tubbs.’

“And here is the last one,” said Dick.

"‘Surprised that you should want me, but I think I’ll be able to come. Chester Arlington.”

“Whoop!” shouted Brad. “Hold me or I’ll certain explode!”

“There’s the team, Frank—there’s the team!” cried Dick. “It’s all right!”

Then they actually pulled Merry out of bed and danced around him hilariously.

“Well, I must say this is double-quick work,” he laughed. “It’s simply amazing that you should reach them all so quickly and get favorable answers. It’s now up to me to send a telegram to Henry Duncan. I’ll assure him that his ball team will be on hand and commanded by a Merriwell.”

CHAPTER III.
WAITING FOR THE TEAM.

Under ordinary circumstances Maplewood was a quiet, sedate, steady-going New England village. True, in midsummer it was far more lively, if such a word may be applied, than at any other season. The summer colony rode, golfed and amused itself in various ways, while the villagers braced up and attempted to put on a little style on their own account.
On a certain bright summer day the village had taken on an air of excitement and expectancy, which seemed to denote that something unusual was transpiring or about to transpire. On the veranda and lawn of the Maple Heights Hotel a great gathering of summer visitors had assembled. They held themselves somewhat aloof from many of the villagers, who were also on hand in the vicinity. The hotel flag fluttered at the top of its staff and the sunshine gleamed on the polished brass cannon planted before the building. Near this cannon stood five men of various ages from twenty-five to fifty. Three of these were summer visitors well known in Maplewood, having made a custom of coming there regularly each year for some time. They were William Drake, Eustace Smiley and Benton Hammerswell. Drake was a quiet, somber-looking man, well up in years; Smiley was ten years younger, florid-faced and corpulent; while Hammerswell had not yet passed twenty-five and had a square jaw and drooping black mustache. The remaining two were villagers by the name of John Cole and Henry Duncan. In his younger days Cole had been a common laborer, but later had obtained a start in the lumber trade and made a fairly comfortable fortune. Still he remained rough and coarse in his manner and speech, indicating that he was a man of very little education. Duncan had some years before discovered the possibilities of Maplewood as a summer resort and shrewdly bought up options on a great deal of land thereabouts. When the boom came he disposed of this land at high prices and rapidly amassed what seemed to the villagers great wealth. He had not yet passed the age of forty.

“Well, well, Mr. Duncan,” said Smiley, rubbing his hands and beaming genially; “it seems that the whole place is interested and anxious to see our baseball team appear. I didn’t suppose these village folks would care so much about it.”

“The reason is simple,” answered Duncan. “Frank Merriwell is remembered by them, and they are anxious to see him again.”

“Yes, he is remembered,” nodded Hammerswell, with a slight sneer. “Some of them don’t seem to think so much of him, either.”

“Oh, I think you’re mistaken, Mr. Hammerswell,” quickly retorted Duncan. “I believe he’s held in the highest esteem here.”

“I think Mr. Duncan is right,” nodded William Drake. “I was not in Maplewood the year this young man brought his ball team here, but I have heard much about him. Almost everybody seems to think him a gentleman, as well as a wonderful baseball player.”

“Oh, he was pretty good as a ball player,” growled John Cole. “And that’s what we hed him fer. We didn’t hire him ter come here and play the gentleman, and we’re not hiring him fer that this time. What we want is a team that can wipe the earth with them other teams. If he can’t bring that kind of an outfit he’d better keep away.”

“I think there’s no question but that he will bring what we want in the way of a ball team,” said Duncan.

“Well, he’s got to bring a pretty good one if it’s better’n the team my son Jack raked together,” declared Cole. “I ain’t just satisfied in my own mind that Jack wasn’t the feller to run the team, anyhow. And while I am speaking of this thing, gentlemen, I want to say that my boy is jest about as good a baseball player as they put up around these parts. I guess he’s good enough ter play on this Merriwell’s team, and I propose ter see him have a show.”

“That’s proper, Mr. Cole,” said Hammerswell, immediately. “Your son can play the game, and the people here want to see him wearing a Maplewood uniform. If he wishes to play this year, I shall stand by you in case you insist he be given a show.”

“Plenty of time to discuss these matters later, gentlemen,” smiled the corpulent member of the quintet.

“All the same, as backers of the ball team and the men what puts up the money for and takes all the risks, I rather think we can talk it over any time we want to,” growled Cole. “It’s likely this yer team will cost us more than a dollar or two.”

“I’m not sure about that,” spoke up Henry Duncan. “I investigated the record of the Merriwells when here before, and, to my surprise, I found it was self-supporting. The backers of the team were not called on to contribute a dollar after the first assessment, and at the end of the season there was enough in the treasury to pay them back every cent they put out to start with.”

“I really don’t see how they did it in such a small place,” said William Drake. “As near as I can find out, they are paying astonishingly high salaries for men in Rockford and likewise in Seaslope. Why, I hear they have paid as high as thirty dollars a week for pitchers, and that outfielders are getting fifteen dollars a week. Besides that, these men are boarded. Why, gentlemen, such salaries are outrageous! The New
England League doesn't pay that sum of money, save to a few special men. It's suicidal!"

"Yes, and it's foolishness to think we kin git a team for little or nothing that will be able to meet professionals who can command such high salaries," said Benton Hammerswell. "It's well enough to talk of what Frank Merriwell did years ago, but conditions have changed. In those times there were no such salaries paid. Your plan may be all right, Mr. Duncan; mind you, I am not saying it isn't; but it's my conviction that Merriwell will find himself up against a difficult proposition this year. Rockford always held the pennant in the old days up to the time when Maplewood got into the league with her college team. The result that year aroused Rockford and now she proposes to bury us. These are facts, and I know it. Maplewood is nothing but a little village, while Rockford is a small city. If we meet here on an even footing, we'll have to go down into our pockets and put out the money to do it."

"I'm against that! I'm against that!" exclaimed Cole. "I don't believe it's necessary. We can't afford it. We'd better not have a baseball team at all than to git stuck all round for lots of money."

"Mr. Cole," said Duncan, quietly, "we have spoken of this matter before and pledged ourselves to stand behind the team regardless of expense. If you wish you can withdraw now. It's not too late. You know you were anxious to get in on an even footing with the rest of us."

This was true, but Cole's anxiety sprang from his desire to see his own son on the Maplewood team. Naturally he was a penurious man, who pinched every coin that touched his fingers and gave up none save with the greatest reluctance. Old Uncle Jim Sprout, the village philosopher and wit, had stated of Cole that he was "so all-fired, goll-darn mean that he would skin a house for its pelt and bile it down fer its lard and taller."

"We'll not worry over this thing now," said William Drake. "Time enough when we find out what sort of a baseball team Mr. Merriwell brings. Isn't it about time for that car to arrive?"

He glanced at his watch and then stated that the car should arrive in view within five minutes.

And now the greater portion of the people assembled in the vicinity of the hotel were gazing down the road toward an opening in the distant woods, through which the expected trolley car must come.

Henry Duncan lighted a long piece of punk, which sent up a little thin wraith of blue smoke. With this punk in his hand, he stood near the breech of the brass cannon.

"There's my boy now!" exclaimed John Cole, as several youngsters appeared at a distance and stood watching the opening in the woods. "Them's some of his ball players with him, and it wouldn't surprise me any ter find out that they can play just as well as most of these college chaps."

There were six boys in the group, and prominent among them was a tall, freckled, sandy youth, who had the air of a leader.

"I want to see this great Merriwell," he was saying. "I remember him, but I didn't think he was such a much."

"I say, Jack," said a thin boy by the name of Joe Goddard, "it strikes me that we fellers ain't been used right. Here we've got together and practiced and supposed we were going to play baseball this year, and now them summer folks git dissatisfied with us and send off for a lot of strangers."

"That's right," growled another, who was known as Tom Bruce. "I threw up a good job to play baseball, and now we can't play. My old man is sore about it, too."

"Say," grinned Len Silver, "my father is tickled to death. He says I am getting baseball crazy, and he's just glad the thing has turned this way."

"I want you fellers to understand one thing," nodded Cole. "I'm going to play baseball this year. They'll have to give me a show, and don't you forget it. My father is on their old committee, and he'll see to that."

"What if they bring a full team?" asked Goddard. "If they do they'll have to discharge somebody, that's all."

"Well, how about the rest of us?" demanded Bruce. "Where do we come in?"

"You wait! you wait!" nodded Cole. "Perhaps these chaps who are coming won't pan out too hefty after all."

"What made all the trouble," said Len Silver, "was Rockford. They didn't stick by their agreement. If they had, we could have played them."

"That's right," asserted Bruce. "With two outside players to make up our team, we could beat any local nine Rockford could scrape up. Why, didn't we beat them three weeks ago?"

"That's what we did, Bruce. And that was the very
thing that made them hot and led them to go back on their agreement and hire professionals."

Suddenly there was a stir among the crowd, and then Goddard cried:

"Here comes the car!"

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CHAPTER IV.

THE DISAPPPONTING RECEPTION.

Boom!

With a mighty roar that made the hills and valleys echo, the little cannon belched forth fire and smoke.

The open trolley car had arrived in front of the hotel, and from it sprang a lot of smiling, bright-faced youngsters.

The crowd cheered and waved hats and handkerchiefs.

"Whatever is this yere, pard?" exclaimed Brad Buckhart, giving Dick Merriwell a nudge. "Is it the fourth of July?"

"It looks to me," said Dick, who was also somewhat surprised, "as if these people were here to give us a reception."

"Hang the reception!" piped Obadiah Tubbs. "What I want is pie! Give me a pie! I am starving to death, by Jim!"

"'Ow remarkable!" said Billy Bradley. "'Ow deucedly strange! Hi didn't hexpect anything like this."

"This must be a red-hot baseball town," chuckled Earl Gardner. "I should sus-sus-sus-say so!" spluttered Chip Jolliby.

"Excuse these few tears!" sobbed Ted Smart. "I am sorry to see so few on hand to welcome us!"

"Well, this certainly does beat all!" grunted big Bob Singleton.

"Mates," observed Cap'n Wiley, "the gorgeous grandeur of this reception agitates my equilibrium and disrupts my equipoise. In my palpitating bosom I feel that we have struck a place where there is something doing. I smell home runs in the air. Methinks I scent low balls and high balls—especially high balls."

"I wonder if this is the ranch we put up at," said Badger, jerking his thumb toward the hotel.

"You will find out in a minute," said Dick. "Here come some gentlemen to meet us."

Headed by Henry Duncan, the committee advanced toward the boys, whom they seemed to be regarding with no small amount of surprise.

"Pardon me, young men," said Duncan. "I wonder if you are the ones we expected. Are you Merriwell's baseball team?"

"Hit it first shot out of the locker," promptly returned Cap'n Wiley. "We are the aggregation that will delight your optical vision by the manner in which we will disport ourselves on the diamond and wipe up the field with the limp and helpless enemy. Yes, we are Merriwell's baseball team."

"A lot of kids!" muttered Benton Hammerswell. "Why, the fellow is crazy to bring babies here to play baseball. Where is he?"

"Yes," said Henry Duncan, "where is Merriwell?"

"Behold him," said Cap'n Wiley, with a sweep of his hand toward Dick. "Here he is."

"Where? Not this boy? I know him well. I have met Frank Merriwell."

"Oh, beg your pardon, sir," said Dick. "I am his brother, Richard Merriwell. He sent me here to fill his place."

"To fill his place?" exclaimed Duncan, in astonishment.

"To fill his place?" sneered Hammerswell, pulling at one end of his dark mustache. "To fill his place!" murmured William Drake, dolefully.

"To fill his place!" said Eustace Smiley, beaming a little even as he shook his head.

"What? You?" exclaimed John Cole, in derision. "You fill his place? He sent you here? Well, say, what sort of a sell is this? And is this the baseball team he sent us—these boys? What do you think of that, Mr. Duncan? What do you think of that, gentlemen? Now how do you like the way your plan has worked?"

"Wait a minute, Mr. Cole," said Duncan. "Let's understand this."

He then turned once more to Dick:

"My boy," he said, "it seems to me there must be some mistake. I thought I explained fully to your brother the fact that we needed a ball team here that would be able to cope with other teams made up of professional players."

Dick was slightly flushed, but he smiled quietly as he said:

"I am sure my brother understood it. He read me the letter."
"But he couldn't have understood it," said Duncan.
"I asked him to come himself, and——"

"It was impossible," said Dick. "He did the best he could for you under the circumstances. Business would not permit him to come."

"But he said——"

"You asked for a team in which he had confidence. You said that Maplewood wished once more to have a team captained by a Merriwell. My brother left the matter entirely to me. I am here with my team, of which I am the captain.

Benton Hammerswell laughed harshly.

"Well, it seems that we have been tricked, Mr. Duncan," he observed. "We have wasted our time and made a spectacle of ourselves by this foolish demonstration. Of course, we all recognize the folly of putting a team like this into the field against Rockford's old staggers and Seaslope's fast professionals."

"I should say so! I should say so!" snapped John Cole. "Why, I'll bet a dollar and a half our local team right here could beat the stuffing out of these fellers. Yes, sir, I'll bet a dollar and a half!"

"Don't be so reckless with your money, Mr. Cole!" said Duncan. "You might lose it."

"I know what I'm talking about!" excitedly asserted Cole. "There's my boy right over there, and, by ginger! he can get together his team in an hour and beat these fellers fair and square."

Dick smiled.

"It's possible you are right, sir," he said. "Still I think we will be willing to make the test if you wish it."

"That's right," said Chester Arlington, who had remained silent up to this point. "That will be the best way to satisfy them."

"Let 'em try it! Let 'em try it!" exclaimed Cole, shaking his fist in the air. "I'll bet two dollars that my boy's team will do 'em up! Yes, by gum! I'll bet two dollars and a quarter!"

"Perhaps," said Dick, "you will permit us to get something to eat before this proposed contest takes place."

"Find out if they've got any pie round here," whispered Obediah Tubbs, crowding nearer to Merriwell. "If I've got to play baseball this afternoon I must have about fifteen triangles of pie."

The summer people had not crowded around the new-comers, but the villagers were on hand, and now their comments were heard by the boys, and many of the things said were far from complimentary.

Arlington's face flushed as he listened, and it was plain that he was angered.

"We didn't come here, Merriwell, to be insulted," he said.

"Keep quiet," advised Dick. "Perhaps it was a mistake not to let them know Frank wouldn't be with us."

"Somebody is sure going to hear from me pretty soon," muttered Brad Buckhart, feeling his fighting blood stirred.

"We'll have to talk this thing over, boys," declared Mr. Duncan. "In the meantime here is the hotel, and we have made arrangements for you to stop there. You will find dinner ready for you at the regular hour."

"What are you going to do?" demanded John Cole. "Are you going to feed these fellows? This ain't the kind of a team we called fer, and I don't see no reason why we should pay anything fer their grub. I'm agin' it!"

"At least we'll have to give them one meal," pacifically observed Eustace Smiley. "We can do nothing less."

"I am agin' it! I am agin' it!" palpitated Cole. "I don't propose to pay a cent of my money fer it."

"It won't be necessary, Mr. Cole," said William Drake. "You are right, Mr. Duncan. Even if we are not satisfied, the least we can do is to put them up for the time being."

"Mr. Duncan," said Dick, "in case you are not satisfied and we don't remain here, rest assured it shall cost this gentleman nothing. I think I can look out for that."

"All right," said Cole. "You know where I stand, I'm agin' it!"

As the boys marched up the walk to the hotel, led by Henry Duncan, they were regarded curiously by the summer people, and not a few of these expressed disappointment over the youthfulness of the ball players.

The boys were shown to their rooms, but a few moments later they had assembled in the room assigned to Dick and Buckhart.

"What do you th-th-th-think, Dick?" said Jolliby.

"I more than half expected it," was the reply. "They were looking for older chaps."
“I feel that we have been insulted!” exclaimed Chester Arlington.
“I am simply delighted!” declared Ted Smart.
“Wait,” said Capt. Wiley. “When they see us doing stunts they will immediately change the erroneous opinions they have formed so hastily.”
“By Jim!” piped Obediah Tubbs. “It kinder seems to me we’re going to have a baseball game on our hands right away. They think they’ve got a bunch here in town that can put us to the woods.”
“Look here, Jolliby,” said Dick, “will you look after our baggage? It will be along on the next car.”
“And I wouldn’t be sus-sus-surprised if it went away on a cuc-cuc-cuc-car pretty soon after that,” muttered Chip.
There was a rap on the door, and Henry Duncan stood there.
“I’d like to speak with Mr. Merriwell,” he said.
“I’d like to have a few words with you in private, my boy.”
“All right,” said Dick. “Come in, sir. Boys, I’ll see you all at dinner.”
They departed and left Dick with Henry Duncan.
“I am very sorry about this business,” declared the man. “To confess the truth, my boy, I don’t understand how your brother happened to send you here.”
“Mr. Duncan,” Dick retorted, “I assure you my brother seldom makes mistakes, and if he had not felt fully satisfied that we could fill the bill he would not have sent us.”
“But it’s plain he doesn’t understand the situation here this year. The teams Maplewood have to meet are much stronger than when he was here some years ago. That being the case, he should have brought a stronger team himself, or at least sent one that was stronger. Rockford is paying fancy salaries and securing leaguers. It’s simply out of reason that a lot of youngsters like you and your team can hope to cope with professionals and with leaguers.”
“You may be right, sir, but I hope Maplewood will give us a chance to show what we can do.”
“You are not college men? At least all of you can’t be. You’re too young. Where are you from?”
“There are none of us college men. We are all from Fardale, the school at which my brother fitted for college.”
Duncan shook his head.
“It won’t do! It won’t do!” he declared. “I am afraid this is the end of baseball this year for Maplewood. Still I shall do my best to see the thing started. It’s too late to make any changes. There may be some good players among your men, and it’s possible we can pick up a team by adding some local men. This will start the season, and in the meantime we can be gathering in other players.”
Dick’s face was flushed and he promptly said:
“In case any of us remain here it will be necessary for all to start the season together. I shall not agree to any change. The men I have brought with me have been playing together this year and therefore are in condition to do their best. We have our signals and team work, and any changes will be to our detriment.”
“But the committee——”
“The committee cannot form a just opinion until they have seen what we can do.”
“It’s too bad, too bad!” muttered Duncan. “However, I will do my best. The committee has decided to meet this afternoon and discuss the matter. I shall advise and insist that your team be given a show. That’s all I can promise. And I am aware that I shall be strongly opposed. In case a vote is taken not to accept your team, I wish you to understand that I have done my best.”

CHAPTER V.

BENTON HAMMERSWELL GETS TO WORK.

Dick strolled out onto the hotel veranda before dinner.
On the steps two men were talking in low tones. They were John Cole and Benton Hammerswell.
As Merriwell came out of the hotel he heard Cole say:
“Then that settles it, Mr. Hammerswell. I guess we can fix it all right. We’re three to two.”
“Depend on me, Cole,” said Hammerswell. “All right. ’Sh! There’s one of ‘em now. That’s the fellow you’re looking for.”
Hammerswell turned and saw Dick, who had stopped and was regarding the two men quietly.
Cole gave the boy a contemptuous stare and then turned away.
Immediately Hammerswell mounted the steps and approached Dick.
“So you’re Frank Merriwell’s brother?” he said, regarding the lad keenly with his piercing eyes.
“Yes, sir, I am his brother.”
“Well, I want to talk to you.”
“Very well, sir; I am at your service.”
“Why didn’t your brother come?”
“I think I have explained that he couldn’t.”
“I’ve been wanting to see him,” Hammerswell declared, and there was a certain savageness in his voice.
“Do you know why?”
“I am sure I do not.”
“Do you want to know?”
“I see no particular reason why I should care to know, sir.”
“All the same, I am going to tell you. I have a little grudge against your brother. That’s why I voted to have him come here this summer.”
“Strange reason.”
“Oh, I don’t know. Did you ever hear of the Hon. Artemus Hammerswell?”
Dick shook his head.
“I don’t think so, sir. Who is he?”
“He was my uncle. He was here some years ago when your brother brought his wonderful ball team to this town. His son, Herbert, my cousin, was also here. They were interested in baseball at that time, as I am now.”
“Well, sir?”
“I am not going through all the particulars, but your brother treated my cousin in a pretty dirty manner. They were enemies.”
“And because they were enemies at that time you voted to have Frank come here again? That’s most remarkable.”
“Wait till I’ve finished, boy. After leaving Maplewood both my cousin and my uncle met your brother again. Never mind what the trouble was, but in the most contemptible manner your brother put up a job on them, with the result that they got it in the neck. I heard all about it from Herbert, and I promised him if ever I had the opportunity to get even with Frank Merriwell that I would do so. That’s why I was anxious to have your brother come here.”
“You are very frank, Mr. Hammerswell!” exclaimed Dick, his eyes flashing. “You have no hesitation in telling me that you voted to have my brother come here this summer in order to give you the opportunity to settle an old grudge. You didn’t vote for the interests of Maplewood. Evidently you were a hypocrite!”
“Be careful, boy! I will not take much of that from you! I am not the sort of a man for you to talk to in such a manner. Herbert was a quiet, peaceable chap, and your brother imposed on him in every way. I hoped he might try the same thing with me. As a member of the athletic committee I propose to have some say in football matters here, and it was my intention that he should know it. They tell me that he ran the ball team when he was here just about as he pleased. I assure you he would have found it difficult this year.”
“You mean, sir, that you propose to be the dictator. Is that it?”
Hammerswell nodded.
“Well, Mr. Hammerswell, I fancy you would have found your hands full. You would have found my brother a hard man to govern. Had you made suggestions he would have considered worthy of consideration, I know he would have considered them; but had you given orders that he regarded outrageous or detrimental to the interests of the baseball team, your orders would not have amounted to that!”
Dick snapped his fingers.
“Evidently you think your brother a wonderful person,” sneered Hammerswell. “Well, I am going to show you just about how much power he would have had here. He has sent you in his place. How long do you think you will stay?”
“If I am given a fair show I think I will stay during the rest of the summer.”
“You will pack up and return to-night!” returned the man, grimly.
“As soon as that?” said Dick, with a smile. “Do you really think so?”
“I know it! What use have we for you and that lot of kids you brought? We have no use for you, and you will be packed, bag and baggage.”
“It isn’t possible, sir,” inquired Dick, sarcastically, “that we might be able to remain another day? Do you own the whole town?”
“I don’t like your tone, youngster. I don’t own the whole town, but I tell you now that the Maplewood athletic committee cannot be imposed on, and this afternoon they will vote to fire you.”
“You seem positive.”
“I am.”
“Then it is all fixed?”
“Practically fixed.”
“You don’t propose to give us the slightest chance to show what we can do?”
“It isn’t necessary.”
“Not necessary?”
“No. Anyone who is not foolish knows you and
your team can’t cope with the Rockford team. Why should we bother with you? I want to tell you now that I have already wired a man in Boston to gather some players and send them here without delay.”

“You have done this before the committee met, have you?”

“Exactly.”

“You seem somewhat hasty, Mr. Hammerswell. It will be too bad if you have made a mistake.”

“I make no mistakes. When you see your brother tell him Benton Hammerswell fired you. Tell him Benton Hammerswell means some day to settle an old score with him.”

“It’s possible, Mr. Hammerswell, that you have all the authority you claim. It’s possible you may be able to fire us without giving us the slightest show to demonstrate what we can do. I don’t deny that, but let me tell you something. I have come down this way to play baseball, and I propose to remain in the Trolly League.”

This brought a sneering laugh from the man.

“Where do you think you will stay?” he asked, decisively. “Do you think Rockford will want a stripping like you when she has plenty of men? Do you think Seaside will take you? If you do you’re foolish.”

“That’s all right,” returned Dick, quietly. “I have told you I shall stay. If possible, I propose to stay right here in Maplewood.”

“But it isn’t possible.”

“We shall see, sir,” said Dick, and immediately turned his back on Hammerswell and walked away to the end of the veranda.

Some of the guests of the hotel had heard a part of this conversation, for there were more than a score of them lounging about on the veranda.

“Insolent young puppy!” muttered Hammerswell, glaring after Dick. “What he needs is a good trimming. I think I’ll set Jack Cole on him and see that he gets a trimming before he leaves this place. Cole will take delight in giving him a pair of black eyes.”

Muttering to himself, Hammerswell entered the hotel and sought the proprietor, whom he found.

“Mr. Gray,” he said, “if I were in your place I’d plan to have a few vacant rooms in the morning. If anyone applies for rooms occupied by the members of this so-called baseball team take my advice and let those rooms for occupancy to-morrow morning.”

“What do you mean?” asked Gray, in surprise.

“Those rooms will be vacated.”

“I like that!” exclaimed the hotel man. “Why, I’ve put myself out to hold those rooms for those baseball players! I might have let two of them to-day. Just to accommodate you and Mr. Duncan I took the ball players in here, although I thought it poor policy.”

“I am sorry, sir, if we advised you wrongly. Under the circumstances I will see that you lose nothing. In fact, on thinking the matter over, I will pay you full price for all you lose, but you are to give notice at once to Richard Merritt and his ball players that you must have the rooms.”

“Well, Mr. Hammerswell,” said the hotel man, “if you agree to stand for my losses—”

“I do if you agree to give them notice right away. Let them have dinner, but notify them directly after dinner that you have no room for them in your house. Will you do so?”

“Why, yes, if Mr. Duncan—”

“Never mind Mr. Duncan. The athletic committee meets at two o’clock, and it will vote not to accept this baseball team.”

“Do you know this for a fact?”

“I know it for a fact, sir. I have brought you considerable custom, Mr. Gray, and in this matter you can afford to take a suggestion from me and follow it.”

“Indeed you’re right, Mr. Hammerswell; I shall do so.”

“Very good,” said Hammerswell. “That’s all. Perhaps you’d better suggest to them that, on account of the prejudices of your guests, who don’t care to have them in the house, you find it necessary to have them leave immediately. Don’t let them remain here overnight.”

“All right,” nodded Gray.

Hammerswell then purchased cigars, lighted one and strolled out.

CHAPTER VI.

PERCY SAPPINGTON MAKES A MISTAKE.

As Dick walked toward the end of the veranda a young chap in summer flannels rose from one of the easy-chairs and gave the boy a somewhat curious though coldly contemptuous glance. He was a fellow with an unusually receding chin and unusually large nose.

“Aw,” he muttered, “one of those common ball players.”
Then he passed Dick, taking care not to touch him, and walked away.

Young Merriwell smiled slightly.

"Formerly called a dude," he thought; "now known as a sissy."

Dick sat down in the chair just vacated and surveyed the beautiful scene before him, for the hotel was situated on an elevation where he could look away over a considerable expanse of country. The village lay in a valley to the left, while before the hotel were wooded hills and a beautiful lake. Down the road toward the village Dick saw a fenced field and immediately decided that the strip enclosed was the baseball ground.

Perhaps he had remained there five minutes admiring the scene when he was surprised to hear a voice close beside him, which said:

"Aw! That's my chowder. Get up, boy, and let me have it."

Glancing up, Dick saw the dudish man in flannels had returned and was standing near, smoking a cigarette.

Now had this chap approached and politely suggested to Dick that he had vacated the chair temporarily, the boy might have given it up; but the insolent tone and words, combined with the youth's contemptuous manner, proved most irritating.

"Your chair?" said Dick. "Do you own it? or does it belong to the hotel?"

"By Jove! I was sitting there, don't you know."

"You were sitting there? And did you place a mortgage on the chair when you left it?"

"But it's not polite to take a gentleman's chair."

"I was not aware I had taken a gentleman's chair," retorted the boy, in a cutting manner that could not be misunderstood:

"You're insolent—devilish insolent! It's plain you have no breeding! I am a guest at this hotel."

"If the other people can stand it, perhaps I can," said Dick.

The face of the youth flushed.

"Perhaps you don't know me? My name is Sappington—Percival Sappington."

Having made this statement, he paused as if fully expecting Dick to be quite overcome with awe.

"Never heard of you, Percy," Merriwell retorted; "but I assure you, your name seems to be a perfect fit.

This was not lost on Sappington, who could not fail to feel the sarcasm in the boy's words and manner.

"I decline to waste furthur time on you!" he snapped. "Get up at once and give me that chowder!"

Dick settled back in a more comfortable position.

"Couldn't think of it, Percy," he laughed. "You will have to find another chowder. I know it will be a terrible exertion for you, but perhaps you will live through it."

"I hate to soil my hands on you, young fellow," said Sappington; "but, really, I shall remove you from that chowder unless you remove yourself."

"You annoy me," said Dick. "Go away before I am tempted to get up. Run away and find your keeper, Percy, and tell him to tie you up somewhere. You should not be roaming around at large like this."

"Aaw, by Jove! I see I will really have to do it!" cried Sappington, as he seized Dick by the collar and attempted to drag him from the chair.

Instantly something happened to Percy. Dick rose in a twinkling, and somehow Percival's nose got between his thumb and forefinger. That nose was given a terrific twist with the result that a squawk of pain escaped the lips of its owner.

"Now go away, Saphead—I mean, Sappington," said Dick, "and don't bother me any more."

Sappington's cigarette had dropped to the floor, sending up a little burst of sparks, and the fellow stood clinging to his nose and glaring at Dick.

"You wretch!" he panted.

His cry had caused some consternation among the guests, who were greatly shocked by what they saw.

As Dick sat down without giving Sappington any further attention, the fellow fancied he saw his opportunity, and with his clinched fist he made a blow at the boy's head, having stepped forward to do so.

Dick suddenly leaned forward a little, and Sappington's fist shot past the back of his neck. Instantly young Merriwell reached up with his right hand and seized the fellow's wrist. With a downward and forward surge he actually sent Sappington in a half circle through the air clear around the back of his chair. Percy came round to the front all spraddled out, with his arm and shoulder terribly wrenched. He was quite out of breath and entirely unprepared for what followed as Dick rose and seized him by the collar with one hand and a convenient portion of the trousers with the other, lifted him bodily, and dropped him over the veranda railing to the lawn.

"There, Percy," said Dick, leaning on the rail and looking down at the chap, who had fallen in a sitting
posture on the grass and was staring upward, "I hope you're not badly rumpled. You compelled me to do it, and the day is altogether too warm for such unnecessary exercise. Take my advice and go tell your master to put a dog collar and chain on you."

Dick sat down once more, seeming quite undisturbed.

Sappington rose and shook his fist at the boy.
"You will be sorry for this, by jingo!" he shrilly cried. "I will make you sorry for it!"

Then he walked away, rubbing his arm and shoulder.

CHAPTER VII.
GIVEN NOTICE.

A clean-cut, brown-eyed youth on the veranda had witnessed the encounter between Sappington and Dick. He now approached the latter, laughing a little as he spoke.

"I beg your pardon," he said. "I am not going to claim that chair. I want to congratulate you on the clever manner in which you disposed of Mr. Sappington. I happen to know him. He's been stopping in my town lately and is simply spending a few days here in Maplewood. You are Dick Merriwell, Frank Merriwell's brother?"

"Yes," nodded Dick. "I am sorry I had trouble with that chap, but he forced me into it."

"I saw it; I heard it. You were not to blame. I was about to speak to you when he came back and demanded the chair. Of course you don't know me. My name is Garrett—Raymond Garrett. I have seen you before."

"Indeed?" said Dick. "I think you have the advantage of me, Mr. Garrett."

"Without doubt. I will tell you where I saw you. It was at New Haven a week ago. I am a Yale man."

Instantly Dick was on his feet and had grasped the outstretched hand of Raymond Garrett.

"A Yale man!" he exclaimed, his eyes glowing. "Then I am glad to know you—mighty glad to know you! My brother—"

"It is doubtful if you can tell me a great deal about your brother that I have not heard," smiled Garrett. "Every Yale man knows all about Frank Merriwell. Every Yale man is intensely proud of him. Didn't we give him a red-hot reception?"

"Certainly it was red-hot," laughed Dick. "Why, it made my blood tingle."

"And wasn't that a game, Dick?" cried Garrett, with his hand on the boy's shoulder. "Say, that was the greatest game of baseball I ever saw, but what made it most remarkable was that you went in and pitched it through after Frank was taken ill. Shame he was taken ill! Do you know, I have heard about that! Why, they say he was drugged! A waiter at the hotel did the trick, but he got full afterward and told of it. It was outrageous!"

"Frank knew something of the sort had happened to him," said Dick.

"He was lucky to have a brother who could go into the box and hold Old Eli down. Do you know how I happened to be here to-day? Well, I will tell you. We heard over on the island that he was coming with his baseball team, and I came over to see him."

"He couldn't come," explained Dick.

"And so he sent you? Well, you will be liable to show these people down here a little baseball, I'm thinking."

"I don't know about that," Dick returned, as Garrett found a chair near by and drew it up.

"Don't know about it?" cried the Yale man, as both were seated. "How's that? I hear there's some disappointment because your team is made up of such young fellows, but—"

"It's worse than disappointment," Dick asserted. "A short time ago I was informed that the team will not be accepted by Maplewood."

"What?"

"That's right."

"Who told you?"

"One of the committee, and he seems to know. He was confident of his position."

"But it isn't possible they won't give you a show," said Garrett. "Of course they will do that! If they do, you will be able to convince them that you can deliver the goods."

"I have been told that we will not be given a show. I have been told that already other men have been wired for."

"Outrageous!" declared Garrett. "It's an imposition! They must be crazy! What are you going to do?"

"I haven't decided yet."

"Well, see here, can't you fellows come over to the island and stop a while with me? Now you're down
here we might be able to give you a good time. We have a little town over there called Fairhaven. It's not a very large place, but there's plenty of fishing and sailing."

"Thank you," said Dick. "It's fine of you, Mr. Garrett——"

"Don't call me mister, please. My front name is Raymond—call me Ray. When I go back to college I'll throw out my chest and inform the fellows how I became acquainted with Frank Merriwell's brother. They'll all stand round and envy me."

Garrett laughed heartily. He was such a frank, open, wholesome chap that Dick felt himself strangely attracted to him.

"All right, Ray," he said; "and you make it Dick. That's getting on familiar terms pretty quick; but I hope in this case familiarity will not breed contempt."

"Not on my side of the house, I am sure," nodded the Fairhaven youth. "Let's see, what was the name of that chap who did the catching for you at New Haven?"

"Buckhart."

"Yes, that's it. Say, he was a corker behind the stick! Don't believe he's much, if any, older than you, either. The way he handled your hot ones was simply great, and he could line the ball down to second, couldn't he?"

"Brad is a good man. He and I have worked together until we know each other thoroughly. He's here with me."

"And the rest of your team—how is it made up?"

"It's made up of Fardale players. I know we're young, and that's one reason why these people here seem to think we're not in the same class with Rockford and Seaslope. I can't say that we are, but——"

"They should give you a show. Your brother sent you, you say?"

"Yes."

"Well, Frank Merriwell knows his business, and I am sure your team is all right."

"Thank you, Ray."

At this moment Buckhart, Jolliby and Gardner came out of the hotel, saw Dick and drew near. They were introduced to Garrett, who shook hands with them in that hearty manner of his and made them like him instantly.

"Mighty glad to know you, boys," he said. "I've just invited Dick to take you all and bring you over to Fairhaven for an outing. I will do my best to make it pleasant for you."

He then explained where Fairhaven was, and when he had finished Buckhart said:

"What's this yere I hear rumored, Dick? They are talking in the hotel about some sort of a ruction out here, and I heard your name mentioned."

Garrett laughingly related what he had witnessed. And then Earl Gardner spoke up:

"I've heard something else. They say we're not liable to remain here very long."

"Gug-gug-gug—going to get our walking pup-pup-pup-papers," grinned Jolliby. "This is a gug-gug-gug—great baseball trip, this is!"

At this moment the proprietor of the hotel walked up to the little group and singled out Dick.

"Mr. Merriwell," he said, "I must give you notice."

Dick turned and faced him.

"Of what, Mr. Gray?" he asked.

"You know, young man, that your rooms here were engaged by the baseball committee."

"I presumed so."

"That's right. Well, I've been informed that the committee will not hold themselves responsible, as it seems your brother was the one they expected and they are dissatisfied. That being the case, you may save yourself trouble by not having your baggage taken up to your rooms."

"In other words, we're invited to leave."

"It's a matter of business with me," said Mr. Gray. "My house is full and almost overflowing now. I can't bother with you."

"But, if we choose to remain at our own expense, I presume we can do so."

The hotel man shook his head.

"No," he said, positively.

"Why not?" Dick indignantly demanded.

"Because I have no room for you."

"The rooms we have are satisfactory."

"But haven't I made it plain to you that those rooms are engaged by the baseball committee? I have been duly notified that they will not pay the bills if you remain in them. There are no other rooms for you in the house."

"Mr. Gray," said Raymond Garrett, "you must see that this outrageous treatment can do you and your house no good."

"I am running this hotel, young man! I know my business and want no suggestions from you."
“But you cannot turn guests out of doors after taking them in, unless they do something to give you just cause.”

“Already there have been complaints,” said Gray. “It seems that Mr. Merriwell has engaged in an encounter with one of my guests since arriving here. That’s quite sufficient. It is cause enough. I’ll not have such things around this hotel. He must go and his friends with him. That’s all there is to it. There’s nothing more to be said.”

“Very well,” said Dick, “it’s quite enough. We’ll go out at once, boys.”

CHAPTER VIII

CHALLENGED BY JACK COLE.

There was consternation among the boys when they learned from Dick that he had decided to leave immediately.

Obadiah Tubbs set up a yell of dismay.

“But I am hungry!” he cried. “Dern my picter, I am just famished for a piece of pie! Where be we going to eat, Dick?”

Once more they were assembled in Dick’s room, having been called there by their captain.

“We will find some place,” he said.

“I’ll find a place for you,” declared Ray Garrett, who had met them all. “I don’t blame Dick for not staying a moment longer. There’s a little restaurant down in the village, and you can get something there.”

“Pie?” questioned the fat boy, in great anxiety.

“I believe pie is one of their staples,” laughed Garrett.

“Thank goodness!” said Obed. “My life is saved!”

A short time later the boys marched out of the hotel with their gripes and their hand bags and turned toward the village.

Chester Arlington was thoroughly disgusted.

“This sort of treatment makes me hot!” he declared. “If this is what we’re going up against down here, I have had about enough of it.”

“Don’t get sore,” said Dick. “I am sore enough myself.”

“But I came down here to play baseball, not to get kicked out of a hotel,” said Chester. “First time I was ever put out of a hotel in my life. Perhaps if they knew my father is D. Roscoe Arlington——”

“Why don’t you go back and tell them?” muttered Buckhart.

“Now don’t get fresh, Buckhart!” exclaimed Chet. “I might have told them. I might have stayed there. If I choose to stick by you, don’t get nasty.”

“Don’t be so almighty touchy,” said Brad. “Why can’t you stand a little chaffing, like anyone else?”

“I’m in a poor mood to stand chaffing,” growled Chester.

They filed down into the village and came at last to the restaurant. Arlington sniffed in disgust as he surveyed the place on entering.

“Dirty joint,” he said. “I can’t eat here.”

“You ought to rough it some more in the West,” laughed Dick. “I should fancy you would be used to almost anything.”

“I always get the best they have wherever I go,” Chet asserted. “The knowledge that there is in this town a good hotel where people live like human beings is enough to gall me when I think of eating here. I don’t believe I want anything to eat. I’ll just go out and take a walk to cool down.”

“Better stay and have something,” Dick urged. “You must be hungry like the rest of us.”

Arlington declined to stay, but the others found seats and gave their orders. The food did not prove to be so bad after all, and finally, with joking and laughing, they cheered up.

Raymond Garrett ate with them, but finished before the others and excused himself, saying he had business to which he must attend and that he would return as soon as possible.

“If that committee actually takes a vote to drop you,” he said, “which it seems beyond question they will do—or Hammerswell was a fool to have you warned out of the hotel—we could catch the late afternoon boat from Rockford and get over to Fairhaven to-night. I will be on hand.”

The boys had aroused the interest of the villagers as they marched along the street and entered the restaurant, and there was a small gathering in front of the place when they came out. In this cluster of villagers were two fellows wearing baseball uniforms. They were Jack Cole and Tom Bruce. The moment Dick appeared Jack Cole stepped forward and stopped him.

“Say,” he said, surveying Dick with ill-bred contempt, “you’re the boss of this crowd, ain’t yer?”

“Not exactly,” answered Dick.

“Ain’t yer name Merriwell?”

“Yes.”

“Then ye’re the feller I’m looking fer. I am Jack
Cole, and I am captain of the Maplewood ball team. My old man says you think you can beat anything on earth. We’re going to have practice this afternoon; but, if you want to, you can come over to the ground and we’ll chew you up. We can beat the stuffing out of you and not half try.”

“Whoop!” cried Buckhart. “That’s the kind of talk that moves me some!”

“Even so,” said Cap’n Wiley. “It agitates my lumber nerves. I propose that we perambulate to the ball park and pass the sphere. It will give me great pleasure to accommodate these strenuous young gentlemen.”

“We dare you to play us!” growled Tom Bruce.

“That’s right,” nodded Cole. “We dare you come, if you’ve got any pluck.”


“I think we’d better, fellows,” smiled Dick. “At least, we will get one game of baseball in Maplewood.”

“Sure thing,” agreed Buckhart.

“Come on,” grinned Cole. “You can follow us right over to the baseball ground. The rest of our fellers will be there pretty soon, if they are not there now.”

“You will have to wait for us to get into our suits,” said Dick. “I suppose our trunks are still at the hotel. I will send up for the suits, and we will come over to the ball ground as soon as possible.”

“They won’t come, Jack,” said Tom Bruce, sneeringly. “They’ll back out. They’re just fixing it so they can back out.”

“Don’t worry about that,” assured Dick. “We’ll come over just as I have agreed and let you beat us—if you can.”

“You bet your life we can!” nodded Cole. “We won’t let a lot of dudish-looking stiffs like you fellers beat us for a thousand dollars.”

At this a number of village boys, who had gathered about, set up a shout.

“That’s right, Jack—that’s right!” they cried. “We’ll all be there to watch yer.”

“If you don’t come——” began Cole.

“Don’t worry,” retorted Dick, in annoyance. “I’ve promised to be there, and I have a way of keeping my promises.”

“All right,” nodded the captain of the Maplewood locals; “I’ll go over and tell the fellers you’re coming. You will find us waiting.”

Dick inquired where he could find a truckman to take the baggage from the hotel. In a short time a man was found who promised to get the stuff without delay.

“Hitch your team right up,” said Dick. “I’ll go up to the hotel with you. While you’re getting your team I will find a place to store the baggage until we wish to move it again.”

Such a place was found, and Dick made arrangements to use an upper room in the building as a dressing room.

He then accompanied the truckman to the hotel, from which the trunks were taken. Somewhat to Dick’s surprise, he saw Chester Arlington standing on the hotel veranda in conversation with Benton Hammerswell. This sight gave Merriwell an unpleasant feeling, and there was a frown on his face when he approached Chester.

“Hello, Arlington!” he said. “What are you doing back here?”

Chet gave a slight start, and his face flushed a little as he turned and saw Dick.

“I came back for something to eat,” he said. “Seems to be the only place in town where a human being can get anything fit to put into his stomach.”

“And you are here after we were put out of the place?” asked Dick, in accusing surprise.

“Sure! I didn’t propose to starve!”

Hammerswell stood tugging at one end of his drooping mustache and regarding Dick with a sullen frown.

“Are you aware, Arlington,” Merriwell inquired, “that this man is the one who caused our sudden and unceremonious departure? Are you aware that he is the one who has spoiled all our plans?”

“Is he?” asked Arlington.

“He is,” Dick nodded. “I thought it possible if you knew you wouldn’t be seen talking with him openly.”

“Oh, we were just speaking about baseball in this place,” Chester falteringly said. “He was telling me that he was greatly disappointed over what had happened.”

“He looks it!” said Merriwell, with deep sarcasm.

“He caused it all, and yet he is greatly disappointed! I presume you believe him?”

“Why, I suppose he doesn’t understand. If he did——”
“Well, you understand, Arlington. It’s plain enough to you. We’ve been practically kicked out of this hotel through the orders of Mr. Benton Hammerswell.”

“Thanks!” said Hammerswell, sneeringly. “I think I’ve shown you that the people of Maplewood can’t be imposed on by a lot of kids calling themselves hall players. Don’t blame me; blame your brother. He had no business to send a lot of boys here. We want men.”

Dick gave the man no attention, but continued to speak to Chester.

“We’re going to play the local ball team right away,” he said. “We’ve been challenged by their captain, and the boys are down at a restaurant, where we will change our clothes. I have sent the baggage down there now. There goes the truckman with it. Come on, Arlington.”

“I’ll be right along,” said Chester. “I haven’t settled for my dinner. I must do that.”

“Then you will come?”

“Yes, yes; I will be right along, I tell you.”

“All right,” said Dick, and turned away, while Arlington started for the hotel office.

CHAPTER IX.
THREE UP; THREE DOWN.

When they appeared at the Maplewood ball ground Dick and his friends found a surprisingly large crowd assembled there. Cole had taken pains to let the villagers know the locals would play the new ball team; but all the spectators were not villagers, for the report had spread among the summer visitors, and many of them were on hand.

“Here they come!” cried an urchin, near the gate.

As Dick and his followers marched through the gate a crowd of boys set up shouts of mockery and derision.

“Look at ’em!” shouted one. “Ain’t they pretty fellers!”

“Where’d they git them suits?” came from another.

“What’s the big ‘F’ stand for?” inquired a third.

“It stands for fools!” bellowed a chap, who evidently thought himself something of a wit.

Dick and his friends were wearing the old Fardale suits, each of which had a large letter “F” on the bosom of the shirt. These suits looked as if they had seen hard usage, but somehow they gave the wearers an appearance of businesslike determination.

“See the lanky chap!” was the cry, as Chip Jolliby marched in.

“Wow! wow! Look at fatty—look at fatty!”

“Derp your picters!” squeaked Obediah Tubbs. “Go ahead and have your fun now! I have just ett seven pies, and I’m right in trim! By Jim! I’ll show you a few stunts!”

This brought another derisive howl from the crowd of boys.

The local team had been practicing, but they paused to look the strangers over.

“We can eat ’em, Jerry,” asserted the shortstop, speaking to the third baseman.

“If we don’t beat the stuffing out of them I’ll never play baseball again,” retorted the third baseman.

“Come on, fellers,” ordered Cole, “let them have the field for practice.”

Dick and his followers stopped near one of the benches, threw down their bat bags and got out their mitts and other paraphernalia.

“Where hin thunder is Harlington?” inquired Billy Bradley. “’E hought to be ’ere.”

Chester Arlington had not appeared according to his promise. Since leaving the Maple Heights Hotel Dick had seen nothing of him.

“Never mind,” he said. “We’ve nine men without him. A word to you, boys. Get around close.”

They packed close about Dick, who gave them some instructions in a low tone.

“Yee! yee!” shrilled the derisive village youngsters.

“They are holding a pow wow! They’re fixing it all up ter beat yer, Jack!”

Cole laughed at this.

“Of course they’ll do it,” he said. “Of course they will—I don’t think!”

The field being clear, Dick’s team trotted out into their positions. The practice that followed amused the witnesses, for the visitors fell over their own feet in going after balls, threw wild and high, muffed flies and dodged liners. In fact, it was a comedy of the most uproarious sort while it lasted.

One man among the summer visitors who were on hand was William Drake, who watched this practice with growing disappointment and disgust. At last he turned to a man at his side and observed:

“I thought it possible those boys might be able to play a little and that we were too hasty in our judg-
ment of them; but now I see that I was wrong and am satisfied we have no use for them."

"I should say not!" said his companion. "It's too bad! I can't understand why Frank Merriwell sent them here. Of course you will not keep them?"

"That's practically settled now," nodded Drake. "Hammerswell was rather hasty about having them warned out of the hotel, but I shall support him now."

"Are you going to watch any of the game?"

Drake looked at his watch.

"I haven't time," he answered. "The committee meets at two, and it's ten minutes of two now."

"Well, it's evident you won't miss anything," laughed the other man.

"I may miss a roaring farce, but that would make me still more angry."

So William Drake left the ground and departed toward the hotel before the game began.

"What are the ground rules, Capt. Cole?" inquired Dick, as he came in from the field with his players.

"A ball hit over the right field fence between the foul line and that flag is good for two bags," answered Cole. "Anywhere else it is a home run. I suppose you fellers will be batting it over the fence all the time?"

He made this final remark in an insulting manner, but Dick paid no attention to it.

"How about wild throws for first and third?" Merriwell inquired. "How many bases may a runner take on such a throw? I see the ball would be sure to go into the crowd, in case there was a crowd back of those bases."

"In a regular game," answered Cole, "we take one bag on such a throw, but to-day——"

"Make it the same to-day," invited Dick.

"Well, judging by the throwing of your team it will be a good thing for you," chuckled the Maplewood captain. "If the runners could take all the bases they wanted, our fellers would keep going round the bags all the time on your bad throws."

"Perhaps that's so," admitted Dick. "The boys do appear to be a little off in their throwing."

"A little off!" laughed Cole. "I should guess yes! Saw you practicing at short. Thought you would pitch?"

"I may before the game's over. I am going to send one of my other pitchers in to start it. He is warming up now."

"Oh, that feller?" said Cole, surveying Cap'n Wiley, who was limbering up his arm by throwing the ball to Brad. "That's too bad. We wanted to bat your eye out, Mr. Merriwell."

"Well, if you knock him out of the box I will give you a chance at me."

"Well, I guess we'll get the chance in the second inning. He won't last more than one inning."

"Do you think so?"

"Well, you see if he does."

"It's your choice of innings."

"We'll take the field," said Cole. "Are you ready?"

"All right."

Cole signaled to his players and they trotted onto the field.

The teams lined up like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DICK'S TEAM</th>
<th>MAPLEWOOD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gardner, 1f.</td>
<td>Cole, 3b.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiley, p.</td>
<td>Minns, 1f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradley, 3b.</td>
<td>Bruce, cf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jellby, cf.</td>
<td>Silver, 2b.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Singleton, 1b.</td>
<td>Spare, ss.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merriwell, ss.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buckhart, c.</td>
<td>Jones, 1b.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smart, rf.</td>
<td>Pike, c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tubbs, 2b.</td>
<td>Goddard, p.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Now, Gardner, old codfish," cried Cap'n Wiley, as Earl selected a bat, "get out there and put that pine tree against the sphere! Nail it on the trade-mark and lift it out of the lot."

At this the village kids who were watching gave another shout of derision.

"Oh, he will lift it out of the lot!" cried one. "That will be easy with Joe Goddard pitching!"

The lanky pitcher of the home team, a look of confidence on his face, toed the rubber.

"Don't make a home run!" entreated Cap'n Wiley. "I want a chance to bat you round, Gardner. I'll drop it into the cemetery up yonder, motioning toward the distant village graveyard, which could be seen on a hillside. "That will make those fellows look grave."

Now, for a country pitcher, Goddard was not such a slouch. He soon demonstrated this, for he had some curves which fooled Gardner beautifully. The first was a sharp out that broke suddenly and caused Gardner to miss when he went after it.

"Yee!" shrieked the village boys.

"He! he! he!" shrilly laughed one of them. "He will lift it out of the lot!"

"Don't do that! don't do that!" entreated Cap'n
CHAPTER X.

AN UNEXPECTED TERMINATION.

"Why, this is the best snap we ever struck, boys!" laughed Jack Cole, as he came in to the bench with the rest of the players. "Those duffers can't hit a balloon. Let's sail right into this thing and win in the first inning."

"I rather think they know what they're up against now," grinned Goddard, proudly. "We will open the eyes of some of the people round here who think we're not good enough to play in this old league."

Dick walked out at the side of Cap'n Wiley, who was to pitch.

"You must hold them down, Wiley," he said. "You must show them that you're as good a man as that lanky country chap, and he really is no slouch."

"Put the utmost reliance on me," retorted the sailor. "To-day I have an arm like iron."

Cole was the first hitter for the locals.

"Go for him, Jack!" cried one of his friends. "Start right in on him! We'll follow you."

"Please don't bat him too hard!" cried Ted Smart, who was in right field. "Just give us a little show! You will ruin our reputation!"

"Your what?" shouted a big country chap. "Did you ever have any reputation?"

"Avast there, my friend!" exclaimed Wiley. "Roll that quid of tobacco to starboard. Keep your weather eye on me."

"Oh, you will do wonders!" was the derisive retort. "They'll hammer you to death!"

"In which case I invite you all to the obsequies," laughed the swarthy sailor. "Evidently there will be a funeral to-morrow."

"Come, come; pitch the ball!" snapped Cole.

"Don't be so hot in your hastiness," advised Wiley. "Permit the wild and woolly gentleman who has to stop my shoots behind the bat to adjust his body protector. I don't want to kill him with the first ball, and my speed is something terrific."

When Brad was ready under the bat the sailor placed his toe on the slab, leaned forward a little for a signal, then gave a wild pump-handle flourish with his arm, pulled up his right foot and seemed to place it on the knee of his left leg, pushed the ball into the pit of his stomach, made a terrible face and appeared in the utmost agony. Following these strange movements he delivered the ball as if really trying to drive it through Buckhart.
To the astonishment of Cole, who had looked for a speedy one on account of Wiley's gyrations, the ball came sailing up in a rainbow bend through the air with such slowness that the batter struck long before it reached him.

"One strike!" called the umpire.

The spectators shouted with amusement and derision.

"Is that your speedy one?" roared the big chap who was chewing tobacco.

"Sure! sure!" said Wiley. "Pretty soon I'll give him a slow ball."

"What's the matter with yer?" exclaimed Cole. "Git some ginger into yer arm!"

"Dear me!" said Wiley. "Wasn't that swift enough? Why, you scarcely saw it. You didn't hit it, did you?"

"Don't try to make a monkey of me!" snarled the batter.

"I don't have to," answered the Marine Marvel.

"Some one attended to that job before I ever had the pleasure of beholding you."

Brad returned the ball to the sailor, who went through the same astonishing movements before delivering it again. Seeing this, Cole fancied it would be another slow one, and therefore he struck too late when a straight, speedy ball came whistling over the heart of the plate.

"Two strikes!" said the umpire.

"There's a slow one!" whooped Smart.

"'Ow do you like it?" inquired Bradley.

"Why dud-dud-dud-don't you hit it?" chattered Jolliby.

"Dern my picter!" squeaked Obadiah Tubbs, dancing around cumbrously. "I'm getting tired for want of exercise! Hit the ball, you fellers, and give us something to do."

"Let him hit it, Wiley — let him hit it!" rumbled Singleton.

"He's sure to hit the next one," came quickly from Gardner.

"Burn 'em! burn 'em!" urged Buckhart, crouching under the bat and holding up his big mit. "Put 'em into the pocket, you salty tar."

Behind Wiley the team now kept up a constant chattering, and this talk seemed to delight the sailor, who smiled in a pleasant manner and made ready to pitch again.

"I will hit it this time," thought Cole. "He can't fool me again. All he has anyhow is a slow ball and a little speed."

Apparently the next ball was too high; but Wiley threw it in such a manner that it dropped swiftly down past Cole's shoulders.

"Three strikes; you're out!" said the umpire, laughing.

"What's the matter with you, Phil Glover?" shouted Cole, in disgust. "That was too high! What are you trying to do?"

"Oh, give them a show!" answered the umpire.

"They'll need it all right."

"Thanks, kind sir," said Wiley. "It's almost too good of you."

"That was high," declared Cole, as he retired to the bench.

"It looked high," confessed Winks; "but it dropped pretty fast. Evidently the fellow can throw a drop all right."

"Get in there and pound him, Minns," urged Cole.

"He will be a perfect picnic."

"Oh, I'll get a hit," declared Minns, as he started toward the plate.

Apparently Wiley lost control of the ball, for he threw the first one behind Minns, while the second went over Buckhart's head and rebounded from the foul board.

"What are you trying to do?" demanded the batter.

"Did you ever pitch before?"

"Don't unnecessarily agitate yourself, my anxious friend," said Wiley. "Try this next one."

It looked good to Minns, but it proved to be an out-drop, which he missed.

"Don't let him do that!" exclaimed Cole. "It would have been a ball."

"You have them guessing, Wiley," smiled Dick.

"Their lanky pitcher doesn't seem to be the only pitcher on earth this afternoon."

"Thanks, mate, for your kind words of encouragement," said the sailor.

But Minns hit the next ball fairly and drove out a scorching single.

At this the villagers set up a whoop of delight, and Jack Cole danced down to the coaching line near first, crying:

"Here we go! here we go! Everybody hits him now! It will be a snap!"

Big Tom Bruce took his position in the batter's box.

Again Wiley seemed to find it difficult to locate the plate. He threw three balls in succession, and Cole shouted:
“Make it a walking match, Bruce! He'll issue a pass!”

Bruce, however, could not resist the temptation to swing on the next ball, which was straight and right over the center of the pan.

He hit it fairly and sent a grounder skimming past Wiley to the left.

“Dig! dig!” howled Cole. “It's good for two bags!”

Then he caught his breath, for Obadiah Tubbs, by a marvelous piece of work, flung himself forward and stopped the ball with his outstretched left hand. The fat boy rolled over on the ground and sat up with the ball in his grasp. Sitting thus, he quickly snapped it to Dick, who had covered second, and Minns was out on a force.

That was not all. Barely did Dick seem to have the ball in his hands before he whistled it past Minn's head and into the hands of Singleton at first, the whole thing being done so swiftly that Bruce was likewise put out and a double play was accomplished.

There came a breathless hush as the spectators seemed to pause to realize what had happened. The local players were likewise astonished, and the silence was broken by a squeal from Obadiah Tubbs, who had remained sitting on the ground.

“Dern your pieties, we got yer that time, didn't we?” piped the fat boy. “How do you like that kind of medicine?”

“Well, of all things!” muttered Jack Cole. “Talk about your accidents! That fat boy couldn't make another stop like that in a thousand years!”

Already Cap'n Wiley was teetering in to the bench, for which he had started, as it seemed almost as soon as the ball was hit. Apparently he had known on the instant that it was driven out that a double play would be made and the locals retired.

“Horseshoes! horseshoes!” shouted many of the villagers.

Among the summer visitors, however, there were a few who applauded the handsome double play.

“That's the sort of support to sustain a pitcher's pneumatic nerves,” observed Cap'n Wiley, as the rest of the team came in to the bench and sat down.

“Look over there by the gate, Dick,” said Gardner. “There's Arlington.”

“Sure enough,” said Dick. “And he is with that fellow, Sappington.”

“Oh, he's a good one!” muttered Buckhart. “This is the time we need him, and you see where he is, Merrivell. Didn't you say he promised to be on hand?”

“He did.”

“Well, you see he had no intention of it.”

In truth Chester Arlington had appeared in the enclosure, accompanied by Percy Sappington. They entered just in time to witness the double play by which the locals were retired.

“Just fancy!” exclaimed Sappington. “How did they evaw do it?”

“Oh, I told you they could play the game some,” answered Chester. “Really, a few of those fellows are all right. Merrivell isn't such a bad player.”

“But he is a nawsy creature, don't you know,” declared Percy. “He really injured my nose, don't you see.”

“Better keep away from him,” said Chester. “I wonder what he's trying to do anyway. The jigger is up here, and I don't see why he should waste his time playing this game.”

“I am deuced glad they gave him the bounce,” nodded Sappington. “I come ovaw here occasionally and stop a while. I should hate like the dickens to have him around. I really would.”

“Then you don't stay here right along?”

“Oh, no, no. I am spending the summer over at Fairhaven, don't you know. Devilish fine place. Beautiful scenery and all that. Lots of common people ovaw there, though. You see the principal business is granite cutting and lobster fishing. Those big, rude granite cutters are perfect beasts. But,” he added, with a smile “there are some blawted pretty girls on the island. Ya-as.”

“How far is Fairhaven?” inquired Chet.

“It's something like ten or twelve miles from Rockford. Two steamaws make the trip forenoon and aftawnoon.”

“When are you going back?”

“Aw, this afternoon, I think. I have a mash on several pretty girls ovaw there. They are all crazy ovaw me. There's one deuced pretty girl on the island, but I've never had the pleasure of meeting her. Her name is Grace Garrett. You should see her, my deaw fellow.”

“Well, I am liable to stay around here a while,” said Chester. “Although I came with Merrivell and his crowd, I shall not leave with them. I like the place, and I'm inclined to linger a while. Perhaps I might find an opening to play a little baseball myself.”
“Aw; are you a good playaw?”

“Well, I don’t want to brag,” said Chester, “but I am just about as good as they make. I am a pitcher. Come down with the Merriwell crowd as one of his pitchers, you see.”

“Aww! Ya-as. Well, I heaw they don’t intend to give up having a ball team heaw in Maplewood. Perhaps you may get a chance with it.”

By this time Chip Jolliby was in position to hit, and Goddard started in with the idea that he would repeat his performance of the first inning.

Chip watched the ball as it was delivered, and his quick intuition told him it would be an outcurve. Still it had been started for the inside corner of the plate, and Jolliby fancied he might reach it. With this in his mind, he swung sharp and sure, reaching out to the full extent of his long arm and long bat. He caught the ball fairly, and away it sailed over the right field fence, just inside the flag which marked the two-base limit.

“What’s that? What’s that?” howled Cole. “What’s the matter with you, Joe?”

“Biggest accident that ever happened!” growled Goddard.

“Strange how everything we do seems an accident to those fellows,” laughed Cap’n Wiley.

Big Bob Singleton faced Goddard.

“If Bob can land on it fair,” said Gardner, in a low tone, “they’ll never find the ball.”

Barely had he spoken when Singleton struck, and beyond doubt it was one of the longest hits he ever made. The ball sailed away and disappeared far, far beyond the center field fence.

“Stop the game! Stop the game!” chuckled Dick’s first baseman, as he lazily jogged round the bases. “Send out for a dozen balls. You’ll need them.”

Cole ran excitedly in to Goddard, whom he clutched by the shoulder.

“What are you trying to do?” he savagely asked. “Are you letting those fellows hit the ball? Why, I wanted to whitewash them!”

Goddard was pale and exasperated.

“Don’t take me for a fool!” he retorted. “I want to whitewash them as bad as you do.”

“Don’t revile him, Cole!” cried Wiley. “By the way, are you any relation to Old King Cole? He was a merry old soul, you know.”

As Singleton came in and reached the plate after circling the bases the village youngsters stared at him with ludicrous awe and respect.

“Jimmy, boys!” said one, who had been howling the loudest in derision a short time before. “That feller did soak it a gee-wilkins crack! Never saw nobody hit a ball so far before.”

“Mebbe these fellers can play baseball,” said another.

“I bet you ten thousand dollars,” piped a ragged, dirty urchin, “that they won’t get another hit off Joe. He is mad now. Just look at him! You will see him pitch like all thunderation!”

In truth Goddard was “mad,” and Jack Cole was in a similar mood.

The captain of the locals returned to his position, looking as if he would enjoy chewing iron.

It was now Dick Merriwell’s turn.

“He’s easy, captain,” declared big Bob. “Just stick out your bat and let the ball hit it. That’s all you’ll have to do.”

“I’ll show you. I’ll show you!” grated Goddard, under his breath.

He threw the first ball straight at Dick, who dodged it by an agile leap. The second ball was too high and the third too low.

Then Dick stood still until two strikes had been called on him, but swung on the next ball pitched. He did not seem to swing hard, but met the ball with a sharp snap of the bat, the handle of which he gripped as he struck. Apparently he simply tried to tap it out, but the result astounded the Maplewood spectators, for once more the ball was driven over the center-field fence for a home run. Cap’n Wiley stood on his head on the coaching line and waved his heels in the air.

Jack Cole actually frothed.

“Stop this blamed foolishness, Goddard!” he commanded, shaking his fist at the pitcher.

On the bench Dick’s players were laughing heartily. They seemed to regard the whole thing as something of a circus.

Now one of the village urchins, who had previously said very little, took his position in the midst of his companions and remarked:

“Say, what do you fellers think you know about baseball, anyhow? You’ve been putting up a hollow that this bunch couldn’t beat a carpet. What do you think about it now? Ain’t they just salivating our fellers? Ain’t they just raising thunder? Well, I guess they are! And that one who just hit the ball is
Frank Merriwell’s brother. I told yer I’ve heard all about Frank Merriwell and he was a coker and his brother had to be a coker, too. Yer laughed at me, didn’t yer? Well, what do yer think now?”

“Oh, you shut up, Snifty Jones,” retorted one who had been loudest in his scornful contempt of the strangers. “This game ain’t over yet.”

“Well, it will be over putty soon,” nodded Snifty, giving his nose a wipe with the back of his hand. “And then you see if I ain’t right. They’ll jest paralyze Jack Cole and our boys. When I grow up, by jingo’s! I’m going ter Yale and git to be a ripping good baseball player, just as Frank Merriwell is and just as his brother is.”

“You go to Yale!” was the mocking retort. “You’ll go to—Halifax first. Why, any feller who goes to Yale has to study some, and you can’t spell soup. You spell it s-o-o-pe. That’s a great way. He! he! he!”

“He! he! he!” laughed several of the boys, and all of them pointed their fingers at Snifty, who flushed and backed off a little.

By this time Brad Buckhart was ready, but Goddard seemed unable to get the ball anywhere near the home plate. Brad waited until he fancied he would be compelled to walk on four balls. Seeing this, he reached for a high one and sent it whistling out over the shortstop’s head.

“I won’t do anything like that!” declared Ted Smart. “I am ashamed of these fellers! They don’t know any better! Just toss ‘em up to me, and I’ll strike right out!”

For all of his promise Ted hit a hot grounder into the diamond, which enabled Buckhart to reach second, although Smart was thrown out at first.

“Look at the prize fat boy!” shouted a voice, as Obediah Tubbs walked into the batter’s box.

Goddard hit Tubbs with the first ball, and Obediah gave a squeal like a stuck pig.

“Say, by Jim! you nearly knocked a pie out of me—I mean a lung out of me!”

“Here’s your easy man, Goddard,” said Cole, as Earl Gardner once more came up, with Buckhart and Tubbs on second and first.

There was a grim look on the face of the boy from Calais, Maine. He swung at the first ball pitched and missed it. The second was wide, and he let it pass. The third—he hit!

It was a line drive clean to center-field fence, from which it rebounded.

On this hit Gardner reached third, while Buckhart and Tubbs scored. Jack Cole actually appeared derailed by what was happening.

“Come out of the box, Goddard!” he snarled. “Take my place. I’ll do the pitching. I’ll show them!”

“That’s right, Jack,” nodded Cap’n Wiley, as he walked out and tapped the rubber plate with his bat. “You’re the boy to do it. Without doubt you will raise merry high jinks with poor little Walter.”

“Dry up!” snarled Cole. “You have got too much mouth!”

“And you have too much ears,” said Wiley. “Hee-haw! hee-haw! hee-haw!” The sailor gave an excellent imitation of the braying of a mule.

“I’d like ter punch yer head!” snarled Cole.


“You won’t enjoy it if I get at you!”

Cole threw the first one straight at the sailor, who stepped onto the plate and let it pass behind his back.

“I can’t hit ‘em on that side, Jack,” he said. “Port your helm a little. Put the wheel over.”

Cole did put the next ball over, using a drop. Wily got under it and lifted it away into the left field.

By this time the local players seemed completely demoralized, for although Minns got under the fly he muffed it, and Gardner scored, while the sailor took second.

“Oh, Lord!” groaned one of the spectators, “will they never stop it?”

Cole was so enraged that he walked round and round in a circle.

“Hold your pucker, Jack,” advised Wiley. “You’re rudder seems to be jammed.”

“You’ll be jammed, blame yer!” frothed the captain of the Maplewoods.
"Come right down and jam me," invited the sailor.
"I will!" howled Cole, as he made a rush at Wiley.
A moment later there was a mix-up near second,
which resulted in Cole being seized about the legs by
Wiley and thrown into the air to come down hard on
the back of his neck.

Then Silver struck Wiley behind the ear and
knocked him to his knees.

Followed by the rest of the team, Dick rushed onto
the diamond. The local players also made a rush to-ward second, and as he sat up Cole shrieked:
"Give it to 'em! Soak em, fellows! Let's knock
the stuffing out of them!"

Right there the game broke up in a free fight.

CHAPTER XI.
AN OFFER FROM FAIRHAVEN.

The members of the Maplewood athletic committee
were holding their meeting in a room of the Maple
Heights Hotel. Henry Duncan was speaking.
"This is a most unfortunate affair, gentlemen," he
said, gravely. "No one regrets it more than I, but I
am positive Mr. Hammerswell has been altogether too
hasty. We have not treated those young fellows with
proper courtesy."

"Courtey be hanged!" interrupted Hammerswell.
"We're not to be imposed upon."

"But until this committee had met and voted on the
matter they should have remained in the hotel. I ap-
peal to the rest of you, and I am sure you will agree
with me. I am really ashamed because they were
treated in such a manner."

"Well, I ain't," declared John Cole. "I tell you
that I wouldn't help pay a cent for their expenses. Mr.
Hammerswell knew just where I stood, and I am back-
ing him up."

"Perhaps," said William Drake, "the action was a
little too hasty, but I was on hand at the baseball ground
and saw those boys practice. They are no more fit
to play baseball in the Trolley League than a lot of
woodchoppers would be. They can't play the game.

I have seen the local players in one game, and I as-
sure you they can beat these strangers nine times out of
ten, at least."

"What have you to say, Mr. Smiley?" asked Duncan.
Smiley rubbed his hands and beamed:
"I am quite sure that Mr. Hammerswell has made
no mistake in his judgment," he said. "I don't wish to
offend anybody; but I think he was right, even if he
was a little hasty."

"Well, then it seems to be settled," said Duncan, re-
gretfully. "You decline to accept any of these players
for the Maplewood baseball team?"

They nodded pronouncedly.
"I move," said Hammerswell, "that the chairman,
Mr. Duncan, be instructed to notify Richard Merriwell
of the action of this meeting."

"Second the motion," said Smiley.
The motion was carried.

"Before we break up," said Hammerswell, "I wish
to add that I have wired a man in Boston, requesting
him to pick up some ball players for us. We will have
a team here now, no matter what it costs us."

"And I wish to say," said Henry Duncan, "that I
withdraw from this committee. I shall have nothing
whatever to do with the proposed Maplewood baseball
team."

"Oh, all right!" sneered Hammerswell. "I think
we can get along without you. You know what you
have to do as your last duty. We will accompany you
to the baseball ground, where, as Mr. Drake has in-
formed us, these boys are playing the locals. Without
doubt we will see them handsomely beaten."

A few moments later the committee left the hotel
and walked together to the ball ground. As they
reached the gate they were surprised by shouts and
cries and sounds of great commotion within the ground.
On entering they were in time to witness the free
fight in which the members of the two teams were
engaged.

"What's the meaning of this? What's the meaning
of this?" demanded Henry Duncan.

One of the summer visitors happened to be near, and
he answered:
"The game has ended in a fight. These strangers batted the local pitchers out of the box and were hitting the next man just as hard. The Maplewood boys couldn't get a score."

"What's that?" exclaimed William Drake, in astonishment.

"Let's stop this fighting," said Duncan. "It's disgraceful!"

"If you will wait a minute," laughed the summer man, "I think it will be all over. The strangers seem to be getting the best of it."

This was true. Dick and his friends were proving more than a match for Cole and his companions. Buckhart had waded into the fight like a raging lion. Big Bob Singleton wielded his heavy fists in a most effective manner. Dick was in the midst of it, and already the locals were beginning to weaken.

Nevertheless, Duncan, followed by several others, rushed in and stopped the fight. Their action seemed an absolute relief to the village boys.

"I am very sorry this happened, Mr. Merriwell," said Mr. Duncan.

"It shows the kind of young ruffians they are!" sneered Hammerswell. "They come down here to play baseball and then kick up a fight with the local players."

"You're quite mistaken, Mr. Hammerswell," said one of the spectators. "It was the village boys who started the fight with them. They were in no way to blame."

"I am sorry," Duncan again said. "I am to inform you, Merriwell, that the Maplewood Athletic Committee has voted not to accept your baseball team."

"All right, sir," said Dick. "I am not blaming you for their action."

Raymond Garrett had also arrived on the ground in time to witness the finish of the fight, and he now stepped forward.

"As long as Maplewood has voted not to accept you," he said, "I now feel at liberty to make you a proposition. I have been telephoning the people in Fairhaven, and within an hour I have raised money to support a baseball team there. Mr. Merriwell, I am instructed to make you an offer. I am instructed to invite you to take your team and come to Fairhaven. Will you accept?"

"Who do you think you will play against with your Fairhaven team?" asked Hammerswell, sneeringly.

"We will play against any team in the Trolley League that dares meet us," retorted Garrett. "And, at the very start, we promise to offer a purse of one hundred dollars to the winning team and issue a general challenge to Rockford, Seaside, and Maplewood."

Dick and his friends were stirred with sudden enthusiasm. They gathered about Garrett, and, suddenly, at a signal from Merriwell, the Fardale cheer burst from their lips, only instead of Fardale the name of Fairhaven was used.

Dick grasped Raymond Garrett's hand.

"We will stand by you," he said, "every one of us; and we will do our best to give Fairhaven baseball that will satisfy them."

THE END.

The Next Number (429) Will Contain

DICK MERRIWELL AT FAIRHAVEN;

OR,

Bucking the Trolley League.

A PROFESSIONAL TEAM BEATEN.

Maplewood Refuses the Merriwells—All Ready to go to Fairhaven—Percy Sappington and Chester Arlington—The Sail to Fairhaven—Obediah Tubbs and Chip Jelliby Talk of Seasickness—They Experience It—For Once in His Life Obediah Doesn't Want any Pie—The Wreck at Dead Man's Ledge—Dick Makes a Rescue—Grace Garrett Saved from Drowning—The Challenge to the Trolley League—The First Game With Maplewood—Maplewood is up Against It—Bill Swarton Strikes Out.
APPLAUSE.

With your permission I will for the first time raise my voice in the Applause column in the interest of harmony and with the view of calming the fierce storms of wind that has been raging for many moons, and to quiet the troubled waters.

The question which is agitating the minds of the readers is a letter by I. M. Kicking, but the last named gentleman is not to be blamed as much as several others, for Buckhart is really and truly a swashbuckler.

As to the lacustrations of I. M. Kicking, Jr., who pretends to think, and would have others think he thinks, that Merrillwells is a "foxy" chump, in proof of which he cites the instance of "Dick's turning Chet down without a show." The Junior goes on to relate that if Dick had made friends with Arlington he would have had no trouble with him. Then, Junior, after the fashion of the true partisans in war, goes on to secure "important news from an intelligent contraband," proceeds to enlighten "new readers" that Dick is a swell head and not fit to be Frank's brother. Our Junior believes, and would have others believe, that the Merrillwells win too much. As far as readers of intelligence are concerned it was a waste of time for the Junior to write the hot air which appeared in No. 401. It is not enough that he should display his ignorance of the back numbers of Tip Top, but he must undertake to enlighten (?) others from his viewpoint.

Could you get the consent of the widely known I. M. K., Sr., of Savannah, State of Georgia, whose "opinion" so perfectly coincides with your own to back your statements with a reasonable stake? We think not, as he doesn't read Tip Top and never did, except two or three papers.

In conclusion, Junior, I will remark that I wish it distinctly understood that it is only in courtesy to the publishers of Tip Top—and the Merrillwells—and the Junior, that I condescend to notice the lacustrations of people of your calibre. There are so many contributors to these columns whose articles are worthy of criticizing and commenting on that but for the considerations mentioned it would be inexcusable to encourage by notice any further exposition of your "personal opinions" which beguile the readers into the belief that the Merrillwells—Dick—is not what Mr. Standish has devoted a great part of his life in making him, i. e. the ideal American boy.

The majority of the readers are disgusted when they see the Applause column so descanted. The fact is that there ought to be a kind of "graded school" system adopted by the publishers with a primary department for contributions of his caliber to disport themselves in.

A Young Critic's sophomoric and diluted effusion places him on a level with the Junior. I have already stooped to notice, out of courtesy to the publishers, the effusions of one "squir," but I confess the task is distasteful. I am like the man who ate the crow. "I can do it, but I don't hanker after it." As I said before, there ought to be a primary department for writers of his class, who will persist in fooled with a pen in spite of the will of God that he should saw wood. Yours very truly,

PITTSBURG PHIL.

You are not Pittsburg Phil, the plunger? We guess not. But you write a rattling good letter—anyway.

I have just finished reading the letters in the Applause column of the Tip Top Weekly, and when I came across the letter from the two Dakota girls, I sat me down to write this letter for the benefit of them and all other kickers. I ask their pardon for using the word kickers, but that is what they are. They say Chet Arlington has been treated unfairly, was not given chances enough. He was given too many. That is why he took advantage of them and became so sneaking, so much like a coyote trying to get the best of one in an underhanded manner. You Dakota girls seem to think the Merrillwells brothers are too good. Let me tell you, there are some like them—very few, but still some. I think Hal Darrell a fine fellow; ditto of Earl Gardner.

Ted Smart makes me laugh. How can anyone want to have these characters removed from the stories?

A Girl Reader and Miss Ruby L. express my sentiments to T. Say, Texas, if the Dorisites don't come to the front it won't be our fault.

I think I. M. Disgusted insulted the girls by saying Dick is not good enough for them. They think he is, else they would not be seen with him.

Again, as to Chet Arlington. Will he ever become Dick's friend? No, Will Chester ever reform? It's my opinion he never will. He has not enough will power to reform.

You Dakota girls say Doris is a jealous little chit. Have you ever stopped to think that there are not many girls in this world who are not of a jealous disposition? Take June, Doris or Felicia, for instance; are they not all of a jealous disposition? Prove it, you say. Are they not all jealous of each other about Dick? Doris, a girl without character and a flirt! Never! I would not blame Dick for choosing her; for she is all that a fellow would want. And to the readers who think Brad so much of a braggart and bully, did they ever stop to think that he has never bragged about himself? No; if he ever did any bragging it was about his pard, Dick. Did they ever stop to think that Chet A. brags more than Brad ever will? Did he not brag a whole lot about what he could do at bowling and fencing in Tip Top, No. 419? He has too much confidence in himself. Hoping that I will cause no enemies by this letter, and begging their pardon if I do, I remain, truly yours,

R. C. KNOX.

A lot of people agree with you in regard to Chet.

Once more I add my testimonial to the Applause Column. I do this by the request of my fellow readers. In No. 418 I had the pleasure of reading the letters of Miss Lorrie Elsworth. The enthusiasm as shown in her sentiments goes to show that she is a lover of good literature.

I would also like to thank her for appreciating my letter of No. 411. Should she be at leisure to write again, I am sure the readers would be pleased to hear from her.

In one of the recent numbers I came across a chap who signs himself as "I'm Disgusted." I think it would be a good idea for the readers to adopt some idea in getting up a collection for these disturbers of peace, and let them publish a paper of their own. I would name I. M. K. for editor and I. M. K. Jr., for assistant editor, and I'm Disgusted, foreman, and Sam Feedlinks for press man. I think their paper would be a success with such a great combination.

I am not rash in my sentiments, and I think I have a right to express my opinion about people who are playing the characters of "Tip Top." I am not seeking notoriety by expressing my views in this manner. I look to those who have read and given their opinions to the characters portrayed in this excellent publication cannot be had by any other one of its kind; it stands alone, and heads the list of all five-cent libraries in its manner; it is tip-top.
In reading No. 419 my attention was called to the readers who sign themselves as Miss Florence Carroll and Dorothy Mayhew. I wish to say I think that they are very unjust to say that Chester never talks as I desire. As long as I have read Tip Top I have known him to receive every opportunity that a person deserved, but he did not desire anything from a low-down fellow, as he called Merriwell. He had the idea that he was going to be it. This character has been a great advantage to the readers. I want no criticisms of Miss Mayhew and Carroll but the opinions of readers, and, if I am wrong, I will offer an apology.

I have a few words to say in reference to the Correspondence Club. I believe it would be a great advantage to the readers. It would bring forth new readers and more supporters. I shall look to see a correspondence club very soon. Prof. Fourth is demonstrative in his letter. I agree with him in the point of view. Every young man should take advantage of this great opportunity, and grasp a good thing when he sees it, for he may never have the chance again. I advise my fellow readers to follow his instructions every week; very good advice is given by him. Educate your muscle as well as your brain. I will suggest before I close that any reader desiring to correspond with me can address letters to 240 Hooper Street, Brooklyn. 'Wishing Burt L. Standish and Street & Smith success, I am, very truly yours, Brooklyn, N. Y. A. Herbert J. Thompson.'

This is a rather long letter, but an interesting one. Mr. Thompson seems to take great interest in the girls. We incline to think that he is a good deal of a ladies' man.

Hurrah! To-morrow is Thursday. You don't know how glad I am, because that is the day I always get my best friend, Tip Top. I class myself as one of your most ardent admirers, because Tip Top has done more for a world of good. Before I started to read your excellent weekly I had no ambition in life. I only lived for the pleasure of living. After I had read five or six 'Merries,' I became inspired to be something more than I was. I knew that the best way to do that was to be, or try to be, like Frank Merriwell. Whenever I was tempted to do anything wrong or ungenerously I would think, "Would Frank do this?" My answer was always, "No." When I first read Tip Top I was working in a brewery. One day, while at work, my thoughts turned to Tip Top, and then I thought, "Would Frank Merriwell work in a brewery?" No, of course he wouldn't," so I quit my job the next Saturday.

I had an argument with a friend the other day concerning the existence of Frank Merriwell. He claimed there was no such person. I argued with him. I told him that I could cite a half dozen people who disbelieve everything they read. I always feel like punching somebody's head when I hear anybody say anything about Frank Merriwell that isn't true. That is the way Bart always did. I admire him for it. I like Bart next to Frank, because he is always so true to Frank. I admire him, too, because he is hot-headed, and doesn't let everybody walk all over him. I am a little that way myself. But nobody is more noble and generous and grand than Frank. He is a gentleman in every sense of the word, and the same kind of an athlete.

Next to Bart I admire Gallup. I am built something like him, although I am not so awkward. I tried to develop myself last winter. I joined a club and practiced with dumb-bells and Indian clubs. I learned to swing Indian clubs pretty well, and am giving lessons to several of my friends now. Well, I will close now, adding that if I should write all night I could not say enough in praise of Tip Top. Wishing to see this in print soon, I remain,

Emil Herrick.

Canton, Ohio.

We are glad to hear that you resemble Bart. We like Bart all the way down to the ground, and extend to you in his name the right hand of fellowship.

I wish to send you my opinion of the great and only Tip Top, "king of weeklies." I wish to say that I never believed in reading what my parents termed trash, but was persuaded by my friend, Charles A. Cook, to read last week's Tip Top, and wait until Friday comes. I wish to recommend this great publication, with an ideal American boy for its chief character, to any person who wishes to enjoy a good hour's reading. I cannot de-
characters fill the gap the others have left as they have gone out of our lives.

I will not stop to criticize, as I realize that I am incompetent to do so; so, therefore, all I have written in this letter is simply to show the attitude of an old reader toward Tip Top. I do not know that I have accomplished much, as I have no remedy for the situation; therefore, I will continue reading Tip Top as of old, hoping that Burt L. Standish will continue to interest me in his inimitable, entertaining way. Wishing the publisher, author and readers all kinds of good fortune, I remain,

Manchester, N. H.

"AN ANONYMOUS READER"

Why are you "anonymous"? Let's have your real name.

Just eight years ago I read No. 1 of your celebrated Tip Top Weekly, and have read and re-read every copy since—four hundred and eighteen in all.

It is not necessary to go into details and mention the many virtues of this wonderful publication; suffice it to say it is "an ideal publication for the American youth."

I know that there are a hundred and eighteen numbers that I would have changed, and that is Frank's choice for a life companion.

That made me feel sad when he proposed to Inza. I admired the character of pure, sweet, unsellish Elsie so much I couldn't see how Frank could possibly choose Inza. There is no doubt that he cared more for Elsie than he did for Inza at one time, for he has admitted it. I also have some hope that in some way he will discover that he admires Elsie more. When Frank marries Inza (if he ever does), then I am sure Tip Top will lose its interest for me.

As to the Doris-June affair, I think Dick is rather young to decide such an important question; but, for my part, I am still in favor of the sweet, pretty, innocent, girlish girl—Doris. Feeling sure there are lots of readers who agree with me, I ask them to come forward and champion the cause of Elsie and Doris. Respectfully,

H. C. LOWES
Harrodsburg, Ky.

After eight years' acquaintance we should get together and shake hands for the sake of "Auld Lang Syne." It is from such loyal friends as you, H. C., that we like to hear. Good luck to you!

I have just finished reading No. 460 of the Tip Top, which I think is the best I ever read. In the Applause Column, I saw where several of the "Veteran Readers" were criticizing Dick's friends, and saying that the Tip Top now were not nearly so good as they were; but Frank was at school. I think they're interesting every week, and Dick, Hal, Brad and Barron Black are as nice as anyone wants to read about. I like Black especially. If this does not get in the wastebasket, I hope to see it in print. With best wishes for Burt L. and the publishers, I will close.

AN ADVENTURE

I have written you one letter already, but, not seeing it in print, I thought I would write you another.

I have read Tip Top Weekly almost ever since I could read. I think that Obediah Tubs is too fat and clumsy to be on the team. He ought to be allowed to fade away gracefully (that is, if he can do it without falling all over himself, or making some idiotic allusion to pie), and let Hector Marsh or Clint Shaw take his (Obediah's) place, as they are both first-rate ball players, while Tubs never gets a safe hit and never loses a chance to make some crazy blunder. Chester Arlington never got a fair shake either. He was a rich man's son, and a snobbish, generous fellow. When he came to Far Dale he should have been allowed to take his place on the team without question. But Dick Merriwell kicked him off, because he saw that if Chester once got on the team, he would soon show Dick up in his true colors.

Then, when Chetzie rightfully tried to get even, Dick Merriwell worked against him; so that Chester, the son of a rich man, and one who ought to have every mark of respect shown him, was soon actually looked down upon by the boys with no money—boys that belonged to the common herd of poor people. Just think of it! Wouldn't it make your blood boil?

I think that Zona Desmond had better marry Dick Merriwell, even though he is not worthy of her.

Some of the boys in the Applause Column are "running down" Brad Buckhart. That's right; keep up the good work, boys.

I will close, with three cheers for everybody except Dick Merriwell and his set. Yours truly,

T. S.
Little Rock, Ark.

What's this? Pitching into Tubs? "Dern my picter!" What will the other boys say?

I have been an admirer of Tip Top for the last two years, but have never taken the opportunity to address a few lines to the Applause Column. It is my favorite weekly, and I admire Frank and Dick Merriwell; but I'll let those famous critics, like Emory Sisters, or Dorothy Mayhew and Florence Carrol, criticise Frank or Dick's friends and enemies. As to the girls, I won't criticise, because there is nothing I am more afraid of than to don the mits with them; so I'll close, saying I admire all the girls, but I think that Doris would be the girl for Dick. However, we will let it to Mr. Standish to decide that question, and close with three cheers for Tip Top. Hoping to see this in print,

Allegeny City, Pa.

"Three cheers for Tip Top!" We can hear them echoing still.

I am an ardent admirer of Tip Top. I think it is a clean, beneficial and interesting weekly for Young America. I see no fault in it. Why beneficial?—some will ask. Because it points the characters in such a vivid light that you can compare their manners, acts and sacrifices to some living person, if not to your own. That is where the beauty of it lies. Right is triumphant. "He that doth right has a clear conscience." Look at Tip Top No. 460, where Chet Arlington thought he had killed Dick Merriwell. Wasn't his conscience ever deceiving him and conjuring up purgators? The gentle breeze's mournful sigh was to him an accusing Nemesis.

Now I will pass comment on the characters. First is Frank, then his faithful followers. Then Frank retires to give place to Dick, who has his trials and troubles. Of the girls, I like Doris best. Why? Because wasn't June an accomplice of Chet in trying to carry Dick off in the yacht, and where Dick controlled the mind of Chet and, by superior intellect, ruled him entirely? There are a few who have written to the Applause who seem to think these characters are lifelike, instead of being the creation of Mr. Standish. They ought to stop and think. Hoping to see this in print, I remain, an ardent admirer of Tip Top,

Caruth, Mo.

F. ROGERS.

Here's to Missouri and F. Rodgers.

I had the good luck to read the first issue of the Tip Top Weekly, and I have read all of them that I could get hold of ever since. I am situated now where I can get every issue, and my only regret is that they come no oftener than once a week.

I think Frank Merriwell was a great fellow, but since he has got to be a man I am more interested in Dick. I believe Hal will turn out all right. I do not know what to say of Chester Arlington; he has stopped to some pretty low actions. I don't believe he would fare nearly as well at the hands of Dick Merriwell as he has if it were not for his Sister June. I like to read the baseball stories better than any others. I notice that fire-eating Kentuckian, Victor Knowles, mentions a "Ham with a borrowed O. R. T. card." I don't know who the said "ham" was, but I am also a Ham. But my O. R. T. card is not borrowed; my duds are paid for.

I will be glad to see Cap'n Wiley again; he is one of my favorites, probably because he is such a liar. I also look forward to the next issue with great anticipation of seeing Chester Arlington do something decent. Yours truly,

Fontana, Kan.

L. W. Wood, Operator, Frisco Ry.

It was good luck to read the Tip Top Weekly from the first, wasn't it? We'd like to get you on the wire and click to you our heartfelt welcome to the Applause Column.
QUESTIONs AND ANSWERS
EDITED BY
PROF. FOURMEN

PROF. FOURMEN: Being a constant reader of Tip Top, I take the privilege of asking your opinion on the following questions, which I see you answer in your next issue:
1. What is the best time of the day to take heavy exercise with apparatus?
2. Does it make any difference if taken in the forenoon or afternoon?
3. Is heavy apparatus best to gain weight? And how heavy should the dumbbells be for a boy of 19 years?

Thanking you in advance, I remain,
A TRUE BELIEVER IN PHYSICAL CULTURE.

1. In the afternoon.
2. No.
3. Yes. Ten to twenty pounds.

PROF. FOURMEN: I am 14 years and 10 months old, and weigh 122 pounds. My height is 5 feet 2 inches; waist, 28 1/2 inches; biceps, 13 inches; chest, contracted, 31 inches; expanded, 34 inches; across shoulder, 16 1/2 inches; neck, 14 1/2 inches; wrist, 7 inches. Are these measurements good? Do you think I would make an athlete? Yours truly,
A TIP TOP ADMIRER.
New York City.

For your age you are well proportioned, and, with training, you should develop into a very powerful man.

PROF. FOURMEN: I have been reading your Tip Top Weekly from about No. 200 to the present time, therefore I would like to ask you a few questions. In what way can I develop my neck? It is not large enough at the base, and about halfway between the base and the edge of my hair, when I turn my head sideways, there is a knot or a muscle. Hoping to see this in print, yours truly,
F. G. MILBURN.
Rosedale, Kan.

Wrestling is the best exercise for developing the neck.

PROF. FOURMEN: Will you kindly tell me what you think of my measurements? These were taken stripped. Age, 17 years and 1 month; height, 5 feet 3 inches; weight, 107 pounds; chest, 28 1/2, 30, 32 1/2 inches; breadth of shoulders, 15 1/2 inches.
1. Please tell me how I can broaden my shoulders.
2. Is there any remedy for curvature of the spine?

Thanking you in advance, I remain, truly yours,
CLAUDE FAIRCHILD.
Peoria, Ill.

1. Exercise on horizontal bar.
2. Exercise will help it.

PROF. FOURMEN: I am an ardent reader of the Tip Top Weekly and a follower of athletic sports and pastimes. I herewith send you my measurements for your inspection. Please point out my weak points, so that I may remedy them.

Age, 18 years 7 months; height, 5 feet 6 1/2 inches; weight, 137 pounds, stripped; chest, unstripped, 35 1/2 inches; normal, 37 1/2 inches; expanded, 39 3/4 inches; right biceps, 13 inches; left biceps, 12 1/4 inches; right forearm, 11 1/2 inches; left forearm, 11 inches; right thigh, 22 1/2 inches; left thigh, 22 inches; right calf, 14 inches; left calf, 14 1/2 inches; waist, 31 inches.

I have been continually exercising with 5-pound dumb-bells for one month, and my development has increased wonderfully.

I have tried many systems of physical exercise, but the best I have yet found is Prof. Attila's system of exercise with 3-pound dumb-bells.

I also practice Prof. Ithman's muscular resistance and breathing exercises, and find them excellent.

Please let me know your opinion of these different systems.

Hoping to see this in print in the Tip Top Weekly, and thanking you in advance for your valuable advice, I am sincerely yours,
A. X. Y. Z.
Coal City, Ill.

Both systems are excellent. I have used a system similar to Prof. Attila's for many years myself.

PROF. FOURMEN: I have a brother fifteen years old whose desire is to become an athlete. His measurements are: Height, 5 feet 2 inches; weight, 93 pounds; neck, 12 inches; chest, normal, 27 1/2 inches; chest, expanded, 30 1/4 inches; waist, 25 inches; forearm, 8 1/4 inches; biceps, 9 inches; wrist, 6 3/4 inches; thigh, 17 inches; calf, 12 inches. Record for high jump, 3 feet 9 inches; running broad jump, 14 feet. He can also do eight miles on a bicycle in 20 minutes.

How are his records and measurements? What branch of athletics do you think he is built for?

"YOUNG MELSON."
East Orange, N. J.

1. Your brother is a promising youngster.
2. Wait till he grows older before setting him at any particular branch. Let him become an "all-round athlete" first.

PROF. FOURMEN: Being a constant reader of Tip Top, I take the liberty of asking you a few questions. I am nearly 15 years old, and weigh 177 pounds. My measurements are: Neck, 13 1/2 inches; height, 5 feet 3 3/4 inches; biceps, 11 1/2 inches; chest, 15 inches; chest, normal, 33 inches; expanded, 35 1/2 inches; waist, 28 inches.

I can run and jump fairly well but if I work a little hard I get a pain in the side. Please tell me the cause and remedy for this.

Is ice cream bad for athletes? Yours respectfully,
R. L.
New York City.

1. Your measurements are fair.
2. The pain is caused by lack of training. Take a long run every day and presently it will disappear.
3. Ice cream is wholesome if eaten slowly and in small quantities.
TIP TOP WEEKLY.

PROF. FOURMEN: As I have read a great many Tip Tops, I take the liberty of asking you a few questions. As you will see by my weight and measurements that I am very thin I would like to have you advise me how to gain flesh. I am 14 years 7 months of age and weigh only 70 pounds. My measurements are as follows: Height, 4 feet 9 1/2 inches; neck, 11 inches; chest, normal, 22 1/2 inches; chest, expanded, 27 1/2 inches; waist, 22 1/2 inches; across shoulders, 13 1/2 inches; thighs, 15 1/2 inches; calves, 10 1/2 inches; ankles, 6 1/2 inches; biceps, 7 to 8 inches; forearm, 7 1/2 inches. I would be very much obliged to you if you would give me advice so that I may develop myself, particularly in the legs and arms, as I like to run and play baseball. I am short-winded. How can I overcome this?

I will close, thanking you in advance for information. I am, yours sincerely,

H. R. H.


Keep in the open air all you can, and go in for outdoor sports. Wrestling and football will do you more good than anything. For the wind, take long, slow runs, about twice a week.

PROF. FOURMEN: Being a reader of the Tip Top Weekly, the king of all weeklies, I take the liberty to ask you a few questions. I am 14 years old; height, 5 feet; chest, normal, 31 inches; chest, expanded, 39 1/2 inches; weight, 88 pounds; waist, 26 inches; neck, 12 1/2 inches; wrists, 6 1/2 inches; calves, 12 inches; across shoulder, 10 1/2 inches below neck; ankles, 10 inches; above ankles, 8 inches; muscle, left arm, 9 inches; muscle, right arm, 9 inches.

1. Are my measurements good?
2. What are my weak points?
3. What are my strong points?
4. What exercise will do me the most good?

Hoping to see this in print I remain a constant reader of Tip Top.

H. J.

Longmont, Colo.

1. Fair.
2. Chest and arms.
3. Lower limbs.
4. Exercise with 5-pound dumb-bells.

PROF. FOURMEN: I would like to ask you a question. Every time I run very hard I have an awful pain in my right thigh, and I have to stop, and can hardly walk. It seems as though the muscle doubles up and will not relax. Will you please tell me what this is from, and how to get rid of it? I would like to know how to get more chest muscles. Answer in next Tip Top and oblige an admirer,

A. E. SHAW.

New York City.

1. It's simply a bad cramp, and will go away when you get older. Rubbing and moderate exercise will help.
2. The best exercise I know of for the chest muscles is dipping on the parallel bars.

PROF. FOURMEN: My measurements are as follows: Age, 13 years 5 months; weight, 95 pounds; height, 4 feet 10 1/2 inches; neck, 12 inches; shoulders, 34 inches; chest, normal, 27 inches; expanded, 30 inches; waist 27 inches; hips, 30 inches; left thigh, 17 inches; right thigh, 18 inches; left calf, 11 1/2 inches; right calf, 12 inches; ankles, 9 inches; left arm, 8 1/2 inches; right arm, 9 inches; left forearm, 8 1/2 inches; right forearm, 8 1/2 inches; wrist, 6 1/2 inches.

My muscles are soft. I have always been sickly.
1. What are my strongest points, and what are my weakest?
2. What should I exercise with?
3. I drink fresh milk or water, never tea or coffee. Pardon me for asking so many questions. I hope to see the answers in Tip Top. Yours respectfully,

R. B. TOTTEN.

Crawfordsville, Ind.

1. You are fairly well proportioned, needing a general building up rather than attention to any particular point.
2. Use chest weights and 3-pound Indian clubs.

PROF. FOURMEN: Being an ardent admirer of the "king of weeklies," I take the liberty of asking a few questions.

1. How are my measurements? Age, 17 years; height, 5 feet 7 1/2 inches; weight, 111 pounds; neck, 13 inches; chest, normal, 30 inches; expanded, 33 1/2 inches; biceps, 11 inches; forearms, 10 inches; wrists, 7 inches; thighs, 10 inches; calves, 13 inches; waist, 27 1/2 inches.
2. What are my weak and strong points?
3. I play baseball, jump and use 5-pound dumb-bells for twenty minutes before retiring. Is this good for me?
4. I can't find words enough to thank you for the benefit I derived from your instructions through Tip Top, but please accept my sincere thanks. Yours respectfully,

J. KEUSE.

New Orleans, La.

1. You are well built.
2. Chest and upper arms.
3. Yes.

PROF. FOURMEN: Below are my measurements taken now. I am 13 years old, 4 feet 10 inches in height. My measurements are as follows: Chest, normal, 27 inches; chest, expanded, 29 1/2 inches; neck, 12 inches; waist, 26 inches; thigh, 13 1/2 inches; calf, 11 1/2 inches; forearm, 8 1/2 inches; biceps, 9 1/2 inches; weight, 87 pounds.

1. Will you please tell me where I can get a book of how to be a pitcher and how to train?
2. Are my measurements all right?
3. What exercises would you advise me to take? Yours truly,

"A WOULD-BE ATHLETE."

1. In Nos. 366 and 367 of Tip Top you will find articles on pitching. No. 6 of the Diamond Handbook Series, published by Street & Smith, at 10 cents, is a valuable book on training.
2. Very good.
3. Chest weights and Indian clubs.

PROF. FOURMEN: As a reader of Tip Top I take the liberty to ask you a few questions. Age, 13 years; height, 4 feet 9 inches; weight, 76 pounds; chest, expanded, 20 inches; normal, 27 inches; forearms, 8 1/2 inches; biceps, 8 1/2 inches; expanded, 4 inches; thighs, 13 inches; calves, 11 1/2 inches; neck, 11 1/2 inches; wrists, 6 inches.

1. How are my measurements?
2. Am I under weight? If not, how can I gain weight?
3. Am I up to the average measurements?
4. How can I make my wrists larger and stronger?

Hoping to see these answers in Tip Top, I will close, with three cheers for Burt L., Prof. Fournien and Street & Smith. Yours truly,

H. A. O.

Mobile, Ala.

1. Good.
2. No.
3. Above them.
4. Use a wrist machine or fence.

PROF. FOURMEN: Being a constant reader of Tip Top and a would-be athlete, I would like to ask a few questions. I am 15 years of age, and weight 140 pounds. My measurements are as follows: Chest, normal, 34 inches; expanded, 37 inches; waist, 30 inches; arms, 12 inches; forearms, 10 inches; neck 14 inches; thighs 10 1/2 inches; calves, 13 inches.

1. How are they, and what am I lacking?
2. Here are some of my records: 100-yard dash, 11 seconds; 100-yard low hurdles, 13 seconds; running broad jump, 17 feet 4 inches.

How are my records, and what is the record for the low hurdles? I run, jump and punch the bag. Thanking you in advance for your answers, I remain,

A. J. JACKSON.

Hobart, Mich.

1. You are very well built for your age, but I would like to see your chest and arms a little larger.
2. Good. Kraenzlein holds this record at 25 seconds.
TIP TOP BASE BALL TOURNAMENT
OPENS THIS WEEK.

THE PRIZES ARE:

FIRST  The Tip Top All American Championship Pennant.
SECOND A Full Equipment for the Two Winning Teams.

Each Player on the Winning Teams will be Awarded the Following:

1 PAIR BASE BALL TROUSERS
1 PAIR BASE BALL SHOES
1 BASE BALL SHIRT
1 BASE BALL CAP
1 PAIR BASE BALL STOCKINGS

The two teams which at the end of the season have the highest average, or, in other words, play the greatest number of games, score the most runs, and have been least scored against will be declared the winners.

Get Your Scores in Quick

Managers and Captains of teams will do well to start in at once. They will find the coupon for entering the scores upon, below.

TIP TOP BASE BALL TOURNAMENT COUPON

Name of Team  Town  State  Opponent’s Name

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Winner  Final Score  Manager


The Tip Top Baseball Tournament for 1904 Is Open

Do You Want a Chance for the Pennant?
Do You Want Your Team Equipped With Baseball Outfits?

Then Look Inside for Rules and Full Particulars of Tournament and PLAY BALL!