By such practice a good batter may become a candidate for the 300 class.
CHAPTER I.

THE CRITICS.

"Every man," said Lynn Hartman, pulling at his handsome meerschaum pipe on which were his class numerals, "has a right to his honest opinions."

"Just so," nodded Tom Pepton, the college reporter, "and every other man has a right to different opinions."

"Which is tautology," declared Hartman. "I'm not disputing your right to your opinions regarding the nine and the work of the new coach, but I must repeat my warning that if you wish to obtain the reputation of the wise prophet and seer, you'd better wait a while longer before you write any more enthusiastic predictions that Yale will have this year the greatest nine she has turned out since the days of Frank Merriwell."

Jackson Colcord, the "philosopher," who sat beside them upon the tiers of bleachers over which were scattered groups of Yale men who had found time to run out to the field for the purpose of watching the practice of the team, put in a word at this point.

"Pop Hanscom seems to have an exalted idea of the value of batting. A batting team, a team of hard, sure hitters, is always dangerous. No one disputes that."

"No one disputes it," nodded Hartman; "but batting is only one feature of the game. A bunch of sluggers will sometimes win games which they have no license to win, but in the long run it's team work that counts."

"But batting," said the enthusiastic Pepton quickly, "is one of the principal features of team work. I mean scientific batting, of course. Look at those fellows working now. By such practice a good batter may become a candidate for the 300 class. I've stated in print, and I still maintain, that Hanscom is going to develop a bunch of stickers who will prove a terror to opposing pitchers."

"You're doing a lot of guessing at a very early stage of the season," Hartman laughed. "Who have these fellows batted against? They've had their own pitchers to hand up the ball, and, having kept at it day after day, pushed on by Hanscom, they've got onto the curves, tricks and style of those pitchers. Put them against slabmen with whom they're not familiar, and I'll venture to predict that you'll be surprised at the way their batting will slump. When we open the season with Tufts on Saturday, these same supposed-to-be dangerous hitters are going to find themselves up against Scotton, a lank, long-armed Yank from some-"
where down in Maine, who'll be liable to take a lot of conceit out of such chaps as Buckhart, Jones, Cohen and even Piper Devon, the new man they've given the nickname of 'Pipe Demon' on account of his skill with the willow."

"I've heard about this Scotson," said Colcord. "He's a professional, isn't he?"

"Professional—nothing," cried Hartman. "That's a gag they invented when they found we were trying to get him here at Yale. Merriwell's friends started that yarn. They were afraid of Scotson."

"Afraid?" murmured Pepton incredulously.

"Yes," insisted Lynn, "they were afraid."

"Of what?"

"Of the mighty Merriwell's prestige. They're determined that Merriwell shall be captain of the nine next year, and in order to make his election sure they want him to be the star performer this season. This Scotson is a youngster, a south-paw man, and he can hit and play the game in other departments besides pitching. I've heard that the big league scouts are after him."

"There it is," said Pepton quickly. "Down in Maine the college men who play baseball are not restricted by any rules which prevent them from accepting money, and therefore a large number of them are tainted with professionalism. They play summer baseball on salaried teams. Further than that, I've heard that the colleges and even the prep schools down there give financial aid to such men."

"It's my belief," said Hartman, "that no one has any absolute proof that Scotson has ever played baseball for money. The hue and cry against him was raised because some newspapers printed the statement that one or two big league managers were watching him and that he had received overtures from them. That gave the Merriwell crowd a chance to set up a howl. Go ahead with your prophesying, Pepton, but don't forget that once more Yale lacks pitching material. We've got Merriwell, but I defy you to put your finger on another first-class twirler."

"Both Keene and Kates should do splendid work this year. They've had lots of experience, and they've developed wonderfully."

"I doubt if you see Wilbur Keene pitching for Yale this year."

"Why?"

"His arm is knocked out. That's some more of the folly for which Pop Hanscom, our new coach, is responsible. He let Keene pitch five innings against the scrub on a raw, cold day, and Wilbur hasn't been able to lift his hand to his head since then."

"But he'll come round all right. He's doctoring his arm."

"You never can tell about such things. He may come round all right, but a fellow who kills his wing early in the season or before the season fairly commences is liable not to do any pitching before hot weather sets in. Yale will be all through playing then. If Keene gets his arm back by July, how much good will it do us?"

"I think you exaggerate the misfortune that has befallen the man."

"But as I said in the first place, every fellow has a right to his opinions. However, wait and see. I'll bet you ten dollars that Wilbur Keene isn't able to pitch through another game before July fourth."

"I must remind you," grinned Pepton, "that I'm not wealthy or inclined to sport it. You're always ready to bet on anything. If I had luck, I'd gamble a little occasionally."

"Luck!" chuckled Hartman. "My boy, it isn't luck; it's judgment. I use my head. I don't bet merely from enthusiasm. I'll leave it to Colcord if we ever had a bunch of men so badly knocked out at the beginning of a season. Hanscom has pushed them too hard. Besides the misfortune to Keene, there's Jones and Cohen both stiff as wooden men with the 'Charlie horse.' It will take them some time to get the kinks out of their legs. Cohen has slumped frightfully in his work at third. Even old man McGregor is crippled. They've moved Claxton onto first in order to give Darrell second base, another piece of bad judgment."

"But Darrell is a corker. He's a sensational player."

"Yes, that's just what he is," nodded Hartman; "but sensational players are usually erratic. Give me the cool, steady, reliable man every time. You remember, doubtless, that Darrell was called the whirlwind of the back field last fall, and I presume you also recall the fact that the whirlwind suddenly became a very timid zephyr. He played like a fiend in one game, and then when everybody got to talking about him he blew up."

"But he held his position on the eleven," reminded Colcord, who had been listening to this conversation while he watched the men at batting practice.

"He managed to hang on," nodded Hartman; "but we all know that it was Merriwell who saved him. Only for Merriwell, he'd have been dropped."

"Possibly," agreed Colcord; "but his work in the last few games proved it would have been a blunder had they dropped him. I acknowledge that he did a few
of those sensational stunts which led enthusiasts to call him the whirlwind of the back field, but he played hard, worked hard and fought hard for the blue. There's good stuff in Darrell.”

“But I'll leave it to you if you don’t think it a mistake to move a man like Claxton onto first. As far as possible, the old line-up of the team should be maintained. If this man Darrell can play second better than Claxton, why didn't they put Claxton in the field? McGregor should cover first. He's lame, and he can't get over the ground fast enough for an outfielder.”

“Perhaps you’re right,” admitted Colcord; “but if you are, they’ll find it out sooner or later.”

“Besides,” added Lynn, “the proper place for the captain is in the diamond.”

“It’s usually better for a captain to be in the diamond,” acknowledged Colcord. “Still, some of the most successful captains have been outfielders.”

“Come back to the matter of pitchers,” said Pepton. “we’ve got Kates.”

“Kates!” scoffed Hartman.

“Yes, Kates.”

“A fourth-rater.”

“Oh, I’ve seen him do splendid work.”

“Did you ever see him pitch one whole game and do good work?”

“Yes.”

“When?”

“Against Syracuse.”

“He didn't pitch the whole of that game,” declared Hartman promptly. “He went in after Wilbur Keene was knocked out of the box.”

“That’s right,” confirmed Colcord; “but the score was five to one against us. He went in and held those Syracuse men down.”

“But never,” sneered Lynn, “did he start a game on the slab that he didn’t go to pieces. It wasn’t his pitching that won the game.”

“What was it, then?” demanded Pepton.

“For one thing, I'll have to admit that it was mainly Merriwell’s encouragement of the team. I remember every feature of that game distinctly, for I lost twenty-five dollars on it. My judgment——”

“Was n. g. that time,” chuckled the reporter.

“My judgment of the relative strength of the teams was correct,” asserted Hartman grimly. “Merriwell was supposed to be knocked out. At the beginning of the game he didn’t even appear in a suit. When he did get into a suit and come out, it gave the weak-hearted ones courage. Monahan, the S’cuse pitcher, had our men at his mercy. They couldn’t do anything with his delivery. Henderson was spiked, and some one had to cover first. They put Merriwell onto the sack. He got a life on an attempted sacrifice. Then he stole a couple of bases and irritated Monahan. But what broke Syracuse up was his steal home from third. Merriwell is no friend of mine, but I'm fair enough, at least, to give him credit for winning that game.”

“It seems to me,” said Colcord, “that you’ve forgotten the finish. We needed two scores to tie, and we had two men on sacks. Kates was the batter. Nobody looked for him to do much of anything, but he hit a fierce one through shortstop and made a home run on it, which gave us a lead of a single score. That was in the seventh. I must agree with Pepton that Kates pitched the game of his life that day, for he held S’cuse down in the next two innings.”

“Winning a single game doesn’t make a pitcher,” asserted Hartman. “What did Kates do in the Harvard series? Nothing. We had to depend on Merriwell. Merriwell’s friends seem to think that he’s all the pitcher Yale needs this year. Harvard walked over us on the water, and she’s going to fight like the devil to down us on the diamond this season. If we’d got Scotson we’d had a better show. Merriwell is a right-hander; Scotson is a south-paw man. Every team should have at least one left-hand pitcher.”

“Why, is it possible with all your keen discernment,” laughed Pepton, “that you haven’t observed that Merriwell can pitch with either hand?”

“Oh, piffle! He does some pitching with his left hand, but he’s naturally a right-hander. He couldn’t pitch a whole game with his left hand if he tried—I mean a hard game, a close, fighting game. He bothers batters sometimes by unexpectedly changing his method of delivery and hanging up a few balls with his left hand. There never yet has been a real pitcher who could pitch as well with one hand as with the other—and there never will be. This persistent batting practice is getting monotonous. I’ve seen men who lost their judgment and their confidence by too much pounding and hammering at one line of work. Wait till those fellows get against a strange pitcher.”

“And that,” said Hopkins Dwinell, a freshman who happened to sit within earshot, “is going to happen right now. They have asked my friend Oakes to pitch a little to-day, and there he is. If the rules didn’t prevent him from doing so, he would have Merriwell working to save his honors before the season was over. Excuse me, gentlemen, for butting in.”

Clifford Oakes, the freshman pitcher, who had been asked to come out to give the batters some work, was
now seen advancing to take the place of Kates. He was a clean-looking, well-built chap with a self-confident air and a rather conceited face.

Pepton, glancing round at Dwinell, laughed.

"It's proper for a man to hold a good estimate of his friends," he said. "I hardly think Oakes will display any baffling cleverness against a bunch of men who have been given such drilling at batting."

CHAPTER II.

A MAN WHO COULD HIT.

Oakes had pitched for his class team in the fall and made the sophomores "look like thirty cents." In prep school he had been regarded as a wizard, and it was not at all strange that he had come to Yale with very high opinions of his own ability and value. He had a peculiar style of delivery and one particular pet curve, which he had developed himself and had found to be a very baffling ball for batters to hit. In justice it must be further stated that he had an excellent head, and knew how to use it. He was the sort of a man to study each batter who faced him and work on their weak points. Unless spoiled, he promised to develop into a great pitcher.

Day after day, when possible, Oakes had watched the batting practice of the regular team, and there was not a man on it whom he had not scrutinized for weaknesses. This constant scrutiny had led him to believe he knew them all as well as if he had been pitching against them for an entire season. One man could not hit safely a low ball close to his knees. Another could not touch one that twisted round his neck. Still another was easily led into reaching after the wide ones. It is surprising how a man who has acquired this fault of reaching will persist in it in the face of repeated failures and insistent advice and coaching.

For a long time Oakes had desired an opportunity to pitch to those batters, but he had stated that he was not fool enough to go out there day after day and toss over easy ones for them to lay out. Privately he had informed his chum, Dwinell, that should he ever get the opportunity he would do his prettiest to show those fellows up.

At last Oakes had the coveted opportunity. Hanscom had asked him to come out in a suit, and he knew what that meant. He was still a little sore because he had not been given a chance to pitch on the scrub, and he was therefore doubly determined to demonstrate his value and ability to coach, players and spectators.

"I don't suppose you're looking for me to toss over straight ones, are you, Mr. Hanscom?" he asked.

The coach shrugged his shoulders.

"Bend 'em over all you please; kid," he said. "I want the boys to bat against something difficult today."

Oakes felt like laughing, but he bit his lip and kept from smiling with satisfaction. They should have something difficult, something that would test them to the limit.

As he walked out to the pitcher's position he glanced toward the seats where he knew his friend, Dwinell, was watching. Dwinell waved his hand, and Oakes nodded his head a bit.

Bert Nash, one of the new men who seemed certain to get a tryout on the nine, was sent in front of the net to hit.

Before this Oakes had limbered his arm, and he was ready for business.

"Let 'em come," said Nash, planting himself in position.

The freshman whipped over a sharp curve that cut an inside corner.

Nash slashed the air.

On the seats Dwinell laughed to himself.

Nash stamped his spikes into the ground and gripped his hat, frowning a little.

The ball was returned to Oakes.

With his next delivery the freshman used a high drop. It looked altogether too high, but Hanscom saw it come down across the batter's shoulders and promptly cried:

"Hit the good ones! Hit the good ones! That would have been a strike."

Nash looked doubtful, but a moment later he reached for a high one that did not drop at all, and again he missed cleanly.

"A strike-out," laughed Dwinell, turning to Hartman and his friends. "Those chaps will find that Clif can pitch a little."

"He has good form and delivery," nodded Pepton.

"But Nash is a new man," said Colcord. "He's not a powerful hitter. Still, it would surprise me if he didn't rap the next one that comes over."

Nash did not rap the next one. He missed again, greatly to his own chagrin and perplexity. Then he fouled the ball twice, and finally succeeded in rolling an easy grounder to the feet of Oakes.

This was not bad, but it was far from satisfactory to Hanscom.
“Wake up, Nash!” said the coach. “Hit the ball out. Land on it.”

In spite of himself, Oakes was smiling, for he was well satisfied with this beginning. He now resorted to his own pet strike-out curve, and with this he caused Nash to fan the air three times.

“Let somebody else have that bat,” said Hanscom. “Here, McGregor, take your turn.”

The captain of the nine, limping a little, walked into position. McGregor scarcely did better than Nash. He fouled the ball oftener, and once he put up a high fly that would have been easy for the infield to handle.

“Why didn’t you straighten that out?” growled Hanscom. “Perhaps you’d better get off that ankle. It won’t do it any good, I suppose. Jones!”

Blessed Jones looked as if he had attended a funeral that day. He looked even sadder after slashing a number of times at the freshman’s curves and failing to drive out what would have been anything like a safe hit.

The players were beginning to talk among themselves in low tones, all the while watching Oakes to discover what sort of curves he was using which were so hard to hit. Two of them got down behind the pitcher, but he stopped and refused to go on.

“You fellows can do that as much as you please later,” he said. “You wouldn’t have the chance if you were batting in a game, and I’m anxious to find out how many of you can bat me.”

Buckhart was next given a trial. Oakes fooled him twice on wide ones, and then Brad lifted a skyscraper, which, however, would have fallen into the hands of a centre-fielder playing in proper position.

Dwinell was laughing outright by this time.

“What do you think of my chum now, gentlemen?” asked he.

Neither of the three men addressed paid any attention. Hartman was satisfied—more than satisfied, for already he saw the proof of his claim that, in spite of constant batting practice, the members of the Varsity nine would find themselves none too strong with the stick when they got into real baseball.

Colcord smoked on in sereneness, but Pepton was frowning and dismayed.

“If that’s all they can do, what does Hanscom’s training amount to?” he muttered.

“You’ll observe,” said Hartman, “that we have a freshman who can fool them. What do you fancy they’ll do against Scotson, Saturday?”

“Some of those fellows will hit him yet,” said Pepton. “They must. If he were pitching a game against them they would certainly get onto him before it was over.”

Sam Kates took his turn with the bat and could not improve the performances of those who had preceded him.

“Ah!” breathed Pepton. “Here comes Piper. Watch the Demon. He’s a hitter.”

Piper Devon, who had already displaced Tommy Tucker as shortstop on the team, was a fellow of medium height, long arms and muscular build. Indeed, his arms were so marvelously long that he sometimes seemed to scoop the ball from the ground without stooping at all. Those arms gave him a wonderful reach, and he could go into the air after a high liner and capture it when it might have passed over a fellow several inches taller than he.

But his fielding was not the chief feature of his work. He could hit like a demon, and it was this hitting that had given him his nickname.

The watching players nodded among themselves and told one another that Pipe would bump the freshman.

Oakes realized that this man was formidable, but he had studied Devon faithfully and well. A swift ball close to Pipe’s ankles was his hoodoo; but, if he suspected the pitcher meant to deliver such a ball, he could drop back and rap it hard.

Oakes whipped one over, and he delivered it without any preliminary swing or a single unnecessary move. It was waist high, but close, and Devon did not hit it.

“Ha, ha!” laughed Dwinell. “There’s your great batter.”

“By thunder!” muttered Pepton. “If he strikes that man out I’ll have a fit.”

If Oakes sought to “pull” Devon on the next ball, which was high and wide, he failed. Following this he resorted to his own choice curve, and Devon did not even make a foul.

“Two strikes! two strikes! two strikes!” chanted Dwinell. “Gentlemen, what do you think about it?”

“Oh, shut up!” growled Hartman. “Talk to yourself!”

Nevertheless, Lynn was exulting. His statements and theories were thus receiving sudden and unexpected substantiation.

Devon meant to hit the next ball. He was not disheartened or robbed of confidence. He simply believed Oakes the possessor of a few odd tricks and curves which could be easily solved.

But all the while that the batter’s brain was working
to fool the pitcher, the pitcher's mind was equally active in the endeavor to deceive the batter. Oakes knew Pipe Demon would be harder to strike out than the other men who had faced him, but he meant to do it—and he did.

Again he used his own peculiar curve, and again Devon missed.

Dick Merriwell was watching all this. Buckhart muttered at his ear, but Dick scarcely heard Brad, who was saying:

"Can't anybody hit that freshman galoot? We must be a bunch of lobsters. I thought we could bat a little. Pard, you've got to get a hit off him. Do get one clean drive."

By this time Dick had found that Oakes used certain balls and curves in rotation, breaking the order only to deliver his own peculiar and characteristic bender. This was apparently a ball which started like an out-drop but resolved itself into a sort of writhing twist and finished like a straight ball. In all his baseball experience Merriwell had never seen anything precisely like that, yet he fancied it could be hit successfully if a man would not permit himself to judge it as an out-drop. The batter, Dick believed, should strike low and swing as if he expected to meet a straight ball.

After trying repeatedly, Devon finally made what seemed to be a hard safe drive. He was willing to retire at that.

"Merriwell!"

It was Hanscom calling, and Dick stepped out with his bat.

Now Oakes was even more anxious to strike out Merriwell than any other man. He knew Dick was a fellow to use his brains, but he also fancied he had perceived a weak spot in his hitting. And so, to test that weak spot, he started off with a sharp inshoot, high and close.

Merriwell fell back and pounded the ball down to the ground, although there was a question whether it would have been a hit or not.

Oakes frowned a little.

"I'll have to give him my bender," he decided.

And that was precisely what Dick believed he would do. Nevertheless, Merriwell held himself ready for anything. He was not the sort of a man who makes up his mind in advance about the kind of a ball the pitcher will deliver and is therefore thrown off his guard when some other curve is used.

Oakes pitched again, and for the first time his pet was murdered. Merriwell smashed it a terrific blow and sent it humming out on a dead line.

Buckhart uttered a whoop.

"There!" he cried. "I allowed the gent could be hit some."

Another ball was tossed to Oakes, while some fellows chased the one that went bounding away into the field.

The freshman resolved to try the same curve again. Dick hit it handsomely, although not quite as hard as before.

Oakes felt a flutter of departing confidence. Suddenly he began to believe he was facing a man who could hit him, no matter how hard he strove to prevent it.

Again he resorted to the inshoot, and it gave him a little satisfaction when Dick made merely a foul.

Either Oakes was wild or else he wasted his efforts in trying to pull Dick on wide ones, for he pitched three times while Merriwell waited without even wiggling his bat.

"Get 'em over!" called the coach. "We're here for batting practice, not pitching."

Oakes faltered a moment and put one over.

Crack!

Dick hit that ball harder than he had the first one he had driven far into the field. It was a fearful smash that must have passed over the head of any center-fielder who was in his usual position.

Oakes knew at last that one man of the Varsity could hit him hard and clean.

CHAPTER III.

BITTER MEDICINE.

But what discouraged Oakes most was when Merriwell began bunting, laying the ball down to right or left or dropping it dead a few feet in front of him, apparently with the utmost certainty and ease.

To stop this the freshman again resorted to a high, swift ball, but every time he got it over, Dick cracked it out on a line.

Oakes actually grew rattled. His face flushed and paled, and he felt his nerves quivering.

Besides his friend, Dwinell, he had told several others of his classmates that he would have an opportunity to pitch to the batters that afternoon and suggested confidently and knowingly that they would be amused if they came out to the field.

The most of them were there, but Oakes felt that they were not being amused in exactly the manner he had fancied they would be. For a moment or two his
mind strayed from the work in hand, and he thought of Dwinell, sitting up there on the seats, filled with disappointment and disgust. He thought of some of the others, chuckling over what was happening, for he knew a few of them believed him conceited, and he was sure they would rejoice.

Then sudden hatred for Merriwell rose in his heart. Up to this point he had professed a certain amount of admiration for Dick, although he had, in his knowing way, like many others, repeated the oft-prated assertion that Merriwell was a much overrated man.

“Oh, he’s clever,” Oakes had admitted—“he’s clever, but he’s no such a marvel as his friends claim him to be.”

In his ambitious dreaming, Oakes had often fancied himself as rising, during the three years of his course following freshman days, to become a pitcher of a higher grade and greater fame than Merriwell himself. He had imagined the time when men would begin to say that he was as good as Merriwell, and this, he fancied, might take place in his sophomore year while Dick, a senior, was still Lester for Yale.

He had even believed it probable that many wise ones would declare him Merriwell’s superior at that time. And in the two years to follow he would prove to everyone that he was Merriwell’s superior, that he was the greatest pitcher Yale had ever seen; and his name would be known to every college man in the country who took an interest in baseball, and to thousands of others who were not college men, but who followed the fortune of college teams. He had seen visions of those days when he should become known as “The great Oakes,” “Oakes, the marvel,” “Cliff Oakes, Yale’s wizard twirler.”

Back home, in the small country town from which he had come, they were proud of him now, although as a boy he had been regarded as conceited, snobbish, a prig and an upstart. He had always believed in himself and felt confident that sometime he would be a great pitcher. He had worked hard with this object in view, and when a man has confidence in his own ability and works hard to achieve the great object of his desires, he is almost certain to attain some degree of success. Confidence and hard work will do more for a person of ordinary ability than genius and lack of ambition. In many cases this combination of confidence and hard work is mistaken for genius. Some great man, on being asked if genius was not inspiration, replied that genius was mainly perspiration, which was simply another way of saying that it was the result of hard work.

But many a promising lad who has accomplished unusual things by hard work gets his head filled with the mistaken idea that he is the superior of all others of his years and class. In short, he becomes afflicted with that most obnoxious and most baneful of troubles, the swelled head, a malady which has proved fatal for thousands.

Oakes had it—bad. It was high time that some of the conceit should be taken out of him, for this remedy, applied at an early stage of the disease, is the only sure cure. Like most beneficial medicines, it is unpleasant and bitter for the one who has to take it.

It was bitter indeed for Clifford Oakes. After a time his face became set with a sort of grayish pallor, his lips were dry and drawn back from his teeth, and his eyes blazed. He lost his keen judgment and his great cleverness oozed away, for his brain could not work while he was aflame with resentment and wrath. Twice he seemed to pitch the ball with all the great speed he could command, sending it straight at Merriwell, who was forced to dodge like a flash in order to avoid being hit and injured.

“Steady, youngster—steady!” called Hanscom gruffly. “Cool down a bit! Don’t wallop your wing off!”

It must be admitted that the coach was not a little relieved to find one of his men who could hit this freshman freely. Still, he was more or less displeased over the failure of those who had preceded Merriwell. He now saw his opportunity to demonstrate that his method of working those chaps hard at batting practice had not been unwise and a waste of time, and so he called Merriwell back and sent Piper Devon out to try it again.

The Demon had been inspired by Dick’s performance.

“If Merriwell can hit that fellow I can,” he said.

He did. The first ball put over by Oakes after Merriwell’s retirement was smashed full on the trademark by Devon. After that the long-armed chap who had displaced Tommy Tucker on the team continued to hit well, although perhaps not with the same freedom, ease, and certainty that had characterized Merriwell’s work.

Buckhart was given another chance, and he also, with restored confidence, got against the Spaulding for several good cracks.

Hanscom was satisfied. He saw that Oakes was now “pitching his arm off,” and therefore, with the conclusion of Brad’s second turn with the stick, the
coach called the freshman back and told him he had done enough.

The spectators scattered over the tiers of seats were talking about Merriwell. To be sure, a few of them were silent, and one of these was Hop Dwinell, who hastened to leave at the termination of Oakes' performances.

"There," said Jackson Colcord, speaking to Hartman and Pepton, "you can see the effect of example and inspiration. That little performance simply goes to prove my theory that one man like Merriwell can do more toward winning games than several ordinary men who are rated as first-class, but who somehow fail to impart their own confidence and vim to their teammates. For all of Merriwell's cleverness, he never does anything as if he felt himself to be the only one who could perform the feat. He always seems to say, 'Look here, boys, this thing isn't half as hard to do as it seems, and you can do it as well as I.' I don't think I can explain this quality of encouragement for others which some men possess. Their best efforts influence their comrades to emulation. Other men discourage comrades or teammates by seeming superiority of an unattainable sort. I've seen teams demoralized by the cleverness of the star performer, and other teams keyed and encouraged to outdo themselves by the example of a star among them. The man who inspires others to follow in his tracks and seek to do the best there is in them, is a natural leader, a builder, a person who could triumphantly command armies; the one who discourages his fellows by seeming to stand aloof and above them, who exerts no such inspiring influence, is a destroyer, a demolisher of system, and often an unconscious and unwitting anarchist."

Hartman was frowning and pulling at his dead meerschaum.

"Nevertheless," he said somewhat sullenly, "I hold that Oakes practically proved that I was right in my claim that Hanscom has wasted too much time on batting practice. Those fellows were at the mercy of Oakes until Merriwell broke the freshman's heart."

"And then Pipe Demon and Buckhart showed that they could bat," nodded Colcord. "Others would have done the same. In many a game you and I have seen a whole team at a pitcher's mercy until some determined spirit on that team got at the twirler and bumped him hard. We've seen games in which pitchers held the opposing batters in the hollow of his hand and toyed with them for six or seven or even eight innings; and then, all at once, somebody has landed on him and the others have followed suit and hit him as freely as if he were the poorest sort of a novice. I doubt not that such a thing will happen with Yale this very season, and it may occur repeatedly. It's a great thing for us that we've one man like Merriwell who can start and inspire a batting streak."

"But what's his secret?" questioned Pepton. "Why was it that he, who often hits no better than several others in a game, could step out there to-day and pound the man who had fanned all those chaps who came before?"

Colcord deliberated and replied slowly and cautiously:

"I don't know as I'm qualified to reveal his secret. Still, I think that three words will explain it to some extent. They are observation, determination, and confidence. He watches a pitcher to learn the man's style, all his tricks of delivery, all his stratagems to deceive the batter, all his particular effective methods and curves. I'll guarantee that he studied Oakes and used his brain to devise the proper process of meeting the man on an even footing. I'll even admit it is possible that Merriwell would not have made such a good showing against the freshman if he had been called on to step out as the first batter."

"Oh, Merriwell's a wonder, there's no question about that," cried Pepton enthusiastically. "Last week I wrote a little article about him for the New York Globe and wasted my labor, for it wasn't used. I suppose the editor who passed judgment on the dope regarded it as a bunch of hot air. Anyhow, I failed to get the price of half a column of good stuff."

"Possibly," smiled Colcord, "you'd seen your stuff used if you'd boiled down that half-column into half a dozen lines. You said too much. Space is valuable in the big papers, and copy readers and editors don't like the work of blue penciling or rewriting half a column into six or eight lines."

In the meantime, Dwinell had hurried after Oakes and overtaken him as he was leaving the field.

"What was the matter, Clif?" he asked.

Oakes turned a pair of fiery eyes on his chum.

"I don't know," he confessed, his pale face flushing again. "The man hit me, that's all. I couldn't seem to put the ball anywhere within his reach that he couldn't land on it."

"But you felt sure you could strike him out."

"I know it," Clif admitted. "I tried everything on him. He's got the best eye of any man I ever saw. Another thing, you can't tell what he's going to do. Some fellows shift their positions every time they bat,
but they shift it soon enough to give the pitcher warning of their intentions. If they're going to bunt, you know it by the way they stand and hold the bat. If they're going to hit out, you can feel certain by the tokens they give you. Merriwell doesn't seem to give any such warning. When he means to bunt, he holds his bat just the same as if he were going to swing on the ball, and he shifts his grip after it's too late for the pitcher to divine his purpose. He shortens his grip on the bat like a flash, and meets the close ones. He can reach over the plate and get a wide one when he chooses. But it's his eye, his eye that does it. He's watching the ball all the time. I swear, he made me boil with rage."

“And that's why those other men hit you afterward,” said Dwinell. “I was sorry to see that.”

“Oh, I don't give a rap about that. Merriwell’s the man I wanted to fool. He's the fellow you hear all this talk about. It's queer that I should feel so uncertain after he got that first hit. I never felt that way before. What did the fellows say? I suppose they're laughing over it.”

“What do you care if they are?”

“But I do care! I asked some of them to come out to the field. I’ll feel like crawling into my hole and staying there for a day or two.”

The first dose of medicine had taken powerful effect upon Oakes.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SECRET.

That evening the various members of the nine dropped into Merriwell’s room until all were assembled there. Dick was surprised as they came in, one after another, for it seemed as if there must be some understood purpose in their appearance.

Naturally, the talk was of baseball and the coming game with Tufts, which was to be practically the opening of the season.

“They say,” said Nash, “that this man Scotson is a holy terror.”

“I’ve even heard, gentlemen,” smiled Claxton, “that Pop Hanscom is afraid of the Tufts’ terror, and that’s why he’s kept us hammering so hard at batting practice.”

“Verily, I confess,” droned Jones, “that I shall hold him in proper awe if he has anything more to show in the way of kinks than the freshman exhibited today.”

“Waugh!” exploded Buckhart. “That kid can pitch some. You hear me gently murmur!”

“It was Merriwell who broke the spell,” grinned Piper Devon, who looked his fiercest when he laughed. “I was ashamed of my first performance.”

“And that,” said McGregor, turning to Dick, “is why we’re bothering you this evening.”

“Oh? I don’t think I understand,” said Merriwell.

“You didn’t seem to have any trouble in hitting the freshman right off the reel. How did you do it? We want to know the secret.”

Dick laughed.

“There’s no secret about it,” he declared.

“There must be!” exclaimed Nash. “Either you have a secret or else you’ve got the best batting eye of any man I ever saw. Of course, if you want to keep it to yourself——”

“Don’t suggest such a thing as that, Nash,” remonstrated Dick. “If I know anything about batting or any department of baseball that is worth knowing, I’m ready to impart that knowledge to others. I make no claims whatever.”

“Never mind being modest,” said McGregor. “I’ve looked over your batting averages, and in the long run you’ve hit for a better percentage than any of your teammates. Some other fellows have excelled in three baggers or home runs, but you’ve made a steady, clean, consistent record. We’ve listened to the coaching of Hanscom and tried our best to profit by it. After what happened to-day we resolved to wrest the secret from you if possible. We’re here, and we demand to know.”

“I don’t know that I can add anything of particular value to what Hanscom has tried to teach you fellows. Perhaps the pith of this secret, as you call it, does lie in the fact that I have a good eye. Any defect of the vision tends to hamper a batsman. Nevertheless, I’ve seen fellows with perfect eyes who never could seem to learn the art of hitting. A man must have a clear brain and plenty of confidence in himself to become a batsman.”

Dick stopped as if he had finished, but they cried out for him to go on.

“Don’t be afraid to spiel it off,” urged Devon. “Oakes had me going the first time I faced him, but you hit him immediately. How did it happen?”

“The only explanation I can give,” said Dick, “is that I had a chance to watch his methods and his style while the rest of you fellows were batting. He lacks at least one qualification of a good pitcher, and that is change of pace. He uses speed all the time. He has splendid control, and he can put the ball high, low, close or wide, just as he pleases. He also has one
nasty little curve that is not common with most pitchers, and he depends a great deal on that ball.”

“I’d like to know what it is,” said Nash. “It looked to me like an ordinary out-drop, but I couldn’t seem to find it.”

“He pitches the ball like an ordinary out-drop,” nodded Dick; “but it is not the common out-drop used by the majority of pitchers. I have never before seen anything exactly like it. I decided that a man should strike low, swing fair and hold his bat as if he meant to hit a straight ball. Any fellow chopping at that ball or scooping for it will not get a hit unless it should be by pure accident. When I hit this pet curve a couple of times, Oakes lost a great deal of his faith in it. After that he became fairly easy, in spite of the fact that he maintained his control pretty well. He pumped the ball over close, wide, high, low, seeking for some hole to put it through. If that man doesn’t shump, he ought to make a splendid pitcher.”

“What’s your idea of the proper position for a man at bat, Dick?” asked Darrell.

“The proper position is the natural position. You can’t make a fixed rule for every fellow to follow. Just as we all have our peculiarities in walking, running, throwing, and doing many other things, we may have such peculiarities in standing up to the plate. Unless a man puts himself in a false, cramped and unnatural position, he should be permitted to develop his own style. Of course every batter should stand in such a manner that the weight of his body is on his right foot, if he bats right-handed, with his left foot touching the ground lightly, so that he can step into the ball. For a left-hander this is reversed.”

“Which do you consider the best style of batting, right or left handed?” questioned McGregor.

“If a man can do as well left-handed as right, I advise him to bat that way.”

“Why? If he stands right-handed he faces first base; standing left-handed his back is toward the base.”

“That’s true,” admitted Dick; “but think a moment. The right-handed batter throws himself round to one side with his swing. He’s thrown himself out of his pace, and he has to recover before he can start. The left-handed batter, with his shoulder turned toward first, throws himself round and into his pace when he swings the bat. In this manner he gets an advantage, and often every second of time and every inch of ground counts in getting down to first.”

“That’s right, that’s right,” cried Devon. “I used to bat left-handed, but I changed over. I think I made a mistake.”

“What sort of hitters do you consider the most dangerous, Dick?” asked Kates. “The wallopers or the place hitters?”

“Both are dangerous. In the long run, perhaps the place hitter does the best work; but any pitcher fears a man who has a reputation as a walloper. Such a man may strike out often, but if he’s really dangerous he’s liable to clear the bases at a critical point in the game. Some of these wallopers are no good at timely hitting, and they’re not especially feared. But take a man who slams the ball hard and has the faculty of getting a hit when men are on bases, and there you have a dangerous proposition.”

“I couldn’t seem to guess what sort of a ball that fellow Oakes was going to pitch,” confessed Nash.

“And right there was where you made a mistake. A man who stands up to bat shouldn’t do any guessing. He should put himself into position to hit anything the pitcher may hand up. Every pitcher who becomes especially effective is constantly trying to fool the batter. Some of them have remarkable cleverness in deceiving a batsman into believing they will pitch a certain kind of ball at a critical point of the game and then delivering something wholly different and unexpected. The chap who stands right, in his own natural position, with his weight on his rear foot, ready to step in, and swings the bat with a wrist movement, a sort of a snap, can wait until he sees the ball starting to break before he makes up his mind in regard to the curve. A wide ball can be chopped off into right field, while one a bit close may be turned into good account by a sharp, snappy swing. To use this snappy swing, however, a man must hold his bat short.”

“But you don’t always take up on your bat,” said Darrell. “If a fellow uses a heavy bat he’ll find trouble in getting that sharp, snappy swing, won’t he?”

“Not if he shortens his hold. For the very reason that I don’t believe in letting the pitcher know in advance what I mean to do, I seldom shorten my hold on the bat before he commences his delivery. Some pitchers have no preliminary movements to give a batter time for shifting his hold.”

“You can hit a high ball about as well as a low one” said McGregor.

“To hit a high ball, a man must swing the bat overhead to get the force just a shade late. A low ball must be timed well in front of the plate, with an underhand swing. Of course it isn’t necessary to say any-
thing about pulling away from the plate, for we all
know the folly of that amateurish trick. Some batters
always force the pitcher to put the ball over.”
“Don’t you think that a good idea for a man who
has an excellent eye?” asked Joe Cohen.
“Sometimes, but not always. The best hitters are
the men who are known by pitchers to be good judges
of the ball, but who are not always particular to pick
out the perfect ones.”
“I don’t think I understand your theory, Merriwell.”
“Well, I’ll explain if I can. A man who always
forces the pitcher to put the ball over the plate, rigidly
refusing to hit at those which are a trifle off, eventually
becomes stereotyped in his style of batting and gives
clever fielders a chance to lay for him. With a pitcher
in the box who has perfect control of the ball, the
fielders will get into position to take the anticipated
drive from the bat of a such a stereotyped hitter. Look
at Lajoie and Wagner. Both of those men are terrors
to pitchers, because no slabman can ever tell what sort
of a ball they will pound hard enough to start the
stitches. Some of Lajoie’s most terrific hits have been
made off balls the pitcher was trying to keep beyond his
reach.”
“You know,” said Kates, “some people claim that
batters, like poets, are born, not made.”
“Yes, I’ve heard that,” laughed Dick. “There’s
some truth in it, for many men are natural batters.
But any man who can hit at all can become a fairly
good batsman by consistent practice and proper train-
ing.”
“By gum! there may be some chance for me,”
chuckled Eben Lamb, who had been listening eagerly
to Dick’s words. “I’d like to ask a question.”
“Fire ahead,” invited Merriwell.
“Which is the best way to stand, close to the plate
or a good, fair distance away from it?”
“Great many men toe the batter’s line. By that
I mean to say they get as close to the plate as the rule
will allow. This is a good trick with a pitcher who
has a wide out that proves baffling, for it prevents
him from getting the ball out of the batsman’s reach.
Still, I’ve seen men who could hit well and who stood
as far away from the plate as possible. Nevertheless,
I think it advisable to keep fairly close to the pan.
Some fellows seem to have their arms tied up or held
in restraint. It’s the chap with a good, free, loose
swing of the arms and a strong, supple wrist who does
the best work.”
“Gosh hanged if I can ever seem to bunt,” said
Lamb. “That’s what makes me sick.”
“You’ll get the trick in time,” declared Dick. “Keep
at it, keep at it. In bunting, the bat should be swung
well out to meet the ball and then gently drawn back
on slow balls. If the ball is speedy, the batter’s hand
should relax as bat and ball meet. Every man who
plays the game should learn to bunt. It’s a necessary
qualification. Hundreds of games have been won by
bunting that never could have been won by straight
hitting.
“There, fellows, I’ve told you practically all I know
about batting. There’s no secret in it. Proper coach-
ing and plenty of practice is necessary. Keep at it,
and keep up your confidence. Never get discouraged.
If you seem to get a poor streak of hitting, make up
your mind that you’ll break it—and you will.
“You’ve talked about being afraid of Scottson.
There’s nothing to be afraid of. Doubtless you’ve all
batted against just as good men as he is. Go into that
game with confidence that you can hit him, and the
chances are you’ll hit him before the game is over.”

CHAPTER V.

A LOYAL FRIEND.

After a time Dick laughingly but firmly insisted that
his visitors should take their leave and give him a
chance to study a little before the retiring hour. They
saw he was in earnest and departed in a body, still dis-
cussing and arguing over the opinions and ideas upon
batting, as advanced by him. He smiled as he heard
this earnest discussion dying out in the distance.
He did not spring the catch when he closed the
door, which Jones had negligently left ajar. There
was little chance, he fancied, of further interruption by
callers that evening.
Buckhart, who of late had permitted baseball to in-
terfere somewhat with studying, was already squared
away with a text book at one elbow and a “pony” at
the other.
“Now by the great hornspoon,” he growled, “I’ll
shoot the next galoot who comes prowling around this
wigwam. I can’t seem to get any time to do a little
grinding, and I’m afraid I’ll get a card from the office
almost any day.”
“It’s up to you to make time, Brad,” said Dick se-
ciously. “I’ve told you so before. If conditions should
interfere with your baseball playing this year, we’d be
in a frightful hole. We haven’t got Anderson, you
know. Of the new men Hanscom has tried to de-
velop as backstops not one fills the bill. We rely abso-
lately on you behind the bat. There's only one man in Yale to-day who can come anywhere near filling your place, and he's barred because he's a freshman. I mean Joe Crowfoot. Next year you'll have Joe as your assistant. With you and Crowfoot for catchers, we'll be properly fixed behind the pan."

"Blame this studying business, anyhow!" rasped the son of the Lone Star State. "I never did take to it a heap. Still, I've always managed to get by, though the margin has been some narrow on several occasions. Here goes! I'm off!"

"Who did it?" asked Dick.
"Tommy," said Bouncer sadly.
"Tommy?"
"Yes."
"Tommy who?"
"Tucker.
"Wow!" whooped the Texan in sudden uncontrollable amusement. "That little runt! Oh, say! you don't mean it, Big! You're joking!"
"You must be joking," said Dick, "or else it was an accident."
"No accident about it," declared Bouncer. "He just drew off and poked me plumb in the eye."
"Now what do you think of that!" gasped the Texan, suppressing his merriment with an effort. "That little pint of peanuts hit Big!"
"It's no joke!" snapped the fat fellow angrily, again holding the handkerchief to his eye. "It's a serious matter."

"But Tommy couldn't have been in earnest," said Dick. "You're his friend—his roommate. He wouldn't hit you in anger."
"Now wouldn't he! Anyhow he did."
"What made him do it?"
"He's on it again."
"On it?"
"Yes."
"On what?"
"Another tear."

"Blames me?" murmured Merriwell incredulously.
"Yes?"
"I don't see how he can."
"But he does. He says you could have used your influence for him. He says you might have prevented Pipe Demon from crowding him out."
"If any man, no matter how friendly we may be, thinks I'm going to use my influence to keep him on the team in the face of his own carelessness and folly in failing to do his lever best to keep himself there, he's mistaken. I've been accused frequently of exert-"
ing a pull for my friends, but never have I done such a thing unless I believed the man I was working for was the best man for the position. I warned Tucker last January to break off his careless habits and keep himself in proper condition if he hoped to make the nine again. He laughed at me. He paid little attention to my words. A man who has played on the team one year can’t be absolutely positive that he’ll get there next year. New players are constantly coming to the front, and in college baseball, the same as in business, the fellow who holds his place may have to work hard and prove that he’s still the superior of his rivals. Tommy has quit too soon. The season is just opening, and Devon, although he seems now like a crackjack, may take a slump or be injured or find himself conditioned. If anything should happen to him, Tommy could jump in and play short again, and he might show up so well that he’d hold the place.”

“Just what I told him,” nodded Bigelow dolefully. “I tried to reason with him, but it wasn’t any use. He was mad all the way through because Devon, who played with the scrub in the first practice games, had been taken onto the regulars in the last game, while he was shifted over to the scrub. He called it an insult, an outrage, a piece of underhand work.”

“It’s just what I warned him might happen. I urged him to brace up and do his best, but he was too cocksure. A man can’t afford to be that way. There are one or two fellows on the crew who are growing careless because they’re so cocksure of themselves and their positions in the boat. The first thing they know, something is going to happen to them. But Tucker must have been crazy to hit you, Big. How did that happen?”

“Oh, I chased him up. I found him in Fred’s place with a bunch of fast ones, and he was going it hillity-whoop. I was mad, and I started to tell him a few unpleasant truths. He pushed me away, and I collared him and tried to pull him out of the place. The gang shouted and jeered. That made him furious, and the first thing I knew he let me have it. Nearly knocked me down, too.”

“What T. Tucker, Esquire, needs is a whole heap is a right good spanking,” said Buckhart.

“Who was he with?” asked Dick.


“Hartman!” muttered Dick. “Hartman, a rake and a gambler. Whitmore and Trench are certainly fit associates for Hartman, although I fancy they’re suckers. What did you do after that, Bigelow?”

“Do? I told him to go to Halifax. Then I got out of the joint. After I got onto the street I was so mad I wanted to go back and knock the head off the little idiot—but I didn’t. I was chewing the rag with myself when that crowd come out. Tommy with them. They were all hilarious. They didn’t see me. Off they went, singing and laughing, and I took a notion to follow them up.”

“Where did they go?”

“To Hartman’s rooms.”

Dick opened the wardrobe and seized a cap, which he clapped on his head.

“Hi, pard!” called Buckhart. “Where are you going?”

“To call on Mr. Hartman,” was the grim answer. Brad rose.

“I’ll go with you.”

“No,” said Dick, “you stay here and plug. You can’t afford the time. Besides that, I’d rather go alone.”

“You may get into trouble.”

“Don’t worry about that, Brad. There’s little danger of it.”

“But you’re putting yourself out altogether too much for that little snipe Tucker. If it were the first time, I wouldn’t say a word; but you’ve had to chase him up half a dozen times already. You have had to take all sorts of risks to get him out of scrapes. How much has he thanked you? How has he proved that he appreciated it? You’ve even risked being arrested and disgraced in order to look out for that rattle-brained little imp. Why don’t you let him go his own way? It isn’t any use, Dick. You can see how much good you’ve done.”

Merriwell stopped near the door and turned toward Brad.

“Buckhart,” he said, “I don’t want to appear conceited, but it’s my firm conviction that Tucker would have been fired out of Yale long ago had not one taken sufficient interest in him to check him when he was inclined to run wild. A better hearted chap than Tom Tucker never lived. He has a pronounced weakness. He’s a junior now. In another year he should graduate. He’s been loyal to me, and I’d feel like a cur if I turned my back on him at this stage of the game. If I did so, others would do the same. He’d think his friends had gone back on him. He’d associate with men like Hartman and Whitmore. How long do you think he’d last?”
"Not a great while," admitted Brad.

"Not a great while," echoed Dick. "Such companions would ruin him in short order. Tucker loves to play poker. He'd be a victim for Lynn Hartman, who would bleed him dry. He'd drink and carouse. He'd neglect his studies. He'd be certain to get into disgraceful scrapes, and some day he'd be expelled."

"Serve him right, too!" growled Brad.

"And it would not only ruin his college career, but the chances are ten to one that it would ruin his whole life. He'd be discouraged, disheartened; the sand would be taken out of him. He'd look back at the old days when he was one of us and we were his friends, his comrades, his chums. He'd say we had thrown him down, and the bitterness of it would make him still more reckless. He's not the sort of a chap to go elsewhere to enter college and complete his education. He might—and I fear he would—fall into the habit of constant boozing. He might become a miserable, worthless sot. He might break his mother's heart, and I know that he's her special pride and pet. Knowing this, even if I had ceased to consider Tommy, I should feel myself largely responsible for the shame and sorrow that would come to his mother."

Buckhart was abashed by these words; his face flushed and his eyes refused to meet the dark, enthusiastic orbs of Dick Merriwell.

"The trouble—the trouble with you, pard, is that you take—you take too much responsibility on your own shoulders. You feel that you're responsible for the actions of others, and—"

"To some extent, every one of us is responsible for the actions of others," asserted Dick positively.

"Through our influence and our example we have a great deal to do with the behavior of our associates. Even the weakest and poorest human wretch may influence another human being. A fellow should realize this and also realize his own responsibility. No chap has a right to say that he is harming no one save himself by his behavior."

"It seems to me that you've done for Tucker all any fellow could be expected to do for another."

"I spoke of Tommy's mother, Brad. You and he have been more fortunate than I. I can't even remember my own mother. She died when I was too young to remember her. That has always been a source of keenest pain and regret for me. I see other fellows who have mothers who love them, admire them, take pride in them, and always it stirs up that old feeling of emptiness in my heart. I have a brother living—a brother who is dear to me and whom I adore beyond words to express; I have friends—good, loyal friends and comrades; but still, not one of these, nor all of them, can ever take away that feeling of loss and regret for the mother I never knew. Even if Tucker were far less my friend, the thought of his mother would spur me to do what I could to prevent him from breaking her heart. No, Bigelow, I don't want you with me. I'm going alone. You'd better go to your room and doctor that eye. I'll bring Tucker back with me."

With that final assurance, he departed on his mission.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIGHT IN HARTMAN'S ROOMS.

Merriwell knew the house in which Hartman roomed. As he mounted the steps he was somewhat surprised to hear a great uproar of voices coming from that house. A gleam of light crept out from beneath one of the drawn curtains of the upper windows. The uproar, singing, laughing, and shouting seemed to be in that room.

"They're certainly raising Ned," thought Dick. "I wonder that the landlady stands for it."

As he lifted his hand to ring the bell, the door was opened and a colored man looked out.

"Is yo' looking fo' Mr. Lynn, sah?" inquired the darky.

"Mr. Lynn?" said Dick. "No, I wish to see Mr. Hartman."

"Dat's him, dat's him—Mr. Lynn Hartman."

"Oh, yes," laughed Dick, who had momentarily forgotten Hartman's Christian name. "He's the fellow I want to see."

"Ah 'spected dat was de circumlocution ob de case. Ah resume yo' name is Ham-Ham-Hammersly? Dat's a po'eful hard name for a pussun to distemember. Yes, sah. Walk right up to Mr. Lynn's compartments. He's 'specking you, sah. He told me to keep my eye open for yo' 'rival. He's entertaining a section ob young gen'mans in his compartments."

"I should say so by the racket," muttered Dick, for the noise had grown louder as he stepped into the hall. "That's no Quaker meeting."

"Sounds like a Methodist revival, don't it?" chuckled the negro. "Dey's sullenly getting profuse wid gaiety. Yes, sah. Yah! Yah! Yah! Yo' see de missis am out, and it's de maid's night off. Ah's de only pussun ob sponsibility lef in de 'establishment. Ah
don't care how much noise dey makes if dey don't bring de police down on de 'establishment. Ah 'specs Ah'll have to remind dem ob de obnoxity of de police. Ah 'specs Ah'll hab to caution dem 'gainst rousing de blue-co'ed gardens ob de serenity ob de city. Walk right up, sah. Yo' knows de way. Mebbe it would be a good suggestion fo' you to caution de gen'mans 'gains' disreputing de quietude ob de atmosphere to such a collapsable extent. Jes' suggest to de gen'mans dat dey's making considerable combustion ob noise. Ah's ob de 'pinion dat dey's been indulging in okerby juice to a injudicious degree."

Someone was singing "Harrigan, That's Me." Others were howling for the singer to shut up. As Dick ascended the stairs there came a thud and a crash, and the song terminated. Apparently the musical individual had been forcibly suppressed.

Then Dick heard a familiar voice crying:

"Gentlemen, lend me your ears. Friends, Romans, countrymen, hearken to my tale of woe."

"Tucker! Tucker!" was the cry.

"Hear me for my cause," continued the voice of Tommy, "and be speechless that ye may hear. Have respect for mine honor that ye may believe. If there be in this bunch any dear friend of Caesar's, to him I say that Brutus' love to Caesar was no less than his'n. But, in the words of the immortal Spartacus, I say, 'Sic semper tyrannis,' likewise 'Dum vivimus, vivamus.' Who is here so base that would be a bondman? Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? If any, let him open his face and give vent to his folly. Friends, Romans, countrymen, I come to hury Caesar—alias Merriwell—not to praise him. I have loved him even as a brother, but hath he not betrayed me?"

"Yea! yea! ye! yil!" whooped the listeners.

"In that hour when a rival rose against me, did he not fail to stand by me in his might? Is it not right that this heart should be sore aggrieved and that I should feel hurt even to the wormy core of my quivering being? Pardon these pearly tears. When I think of how I have been betrayed, my grief wells like a living spring in a barren desert."

"Soak him! soak him!" cried some one.

"We haven't got any use for him!" shouted another.

"Yet, my countrymen," continued Tommy, "where will ye find another like him? He is the peer of the mighty. He is loftier than those who sit in high places."

"He's altogether too lofty, that's what's the matter with him!"

"Believe me, my friends, it grieves me sore that I should have been thus betrayed in my extremity by one whom I have loved with an affection a thousand times stronger than that which I hold for frankfurters and sourkraut. A thousand hot dogs, steaming from the kettle, can never fill the vacancy he has left within my bosom. A million foaming bumpers of nut-brown ale will not suffice to drown my sorrow. Yet this is life! Revile him not too harshly, hold him not up in derision to the world, for even now I ask, where will ye find his equal? Echo answers, where?

"Oh, rot! rot!"

"Let up on that!"

"Cut it out! cut it out!"

"Cease this babbling!" shouted Tommy. "One fool at a time!"

"Go on," said some one.

Dick had arrived at the door. It was partly open, and through it he could see Tommy standing on a chair and balancing himself somewhat unsteadily as he flourished his arms in the wildest gestures.

Hartman, standing far back and leaning against a corner of the mantelpiece, was smiling, a crafty look of satisfaction upon his dissipated face.

Dick flung the door wide open and entered.

Tucker, about to continue his speech, stopped short with a gasp, lost his balance, and went over backward, striking the floor with a crash that shook the house.

"And great was the fall thereof," said Dick. "Pick yourself up, Tommy, and come with me."

Lynn Hartman stepped forward at once, a look of surprise and anger on his face.

"What the devil are you doing here?" he demanded. "How did you get in?"

Merriwell turned his dark eyes on Hartman.

"Walked in," he answered, his voice calm and steady.

Tommy, on hands and knees, twisted his head to one side and looked up at Dick.

"That was a beautiful speech," he said. "You spoiled that flowery piece of oratory by your untimely appearance."

"Truly an untimely appearance," said Hartman. "You were not invited here, Merriwell. There's the door."

"I saw it when I entered. Come, Tucker, get up. You're coming with me."

"Never!", said Tommy. "You've broken a trusting
heart, Merriwell. Henceforth we're strangers. Depart in peace."

"Before you part in pieces!" growled Whitmore.
Dick stooped, grasped Tucker's collar, and brought him to his feet with a snap.
"I think you've gone far enough for one night," he said. "I'm sure these gentlemen will excuse you."

"Who ever saw such insolence?" cried Trench. "Are you going to stand for it, Hartman? Are you going to let this fellow come here to your rooms and drag a guest away?"

"Hardly!" rasped Lynn. "Take your hands off Tucker, Merriwell! Let him alone! You can't boss him around to-night!"

"Not a bit!" shouted Tommy, struggling to break away. "I'm my own master!"

"Tucker is hardly responsible," said Dick. "If he were sober, he'd come with me without a word."

"He says you're drunk, Tucker!" cried Whitmore.
"How do you like that from your exalted and noble friend Merriwell? What do you think of that?"

"You're in my rooms, Merriwell," said Hartman, taking another step forward. "You can't come here and carry things with any such high hand, and I want you to understand it! If you don't go at once, you'll be kicked out!"

"I wouldn't try that if I were in your place, Hartman," said Dick gently. "You might regret it."

With a hissing oath, Hartman sprang forward and struck at Dick's face.

Releasing Tucker, Merriwell dodged the blow, met the fellow as Hartman's fist shot over his shoulder, lifted him bodily and flung him over a couch into a corner beyond.

The others uttered cries of rage and rushed at the daring intruder. In a moment he was beset on every hand. It was a fight, with the odds decidedly against Merriwell. He felt himself hit by several hard fists, but those blows simply seemed to arouse the tiger within him.

In a twinkling a terrific encounter was taking place in that room. Dick managed to catch Whitmore a jab in the stomach, doubling the fellow up. He rapped another man a blow on the jaw that made him see stars.

Hartman, crawling out of the corner into which he had been flung, charged at Merriwell. Chairs were upset, the table was knocked aside, and, as Tucker afterwards remarked, "it seemed as if some one was breaking up housekeeping."

Hartman got in a blow that made Merriwell reel. Dick was dazed, and those fellows came at him from all sides, determined to put him down and out without delay.

At this point Tucker awoke. With a scream, he lunged into the fight. He was a perfect wildcat, striking right and left in a frenzy of fury.

"He's my friend!" screamed Tucker. "Go for 'em, Dick! I'm with you! Soak 'em!"

'This diversion gave Merriwell a moment in which to recover. They saw him laugh, and when he laughed like that he was dangerous indeed.

Tucker had nearly upset Hartman. Before the fellow could recover his balance Dick sprang on him with a blow into which he put the force of his whole body, and Hartman was knocked clean across the room. He lay, stunned and gasping, where he fell.

It seemed that double the number of men could not have stood against Merriwell and Tucker then. One after another they were knocked down and put to rout. One fellow tried to crawl under the couch to get out of the way. Another fled to the bedroom and hid himself beneath the bed. Two more made for the bathroom.

It was all over. Somewhat battered and bruised, Merriwell turned and took Tucker's arm.

"Steady, Tommy," he said. "The gentlemen have hoisted the white flag. I think you'll come with me now, won't you?"

"Sure," said Tucker. "Gee whittaker! what a scrap! Wasn't it a dandy!"

They descended the stairs, giving no heed to the excited questions of the frightened darky, lingering in the hall below, and left that house behind them.

CHAPTER VII.

OAKES HAS A VISITOR.

For the next day or two Hartman and some of his friends wore scars of battle.

The story was really too good for Tucker to keep; and so, in spite of his promise to Dick, that he would say nothing about it, the little chap whispered it to one or two friends whom he pledged to secrecy, and they in turn whispered it to friends whom they pledged to secrecy, and so it spread until it became campus gossip.

Hartman, Whitmore, Trench and the rest of the bunch found it impossible to show themselves upon the campus without being surrounded and questioned.
regarding certain marks, scratches, and bruises which they could not hide.

Tommy seemed highly indignant because he had been betrayed by those in whom he confided, yet when he was rounded up at the Fence by a good-natured crowd, who demanded the story, he took pride and satisfaction in the telling of it. The little chap lost few opportunities for red-fire effect in the narrative. According to his version, Merriwell’s appearance was dramatic, although indicative of great reserved power and suppressed force. His scorn for Hartman and his associates was unspeakable; his wit and repartee was the most stinging and crushing; and then, when assailed on every hand by those fellows, the manner in which he fought was likened unto that of a gladi- tor beset by ravenous wild beasts in a bloody arena. Tucker took no credit to himself. Apparently he did not realize that he had entered into that fight at all. He declared that Merriwell had whipped the entire bunch alone and unaided, and had either put them down and out with the Thor-like thunderbolts of his fists or had sent them scudding to cover beneath beds and couches and tables and chairs.

Clifford Oakes and Hop Dwinell were talking of this matter in their room when some one tapped at the door. They were greatly surprised as Lynn Hartman appeared.

“How do you do, Oakes,” said Hartman, nodding to Clif, and placing his hat on the table.

The freshmen were on their feet, wondering if this visit meant that a hazing was to follow.

Hartman glanced at Dwinell.

“Your roommate, eh?” he said. “I don’t think I know his name.”

“It’s Dwinell, sir,” Hop hastened to say.

“Well, Dwinell, I’ve got a little business to transact with Oakes. Would you mind taking a stroll? It’s a lovely day. The air will do you good.”

Hop flushed, reached for his cap, grinned, and said: “I was just thinking about taking a stroll. I hope you'll excuse me.”

“With pleasure,” said Hartman, following him to the door, which he carefully closed behind Dwinell’s vanishing figure.

Oakes was wondering what it all meant. He knew Hartman by sight, and he had heard that the man bore the reputation of a plunger and card sharp. This had not seemed so bad to Oakes, for youth forever finds something fascinating about the man of experience who bears a sporting reputation.

“You needn’t stand, Oakes,” said Hartman, as he deposited himself on a chair and produced his cigar-case. “Smoke?”

“Why—I—I don’t—mind,” faltered Clif. “I don’t smoke—a great deal—you know.”

He accepted a cigar from the extended case. It was a slender, all Havana panatella, fragrant and in precisely the proper, condition of moisture.

Oakes hastened to strike a match and hold the blaze for the visitor to obtain the first light, after which he fired up himself. Thus far, Hartman’s words and manner had not seemed to threaten or suggest anything like hazing. Still the freshman was on guard, for he knew it was quite remarkable that he should be visited by a senior who had never before noticed or spoken to him.

Hartman pulled at his weed until the end glowed with a feathery suggestion of gray ash beginning to form at the extremity.

“I saw you out at the field the other day, Oakes,” he finally said.

Clifford muttered, “Did you?”

“Yes,” nodded Hartman, removing the cigar from his lips and holding it poised in his fingers. “I saw you do a little pitching for those chaps who were practicing batting.”

“I’m sorry,” said Clif.

“Sorry?”

“Yes.”

“About what?”

“I’m sorry you saw it. I was in rotten poor condition that day. I couldn’t seem to do my best.”

Hartman smiled, as he carried the cigar back to his lips and set his teeth upon the moistened end.

“You don’t need to make any apologies, my boy,” he said. “You pitched all right.”

“Oh, no I didn’t!” hastily cried Oakes. “I was on the bum.”

“You say that because Merriwell hit your pitching.”

“If I’d been in my best form he’d never hit me that way.”

“I don’t know about that,” said Hartman. “Perhaps you’re right; but, considering the fact that you were unhittable until Merriwell faced you, I doubt if you could do any better another time. Now don’t feel hurt. He was the only man who could hit you freely.”

“Devon and Buckhart both hit after that,” muttered the freshman.

“That was because you got rattled. You were upset by Merriwell’s success in bumping you. Otherwise, they couldn’t have hit you that fashion. Oakes, I’ve
taken an interest in you. You're destined to be a great pitcher.”

Clifford flushed with pleasure, and then looked sharply at the visitor, wondering if Hartman was not trying to josh him.

“Oh, I'm serious,” nodded Hartman. “I mean just what I say. To-day you can pitch better than Merriwell could when he came here to Yale, and they call him a wizard. I don't want to see you discouraged. I don't want to see you lose heart. I was afraid you might, after Merriwell had the good luck to bump you in that fashion. I say good luck, but, of course, I admit that it was a little something more. It just happened that he got onto your curves and could hit you. He might not be able to hit another pitcher who could not stand for a moment in your class. I've seen him give a mighty poor exhibition at the bat.”

“He made me mad,” admitted Oakes. “I don't know that anybody ever got me so mad before. I was literally boiling.”

“I knew you were. That's the reason why he continued to hit you with such freedom. After he biffed the ball a couple of times you lost your coolness and good judgment. That's why Devon and Buckhart both were successful when they made their second efforts to bat against you. I was enraged with Merriwell. I told some friends that he was trying to spoil a mighty promising pitcher by pounding the heart out of him. You see that fellow doesn't want any rival to rise against him while he remains in college. Next year will be his last; it is true, but he proposes to remain cock of the walk. Why, some fellows wanted to get Scotson of Tufts here this year, but I understand Merriwell and his friends objected. To-morrow you'll see Scotson pitch for Tufts, and if he has a good team behind him he's going to make Yale work like fury to win. I look for him to strike out fifteen men, at least. You know he has a record of twenty-one strike-outs and no hits in one game. Not even a man reached first. He's a spitball artist. You can understand why Merriwell doesn't want him here. Such a fellow as that would be liable to eclipse the mighty Merriwell in a single game.”

“So this man Merriwell is jealous and narrow, is he?” cried Oakes. “Why, some fellows seem to think him the soul of generosity.”

Hartman smiled scornfully.

“Oh, yes,” he nodded, “a whole lot of fellows seem to think so. He's pretty clever, and he knows how to make the bluff of being open and generous. Still, if a man will take pains to watch his career and note his actions day after day, he'll find he's forever working on the quiet for number one. I'm not denying that the fellow is no ordinary chap, but I do claim that there are plenty of others just as unusual and smart as Dick Merriwell.”

“He must be a great batter!” muttered Oakes.

“Oh, he's got a good eye, and he hits pretty well at times. When you came out to the field to pitch the other day, Merriwell watched you. He saw you striking his teammates out and making monkeys of them generally. He decided that you were dangerous. You might become his rival next year. He resolved to hit you, and he studied your every move, your style of delivery, your speed, your curves; and he made up his mind that he would show you up when his turn came. He succeeded, too; nor did he have any mercy on you after he saw you were up in the air. You're a youngster, Oakes, and such a thing as that gets you off your feet. In a year or two you'll have the nerve not to let it upset you. He did his prettiest to break your spirit. Then he urged his cowboy chum, Buckhart, to bump you. He urged Devon to soak you. He was saying to himself, ‘That freshy must be cooked right here today.’”

Oakes face flushed and his eyes were flashing.

“I hate him!” he cried.

Hartman's face—the face of a gambler—did not change expression in the slightest, although his heart was filled with a sudden thrill of satisfaction by these three fierce words.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PILL.

“Do you?” murmured Lynn, knocking the ashes of his cigar off upon a little brass tray.

“Yes, I do!” rasped Clifford—“I hate him!”

“Well, I haven't got any particular liking for him,” admitted the visitor. “Perhaps you've heard the story of his coming to my rooms the other night and kicking up a rough-house? That yarn was exaggerated, of course. He came there in the most insolent manner imaginable and upset the furniture, and then thumped out and ran when we got after him. That little ass Tucker has been stretching his imagination and telling a fairy story about how Merriwell whipped the whole bunch of us, seven men! That isn't the first time I've been up against that gentleman, and I'm getting thoroughly disgusted with him. He's begin-
ning to interfere with my business lately. I wouldn’t weep if a brick fell on him from the roof of a ten-
story building.”

“You can’t hurt him at Yale,” said Oakes.
“Possibly not,” muttered Hartman.
“I understand others have tried it.”
“Bunglers,” murmured Lynn.
“Oh, well, hate him though I do, I wouldn’t care to be concerned in any effort to do him injury.”
“And yet he has done you just as much injury as he possibly could.”

“He hit my pitching——”
“And then laughed about you.”
“Laughed about me!” cried Oakes, starting to his feet.

“Don’t get excited, my boy. Sit down. Why, sure he laughed at you. He said you were a freshman with a swelled head. He said you thought you could pitch, but you were the easiest thing in the world.”

“He said that?” snarled Clif, aquiver with rage.

“Sure. He’s told it to his friends. I don’t see why you should get wrought up over it, old chap. It’s what you might expect from him. He’s not going to let people get the impression that you’re a coming pitcher. He’s going to take pains to hold you down and keep you buried out of sight until after he’s finished his college course. You hope to get a trial on the Varsity nine next year, don’t you?”

“Naturally I do.”
“ Forget it.”
“Why?”

“You’ll never get a chance.”
“You think Merriwell will keep me down—hold me back?”

“I don’t think anything about it; I know he will.”
“He can’t!” cried the freshman, pounding the table with his fist. “I’ll demand a trial! I’ll force it on them!”

“Next year,” said Hartman, “Merriwell will be captain of the nine, and he’ll be the sole and undisputed authority. Oh, yes, there’ll be a coach who will have something to say, but you may be sure that any man Merriwell wishes to keep down won’t be pushed forward by the coach. You haven’t a ghost of a show, Oakes.”

“And this is Yale?” snarled Clif, prancing the length of the room and back again. “Is this the great American college, with its vaunted spirit of democracy, where every man has an even showing and is judged on his merits? I might have gone to Harvard. My father wanted me to go there. I begged to come here to Yale because I had heard that here every man got a fair and even show.”

“The influence of this man Merriwell is felt here in every department of sport,” said Hartman. “You saw how he figured in football. You’ve seen him with the crew coach, watching the work of the rowers. Now you’ve felt him in baseball. Of course you won’t be foolish enough to do anything to harm Merriwell—anything that is liable to react upon yourself. But if you got a good chance to give him a setback, just as he tried to give you a setback——”

“I’d do it!” hissed Oakes.

“I thought so,” nodded Hartman. “You’d be foolish if you didn’t. Now see here. That fellow we’ll admit, has a good batting eye. They say his hitting average is away up at the head of the list. If anything should happen to his eye, if anything should disturb the clearness of his vision, he might lose some of his skill with the swat stick. It would take some of the conceit out of him if he should suddenly find, without realizing the cause of it, that he couldn’t hit the ball at all.”

“How could such a thing happen? You’re talking of impossibilities, Mr. Hartman.”

“Am I? Sit down, Oakes. For heaven’s sake, stop prancing around like that! Quiet your nerves. That’s right. Have another cigar. Yes, take it. It won’t hurt you to smoke a second one to-day.”

Clif accepted and lighted another cigar, and Hartman also touched fire to a fresh weed.

“Did you ever hear of loco?” asked Lynn, after a time.

“Loco? What’s that?”

“It’s a weed that grows on our Western prairies. In some parts of the cattle country this weed flourishes. Grass feeding animals avoid it, but sometimes it’s so plentiful and their feed is so scarce that they get to eating the stuff. Once they’ve commenced on it, they soon form the habit, just as men form the habit for tobacco, alcohol, and opium. At first there may be very little perceptible effect upon loco-eating cattle; but after a time they lose flesh, grow dispirited and dopey, and eventually become crazed. A peculiar effect of loco eating is that it seems to destroy the judgment of vision. A locoed pony may halt and stand trembling and aghast upon the edge of a six-inch wide crevice in the ground, which looks like a tremendous canon to the unfortunate beast—a canon hundreds of feet wide and thousands of feet deep, possibly. Or the creature may serenely walk up to the brink of a chasm a hundred
feet wide and attempt to hop across it as if it were no more than a foot in width. The loco has completely wrecked the sense of proportions. If a man who plays baseball should take to using loco, in time he'd find himself terribly mixed up in a game. A ball might come up to him from the pitcher's hand looking as big as a toy balloon, or else it might sail over the plate, looking no larger than a tiny pea. The distance between bases might seem a couple of yards or half a mile, just as the distorted fancy of the fellow led him to believe. Scores of other things like these might disturb and disrupt his whole playing, until he became totally useless on the field."

"Oakes was listening, his lips parted, his cigar held in his fingers, a tiny wreath of blue smoke curling up from the end of it."

"But—but, Mr. Hartman," he faltered, "you—you don't—propose to—to drug Merriwell with loco weed—do you?"

"Not exactly," answered Lynn slowly. "Because it would be something of a task, according to your own statement," said Oakes. "You stated that the weed had little apparent effect at first, and that this final result came only after it had been eaten constantly and persistently for a long time. No man could succeed in getting loco into Merriwell's food or drink for any length of time."

"I spoke of the loco weed because, as a rule, almost everyone has some knowledge of it and its properties. I have a brother in Brazil. He wrote me about a similar weed which grows on the South American pampas. It's called sang goutte. Why it should happen to be given this French name, which means blood drop, I can't surmise. I should suppose the name for it would naturally be of Spanish origin, but possibly it was discovered and its properties learned by a Frenchman. This weed has a small purple flower of a deep, dark hue, with a bright red speck in the center, like a tiny drop of blood. Unlike the loco, one dose of sang goutte will totally disrupt a person's natural vision. The effects are not especially violent, so that a victim is immediately aware of them, but he begins to see things in improper proportions. For instance, had I been taking the stuff, I might reach out for this book lying at my elbow on the table and extend my hand a foot beyond it, thinking it was farther away than it really is. Or I might fancy yonder chair so close that I could place my feet on it, but when I attempted to do so I'd be surprised to discover my legs were woefully short—much shorter than I ever before imagined. In time, of course, I'd come to realize that something was the matter with me; but it might be a number of days before that thing happened, and in such a period the effect of the sang goutte would pass away unless I took more of it. Now, as I say, unlike loco, this weed acts almost instantly. My brother purchased a tiny vial of sang goutte pills and sent them to me. I've barely half a dozen of those little pills left. Here they are."

Hartman produced the miniature vial from his vest pocket and held it up, showing a few white pills, which rattled in the bottom of it.

"I've had considerable amusement in giving this drug to animals," he said. "It dissolves instantly in water, and is practically tasteless. Drop one of these pills into a glass of water, and it seems to vanish in a twinkling. Drink the water, and in less than five minutes you'll be seeing things wrong. First I tried it on a dog that was thirsty. I dropped a couple of pills into a dish of water and gave him the water to drink. Say, you should have seen him trying to step over chairs, bumping his nose unexpectedly against the wall and doing a lot of foolish things like that. Finally he came upon a Teddy bear sitting propped up in a corner. Teddy was no more than a foot in height when measured at full length, and, sitting, he was much less than that. The dog was a full-blooded, full-grown Boston terrier, ten times as big as that stuffed Teddy bear. Yet when he saw Teddy he jumped backward with a howl of terror, his eyes bulging from his head. He shook in every limb, and a moment later, with his tail between his legs, he turned and fled for his life. It was very comical."

"But finally I tried the stuff on myself. Oh, yes, I tried it. I dissolved one of the pills in a glass of water and drank the water. In less than five minutes, as I sat looking at my feet and wondering what would first seem to be wrong; I discovered that I had a pair of the most beautiful triplets ever attached to a member of my sex. I wear number nine shoes, but my feet looked about proper for number threes, ladies' size. I did all sorts of foolish things before the effect of the stuff wore off. I walked around a pebble as big as an egg in the road, thinking it was a boulder ten feet high. I knew that I was being fooled by my distorted vision, but still I couldn't help it."

"How long did it last?" asked Oakes breathlessly.

"The second day it was at times more pronounced than the first day. There would be periods of an hour or more when everything would seem perfectly natural, and then suddenly everything was all wrong for five or ten minutes. On the third day these spells grew far-
ther apart and things were not so badly distorted. That night I slept well, and the following day I was all right."

For a few moments they sat looking at each other in silence. Finally the freshman whispered:

"What's your scheme?"

"I was thinking," said Hartman deliberately, as he flicked some of the ashes from the end of his cigar with his little finger, "that it might be a pretty good joke to get a dose of sang goutte into our friend, Dick Merriwell, just before or during the course of a baseball game. You can understand what would happen. How much hitting would he do if suddenly he should see the pitcher hand up a ball that looked as big as a prize squash at a country fair? He would be so dazed that he'd never swing at it. Or, on the other hand, supposing the ball looked no larger than a BB shot. Why, he couldn't hit anything like that. Perhaps the first thing that happened would be of a different nature. The batter might bat the ball ten feet over his head, and he would put up his hands, thinking he'd catch it without having to jump for it. Possibly the batter would hit the ball straight at him and he would imagine it going in another direction. The most likely thing to happen, and the most certain, would be the loss of his batting and pitching eye. The plate would be too far away or too near when he pitched. He wouldn't hit at all when he tried to bat. In short, he'd play a rotten game. That's all there is to it. Not knowing that he had been doped, he wouldn't be able to account for it. It would be a good joke, don't you think, Oakes?"

"A corker," nodded the freshman. "It would serve him right, too, the jealous, selfish, conceited big head! But how can you get the stuff into him?"

"I'm going to leave that to you."

"To me!" gasped Clif.

"Yes."

"But I can't do it!"

"Yes, you can."

"How?"

"Do you know Jim Sweat?"

"No. Who is he?"

"He's the fellow who has the honor of being water bearer for the nine. He's the chap who looks out to see that they're supplied with plenty of H'0."

"Well?"

"Sweat is indebted to me. He'll do almost anything I ask him to do. To-morrow I'm going to ask you to take his place. You'll supply the players with water. You'll hand it out to them when they come in thirsty from the field."

Oakes looked disturbed.

"And you—you want me to—to drug Merriwell?"

"That ought to be the easiest thing in the world. I'm going to give you one of these little pills. Carry it in your vest pocket. Some time before the game or during the course of it Dick Merriwell will come to you for a drink of water. When you see him coming have your pill ready between your fingers. Dip up a glass of water and drop the pill into it. That's all you need do. Just give it to Merriwell. It'll fix him."

"But what—what if the pill doesn't dissolve right away? What if he sees it,"

"Don't you worry about that. Haven't I told you that it dissolves almost instantly? Ere it can sink an inch from the surface of the water it will vanish completely. It won't even leave bubbles to betray what has happened."

"And you're sure it can't be tasted in the water?"

"Sure," nodded Hartman.

"But why don't you get Sweat to do the trick?"

"Sweat is a great admirer of Merriwell. In spite of the fact that I've got the fellow who feels himself greatly indebted to me, I don't think I could force him to drug Merriwell. You see he hasn't any reason, as you and I have, for hating the man. I sha'n't tell him what's doing, you may be sure. I'll simply let him suppose that you're very anxious to get acquainted with the men of the Varsity team—that you consider it a great honor to be with them as water bearer. Perhaps I'll joke about it a little. I'll explain that you've pitching ambitions. Now it's up to you, Oakes. Have you got nerve enough to do this job, or are you weak-kneed? This fellow Merriwell has done his prettiest to show you up. He's laughed about you behind your back. He'll keep you under foot if he can."

"Will you swear that the pill will have no permanent harmful effect?"

"I swear it," said Hartman, as he uncorked the vial and rolled one of the tiny white pellets out upon the palm of his hand. "Here's the medicine. Take it if you've got the nerve; but unless you mean business and I can depend on you, don't touch it. If you're going to lose your nerve later on, don't touch it. If you're willing to be held down beneath Dick Merriwell's iron heel, don't touch it. If you haven't the courage of a man to——"

His eyes blazing, Oakes leaned forward and picked the pill from Hartman's palm.
CHAPTER IX

THE SEASON OPENS.

Tufts.
Ordway, rf.
Tombave, 3d b.
Deemer, if.
Goodling, 1st b.
Fulton, ss.
Larsen, cf.
Scotson, p.
Armsby, 2d b.
Gilmore, c.

Yale.
Claxton, lf.
Darrell, 2d b.
Devon, ss.
Merriwell, p.
Buckhart, c.
Cohen, 3d b.
McGregor, 1st b.
Jones, cf.
Nash, rf.

The great day had come at last. Yale was ready to open the baseball season with Tufts on the field at New Haven.

Upon the books of the scorers the names of the players were recorded as above.

Tufts came first to bat, and Ordway walked out with his slugger upon his shoulder.

Claxton was in left field for Yale, Captain McGregor having come into the diamond to cover first because of his continued lameness. Merriwell had thrown a few over the pan in order to get the range of the plate.

Buckhart was ready for business, guarded by body protector and mask. Ordway was a stranger to the Yale men, but the moment he took his position to bat lefthanded, both infielders and outfielders shifted their own positions somewhat to cover the ground for such a hitter.

Quite a delegation had come down with the Tufts boys, for it was generally believed that Scotson would prove to be a puzzle for the Yale hitters.

A goodly crowd of Yale men had assembled to watch the game, but they were not making a great deal of noise. There was some cheering for the old favorites, Merriwell in particular, and a little singing.

"Start us off, Ord!" called Captain Fulton. "Get right into the game!"

Ordway planted himself with his toes close to the boxline and held his bat in a business-like fashion.

Dick looked the fellow over and opened up with a whistling high inshout.

Ordway smashed it full and fair, and drove it out on a line over the head of Darrell, who made an ineffective leap for it.

Apparently Ordway was a wonderful runner. Batting lefthanded, he came round into running position with the swing and went flying down the line to first.

Nash and Jones both raced after the ball.

Ordway crossed first, cut sharply toward second, stretched his legs for it, flung himself at full length in a slide, and got there safely ahead of the ball, which Jones had sent humming to Darrell.

The Tufts delegation cheered like lunatics. On the way to New Haven Ordway had made a wager with Fulton that he would get a hit the first time up.

Tombave, who came next, was prepared to lay down a bunt and sacrifice Ordway to third; but Merriwell kept the ball high, and therefore he could not bunt effectively. He was finally forced to hit, and hit he did, although not safely. Nevertheless, he pounded the ball into the diamond, and Ordway went to third, while Tombave was being thrown out at first.

Deemer, the next man up, was one of the strongest batters on the team, and he was followed by Goodling, another man almost equally capable. Therefore a score for Tufts seemed almost assured.

Fulton and Armsby were coaching. Deemer glanced toward the captain of the team, who gave him a signal, and immediately he went to the plate ready for the execution of the play which the captain called for. Fulton was near third, and he had put Ordway wise. The squeeze play was to be tried immediately. If it worked it seemed probable that it would send the Yale team into the air and disturb Merriwell not a little.

And so the moment Dick started to pitch to Deemer, Ordway dashed from third toward home.

Deemer had shortened his grip on the bat, crowding close to the plate, and he did his prettiest to hit the ball into the diamond.

He succeeded, too, but unfortunately he sent it toward Merriwell. It struck the ground at the left of Dick, bounced once and landed in Merriwell's mitte.

Buckhart had seen Ordway coming, and he was astride the pan.

Had Merriwell stopped to change the ball from his left hand to his right before throwing, he could not have got it to Brad in time for the Texan to stop the run.

Dick snapped the ball with an underhand swing straight into the hands of Buckhart, who put it onto Ordway as the latter slid. Then, without waiting to hear the umpire's decision, the Texan hurled the sphere down the line past the ear of the running Deemer and —plunk!—into the hands of McGregor.

"Out at the plate!" cried the umpire. "Out at first!"

No wonder the Yale crowd suddenly came to life and shrieked like a lot of lunatics.

Buckhart did a war dance, but the rest of the players were apparently grave and unconcerned. They be-
trayed no disposition to show elation similar to that felt by the Texan.

But McGregor limped hastily toward Dick and walked in to the bench with him.

"It's a good thing you stopped that run, Merriwell," said Greg. "If they'd made it they'd been very cooky, and it might have got our men to going some."

"I thought I pitched that ball out of the batter's reach," said Dick. "I suspected they were going to try a squeeze, although it seemed rather odd that they should do so at this stage of the game."

As he reached the bench he observed Clifford Oakes handing Buckhart a glass of water. Oakes did not glance toward Dick.

"That fellow is ambitious to get in with the ball players," thought Merriwell. "That's a good sign. Evidently he isn't discouraged because we hit him a little the other day. That's a good sign, too. I fancy there may be good material in him. I hope so. I'll do my best to help him along if he will let me. I must have a talk with him some day."

CHAPTER III.

THE TUFTS WIZARD.

A moment later Dick had forgotten the freshman, his attention being wholly taken up with Scotson, who was limbering his arm.

The slender, left-handed Tufts pitcher bore himself in a confident manner, and there was something about him to attract and hold the eyes of the spectators. He had a long lock of dark hair which fell at intervals over his forehead and was tossed back by a shaking jerk of his head or swept aside with a quick movement of his hand. His speed was wonderful, as he proved by shooting a couple of sizzlers across to the first baseman, who handled the ball for him while the catcher was adjusting mask and body protector.

The Tufts crowd cheered their players, the captain and the pitcher.

Rob Claxton stepped forth with his bat, and Scotson made ready for business. There was a hush. The Tufts twirler put his right foot on the slab, swung his left arm in a wide sweep, balanced himself upon his left foot a moment, and then shot over a zigzag.

Claxton missed it by six inches, at least.

"Ah!" aspirated the Tufts spectators.

The Virginian gripped his bat, pounded his feet into the ground and squared himself resolutely. Scotson whipped over a rise.

Claxton barely fouled it the least bit.

"Ha!" came from the Tufts crowd.

A moment later pitcher and batter were again watching each other like hawks. Scotson seemed to turn almost disdainfully from the Yale man as he again swung himself in the movements of his delivery.

A third time Claxton struck and missed.

"Ye-e-e-e-e-e!" shouted the Massachusetts lads.

Scotson believed as if this were a mere matter of course as Claxton retired somewhat disconsolate to the bench.

"What's he got, Rob?" asked Darrell, stepping out.

"Speed and a close one," answered the Virginian.

But Scotson pulled Hal with the first ball pitched, which curved beyond Darrell's reach.

"Strike!" droned the umpire.

The next one was speedy and close, and, like Claxton, Darrell barely touched it, making a faint foul tap.

"Two-oo!" came from the umpire.

Hal's face flushed and his eyes gleamed. He set his teeth, hearing the Tufts crowd laughing and cheering gleefully.

"Let him put one over," thought Darrell fiercely.

Scotson went through the movements which seemed to indicate that he was going to drive the ball over with terrific speed; but now, of a sudden, following those movements which promised a hot one, he sent in a ball that seemed to hang and drag in the air.

Darrell was fooled by it and struck too soon.

"Thre—ee—you're out!" said the umpire.

"Great change of pace," said McGregor, as Devon rose from the bench. "Look out for it, Pipe."

Hal made no remark whatever as he sat down.

Devon looked, something like a huge gorilla as he walked out with his long arms dangling at his sides. Barely was he in position when Scotson pitched the ball.

It looked high, and Devon let it pass.

It was a wonderful drop, and it came shooting down across the batter's shoulders.

"Strike!" called the umpire.

Devon shook his head, scowling fiercely.

Scotson tossed back that lock of dark hair and smiled in a superior, well-satisfied manner.

Although the next ball was a wide out, Devon reached for it with his long arms and long bat. He, too, made a foul on the second ball handed up to him, sending it zipping toward first base outside the chalked line.

Goodling stopped the skipper with his big mitt thrust
across the sack, and the umpire declared the second strike.

There was breathless silence now, for suddenly every one seemed to wonder if Scotson would succeed in striking out the first three batters with nine pitched balls.

Devon was fiercely resolved not to let the Tufts man fan him; but in many instances the resolutions of the best batsmen are unavailing. It was so in this case, for Scotson fooled Devon with ease and succeeded in fanning him handsomely, which completed a very clever opening performance on the part of the Tufts man.

Among the Yale spectators many were now speaking of the fact that Scotson might have been secured for their own team, and a few were repeating the altogether groundless assertion that Old Eli had lost the man because of Merriwell's objections.

In the second inning Tufts made two clean singles off Dick, but both men were caught and put out by Buckhart's beautiful throwing when they attempted to steal second. The third batter lifted a high foul back of third, and Cohen smothered it.

Unlike Scotson, Merriwell was not starting in to pitch a strike-out game. But now Dick was to face the Tufts twirler. Scotson smiled and shook back his hair as the famous Yale man came out quickly with his bat.

The cheering in the stands ceased. Even the murmur of voices died away. Would Scotson dispose of Merriwell as easily as those other chaps whom he had fanned? Would Merriwell, on the contrary, show his batting ability by landing on the ball for a safety?

The first one was not over, and Dick refused to go after it.

"Ba-a-ll!" drawled the umpire.

"He'll put it over now," thought Merriwell.

But, although this seemed to be Scotson's intention, Dick saw the ball break for a curve which would carry it away from the plate, and again he refrained from swinging.

"Two-oo!" said the umpire.

In the silence of the breathless crowd in one of the stands some one was heard to say:

"He's afraid of him. He don't dare let him hit it."

Of course these words did not reach the ears of Scotson. The Tufts man, however, had no intention of "pitching himself into a hole" if he could help it, and so he bent over a sizzler.

Dick fanned, although he almost fancied that he felt the bat lightly touch the whistling ball, which plunked into the hands of Gilmore.

"Ah!" breathed the Tufts crowd.
An instant later Scotson shot the ball back with a quick return.

Although he was not taken off guard, Merriwell missed again.

"Ha!" cried the admirers of the south-paw pitcher.

Then Scotson tried that slow, lingering ball which he could so cleverly deliver after going through movements which seemed to promise great speed.

But Merriwell, wholly refusing to be fooled in that manner, stood watching the ball as it came up and dropped toward the ground and let it bound into the hands of the catcher.

"Ball three!" said the umpire.

Now the moment of greatest suspense had come, for the next ball delivered by Scotson would be decisive; it would produce a positive result of some sort—either Dick would hit it, strike out, be hit by it, or get a pass to first. At any rate, the suspense in this case would be over.

Scotson pitched.

Crack!

Merriwell met it fair and square, and sent it humming out on a line with the speed of a bullet.

Smack!

Captain Fulton had leaped in the air and thrust up his bare right hand. The ball struck fair and full in that reaching hand, and he held it.

"Good for two or three bags if he'd missed it!" cried some one.

"Robbery!" shrieked a Yale player.

Dick, who had started for first, stopped short and turned back toward the bench when the umpire shouted, "Out!"

"Oh, what a shame, what a shame!"

Clifford Oakes was muttering the words over and over to himself as Dick stopped for a glass of water. Oakes started in surprise at the sound of Merriwell's voice.

"Yes—yes, sir," he said. "Here it is."

He dipped the water, hesitated, turned with his face burning and handed it to Dick.

"Thanks," said Merriwell, as he lifted the glass to his lips and drank.

CHAPTER XI.

SAVED BY AN ACCIDENT.

The freshman's nerve had failed him. He was glad of it, too.

"For," he told himself, "Merriwell didn't get a hit. He hasn't done anything yet. If he can't hit Scotson safely, what's the use to use the dope? Better keep it for some other time."

Nevertheless Buckhart seemed encouraged by Dick's performance, for he rapped a hot one onto the ground.
and nearly got to first before Tomhave could flicker the
sphere across the diamond.

Cohen forced Scotson to pitch for the plate, and the
Tufts man dallied a bit too long in the effort to fool the
clever young Jew, who drew a pass.

But that did not prove to be of any value to Yale,
as Scotson now more rose to his highest mark and
fanned McGregor.

Nevertheless, having watched what followed Dick’s
near hit, Oakes believed that it had affected the pitch-
ing of the Tufts man. Had it been a clean hit, Scotson
might have been disturbed even more seriously. He
had now pulled himself together again, and doubtless
he would show up in his best form when he next took the
pitching plate.

It was Scotson who first faced Dick in the third, and
he bunted a slow grounder to Devon, who made the
mistake of waiting for the ball, and was then forced to
throw hastily in order to get it across the diamond be-
fore the pitcher could race over the initial sack. That
hasty throw was wide, and McGregor had to leap off
the cushion in order to stop the ball. Scotson was safe
because of bad judgment and an error.

Tufts cheered.

Armsby promptly sacrificed Scotson to second.

Gilmore hit a stinger through Devon a bit to the
right of second base, and Scotson stretched himself as
he raced over third and was sent home by the yelling
coach.

Jones, however, had been playing in, and he rushed
forward with tremendous strides, scooped the ball
cleanly, swung his arm and threw even while he was
still on the run. There had been no symptoms of
Charlie horse in his dash after the ball, and there was
nothing the matter with that brilliant line throw to the
plate. It came into the hands of Buckhart about two
feet and a half from the ground, and Brad jabbed it
onto Scotson, who had slid at the wildly howled appeal
of both coaches.

Gilmore raced down to second and crossed the sack
at full speed, then he saw Buckhart straighten up
with the ball, and he sought to turn back.

The Texan sped the Spaulding into the hands of
Darrell, who was on hand to cover the cushion.

Gilmore lunged headlong with his right hand out-
stretched, but his shoulder struck against Hal’s ankle,
and the ball in Darrell’s hand came down with a thump
between his shoulder blades.

The umpire declared both Scotson and Gilmore out.

That was what might justly be called “playing the
game,” and the Yale crowd awoke to great enthusiasm,
for such snappy, clear-headed work had not been ex-
pected of the team.

The eyes of Oakes were fixed on Dick as he came
trotting toward the bench with Buckhart at his side.

“It’s the spirit of confidence he’s instilled into them
that’s doing it,” thought the freshman. “Take him
away, and they’d lose their confidence in spite of coach
and captain.”

Hoping Merriwell would ask for another drink,

Oakes found the tiny pill and held it hidden between
his fingers.

But Dick sat down on the bench and did not call for
water.

As the game progressed Oakes began to fear he had
lost his only opportunity.

In the last of the third Scotson still continued to
hold Yale down, although Nash unexpectedly made a
two-bagger. The little right-fielder died on second,
nevertheless.

Tufts opened the fourth with the head of her bat-
ting order, and Ordway, after singing, was sacrificed
to third by Tomhave and Deemer.

Goodling tried to bring Ordway home with a Texas
leaguer, but Darrell went back speedily after the ball
and took it when it came sizzling down over his shoul-
der.

Devon opened the fourth for Yale with a single.

Dick bunted beautifully, and Devon went to second
on the sacrifice.

Buckhart tried to score Devon with a long hit, but
his fly was pulled down by Larsen.

Then Scotson fanned Cohen.

There was nothing doing for either team in the fifth.
True, Tufts got a man on both first and second, but
they made no farther progress.

Scotson struck out two of the four Yale men who
faced him.

Tufts had the head of its batting order up again
with the beginning of the sixth, and there was a wild
cheer as Ordway led off with a terrific crack that looked
like a homer.

Fast fielding stopped Ordway at third.

With no one out, Tufts fought hard for a run. Tom-
have fanned, nevertheless.

Then Deemer and Ordway again tried the squeeze
play. This time they succeeded, for Deemer hit to
Devon, who made a poor return to Buckhart, and Ord-
way was safe.

Goodling and Fulton fell before Merriwell’s benders,
and for the first time Dick seemed to be in his finest
form.

“Get into the game now, boys,” urged McGregor.
“We’ve got to win this game, and you know it. We
can do it, too. Stop this foolishness and play ball. Come
on, Darrell, open up for us.”

Darrell did open up with a cracking line drive for
two sacks.

Devon followed, and the Yale crowd cheered, for
every one fancied this was Old Eli’s opportunity to
even things up.

“Give me a glass of water.”

Oakes jumped nervously as he heard Merriwell’s
voice. He had been waiting for this, but the excite-
ment of the game had caused him to forget for the mo-
ment his wretched purpose.

With his left hand he filled the glass, taking hold of
that glass with his right hand in such a manner that the
pill was permitted to slip from between his fingers and
drop into the water. Watching it nervously, he saw
that tiny white speck dissolve and disappear almost instantly.

"Here you are," he said, handing the glass to Dick. Oakes dared not look toward Merriwell, and he turned away as he saw Dick lifting that glass to his lips.

Scotson sent a speedy shoot up to Devon. Yale's long-armed shortstop slapped his bat round to meet the ball, and fouled it. The Spaulding shot off with speed scarcely diminished in a long, sharp foul. The ball struck and smashed the glass in Merriwell's hand just as Dick was lifting it to his lips. Fortunately, no one was hurt.

"Close call, pard," said Buckhart. "Didn't you hear me yell for you to look out?"

"No, I didn't hear you," laughed Merriwell. "Haven't you got another glass, Oakes? That one is out of commission."

Oakes gulped down a lump in his throat.

"There's a dipper here," he said, as he hastened to secure it and dip it full of water. "Here you are, sir."

"Thanks, Oakes," said Merriwell. "I'm glad to see you take so much interest in baseball. I haven't had a chance to look you up since the day you pitched for batting practice, though I meant to do so. I want to have a talk with you, old fellow. Come round and see me at my rooms, won't you? You ought to make a fine pitcher, and I believe you will. If I can do anything to help you, you may depend on me."

Clifford Oakes was sick at heart, although filled with sudden joy over that remarkable accident which had prevented Merriwell from swallowing the drugged water.

There was a sudden uproar of voices. Devon had hit the ball. Darrell was off for third, while the Yale shortstop stretched himself marvelously in a run for first. It was amazing that his short legs could carry him over the ground with such speed. His long arms flying like a windmill, he tore down the line and struck the sack with his foot as the ball came into Goodling's clutches.

"Safe!" shrieked the umpire, who now was thoroughly wide awake.

The excitement was intense. Merriwell was the next hitter. Yale had two men on bases with no one out.

Dick refused to go after the first ball Scotson put over, even though it looked good. He knew Devon would try for second, and that is just what the Demon did. He got there, too.

Then Dick took hold of his bat in a business-like manner, and Scotson felt a sudden qualm of apprehension.

Well he might. Merriwell felt that a second hit would win the game then and there.

He got the hit. In spite of Scotson's strategy, Dick picked a ball off the outside corner of the plate and smashed it humming into right field.

Both Darrell and Devon scored. Dick took second on the effort to stop Devon's run.

Buckhart walked out and nailed the first ball Stetson passed up to him. It was a two-bagger, and Merriwell trotted laughingly over the plate.

Scotson brushed back that look of hair from his pale face. He felt that the game was lost, and he was right. Although he finally stemmed the tide, Buckhart succeeded in scoring, which gave the New Haven lads four runs.

With his team playing an amazingly fast game and giving him beautiful support, Dick did not worry. He made no effort to accomplish anything sensational in the way of strike-outs, but he used his head and kept the batters from bunching their hits or placing them with success at critical times.

Not another run could Tufts secure, and the game ended with the score in favor of the blue.

* * * * * * * * *

Hartman came round to see Clifford Oakes shortly after dark that evening. Oakes was on the point of going out when Lynn appeared.

"Hard luck," said Hartman. "I don't blame you, Oakes, my boy. You couldn't know that foul ball was going to smash the glass in Merriwell's hand. Only for that accident, the game would have resulted differently, and I'd not lost something like fifty dollars on it. However, we'll try it again. Next time we'll turn the trick all right, old chap."

"There won't be any next time for me, Hartman," said Oakes.

"Won't be any next time?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because I'll never try that dirty trick again. I'm done with it, and I'm done with you. I mean business. No use to glare at me that way; I'm not afraid. You can't blow on me without hurting yourself. I came near doing something to-day that I'd have always regretted. That accident seems now like the intervention of Providence. No, I won't stop to talk with you. I'm going out."

"You poor jackass!" said Hartman in disgust.

THE END.

The Next Number (680) Will Contain

FRANK MERRIWELL'S ZEST OR,

THE SPIRIT OF THE SCHOOL.

WORK STILL FOR EXPLORERS.

Few people probably realize the great areas on nearly all the continents which still await the treader of the pioneer. That there still remains plenty of scope for research on the face of this globe is brought vividly to the mind by a long and interesting survey of the interesting countries recently published.

Southeastern Arabia is one of the regions which await the pioneer. Here, embraced within a line drawn north from Aden to Nejd and another eastward to the peninsula called El Katr, is a region of some 600,000 square miles. It is largely occupied by the Roha el Khali, the "Dwelling of the Void," probably the most forbidding desert on the face of the earth. The southern border has not been explored, but the desert itself has been undreamed of except perhaps by hurrying Bedouins. Now Q. W. Dury, an experienced Arabian traveler, proposes to make an extensive expedition into the unknown interior, examining ruins and burial cities on his way.

In Tibet Dr. Stein will follow Dr. Sven Hedén. "While the main object—the search for the treasures that have been buried for centuries under the ever-enroaching sand—is archaeological, he regards geographical exploration as of the first importance. Another problem is that of the unknown stretch of the Lower Brahmaputra, which flows for 100 miles or more through the country of the intractable Abors." An adventurous Englishman, taking his life in his hands, is now on his way through Assam bent upon solving this problem. It is only a few days ago that Mr. Brooke, who was making for the same district from a different direction, perished in the Himalayas.

In the Himalayas Dr. Longstaff and Liut. Slingsby propose to make their way to the Baltoro glacier system in the Karakoram range and if possible to cross the long closed Baltoro pass into the Ong-og River. There is no record of any crossing of the main Karakoram range between the Mustag and Karakoram passes, the latter of which is probably not on the Karakoram range at all. Nothing is known of the mountains north of the peak known as K2, and it is here, as pointed out recently by Col. Burrard, that the great undiscovered peaks are most likely to exist.

Another expedition of great importance is the broad body of New Guinea which belongs to the Dutch. Mr. Mikkelsen, the young explorer who recently attempted to reach the Great Arctic Continent, in the existence of which he believes, starts shortly for Dutch New Guinea and will take charge of a reconnaissance expedition toward the interior. A British expedition is also to explore the Charles Louis range.

Several African expeditions are planned, some of considerable magnitude. The most important of these is that of Mr. Rawlinson, who might walk over any part of Africa now without meeting with adventures, unless, indeed, one provoked them." But Mr. Virachok, who is conducting the European exploration of the Tibetan plateau, and practically unexplored mountain range which runs for some 700 miles northwest from Dar Fur into the heart of the Sahara. More pioneer work perhaps remains to be done in South America than in any other continent, for here "probably some 2,000,000 square miles are still unexplored." But after all, "it is around the Polar regions more than elsewhere that popular curiosity still lingers, since these are still surrounded with a veil of mystery.

In the southern polar area, Lieut. Shackleton's expedition is still at work. What he has accomplished cannot be known until March or April, when it is hoped that the Nimrod will return to New Zealand either with the expedition on board or with the information that Shackleton has decided to continue his work for another year. Meanwhile Dr. Charcot in the Pourquoi Pas has begun his enterprise on the Graham Land side of the Antarctic. He is provided with motor sledges.

For most people the Far, far North that has the greatest fascination for most of them is the Canadian Arctic. The prediction of a comprehensive survey of the Polar Basin by the university at Baffin Island, where he got in two more shots from his rifle before the bear could reach him. These bullets put an end to the bear. The heads had completely destroyed his apathy before he arrived on the scene.
NEW YORK, April 17, 1909.

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TIP TOP ROLL OF HONOR.

Following the suggestion of Mr. Burt L. Standish, that appeared in his letter to Tip Top readers in No. 440, the following loyal Tip Toppers have won for themselves a place on our Honor Roll for their efforts to increase the circulation of the King of Weeklies. Get in line, boys and girls, and strive to have your name at the head of the list.

Edward B. Egan, New York City.
Alfred M. Vandyke, Washington.
Edgar Bickle, Canada.
Ralph P. Paulding, Mass.
Carrie Hazelrigg, Minnesota.
Clarence R. Sawyer, Canal Zone, Panama.
Roy Lincoln, Colorado.
John Anson Lee, New York City.
Chas. C. Wimbish, North Carolina.
L. M. Harmon, Indiana.

The names of other enthusiastic Tip Toppers will be added from time to time. Send in the result of your efforts to push the circulation of your favorite weekly and win a place on the Roll of Honor.

APPLAUSE.

Owing to the large number of letters received, the editor of Tip Top cannot undertake to secure their publication under six weeks. Those who contribute to this department must not expect to see them before that time.

FREE POST CARDS—Any boy who writes us, telling why he loves Tip Top, and what the magazine has done for him, as well as what he is doing on his part to increase its circulation, will, upon request, receive a set of six fine post cards of the principal characters in Tip Top free by mail. Be very sure and address your letters "Editor Tip Top Weekly Post Card Offer."

(A letter from Nebraska.)

Having read "Tip Top" for two years, I thought it about time to let you know how I enjoy it. It's the best reading matter published, there is no joke about that; and I can hardly wait until Friday comes so I can get it. I have several of the Frank and Dick Merriwewl Medall Libraries. At first my father wouldn't let me read them, but now he is as anxious to read them as I am, and he is a busy man, too. I have induced several of my friends to read "Tip Top," and they think there is nothing like them. My favorites are Frank, Dick, Young Joe Crowfoot, Bart Hodge, Dale, and Chester, in order named. I remain a loyal Tip Topper.

W. M. JEN."n

We are glad to know "dad" has been induced to join the fold. There are thousands of parents, and not a few grandparents, who enjoy the weekly visits of "Tip Top."

(A letter from Louisiana.)

I have been a reader of "Tip Top" for a long time and could not do without it. It has helped me so much, especially if I were lonesome. The ideals are good and the portrayal of Western life is fine. I know, because I have been all over the West. I have been in every State in the Union except Washington, Oregon, Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire. My home is in Pennsylvania, and I like it best of all. I am a circus boy, but do not find circus life quite as bad as most people think. I am sure there are a great many honest people in the show business. But, boys, take a word of advice from me, and don't run away with that circus, for you will find it a hard life. It isn't all play, by any means. Just stop to think. How would you like to leave your warm bed to work all night just to please some one else? Don't think I am some old fogey who is giving you advice, as I am only twenty-one years of age. Wish I was only ten and going to school again. I haven't seen my parents for over a year, but I write every week. I have got quite a lot of the boys to read "Tip Top," and they all like it. I tell the girls with a show are like all the rest. They don't read anything but love-stories, fashions, and chewing-gum signs. Now I know I have helped fill the waste-basket.

Wishing "Tip Top" many prosperous years, I remain a loyal reader.

W. M. MENTZER.

Your advice is along the right lines, and yet who ever knew of advice deterring any lad who seemed to be under the sway of the "wanderlust" that attacks so many boys about the age of twelve up to fifteen? Still, we hope some one will profit by your experience.

(A letter from Kansas.)

As I have never seen a letter in the Applause column from this part of Kansas, I thought I would write and tell you how much we like "Tip Top." I think it would be a good thing if every boy in America would read "Tip Top."

I began reading it several years ago, and since then I have induced several more boys to take the magazine.

It is the best teacher a boy ever had, for it has taught me several things I didn't know.

I have been trying to increase its circulation ever since I started to read "Tip Top."

I wish to remain a faithful reader of "Tip Top" as long as it is published. Yours sincerely, CHAS. O. BALL.

All of which is pleasant reading for those connected with the "boys' best magazine."

(A letter from Missouri.)

As I have never written to you, I thought I would tell you how much I like "Tip Top. It has certainly been a great aid to me in living a clean, manly life. Of all the characters, Hal Darrell, Buckhart, and June Arlington are my favorites. I have induced at least a dozen of my friends to read "Tip Top." M. C. WHITE.

Our correspondent has at least the merit of brevity; and yet if he wrote for hours could he say more? He is in good company, for hundreds of thousands of lads find inspiration each week in the wonderful stories of the peerless Burt L. Standish.

(A letter from Oklahoma.)

I have been reading "Tip Top" for some time, and I have read a good many boys' magazines, but "Tip Top" is the best. I like it because the stories are so clean and wholesome. They are good enough for any one to read. I read them to my grandmother, and she likes them. She is part Cherokee Indian.

I have got a good many to read "Tip Top." I think every boy should take it. Yours truly, RALPH WOLFE.

Although you do not say so, Ralph, we feel sure you never learned one bad habit from reading "Tip Top"; and, on the
QUESTIONs AND ANswers.
EDITED BY PROF. FOURMEN.

NOTICE—So many inquiries reach us each week concerning the various manuals on athletic development, which we publish, that we have decided to keep a list of them at the head of this department. Any number can be had by mail by remitting 10 cents, and 3 cents postage, for each copy, to the publishers.

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U. S. ARMY PHYSICAL EXERCISES, revised by Prof. Donovan.
PHYSICAL HEALTH CULTURE, - - by Prof. Fourmen.

PROF. FOURMEN: As we are ardent admirers of the “Tip Top,” having read them for seven years, we would like you to look over our arrangements and let us send them to you. O. L. A.—Age, 19 years; height, 5 feet 10½ inches; weight, 155 pounds; chest, normal, 35½ inches; expanded, 37½ inches; waist, 30½ inches; neck, 15 inches; wrists, 6½ inches; shoulders, 18 inches; thighs, 20 inches; calves, 13½ inches; reach, 65 inches. S. H. D.—Age, 19 years; height, 5 feet 6 inches; weight, 140 pounds; chest, normal, 33 inches; expanded, 36 inches; waist, 28 inches; neck, 15 inches; wrists, 5½ inches; shoulders, 18 inches; thighs, 20 inches; calves, 13½ inches; reach, 65 inches. Hoping to see this in the “Tip Top” soon, we are,
Two ARMY ADMIRERS.
Elmira, N. Y.

O. L. A. should measure 39 inches about the chest. His weight is exactly right, also waist. S. H. D.—Twenty pounds too heavy for the height, chest 2 inches short, and waist a couple of inches too large. I believe by setting yourselves a general course for chest enlargement you will be able to gain what you lack ere long.

PROF. FOURMEN: I am a continuous reader of your “Tip Top,” and I am very much interested in the column which you conduct. I wish to become a runner, especially for distances like 220 or 440 yards. My measurements are: Height, 5 feet 3½ inches; weight, 147 pounds; around chest, contracted, 32 inches; expanded, 32½ inches; waist, 32 inches; calf, flexed, 14 inches; relaxed, 13 inches. With my best wishes for the continuation of your influence for good upon the youth of this country, I remain,
Albert R. Mason.

You are about 10 pounds overweight, Albert. They must have particularly good rations at the manger in your city. You do not say so, but I trust your father, the dominie, fully approves of our magazine as a valuable aid in the upbringing of our boys’ morals and bodies. You have a fine chest. How about your waist, which normally should be 25 inches?

PROF. FOURMEN: Being a constant reader of your “King of Magazines,” I take the liberty of asking your opinion of the following measurements, and, if faulty in any way, to please tell me how to mend them. I am 15 years old; weigh 155 pounds; height, 5 feet 4 inches; neck, 14 inches; shoulders, 22 inches; chest, 36 inches; expanded, 38 inches; forearm, 10 inches; wrist, 7 inches; waist, 29 inches; hips, 32 inches; thighs, 19½ inches; calves, 14 inches; ankle, 9 inches; reach, 65 inches. Thanking you in advance, I remain “A true Tip Topper.”
L. Smith.

Your chest should be 33 inches normal. Weight up to the mark.

PROF. FOURMEN: I am 15 years old and weigh 152 pounds in street dress. Below are my measurements: Height, 5 feet 6½ inches; chest, normal, 33 inches; expanded, 36 inches; biceps,
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normal 10 3/4 inches; expanded, 13 3/4 inches; waist, 29 inches; wrists, 7 3/4 inches; thighs, 20 5/8 inches; calves, 15 inches; ankles, 9 3/4 inches; neck, 15 inches; hips, 36 inches; shoulders, 43 inches. If I have any weak points, please tell me what to do to strengthen them; reach, 70 9/16 inches. Hoping for an answer soon, and thanking you in advance for your information, I remain a loyal ‘Tip Topper.’

Singularly enough, while you weigh just what you should, and measure but a fraction above the right figure around the waist, your chest is woefully short. It should measure almost 39 inches normal. You will have to be up and doing, my boy.

PROF. FOURMEN: Age, 17 years 4 months; weight, 160 pounds; height, 5 feet 10 inches; chest, normal 36 inches; expanded, 37 1/2 inches; waist, 32 inches; neck, 14 1/4 inches; biceps, 11 1/2 inches; forearm, 11 inches; calf, 14 3/4 inches; thigh, 22 inches.

1. Had my chest ought to be larger? 2. Had my waist ought to be larger or smaller, according to my other measurements? 3. Is my weight all right? 4. Should I take a sponge-bath before or after exercise? Thanking you in advance, I remain...

Sayre, Pa.

A LOYAL ‘Tip Topper.’

Weight fine, but you lack 3 inches about the chest, and have just as many too much about your waist. Take the sponge-bath after your exercise and then a brisk rub-down until you seem to glow with warmth.

PROF. FOURMEN: Age, 14 years 8 months; height, 5 feet 1 inch; weight, 88 pounds; chest, normal, 30 inches; expanded, 32 inches; waist, 28 inches; neck, 12 inches; biceps, 10 inches; thigh, 15 inches; wrist, 6 inches. I am an all-around athlete. I can run and jump about three cups of coffee every day. 1. Is coffee harmful? If so, what would you advise me to drink instead of it? 2. What are my weak points? 3. What are my strong points? Thanking you in advance, I remain close with g. ‘Yrns’ for ‘Tip Top’ and S. & S.

New York City.

A. SCHUFFLER.

You seem to measure fully up to what an average athlete of your height should. If coffee injures you in the least better cut it out. Try cocoa, milk, or one of the grain substitutes for coffee, which, properly made, is very tasty.

PROF. FOURMEN: This is my second attempt to but in on your valuable time, and hope it will prove successful, as my other letter was not published. The following are my measurements, on which I would like your opinion: Age, 17 years; height, 5 feet 7 inches; weight, 130 pounds; chest, normal, 37 inches; expanded, 41 inches; biceps, 11 1/2 inches; forearm, 11 inches; waist, 28 inches; hips, 42 inches; calves, 13 inches; thighs, 19 inches. In the last six months I have gained 4 inches in chest, thanks to your advice. Do you think it would benefit me to take a course in physical culture? Well, I will close although I have not said all I would like to in praise of ‘Tip Top’ and all connected with it. Yours respectfully, W. A. MCLAUGHLIN.

St. Louis, Mo.

As you are now fully up to the standard, there is no need of the expense involved. You have proven yourself capable of doing the right thing. Just keep it up, Mac.

PROF. FOURMEN: Being a regular reader of ‘Tip Top,’ I take the liberty of asking you how my measurements are. I sent you my measurements about four months ago, but have not seen same in print, so hope this will not suffer the same fate. My build is as follows: Age, 23 years 10 months; weight, 150 pounds; height, 5 feet 6 inches; neck, 14 inches; chest, normal, 35 inches; breadth of shoulders, 17 inches; girth of shoulders, 43 inches; waist, 29 inches; hips, 36 inches; upper right arm, 11 inches; flexed, 12 1/2 inches; upper left arm, 11 inches; flexed, 12 inches; forearm, 10 1/2 inches; flexed, 11 inches; ankle, 8 1/2 inches; thigh, 21 inches; wrist, 8 inches. These measurements all taken stripped. How do I show up? I am very thin in the face and blue under my eyes. What can I do to remedy this? Do not smoke, chew, nor drink liquor. Drink no more of a coffee a day, get 6 1/2 or 7 hours sleep. What will strengthen the stomach, kidneys, and liver in the line of exercise? I belong to the Y. M. C. A., and go 3 or 4 nights a week for 2 hours. Is this enough, as I do inside work all day, and do not get any outdoor exercise? I remain, Chicago, Ill.

‘A Tip Top Fan.’

Your weight and your chest measurement are just right. That should be enough exercise. As to the marks under your body, you might be well to have a physican see what your kidney are in proper shape. These things taken in time are usually of small moment, but allowed to go on may get to a serious stage. Your weight would indicate that you are all right fundamentally.

PROF. FOURMEN: Being a loyal ‘Tip Topper,’ I take the liberty of sending you my measurements for the first time. Height, 5 feet 14 3/4 inches; weight, 88 pounds; chest, normal, 38 inches; expanded, 30 inches; wrist, 6 inches; neck, 11 1/2 inches; hips, 31 inches; forearm 9 3/4 inches; ankle, 9 inches; call, 11 1/2 inches; knee, 14 1/4 inches; across shoulders, 14 1/4 inches; thighs, 19 inches. How are my measurements? Could I ever make a good football-player and hockey-player? What game should I make most of? Could I become an athlete? Hoping to see this in your columns, I remain, age, 13 years, A TRUE ADMIRER.

London, Ont.

You are only an inch shy about the chest. By diligent practise you may become a good athlete and acceptably fill any of the positions you name.

PROF. FOURMEN: Having read ‘Tip Top’ for two years, I take the liberty to send my measurements. Age, 20 years; height, 5 feet 11 3/4 inches; weight, 170 pounds; neck, 16 inches; across shoulders, 20 inches; chest, normal, 41 inches; contracted, 37 1/4 inches; expanded, 45 inches; wrist, 20 3/4 inches; hip, 38 inches; thigh, 24 inches; calves, 15 1/2 inches; biceps, right, 14 3/4 inches; left, 14 inches; forearm, right, 11 3/4 inches; left, 11 inches; wrist, right, 9 3/4 inches; left, 9 3/4 inches; reach, 70 9/16 inches. I indulge in no special form of athletics, but running is my long suit, either sprinting or long distance. ‘Tip Top’ has helped me a whole lot since I have been following the fortunes of the Merrifields, all hail to them.

L. M. T.

Alliance, O.

Weight and chest splendid. You have the physical make-up of a fine man, and I have little doubt but that you take just as much pride in your morals as you do in the excellence of your physical being. I wish you the best of fortune, L. M. T., in your journey through life.

PROF. FOURMEN: Having read the ‘Tip Top’ for some time, I take the liberty of asking you a few questions. Measurements: Age, 15 years and 5 months; height, 5 feet 10 inches; weight, 127 pounds; chest, normal, 33 inches; neck, 13 1/2 inches; breadth of shoulders, 18 inches; chest, normal, 33 inches; expanded, 35 1/2 inches; waist, 27 inches; calves, 15 1/2 inches; biceps, 9 1/2 inches; expanded, 11 inches; forearm, 10 inches; wrist, 7 3/4 inches; knee, 15 inches; ankles, 14 inches. Measurement of chest were taken stripped. 1. How are my measurements? 2. What are my weak points, and what should I do to strengthen them? 3. What size dumb-bells should I use? With three cheers for Street & Smith Publishing Co., I remain a loyal ‘Tip Topper.’

W. L. M.

Clognet, Minn.

Get a manual, my boy, and read it from cover to cover. You need to get busy. You should weigh 155 pounds and have a normal chest measurement of 39 inches.

(A letter from Wisconsin.)

PROF. FOURMEN: I am 15 years old and 5 feet 10 inches tall. I am narrow across the chest and shoulders. I would like to know what to do to broaden out and increase both. Please tell me of some way to do it at home as I don’t live in the city. I weigh 137 pounds.

You are 20 pounds below the average. Your chest should measure 39 inches normal, which I am sure it does not. Nature intends that you have narrow shoulders, and all your efforts to thwart her in that particular will be pretty much in vain; but you can assist by working hard, day after day, week in and week out, to enlarge your lungs. That will do wonders both for your appearance and your general health.
Prof. Fourmen: I am 16 years old, 5 feet 3½ inches in height (in shoes), and weigh 109 pounds (in street clothes). My measurements are: chest, normal, 31 inches; expanded, 33 inches; waist, 27½ inches; hips, 29 inches; ankle, 8 inches; calves, 10½ inches; thigh, 18½ inches; and wrist, 6 inches. What are my weak points? Records: 100 yards, 12⅔ seconds; 220 yards, 26½ seconds; 440 yards, 1 minute 5 seconds; mile, 6 minutes 10 seconds; running high jump, 4 feet 3 inches; running broad jump, 4 feet 1 inch; standing broad jump, 7 feet 1 inch. I am very fond of becoming taller, as I am small for my age. How can I do this? What event would you advise me to make a specialty of, as I would like to win my school emblem this year? I do not use tobacco or liquor and my parents are both tall, so I cannot account for my lack of stature.

Yours truly,

John S.
Washington, D.C.

You could stand a couple of inches more about the chest, John. All you can do is to stand erect and carry yourself well. Nature will decide your status as regards height, and neither prayers nor appeals make any difference. You will have to decide for yourself as to what specialty in the line of athletics you will follow. As to your abstinence from liquor and tobacco, I congratulate you. It is surprising how many scores of letters come to me stating this same fact, and also the pleasant information that this grand habit of abstaining was brought about solely through the far-reaching influence of Tip Top. It does us all good to know that our bread cast upon the waters is thus returning after many days, and that thousands of young men to-day are proud to admit they owe much of their bodily and moral vigor to these same sound teachings of Frank and Dick Merrwell.

Prof. Fourmen: I have read Tip Top for about three years, and have derived a lot of good from it. I have a book on Physical Health Culture, and I take the liberty of sending you my measurements for your criticism. Calves, 12 inches; chest, 30½ inches; expanded, 33 inches; thighs, 17½ inches; weight, 105 pounds; hips, 29 inches; height, 5 feet 3 inches; waist, 24½ inches; age, 17 years 6 months. I do not use tobacco or liquor in any form, as I aspire to be an athlete. What do you think of my prospects? Your truly,

G. W. D.
Prato, Nova Scotia.

All very good, but you can stand an inch or two more about the chest. Your waist is actually below the average, something I seldom meet with in a boy, especially when his weight is exactly what it should be.

(A letter from Oklahoma.)

Prof. Fourmen: Being an ardent reader of the famous Tip Top for several years, I am taking the liberty to ask you a few questions through your answers in the back of the weekly. How is the following exercise for an office man to take, whose hours are from 7:30 P.M. to 6 P.M.? Arise about 6 o'clock, punch the bag for ten or fifteen minutes, run about seven blocks and rinse off with a cold shower bath, rub down, eat a hearty breakfast, and walk ten blocks to work. If you can put in any improvements on the above, will appreciate same. I also have a pair of five-pound Indian clubs which I swing frequently. I am not taking the above exercise, but am going to do so this winter, commencing same this fall. I am about 5 feet 5 inches tall; weight, 144 pounds, although generally in the midwinter about 150 to 160 pounds; age, 19 years; chest, contracted, 32 inches; normal, 34 inches; expanded, 36 inches. Am a habitual pipe smoker, inhale all the time, generally about ten pipes a day. In addition to the above exercises I box about five rounds two or three times a week. Trusting that you will carefully note this letter, and that I will see the answer soon in the weekly. I beg to remain thankfully yours very truly.

Frank Vaseeman.

Your weight is first-class, but you must not neglect your chest. It is now 3 inches under the average. You will regret having become a victim of the inhaling habit as a smoker. I would advise you to cut out smoking altogether, and there is no doubt in the world that you will feel better for doing so.

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**TIP TOP BASEBALL TOURNAMENT FOR 1909**

The greatest interest taken by enthusiastic amateur baseball teams all over the country in our contests for some years past, has induced us to once again enter the field with a tempting offer. So here it is, boys: The two teams which, at the end of the season, have the highest average—the members of which play the greatest number of games, score the most runs and have lost the least number of games, will be declared the winners of the Tip Top Championship Team of the All-American Baseball Tournament for 1909, and will receive a beautiful silk pennant bearing a suitable device. Each winning team will receive a full equipment, consisting of trousers, shirt, stockings, shoes and cap for nine members. When possible send newspaper accounts of your games also to substantiate the score. Don’t fail to send in your coupon at once. An notice taken of any score not entered on a coupon cut out of Tip Top. Coupons must be properly made out, one for each game.

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**1909—TIP TOP BASEBALL TOURNAMENT COUPON.**

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**WINNER**

**FINAL SCORE**

**MANAGER**
TIP TOP WEEKLY
ARE CONTAINED IN THE MEDAL LIBRARY

We know that there are thousands of boys who are very much interested in the early adventures of Frank and Dick Merriwell and who want to read everything that was written about them. We desire to inform these boys that numbers 1 to 396 are pretty well out of print in the TIP TOP WEEKLY, but all of them can be secured in the numbers of the NEW MEDAL LIBRARY given below.

150—Frank Merriwell's School-days.
167—Frank Merriwell's Chums.
172—Frank Merriwell's Rescue.
184—Frank Merriwell's Trip West.
189—Frank Merriwell Down South.
193—Frank Merriwell's Bravery.
197—Frank Merriwell's Hunting Tour.
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455—Dick Merriwell's Racket.
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461—Dick Merriwell's Ruse.
464—Dick Merriwell's Delivery.
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470—Frank Merriwell's Honor.
473—Dick Merriwell's Diamond.
476—Frank Merriwell's Winners.
479—Dick Merriwell's Dash.
482—Dick Merriwell's Ability.
485—Dick Merriwell's Trap.
488—Dick Merriwell's Defense.
491—Dick Merriwell's Model.
494—Dick Merriwell's Mystery.

Published About January 1st: 497—Frank Merriwell's Backers.
Published About January 26th: 500—Dick Merriwell's Backstop.
Published About February 16th: 503—Dick Merriwell's Western Mission.
Published About March 9th: 506—Frank Merriwell's Rescue.
Published About March 30th: 509—Frank Merriwell's Encounter.
Published About April 20th: 512—Dick Merriwell's Marked Money.
Published About May 11th: 515—Frank Merriwell's Nomads.
Published About June 1st: 518—Dick Merriwell on the Gridiron.
Published About June 22nd: 521—Dick Merriwell's Disguise.

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