It was an exciting situation that thrilled the vast crowd.
Dick Merriwell's Protest;

OR,

The Man Who Would Not Play Clean.

By BURT L. STANDISH.

CHAPTER I.

"WICKED" WEEMS.

They called him “Wicked” Weems, and his reputation had preceded him. He was one of those men who could not seem to play fair, square, sportsman-like baseball. During any game in which he took part he was almost certain to perpetrate some dirty trick, not infrequently injuring an opponent in a manner which he invariably claimed to be accidental.

There are many such ball players, and always they are a disgrace to their teams, although frequently, like Weems, they are men of cleverness and ability which generally enables them to hold their positions, even though their team mates may not approve of their methods.

Tom Moore, captain of the Holy Cross team, had remonstrated with Weems on various occasions, but invariably the man either laughed or assumed an air of indignation and protested his innocence of malicious intent.

“Look out for Wicked Weems” had been the warning given the Yale team; and therefore the defenders of the blue were anticipating trouble with the fellow when Holy Cross came to New Haven.

They were not disappointed. In the last of the third Weems perpetrated his first foul. Each team had scored one run, and, with one man out and Nash on second base, Joe Cohen smashed a hot grounder toward third.

Nash had started for a steal, and he was coming up the line at top speed.

Weems, who held down the hassock at that corner of the diamond, lunged in to get the ball.

Nash had no time to check himself or turn aside in any manner. His judgment told him that Weems could not handle that hot skipper or would not even be able to touch it.

Weems saw this himself, yet, pretending that he was after the ball, he managed to trip Nash, who plunged forward upon his shoulder and lay for a second or two half stunned upon the hard ground.

The ball went skimming away into left field, Bryce, the Holy Cross shortstop, failing to reach it by some distance.

The spectators shouted as they saw Nash plunge heavily to the ground and lie there. They shouted again when he struggled to his feet and crossed third in a dazed way, turning toward the plate.

“Go on!” cried McGregor savagely. “That was in-
interference. Mr. Umpire, that man has a right to score!"

Mullen, the swift left fielder of the visitors, scooped the ball and made an instantaneous and beautiful long line throw to the plate.

As he came down the line Nash staggered and fell again, reaching out blindly for the rubber.

The ball spanked into Tom Moore’s big glove, and he put it onto Nash with lightning quickness.

It was so close that few unbiased witnesses felt really able to say whether Nash had scored or been put out. Under the rule which states that the base runner must be favored in a case where there is any doubt, the umpire would have been justified in calling Nash safe.

But Weems was snarling that Nash had interfered with him, and the umpire declared the runner out.

McGregor objected instantly.

"Weems tripped that man, Mr. Umpire," he cried. "He interfered with me," declared the seemingly furious third baseman. "He had no right to cross in front of me when I was after that ball. I’d got it if he’d obeyed rules and passed behind me."

"The man is out," said the umpire. "He should have passed behind the fielder who was going after the ball."

"But Weems couldn’t touch the ball, anyhow," said McGregor. "There was no chance for Nash to go behind him unless he stopped and turned far out of the base line. Besides that, Weems deliberately tripped him."

"I did nothing of the sort," denied the offending third baseman. "I did hit his foot with mine, but it was pure accident, and it wouldn’t have happened if he had obeyed the base-running rule."

"I’ve decided that the man is out," said the umpire, waving McGregor back. "Play ball."

Many spectators hissed.

Greg McGregor was angry, his bronzed, freckled face betraying his feelings by the deep flush it bore.

Dick Merriwell and Rob Claxton picked Nash up and led him toward the bench.

"Are you much hurt, Bert?" asked Dick.

Nash spat out a mouthful of dirt and gravel.

"I don’t know," he mumbled. "My—my shoulder feels queer. I can’t move my arm."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Dick: "his shoulder is out of place! I hope no bones are broken. Let me see, Nash."

"The man is hurt, umpire," called McGregor savagely. "Call time."

The umpire called "time," and the Yale players gathered around Nash at the bench. Bert sat there looking deathly white and on the verge of keeling over. They gave him some water and dashed a little into his face.

"My shoulder!" he groaned. "My shoulder!"

Dick was making an examination with the skill of a doctor, and, even as the physician came hurrying toward the bench, Merriwell placed the thumbs of both hands on Bert’s shoulder blade near the shoulder joint, gripped the man’s shoulder with his fingers and gave a sudden quick snap which brought a cry of mingled pain and relief from the unfortunate fellow’s lips. Every one near the bench heard the joint snap into place. The doctor heard it, too, and he was near enough to see that quick, skillful performance on the part of Merriwell.

He examined Nash and nodded his head with relief.

"No bones broken," he said. "Merriwell, that was cleverly done. It was much better and easier than pulling or twisting the joint into place."

Dick turned to McGregor.

"Nash is out of the game," he said. "Wicked Weems has done for him. The man ought to be tarred and feathered."

"You’ve heard the umpire," said McGregor. "He blames Nash."

"There might be a possible shadow of doubt if any other man than Weems had perpetrated the trick. I was watching. It was dirty work. Even if Nash was wrong in passing in front of Weems, that fellow had no right to trip him."

"None whatever," agreed McGregor. "He could have claimed a put out as penalty for interference; but he says the thing was accidental."

"Of course. No one would expect him to acknowledge dirty work."

"Play ball!" commanded the umpire.

"Lamb," said McGregor, turning to one of the substitutes on the bench, "you’ll take the place of Nash."

Although Eben Lamb was sorry for his injured comrade, he was glad of this opportunity to get into the game.

Merriwell, who followed Cohen on the batting order, found his bat where he had dropped it to assist Nash, and stepped out to the plate. Literally tingling with resentful indignation, Dick landed on the first ball Frank Riley handed up to him and stung it for two sacks, scoring Cohen.

"That’s the stuff, Dick!" cried McGregor in satisfaction. "That’s the way to show proper resentment."

Weems lifted his upper lip in the middle and pulled
it down at the corners, showing his teeth in a sneer as he laughed derisively.

Buckhart was likewise boiling with indignation, and, being the next batter, he made a splendid bid for a three sacker or a homer; but Rafferty, the centre fielder, got back by quick judgment and a hard, fast sprint and made a wonderful catch.

Nevertheless, Yale had secured the lead, despite the foul playing of Weems.

CHAPTER II.

FIGHTING EVERY INCH.

Merriwell was pitching for Yale. The Holy Cross batters had given him considerable trouble in the second inning, although, with the bases filled and only one man out, he had succeeded in preventing them from securing more than one run.

They were hitters, those lads from Worcester, and the pitcher who held them down had to work.

Driscoll, the right fielder, faced Dick at the opening of the fourth. He was a "sticker" with a reputation, and Merriwell had not discovered his weak point. Dick was anxious to dispose of this man, for he believed he would not find much trouble with Weems and Bryce, who followed.

Behind the pan Buckhart crouched and made a signal beneath his huge mitt.

Dick put over a high, swift one, and Driscoll lashed it.

Only for the fast fielding of Lamb, the hit would have been good for two cushions. The down-easter, however, got after the ball in splendid style and made a running, one-hand stop which prevented the sphere from getting away into the remote distance of right field.

"That's the stuff!" said Weems, as he stepped out with his bat.

He had a peculiar gait, which was not exactly a swagger and yet somehow expressed conceit and insolence.

Dick felt his blood grow hot, and he was seized by a sudden desire to send a whistling shot into the man's ribs.

Weems crowded up to the plate, getting his toes well over the box line.

"Get back," said Merriwell.

"Pitch the ball!" rasped Weems.

"You're out of your box," declared Dick. "I'm liable to hit you."

"Not with anything you've got," was the sneering return.

"Get back!" commanded the umpire. "Don't get over the line!"

With a shrug of his shoulders and a downward pull at the corners of his mouth, Weems inched back, but persisted in keeping a bit of his toes over the line.

"The close ones are the kind for that sort of a man," decided Dick. "With his long bat he can hit anything a foot outside the pan."

Buckhart signaled, and Dick shook his head. When Brad changed the sign, Merriwell, after taking a look at Driscoll on first, used his short, swift delivery and shot up an in shoot with the intention of keeping the ball close to the knuckles of the batter.

Weems stepped in and then was unable to dodge that shoot. It caught him glancingly high up on the body and made him stagger a bit. Had it hit him fairly it might have knocked him out.

Driscoll trotted to second as the umpire swung his arm in a signal for Weems to take first.

"The man stepped out of his box, Mr. Umpire," protested Dick. "He wouldn't have been hit if he'd kept in his place."

"Yah!" snarled Weems, as he jogged to first. "You tried to hit me! Talk about dirty playing, what's that?"

"Cut it out!" commanded the umpire sharply.

"Play the game!"

Weems shouldered Claxton a bit as he reached first and hopped off toward second.

"You're evidently a sportsman, sub," muttered the hot-blooded Virginian in disgust.

"Now don't give me any of your lip!" said Weems in a low tone. "If you do, you may get your medicine before the game is over."

Merriwell's indignation was high. The umpire was supposed to be square, and, as he was Yale's man, it was impossible for the home team to make any strenuous protests against such seeming discrimination. Nevertheless, Dick was determined to show his idea of such decisions, and he did so.

"Here's where we tie it up! Here's where we take the lead!" cried Riley, who was coaching at first. "Get off that cushion, Driscoll! Take a lead, Weems! Look alive, both of you. Something doing, something doing!"

It was an excellent chance for a sacrifice to advance the two men on bases, and therefore Merriwell kept the ball high on Bryce. The shortstop was not a tall
man, and, crouching a little, he made those high ones seem too high, and the first three were declared balls.

"Got him in a hole!" cried Riley. "Steady, Bryce! Have a walk! He can't put it over. Wait, my boy—wait!"

Bryce waited.

Dick believed he would, and therefore he sent over in rapid succession two swift straight ones, low enough to prevent the umpire from declaring them balls, yet a bit too high to lure Bryce into trying for a bunt.

Two strikes were called.

"Wait some more," muttered Buckhart. "You'll have a chance to walk, but it won't be toward first."

Bryce saw Merriwell whip up another one that looked precisely like the two which had been declared strikes. He snapped his bat round like a flash to meet the ball, but it took an upward swerve, and Bryce merely made a gash in the atmosphere.

"You're out!" said the umpire.

"You can walk now," chuckled Buckhart in a low tone. "Rest a while on the bench, old man."

"Never mind that!" cried Riley. "Get after him, Mullen! Come down here, O'Hagan, and take my place."

Riley followed Mullen at bat, and so O'Hagan went onto the coaching line.

Rafferty, coaching at third, kept up a constant chatter, more or less senseless and intended to disturb the pitcher rather than instruct the base runners. Nevertheless, he addressed his talk to the men on the sacks.

Mullen was a more or less erratic hitter, and therefore he came eighth on the list. Sometimes he batted well, but he could not be depended on. Merriwell had the man's measure. He fooled Mullen handsomely with the first two balls. The batter slashed at one and let the other pass, but both were strikes.

"Get off! Get off!" roared O'Hagan. "Stir your heels! Get to going! Drift away from that sack, Driscoll! Stop hugging it! It isn't a girl. Get a divorce from the cushion!"

Driscoll was taking as much lead as he dared, and that came near being fatal for him when Merriwell, accepting the throw signal from Buckhart, whirled like a flash and snapped the ball into the hands of Pipe Devon, who had dodged past the runner and covered second. If Devon had held the ball he might have caught Driscoll, but the sphere squirmed out of his grasp.

"Rotten, Merriwell—rotten!" rasped Devon. "My fault. You had him all right, old boy."

"Aw, go on!" laughed Driscoll. "You couldn't catch me that way."

"Not in a thousand years!" bellowed O'Hagan. "Keep him throwing. He'll put it into the potato patch in a minute."

But Driscoll realized he had been saved by Devon's fumble, and therefore when Darrell leaped toward second the runner got back in a hurry.

"Forget it! Forget it!" he said. "You're delaying the game."

"Oh, play ball!" advised O'Hagan. "Quit the monkeyshines!"

But Merriwell knew he had both runners in bad positions to try for a steal when he shot a high wide one to Buckhart.

Mullen came near biting, but caught himself just in time to stop the swing of his bat before it crossed the plate.

An instant later he did swing at another high one, but the ball struck close to his knuckles and he simply popped up an in-field fly, which was readily gobbled by Piper Devon.

"Two gone, Dick!" cried Claxton. "It's all right. They can't score. No danger from this man."

Riley, the pitcher, was the visitor's weakest batter. Dick took him in hand and fanned him in short order, so that both Driscoll and Weems died on the sacks.

"You're a clever duck," said Weems, as he trotted across toward third, giving Dick a sarcastic grin. "We'll get after you again just the same."

Merriwell paid no attention to the fellow.

Riley limbered his arm by shooting two balls to Paulton at first ere McGregor got into position to strike.

"Hoot, mon, he's easy!" cried Weems. "It's Ireland against Scotland, and never a McGregor could do a thing to a Riley."

Greg came near doing something to the Holy Cross pitcher, for he lashed one of Riley's bendy's away into left garden, where Mullen made a good catch of it.

Then Pipe Devon, the "Demon," smashed a furious grounder against the shins of Weems, who booted the ball halfway across the diamond before he got it.

"What are you trying to do, Pipe, take his pins off?" laughed McGregor, who had gone onto the coaching line.

Weems limped a bit as he got back to third. The Yale captain laughed as he heard the fellow swearing beneath his breath.
TIP TOP WEEKLY.

Riley got him without trouble, for Eben struck three times and did not touch the ball at all.
Nevertheless, Yale had added another tally to her side of the score sheet.

CHAPTER III.
A MAN OF MANY TRICKS.

After getting two strikes on himself, Paulton reached for one of Dick's wide ones and caught it on the end of his bat for two clean bases.

"We'll put the blanket on him yet!" shouted Weems. Rafferty succeeded in laying down a bunt which carried Paulton to third. Dick's cool, swift handling of the ball nipped Rafferty at first.

"Watch out! Be careful!" cried McGregor from left field.

"Watch for the squeeze, pard," cautioned Buckhart.
It was an excellent opportunity for Holy Cross to try the squeeze play. Captain Moore had a fine eye and was just the sort of a man to hit the ball into the diamond somewhere if he could reach it.

Merriwell sought to divine the intentions of the enemy, and concluded that the squeeze play would be tried. Therefore he handed up a shoot high and close, doing his prettiest to keep Moore from hitting it.

Nevertheless, the Holy Cross captain made a foul. Dick had not erred, for Paulton was fully a third of the way down the line to the plate when the batsman fouled the ball. Regretfully he trotted back to the sack.

"Some other time, some other time," laughed Piper Devon, while Cohen at third smiled on the returning man.

"That was a lucky foul," said Joe.
"Unlucky," retorted Paulton. "If Moore had hit the ball into the diamond——"
"What if he'd missed it? They had you cold."
"He never misses," said Paulton, touching the sack and squaring away toward the plate.

Off he edged, his knees bent, every muscle tense.
"Ware, pard!" muttered Buckhart.
Dick took a look toward Paulton, then got into position to pitch. He did not start to deliver the ball, however, but suddenly stepped toward third and whipped it to Cohen.

Paulton ducked back in a hurry and was safe, for the throw was too high.

"Get a stepladder!" shouted Weems. "Keep him throwing, Paul! You know how to play the game!"

"Here comes a lamb!" roared O'Hagan, as Eben Lamb left the bench with his bat. "Never mind that tally, Riley. Get this fellow."

"Better let 'em go when Pipe hits 'em your way, Weems," he said.

"Is that so?" said the wicked man. "You'll see me letting lots of 'em go."

Old Blessed Jones, long, lank and funereal, dropped a Texas leaguer over the infield, on which Devon went to third, reaching the sack ahead of the ball by a beautiful slide. Jones was wide awake and took second on the throw to Weems.

Weems caught the ball low and cracked it down onto Devon's head with almost stunning force.

Devon rose to his feet in a fighting mood, and McGregor had to leap between and grab him by the shoulder.

"Thunder!" growled Pipe, rubbing his head. "He made me see stars. He did it intentionally."

"Oh, don't squeal," said Weems. "Play baseball. You're no baby. A little tap like that didn't hurt you."

"That's his idea of baseball, Piper," said McGregor.

"You can see what you're up against with him."

Claxton, who had been hitting poorly of late and was therefore placed far down on the batting order, stepped out to face Riley.

"Easy fruit now, Frank!" cried Captain Moore.

"You've got the next two chaps. Take 'em into camp."

Rob let the first ball pass and was a bit surprised to hear a strike called. It had seemed too high to him, but he knew how difficult it was for a batter to judge a high drop, and therefore he made no sign of protest or resentment.

The next one was wide.
Then Riley crooked one over a corner, and Rob lifted a fly into centre field.

"Get onto that sack, Pipe!" cried McGregor. "Get ready! Run on the catch!"

Devon, who had been taking a lead off third, leaped back to the cushion and planted himself in position to run, watching the ball as it dropped toward Rafferty in centre.

"Go!" cried McGregor, and Devon leaped away toward the plate just as the ball struck in Rafferty's hands. Rafferty made a long throw to the pan, the ball taking a clean bound into the hands of the catcher; but Devon was too swift, and his score counted. Claxton felt some satisfaction over this, although he was regretful because he had lifted the ball into the fielder's clutches.

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“And you may know how,” muttered Devon; “but it isn’t natural for you to play clean.”

Three times Merriwell chased Paulton back to third. Nevertheless, when he again pitched to Moore, the runner stretched his legs for the plate.

Moore maintained his reputation of “hitting the ball somewhere,” but he simply popped a little fly into Merriwell’s hands, and Dick, smilingly taking his time, threw it to third for a double play. The squeeze had proved a failure.

“Hard luck, Paulton,” muttered Captain Moore regretfully.

“Keep right after them, fellows,” urged McGregor, as he came romping in. “They’re fighting mad, and they’ll never let up till the game is over. We need all the runs we can get. We ought to get some now with the head of the list up.”

Darrell had been doing fine work as the first batsman on the order. In that position he displayed a clever knack of getting to first by some method or other, and on the bases he was swift and heady, although he took such chances as would have proved fatal for an ordinary player. In fact, this impulsive, dark-eyed fellow had become decidedly popular with the baseball fans, and the Yale stand gave him a cheer as he advanced to the pan.

Hal responded by pushing a warm grounder into right field, both first and second basemen going after it, but failing to touch it. Hal sought to draw a throw by romping over first and turning to second, but Driscoll was wise and took his time in putting the ball to Bryce, who had covered the second sack.

Darrell was not one of those fellows who take such long chances in getting a lead that they are constantly poised in the wrong direction, but was far more ready to dive back to the sack than to start for an advance to the next cushion. Nevertheless, he did not fail to get something of a lead, and now he went down on the first ball handed up to Cohen.

Joe knew Hal would try to steal. He swung at the ball without trying to hit it, his sole intention being to bother the catcher, if possible, in a perfectly legitimate manner.

Moore was too steady to be bothered like that. He caught the ball in perfect throwing position and got it off to second with a sharp, short-arm throw which sent it down on a line.

Nevertheless, Darrell covered ground so fast and made such a splendid slide that it was impossible to tell whether he touched the sack first or was tagged successfully. It seemed simultaneous, and the umpire declared him safe.

Weems started to put up a protest, but was instantly checked.

“Rotten! rotten!” he growled sullenly.

The Yale crowd cheered Darrell. Riley betrayed slight tokens of annoyance as he toed the slab and carried the ball to his mouth, covered with both hands. There was an upward and backward motion of his head, and suddenly McGregor called to Cohen:

“Look out for the spitter, Joe!”

The Holy Cross pitcher was an excellent “spitball artist,” although he was not a man who depended mainly on that sort of a kink. Now, however, perceiving that Yale was inclined to push up the score steadily and persistently little by little, Riley decided to try the elusive “spitter.” The ball came whizzing from Riley’s fingers and took a sharp shoot.

Cohen, alert and ready, let it pass.

Riley repeated the performance, but again his shoot carried the ball wide.

“He can place the dry ones better,” laughed McGregor.

When Riley had handed up still another ball, he found himself compelled to put the sphere over. Behind his hands he pretended to make ready to throw the spitter again, but, instead of moistening the ball, he wiped it as dry as possible upon his glove by turning it over and over, got a good grip with his fingers, and sent up a straight speedy one for the inside corner.

Cohen seemed to anticipate what was coming for, to all appearances, he thrust out his bat and held it so loosely in his fingers that the ball almost knocked it from his hands. In this manner Joe dropped a bunt in front of the plate, and off he went toward first, digging his toes into the ground.

Darrell was on the alert, for he knew Cohen would bunt if Riley put the ball over. From his position, ere the ball reached the plate, he saw it would be good, and he got away as fast as possible toward third. But Riley was up to snuff himself, and he had chased the ball in, running forward the moment it left his fingers.

Nevertheless, Captain Moore saw that Darrell could not be caught at third, and he cried sharply:

“First, Frank—first!”

Riley caught the ball up with his right hand, half turned with his right foot as a pivot, and threw underhand to Paulton. The ball sped past Cohen’s shoulder, and Paulton had it with Joe ten feet away.
The sacrifice, nevertheless, had been successful, and Darrell was on third, with only one man out.

“That’s the game! that’s the game!” cried McGregor, with satisfaction.

Riley was worried as he saw Merriwell follow Cohen.

Yale now had her opportunity to try the squeeze play if she wished, and, with a clever batter like Merriwell handling the willow, the prospects of securing a score in that manner were extremely favorable.

Riley kept Darrell hugging third. The Holy Cross men could put the ball to the bases with amazing and dangerous quickness, and Weems remained on third to catch Darrell if possible. Twice Hal got back by a close margin, and each time Weems growled beneath his breath that the umpire needed spectacles, claiming in this manner that he had put the runner out. He was not at all gentle in his method of tagging Darrell, and Hal felt his wrath rising.

“No need to pound the ball into me that fashion,” he said, glaring at Weems.

“Stay on the sack and it won’t be necessary,” was the retort.

Suddenly, without the slightest preliminary swing, Riley pitched to Dick.

Merriwell was waiting to do his part, and he swung round until he could send a grounder toward the left-hand side of the diamond. Had Weems been playing down toward second as usual, he could have secured that ball easily. It is likely, however, that with Weems in good fielding position Merriwell would not have batted in that direction, for he had placed the ball carefully.

Bryce had moved up a little toward third, ready to cover as much ground as possible, and he went after Dick’s slow bounder. Reaching marvelously, he got the ball with his right hand and swung round in his stride, whipping it on a line to Moore.

Darrell was unaccountably slow in coming home. He had made a delayed start, and therefore, although he slid, Moore got the sphere in time to tag him for a put out.

In an instant Hal leaped to his feet, his eyes blazing.

“Did you see that man hold me, umpire?” he cried.

The umpire simply shook his head, signaling that Darrell was out.

Hal was inclined to invade the diamond, and there seemed some danger that he might be put out of the game. McGregor sternly called him back.

“Mr. Umpire,” he said, “it may not be your fault that you can’t see everything that’s going on. Weems grabbed Darrell’s belt and held him.”

“Never touched him!” cried the third baseman savagely.

McGregor turned to Moore.

“Is this the kind of baseball you fellows play?” he asked.

“If the umpire saw Weems hold the runner, it’s his business to declare Darrell safe,” said Moore. “We play the game for all there is in it, but we don’t want any unfair advantage.”

“It doesn’t look that way!” exclaimed McGregor sarcastically. “We know about Wicked Weems. We’ve heard of him. You can’t afford to play such a man, Moore.”

“Play ball! play ball!” several of the visitors were crying.

“Play ball!” said the umpire grimly.

“This sure is a fine old game!” growled Brad Buckhart. “Never mind, Captain McGregor, they can’t win, and they’re showing themselves up.”

The Texan was red-hot, but still his anger did not blind him, and he fell on one of Riley’s swift ones in fine style. It was a corking line drive into centre field, and Rafferty could not have touched the ball had he been a little farther away. However, it came to him in such a manner that he did not have to change his position more than a yard or two, and he held it for the third out.

Weems’ trick had prevented Yale from getting a run in the fifth.

CHAPTER IV.

HOLDING THE LEAD.

“O’Hagan,” said Moore, “we’ve got to get into this game and make some runs. The game is creeping along, and we’ve only got one measly tally. See if you can’t start us off with a hit.”

“I’ll do my best,” muttered O’Hagan.

But Merriwell was pitching now in fine form, and O’Hagan’s best proved to be half a dozen fouls, ending with a strike out. Weems, with his pet bat in hand, sat on the bench and rested his elbows on his knees, watching Dick like a hawk.

“We ought to hit him. We can hit him,” he said.

“Get to first, Mat, and I’ll send you along.”

But Mat Driscoll, like O’Hagan, could not get to first. He hit what looked like a safe Texas leaguer, but Darrell ran back for the ball, looked over his shoulder, reached far out and caught it.
Yale cheered Darrell and Merriwell. There was something like a threat in the manner of Wicked Weems as he walked out in his peculiar manner and took his place at the plate. Once more he crowded close, and again Dick protested to the umpire. "I hit him before," said Merriwell, "because he was over the line. He couldn't get away from my in shoot."

"You'll have to get back," said the umpire. "Play the game right, my boy."

Once more Weems edged back grudgingly, grinning in that offensive way, with the middle of his upper lip lifted and the corners drawn down. Dick actually longed to shoot his speediest ball straight at the man. It was a hard temptation to resist, for never had he seen a fellow as annoying as Weems.

A high in shoot proved too much for the man from Worcester, and not a few spectators shouted their satisfaction as he missed and nearly threw himself down with the violence of his swing.

"Fan him! Fan him!" was the cry.

The infielders were playing deep, for it was plainly Weems' intention to hit the ball hard if he hit it at all. Dick wasted two, and then handed up a dopey one that led Weems into swinging too soon.

"Two strikes!" cried the umpire.

"Why, he's the greatest cinch in the bunch!" muttered Buckhart.

"Is that so?" rasped Weems, gripping his bat and crouching with his eyes on Dick.

"Men who play your sort of a game are always pie," taunted Buckhart, still speaking in such a low tone that the umpire could not hear him.

Nevertheless, Moore, on the coaching line, saw Brad's lips moving and called to the umpire, protesting against the catcher talking to the batter.

Thus far it had been a fighting game with never a moment's let-up.

Dick used his high one once more, and Weems did succeed in hitting it. Although he struck sharply, the ball hit the bat on the under side with a twisting movement and shot down to the ground, rolling slowly along.

Weems was off like a rocket toward first base.

Claxton, who covered the initial sack, was not a natural first baseman, but had been placed there for the want of a better man.

He leaped onto the cushion, while Dick, a little surprised by the result of Weems' hit, recovered himself and went after the ball.

Certainly Weems was a great sprinter. Few men could get down to first with greater speed, and on this occasion he did his handsomest.

Dick saw he had not a moment to lose, and in throwing he put the ball high.

Claxton, fearing he would miss the throw, got back squarely over first and reached with one upthrust hand. Weems veered slightly to the left, his small, keen eyes fixed on the Virginian. Just as the ball struck Claxton's hand the runner came into him with full force, and Rob dropped the sphere. Both men went down.

Weems was the first one to rise, and he instantly claimed that the baseman had tried to block him.

Rob's awkward playing made this claim seem to have something like justice in it, although the most of the players believed the runner had made that collision with deliberate and malicious intent.

The umpire himself was frowning, although he felt that on account of Claxton's failure to give Weems plenty of room to cross the sack at full speed, nothing could be done.

"How long are you going to let this continue, Mr. Umpire?" asked Dick, his eyes gleaming and his cheeks flushing. "It would be a clean game with that man put on the bench."

"You know no baseman has a right to block the runner," said the umpire, "and the first baseman must give the runner a chance to cross the sack without interference."

The terrific jolt had knocked the breath out of Claxton, and it was some moments ere he recovered, making it necessary for the umpire to call time.

"McGregor," said Dick, "I protest against this business. Are you going to stand for it?"

"You know we can't make a kick that will hold on that play, old man," said Greg. "I was watching Claxton did get in Weems' way."

"If this was the first time Weems had tried a scurvy trick, I'd think it an accident or pardonable," said Dick; "but he doesn't miss an opportunity. He will not play clean baseball."

McGregor turned to Moore.

"You've got a team of decent fellows, with the exception of your third baseman," he said. "Again I say you can't afford to have a man like that in the game."

Moore saw his opportunity to defend Weems, which he did with great vigor, putting the entire blame onto Claxton.

"Why, Wick couldn't stop, and you know it," he
flung back. "Your man got in his way. What did you want him to do, hold up and be put out? We're going to play this game for all there is in it. If you beat us you will know you've been playing baseball."

"Whether we beat or not, your man Weems is going to make a fine record for himself."

"Play ball!" called the umpire.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Weems mockingly, as the Yale men returned to their positions.

On the first ball handed up to Bryce, Weems went down to second.

Buckhart threw to Darrell, and Weems, instead of sliding head foremost, shot along the ground with his feet toward the sack and spiked Hal, who dropped the ball. By this time every Yale player was boiling with wrath, while the crowd in the stands hissed loudly.

Weems protested his regret, but added it was up to the man who covered the sack to look out for spikes.

Dick's mental condition was such that he carelessly put a good one over to Bryce, and the Holy Cross second baseman drove it out for two sacks, scoring Weems.

"Got him going!" shouted the wicked man, as he romped over the home plate. "Everybody can hit him now! One more run ties the score! Send Bryce home, Mullen, old fellow!"

Mullen hit to deep centre, and Bryce crossed third on his way to the plate.

Jones saw he could not get the ball ere it touched the ground, and, gauging it perfectly, he took it on the bound and lost no time in one of his amazing throws to the plate.

Bryce scudded toward home with increasing speed, but, fast as he was coming, the ball was traveling much faster. It was not a rainbow throw, but, having risen some fifteen feet from the ground, it came on and on, holding up in a most threatening manner.

"Spikes! spikes!" snarled Weems, as he saw Buckhart plant himself astride the rubber.

But Brad was fearless of spikes, and he took Jones' throw two feet from the ground in perfect position to tag Bryce as the fellow slid.

"Out!" shouted the umpire.

The Yale stand had billowed to its feet, and a roar of admiration and satisfaction went up. They cheered lustily for Jones, and Blessed was forced to acknowledge the compliment as he came jogging in from the field. He removed his cap with such a sad and solemn air that it produced a burst of laughter. This play and the laughter which followed seemed to relieve the tension somewhat.

"Great work, Jonesy!" cried McGregor, as he searched for his bat. "That kept them from tying the score. Greatest throw ever made."

Buckhart gave Blessed a crack on the shoulder with his open hand.

"If you'd been inside the diamond you couldn't have got it to me prettier," he declared. "It was a dandy. You hear me gently murmur!"

Weems stamped his spikes into the ground near third, spat on his glove, and squared himself for business.

"Never mind, fellows," he called in his slightly nasal and high-pitched voice. "It was hard luck, but they've got to win this game before they get it."

Riley still seemed to have McGregor's measure, for he led the Yale captain into reaching after two elusive benders, and then put over one which Greg popped into the air for Paulton to smother near first.

"That's pitching! that's pitching!" said Weems. "We're all backing you, Riley!"

If Riley had McGregor's measure, Pipe Devon seemed to have Riley's, for again he bumped the ball beautifully, making a pretty single.

"Get busy, everybody!" urged Moore, hammering his fist into the pocket in his catching glove, and crouching behind the pan as Jones stepped out.

Once more Yale's lanky centre fielder was given a round of applause. He responded by hoisting a tremendous fly into right field.

Devon saw that Mullen, who fielded that territory for Holy Cross, would have a chance to get under the ball. Pipe leaped back to first, planted his heel on the sack, and threw himself into position to start for second.

Weems funneled his hands to his mouth and shrieked to Mullen:

"Put it to second, Joe—put it to second!"

Dick Merriwell was coaching at first. He watched the ball closely, all the while speaking in a low tone to Devon and urging him to be ready.

"I'll give you the word," he said. "I'll tell you when to run. Ready, now—go!"

The ball was caught by Mullen, and Devon went racing to second.

The visitors' left fielder made an excellent throw, but Pipe was too swift on his feet, and he got down to the sack in safety.

Claxton, normally a good hitter, followed Jones. No one could feel worse than Rob over the slump in his batting, which had carried him down the order.
from first position to eighth. His sensitive nature made this extremely humiliating to him.

"You're due, Clax, my boy—you're due," laughed Merriwell. "Break that bad streak. You can do it. You know I've told you that you would. This is the time."

"Twist 'em round his neck, Riley!" called Weems. "Don't hit him, for you might kill him."

This remark was intended to disturb the batter's nerve, but it was not fear that had caused Claxton to go bad.

The delight of the Virginian was unspeakable when he met the second ball pitched to him, and sent it humming on a line into right field, just beyond the reach of Driscoll.

Devon went home from second on that hit, while Dick sent Claxton down from first. The Southerner was not compelled to slide, for he heard Merriwell crying for him to keep up, and he stopped.

Weems had not interfered with Devon, realizing that the umpire was watching him.

Eben Lamb, a splendid outfielder and a poor batter, followed Rob and simply bunted an easy grounder into the diamond, being thrown out at first.

Yale had recovered her lead of two runs.

CHAPTER V.

YALE'S BAD INNING.

Nevertheless, Holy Cross seemed simply biding her time. A great many baseball games are won in a single inning by a team that has the knack of grasping its opportunity. Indeed, some teams seem to play in a more or less indifferent manner until the opportunity presents itself, when they suddenly brace up and become genuine terrors. Experienced players are quick to recognize the aspects of a turn in their favor, and nothing is more sensational and surprising for the spectators than to see a team that has been drifting along in seeming carelessness or indifference suddenly take a brace and go into the game with that determination and assurance of making runs which prophecies success, and frequently brings it.

Sometimes this change is brought about by a batting streak; sometimes by teamwork and a sudden change in the method of playing; not infrequently by a series of errors on the part of the opponents.

It was the last-mentioned cause which gave Holy Cross heart, and fire, and vim in the seventh.

Mullen hit a slow bounder to Devon, who threw the ball far over Claxton's head.

The Holy Cross man tore over first and swung to the left, reaching second ere the Virginian could get hold of the ball.

"Here we go! Here we go!" shouted Weems, doing a war dance upon the coaching lines near third. "The balloon ascension has begun."

Devon growled sullenly over his own bad work.

"Never mind that," called McGregor. "Keep after 'em just the same."

Possibly Dick underestimated Riley as a batter. At any rate, the visiting pitcher made his first and only hit of the game, a weak scratch to right field, on which he reached first by great sprinting.

Weems held Mullen at third, although some of the spectators fancied the man might have scored.

"We've got to have more than one run, Joe," said Weems. "Here's where we worry the great Merriwell."

"Good judgment, Wick!" cried Moore from the opposite side of the diamond. "Look alive, everybody! Get into it! Wake up! Play the game!"

Paulton was full of ginger as he hurried to the plate. Merriwell took his time, making sure that his companions were prepared for anything that might happen. He was inclined to believe Riley would attempt to take second, and he made sure Buckhart was watching out for such a move. Not only that, but he glanced round at Devon and Darrell and saw that both were in position to handle the Texan's throw down.

The instant Merriwell started his delivery, Riley went leaping down the base line.

Paulton gave his bat a furious flourish, but that did not ruffle the cool and heady Texan.

Mullen had edged off third, and the moment he saw Brad start to throw, he dug his toes into the earth and made for the plate.

Pipe Devon cut across halfway between the pitcher's box and second base, ready to catch the ball and return it, or to let it go to Darrell, as necessity might demand. Had Mullen merely made a bluff at running and then darted back toward third, the Yale shortstop would have kept his hands off the ball, and Darrell, who was leaping into position, might have been able to get Riley, for there was plenty of time.

Devon's mistake was in fancying he knew just what Mullen would do, and it was his conviction that the fellow was bluffing when he started toward the rubber. For that reason Pipe believed he would let the ball pass, and not until it was close to him did he perceive
that there was no fake about Mullen's movements. Then Devon sought to catch the speeding horsehide sphere for the purpose of returning it to Buckhart—and made a miserable muff.

Mullen slammed himself forward at full length in an unnecessary slide.

Riley reached second.

Devon plucked after the ball and caught it up when it was too late, and for the next ten seconds he was so angry and disgusted that he simply walked round and round in a circle, making remarks about himself.

Weems shouted with laughter, slapping his thigh repeatedly, and ending with a queri stiff-legged dance.

"I knew it! I knew it!" he chortled. "It's the fatal seventh. It's a shame to do it, but we can't help it. We've just got to."

"If you will kindly kick me, Merriwell," said Devon, "I'll certainly consider it a favor."

But Dick showed no exasperation, although he shook his head a bit regretfully.

"We all do those things sometimes, Pipe," he said soothingly.

"But that's twice—twice in concussion. I'm certainly good to-day!"

"Get into it! get into it!" Tom Moore was crying.

"Here's where we win this game!"

Dick was not alarmed, although he felt regret over the enemy's success in securing an unearned score. Holding Riley close to second, he handed up a high one to Paulton.

The batter started to strike, but checked himself in time, and a ball was called.

Then Merriwell tried an out curve, but still Paulton declined to bite.

"Two balls," said the umpire.

"Get 'em over! get 'em over!" cried Weems. "Are you afraid? Lost your nerve? Got the woogles?"

"Stop that!" commanded the umpire sharply. "Talk to your own players."

"All right, kind sir," grinned Weems. "I beg a thousand pardons, and, as they cost me nothing, I'll make it ten thousand."

The next ball looked good to Paulton, and he hit it. It was a line drive to right field, and Eben Lamb quickly got into position to take it.

But Lamb muffed the ball!

Paulton stretched himself and reached the initial sack just as the ball, quickly caught up and thrown by Lamb, spanked into Claxton's mitt.

"Safe!" announced the umpire.

And Weems had further spasms.

Pipe Devon's shame and disgust over his errors was really nothing, compared to the feeling of humiliation and dismay experienced by Eben Lamb, for the New Englander, being only a substitute player, had longed to make a creditable performance that might establish his standing in baseball. He had felt that his weak hitting was a serious handicap for him, but he had been absolutely confident of his ability as a fielder, and this was the first fly ball he had dropped, even in practice, for more than a week.

The Yale spectators now experienced a feeling of anxiety that was little short of dismay, although they tried to keep up their spirits. Nevertheless, many a man was bewailing the misfortune which had befallen Bert Nash and led McGregor to put Lamb into the game. Devon's errors were somewhat pardonable, considering his brilliant record and the fact that he was known to be a rattling good shortstop, hitter, and base runner. Yet it is possible that Lamb would not have muffed that ball had the Yale demon played in his usual form. Batting is infectious, and so is the making of errors. Sometimes two hits coming together and secured by good batters on a team that has not been doing any stickwork will lead the men who follow into pounding the ball mercilessly; and errors made by good players often seem to have a disastrous effect upon the work of other men on the team.

"No one out!" shouted Moore. "Take my place here, Bryce. Hurry up."

Bryce scampered down onto the coaching line, and the Holy Cross captain made for the bench, being the batter who followed Rafferty, and Rafferty was prepared to hit.

An errorless game is sometimes a tiresome one, and many an exciting game to watch is replete with mishaps. In this case these errors, which had helped Holy Cross, created a feeling of suspense and anxiety among the spectators that was both painful and delicious to experience.

Among the Yale men there were two, at least, who took pleasure in this turn of the game. They were Lynn Hartman and his friend, Foster Trench. These fellows sat a bit apart from their college associates amid the general crowd of spectators.

"Didn't I tell you, Trench?" said Hartman, in a low tone. "I knew Holy Cross had a hot team. It looked to me like a fairly good bet to put your money on that bunch."

"It hasn't looked that way to me up to this point since the beginning of the game," confessed Trench.
"You thought they would be liable to hit Merriwell, didn't you?"
"They will! they will!"
"They haven't hit him effectively yet. It's errors that got Yale going."
"Just watch them now. Merriwell is worried. Their best stickers are coming up. Weems has harried them to death."
"There's no question about it, he's a dirty player, Lynn."
"Oh, he plays the game for all there is in it."
"How did you happen to know Weems?"
"I've known him for five years. Met him in Plattsburg when he was playing with the high bush league up that way."
"Then he's a professional?"
"Oh, he's played summer baseball, but so have lots of the others. Dick Merriwell has."
"Not for money, though."
"Perhaps not, but who can swear to it? Ha! Look at that! Didn't I tell you?"

Rafferty had made a clean hit between Cohen and Devon, neither of whom was able to touch the ball, which went bounding into left field, with McGregor closing in on it.

Riley was not an exceptionally fast runner, but yet Weems sent him home.

McGregor threw in, hoping to stop that run. His throw just reached Dick, who relayed it on.

But reliable Buckhart was harried perhaps by the rush of Riley, who did not attempt to slide. It was an exciting situation that thrilled the vast crowd—and Buck muffed the ball!

Holy Cross tied the score.

CHAPTER VI.

BREAKING THE STREAK.

"And still not a man out," said Hartman, in great satisfaction. "It's all off with the blue now."
"I'm afraid so," confessed Trench.
"Afraid?"
"Yes."
"Why, didn't you bet on Holy Cross?"
"No."
"I told you to."
"I know you did, but I didn't do it."
"Well, you lost a golden opportunity."
"You haven't been very clever in divining the way the games would go this season, Lynn," reminded Trench.
"Oh, I've had hard luck, that's true," admitted Hartman. "You can't always tell just what will happen in baseball. I had a talk with Moore this forenoon, and he told me Holy Cross was laying for Yale."
"I've seen lots of teams that were doing the same thing and got it in the neck."

"The Worcester bunch won't get it in the neck today. Weems is going to stay over to-night. He likes a little game of poker, and I told him I'd try to get up a party."
"If you've been unlucky at baseball," said Trench, "you've had luck enough with the cards."

He was one of Hartman's associates who had found playing with Lynn decidedly unprofitable. Still, he was not suspicious that he had been beaten unfairly.

"Here's Tom Moore," said Hartman.

"Author of 'The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls?'" facetiously inquired Trench.

"Hardly," answered Hartman; "but he claims to be a descendant. There's a man who knows how to handle a baseball team. Put him in the shoes of Greg McGregor, and he'd make Yale the greatest college team on the turf this season."
"Is he a friend of yours, too?"
"Oh, no, I don't know Moore."

The coaches were jabbering loudly. The cheer captains started the Yale crowd off, hoping to put spirit into the team.

Merriwell knew Moore was dangerous, and he took the utmost precaution in pitching to the man. Nevertheless, he burnt the ball over with speed that made it sting through Buckhart's mitt.

"That's the stuff, pard!" muttered the Texan, as Moore missed one of those sizzling hot ones. "He can't see 'em."

"On your toes! on your toes!" Weems was crying. "Here's where we put it away on ice! Here's where we take the bulldog's hide!"

After missing once, Moore suddenly and unexpectedly hunted, sending the ball slowly rolling in the direction of first.

Dick got the sphere, but secured it in bad position to throw. Without attempting to straighten up, he jerked it past Moore, who was making the final long strides for the sack.

Claxton seemed off his guard, for he put out one hand and dropped the ball.

The little bunch of Holy Cross men in the stand
TIP TOP WEEKLY.

cheered like maniacs, for this filled the bases and still Yale had not secured a put out.

Hartman could scarcely contain his glee.

"I see where this game puts me all to the good," he said. "I've got nearly fifty plunks up on it."

"Isn't it awful!" muttered Trench. "Why, I never saw Yale in such a flunk."

"They couldn't stand the pressure," chuckled Lynn. "It was too much for them. It's a cinch for Holy Cross now."

"You can never tell."

"But you can tell about this game. Merriwell must feel fine."

"He looks grim enough, but he isn't putting up much of a kick."

"Look at him tying his shoes. Now anybody knows he doesn't have to do that. He's trying to give the team time to steady down."

"If the game is lost it won't be his fault."

"Oh, no, of course not!" sneered Hartman. "It never is. No matter what happens, he's always all right. Now watch O'Hagan. There's a batter for you."

O'Hagan felt that this was the time for him to cover himself with glory. A hard safe hit, even though only a single, might score two men. If he could smash the ball for two or more bases the three men on the cushions would come home, giving Holy Cross a lead which she might find no serious trouble in keeping.

Dick knew O'Hagan was anxious to hit. He could read it in the man's face and manner.

At last Merriwell resolved to rely on himself and the backstopping of Buckhart. His wits were at work. A strike out at this juncture might serve to steady the team down and put it in perfect condition to fight the battle through to the finish.

A high drop across O'Hagan's shoulders deceived the man, but did not shake his confidence. It was followed by another high ball, which, however, was an in shoot.

Again O'Hagan missed. The Yale crowd cheered.

"Strike him out!" cried some one.

Dick felt that the batter would expect him to try a coaker, for, with no balls called, most pitchers would feel that they could afford to waste one or two.

Dick glanced round at his backers, his foot on the slab. When he turned, he pitched without the slightest preliminary swing, sending over a high, straight, speedy ball. It had been his object, if possible, to catch O'Hagan unprepared, and he succeeded. The batter struck a second too late, and the ball spanked into Buckhart's glove.

"Out!" shouted the umpire.

But the word was not heard, for a tremendous roar of joy had risen from the Yale stands.

A moment later, accepting the cheer captain's signal, the Yale crowd gave Merriwell a rouser.

"Hard luck, O'Hagan," said Driscoll, who followed at the bat. "I'll try to do what you didn't."

"Come here, Hagey—come here!" cried Weems. "My turn next. Hustle! Stir your stumps!"

O'Hagan took Weems' place on the coaching line. Driscoll was likewise eager to hit. He was a man who stood well off from the plate, and therefore Merriwell started in with a wide out, and, to his satisfaction, saw the batter reach ineffectively for it.

"Look out for those! look out for those!" cried Moore from first. "Make him put them over!"

"Make 'em be good, Mat," urged Bryce. "If he gets it over, hit it a mile."

Apparently, Dick tried another coaker, but the ball was an in shoot which started wide of the plate and cut a corner, while Driscoll waited.

"Strike two!" declared the umpire.

Driscoll shook his head and reached out with his bat, signifying his belief that the ball was wide.

Before he could recover after that movement, Merriwell, who had received the ball on the quick return from Buckhart, shot up a high one.

Driscoll struck under it. The Yale crowd rose as one man and gave Merriwell another resounding cheer.

"What do you think of that, Lynn?" asked Trench.

"Don't you call that pitching?"

"Those fellows make me sick!" muttered Hartman. "They both let him catch them unprepared."

"That's headwork," said Trench. "The complexion of things has changed, hasn't it? There are two men out now."

"Yes, but three on the sacks, and Weems up. Wick is a good pinch hitter, too."

"Wick?" said Trench. "I presume that's a contraction of wicked, isn't it?"

"No, it's a contraction of Wickson. That's his name—Wickson Weems."

"A mighty ood name."

"Well, he's an odd character. Just look at him. Doesn't he look ugly? See him glare at Merriwell."

"And see Merriwell smiling."

"Just you wait, and he will wipe that smile off Merriwell's face."

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"Strike him out!" implored some one amid the spectators.

"He isn’t built right," muttered Weems.

"Wait some, wait some," murmured Buckhart.

"Perhaps you’ll change your mind."

Dick began on Weems with the jump ball. It shot upward, and the batter, who had felt confident of hitting it, missed cleanly.

"You’re another victim," said the Texan in a murmur that barely reached the ears of Weems. "You’re fruit for him."

The wicked man from Worcester stamped his spikes into the ground and squared himself, crouching and leaning a bit backward, with his weight on his right foot.

Merriwell shifted the ball in his fingers and took lots of time. Suddenly he pitched, and the sphere came humming over with speed that almost made the air smoke.

Weems struck again. This time he missed as before, but even as he swung he let go his hold on the bat, which went spinning through the air, straight at Merriwell.

"Look out!" cried Buckhart.

Dick dropped to the ground just in time to let the bat pass over him.

"I beg your pardon," said Weems, his voice distinctly heard in the sudden stillness which had followed this occurrence. "Accident."

Darrell secured the bat and walked in with it, giving it a throw toward the plate.

Straightening up, Dick stood with his hands on his hips, his jaw set, his dark eyes fastened on Weems. Not a word did he say, but his manner was expressive of his feelings.

"Look out for that, Wike!" cried Moore. "You’re always throwing your bat. Hold onto it."

Dick knew Weems had permitted the bat to fly from his grasp with malicious intent. Of course such a thing could not be proved, for it frequently happens that a batter will throw his bat in striking. As a rule, however, they do not throw them straight out into the diamond.

Even after he secured the ball, Dick stood there looking at Weems. The fellow grinned with that uplifted upper lip, but he could not meet Merriwell’s eyes.

"Play ball!" he said. "Pitch! pitch! Are you trying to delay the game?"

"Make him pitch, Mr. Umpire," urged O’Hagan.

After a time, Dick toed the rubber. Again he was tempted to throw the ball swift and hard at Weems, but this temptation he quickly put aside, for should he hit the man he would force a run.

"We’ve got him, pard—we’ve got him," said the Texan confidently. "He will never touch you."

Brad was right, for the very next ball fooled Weems as the others had fooled him, and he simply slashed at the empty air.

Dick had checked Holy Cross’ streak by striking out three men at a time when disaster threatened Yale, and the people in the stands cheered until they were hoarse and black in the face.

CHAPTER VII.
A TASTE OF HIS OWN MEDICINE.

"Weems is certainly ugly now," said Hartman, who himself was in a most disagreeable humor, caused by his disappointment. "He’d like to fight. Just look at him, Foster. Did you see him exchange glances with Merriwell?"

"Well, he’d better not pick up a fight with that man," said Trench.

"Why not?"

"Why not? Because he would get his fill."

"You mean—"

"That Merriwell, though a peaceful chap, can fight like blazes when he finds it necessary."

Hartman laughed.

"Oh, yes, Merriwell is something of a scraper at times, but he’d get up against the real Simon-pure article if he ever tackled Weems. Look at Wick’s reach. Look how shifty he is on his feet."

"That’s all right," nodded Trench; "but Merriwell is a thoroughly trained, scientific boxer."

"I admit that he’s a boxer, but Weems is a fighter. A year ago he went into the Boston A. A. sparring bouts as an unknown substitute for a fellow who couldn’t be present, and he put Larry Crisp out in three rounds. Crisp was known to be something better than an amateur, too, although he managed to pose as such. Since then he’s taken up the fighting game openly as a professional, and he threatens to become the middle-weight champion of the country. Yet Wickson Weems simply toyed with him, cutting him up at pleasure and putting him out when he got good and ready. Any one in proper condition, with a good eye and a quick hand and brain, may become a boxer, but it requires a peculiar qualification for a man to become a real fighter."
“I think you’re inclined to underestimate Merriwell, Lynn. Simply because he’s a peaceable chap and doesn’t prefer to fight, you decline to regard him as a fighter. The best and hardest fighters are not always the men who go around looking for scraps. We all know what Merriwell can do. Didn’t he come after Tommy Tucker the night Tucker got soured and accompanied us to your rooms, Hart? Didn’t he walk into the whole bunch of us and put us on the blink? Holy cats! but he was a terror that night. Oh, I say he can fight.”

“Bah! We had all been drinking. That was no proof of the man’s ability to stand up in a roped ring, before a scientific, determined fighting man. We’d been drinking, Trench, and you know it. We got in one another’s way, too. Merriwell had only himself to look out for, while we had to look out for one another. Oh, no, I’ve not forgotten that occurrence, my friend. I’ve laid it up against Mr. Merriwell, and some day he will settle for his internal insolence. No man invades my rooms without invitation, or raises a roughhouse, that I don’t get even with him eventually.”

“I hope you don’t think of fighting him yourself?”

“As yet I’m not making any plans. I’m waiting for developments to bring about the proper opportunity, and I propose to grasp it when it presents itself.”

“Weems deliberately threw his bat at Merriwell. Don’t you think so?”

Hartman smiled and shrugged his shoulders.

“Perhaps he did, but who can prove it? Wick does lots of things which no man can swear are intentional and malicious. I’ve seen him intimidate an opposing pitcher until the fellow completely lost his nerve, and yet Weems did nothing to get himself in trouble.”

“He can’t intimidate Merriwell. He may as well give up that idea. Holy Cross has lost the chance to take the game. She won’t have another opportunity. Merriwell did it. That simply goes to show, Lynn, the sort of a man he is. In times of absolute necessity he seldom fails to rise to the occasion.”

“Come, come, let up on that!” growled Hartman in disgust. “It makes me tired. Any one would think you one of his best friends or a member of that servile set of adorers who are ready to lie down and let him wipe his feet on them. You think Holy Cross has lost the game, do you?”

“Doesn’t it look that way?”

“Not to me. You saw a sample of her fighting blood just now, and you’ll see more of it.”

“I saw Yale have a rotten bad streak which might have lost us the game; but it’s over, and I don’t expect to see anything further of that character. Here goes Darrell. With the head of the list leading off, it wouldn’t surprise me if Yale went about it and won right away.”

“Never!” cried Hartman. “Look at that!”

The exclamation was caused by Riley’s success in luring Hal Darrell to bite at a dizzy shoot.

“That’s only one,” murmured Trench.

“Well, that’s two,” chuckled Hartman, as Riley again deceived the batter. “I’m not particularly fond of Claxton, but I think they made a mistake when they pushed him way down toward the foot of the order and carried Darrell up into his place.”

“Claxton’s batting has gone off lately.”

“He hit the last time he was up.”

“Yes.”

“Darrell hasn’t been doing much hitting in this game.”

“He got one safety.”

“That will be his limit to-day, for—— Ah!”

Bat and ball cracked. Yale’s fast second baseman had caught one of Riley’s benders near the end of the stick and sent it sailing away to the right of Rafferty in deep centre.

“Now, what do you think of that?” exclaimed Trench, watching the swift course of the flying ball.

“Wait! wait!” whispered Hartman eagerly. “Rafferty is after it. He will get it.”

“He can’t.”

“Can’t he? Watch.”

Rafferty made a splendid run, and, reaching high in the air while at full speed, took the ball with ease.

“I thought that was about what would come of it,” said Hartman, although he could not hide his great relief.

“That was a dandy crack,” muttered Trench. “If he’d only got it a little farther away, it would have been good for two bases or more—it might have been a homer. Anyhow, Riley didn’t strike him out. It was hard luck for Darrell.”

Hartman swore.

“You’re getting worse and worse,” he snarled in a low tone. “I believe you’d be glad to see me lose the money I’ve put up on this game.”

“I’m sorry you were unwise enough to bet the way you did. We’re friends, Lynn, and——”

“No one would suspect it, the way you talk. Here comes another of Merriwell’s pets, that Jew, Cohen. He has said himself that if it hadn’t been for Merriwell he wouldn’t be on the team. Why, Merriwell has more to say about the make-up of the nine than captain,
coach, or all other Yale men combined. Look at his chums on the bench.”

“Do you think they are there because they’re his chums, or do you imagine they seem to be his chums because they’re there?”

“I say he can get any one he wishes on the team if only the fellow can play baseball a little.”

“How about Tucker? He’s one of Merriwell’s chums, yet, after playing last season, he is dropped this year and his place filled by Pipe Devon, a chap who does not belong to Merriwell’s set. That seems to contravert your theory.”

“Not at all. Merriwell, in his priggishness, got sore on Tucker because Tommy was lively and touched the high spots occasionally. To stand safe and solid with Mr. Merriwell, you’ve got to be a model of propriety. You can’t enjoy yourself by drinking a little now and then. You must travel on the sprinkler.”

“Perhaps that’s right, but still I never fancied he was a crank about such matters. Cohen is going to strike out.”

Yale’s Hebrew third baseman, like Darrell, had missed two of the seemingly good ones passed up to him by Riley.

“Oh, yes, I think he will fan sure enough,” nodded Hartman. “He hasn’t done a great deal of hitting to-day.”

“He made a run in the third,” reminded Trench. “For a Jew, he seems a decent sort of fellow.”

“But he’s a Jew—he’s a Jew,” sneered Hartman. “That’s sufficient. Why, his father is nothing but a dirty old pirate of a pawnbroker on the Bowery—perhaps a receiver of stolen goods, a keeper of a fence. There he goes! That settles him.”

For Cohen had missed again.

“What now does the head of the batting order amount to? When Holy Cross tied the score, she put herself in position to win this game, and Riley is pitching for his life. He’s got to pitch now. Here’s Merriwell.”

“Fiddle! Merriwell has had his opportunity. He hit the last time he was up. He’s due to fall this time.”

“We’ll see.”

It soon began to seem that Hartman might be right, for, similar to the two who had preceded him, Dick went after two of Riley’s deceivers and missed them. Each time he missed, Weems laughed tauntingly.


But Riley knew just how dangerous Merriwell was, and did his handsomest to lure Dick into reaching after the teasers. Not until three balls were called did he cease this effort and put the sphere over the inside corner. His command was perfect and he got the corner beautifully; but Merriwell’s eye did not fail him, and he smothered out a splendid drive to the left of Rafferty in deep centre. This time the great middlegarden man could not get his hands onto the ball, and as he chased it the Yale crowd roared its satisfaction.

Over first and over second sped Dick Merriwell. Rafferty had secured the ball and thrown it to O’Hagan, who ran out as a relay man.

O’Hagan whirled like a flash and sent the sphere whistling to third.

Weems saw the ball coming, but saw Merriwell coming also, and there was a chance for him to slide safely to the sack. Just before the runner was ready to slide, Weems leaped into position which would block Dick off the cushion. His right foot was on the sack and his left foot planted some distance away, in such a manner that the runner would be forced to one side when he slid. The tricky, crafty, dirty Weems saw a possibility of getting Merriwell by that blocking, which might hold Dick beyond arm’s length of the sack if he slid straight, and might force him out of reach of it in case he sought to go round.

Dick had been on the point of flinging himself headlong, but, perceiving or divining Weems’ intention, he made a sudden change and went at the sack feet first.

Earlier in the game Weems had spiked Darrell, although doing little harm, when there was absolutely no necessity for it, as Hal was not blocking him. Now the Holy Cross man felt the spikes himself, and the shock nearly upset him, causing him to muff the ball. When he grabbed up the ball, Merriwell was safely on the cushion. Nevertheless, Weems struck Dick a savage blow with the ball.

Like a flash, Merriwell caught the fellow’s wrist and gave it a twist and a snap which again caused the ball to drop to the ground.

There seemed to be every prospect of serious trouble at third, and McGregor leaped in to prevent it, getting between Weems and Dick as quickly as possible.

“He spiked me! he spiked me!” howled the Holy Cross man.

“You tried to block him off the sack,” said the Yale captain, “and you spiked one of our men who was not blocking you. You’re the kind of a fellow who doesn’t relish his own medicine.”

Weems appealed to the umpire, limping a little, and examining his stocking, which was cut above the ankle.
“The runner had a right to slide that way,” said the umpire. “Play ball.”

Weems swore in a husky whisper.

“You wait, Merriwell—you just wait!” he muttered, giving Dick a glare of hatred. “I’ll fix you yet.”

“You must hate yourself” said Dick. “I don’t see how you can help it.”

But he did not permit the fellow to take his attention from the game, and so, when Buckhart connected with the first ball delivered to him by Riley, driving out a warm grounder, Dick got away fast toward the plate.

Bryce made a great stop, but it put him out of position for quick throwing, and when he recovered and sent the ball to first, he had lost his chance to get Buckhart, who covered the ground like a man going for the doctor in a case of life and death. The decision was a close one, but the umpire was justified in declaring the Texan safe. Therefore, Merriwell’s score counted, and, in spite of Weems, Yale had once more secured the lead.

CHAPTER VIII.

TRICKS THAT FAILED.

That was the end of the scoring in the seventh, for Riley lured McGregor into popping up an easy infield fly, which was caught.

“Now let’s turn the trick, fellows,” urged Captain Moore, as the Holy Cross men assembled at the bench.

“If that whelp Merriwell hadn’t spiked me,” rapped Weems, “I’d got him and stopped that score. You never said a word, captain.”

“What could I say, Wick? You know you were blocking.”

“Oh, I had a right to stand in position to catch the ball and tag the man, didn’t I?”

“You’ve got to give a base runner a fair chance to reach the sack.”

“He came near crippling me!” growled Wickson sullenly; “but I’ll make him pay for it!”

“You’d better go slow, Wick. We don’t want any more trouble in this game. You’ve had us on the verge of a riot several times. It isn’t clean baseball, and you know it. If those fellows were playing dirty——”

“What do you call spiking a man?”

“But you spiked their second baseman. It’s your turn to bat, Bryce. Don’t try to kill the ball. See if you can’t get a little safety. We’ve got to play for every point. No dallying, no fooling, no wasting opportunities. Look alive now.”

Merriwell worked swiftly with Bryce, yet he was not careless, although his manner seemed to indicate that he was. He had fine control, but made no effort for a strike out, preferring to depend on his support as long as the bases were empty and the situation not threatening.

Eventually, Bryce hit an in curve and sent it skimming along the ground some eight feet inside the third-base line.

Cohen had no trouble in placing himself in front of that ball, but, although he was a clever infielder, he made a most exasperating fumble, and threw wild to first in his haste to prevent himself from getting an error.

Claxton leaped ineffectively for the ball, and the coacher shrieked at Bryce to take second, which the man did with ease.

Hartman’s spirits rose instantly. Nudging Trench with his elbow, he muttered:

“Here we go now. Oh, they’ll find the game isn’t won!”

“Merriwell certainly is getting rotten support,” said Trench. “It must be discouraging. They say he’s got a temper, but he manages to control it to-day. Mullen isn’t much of a hitter.”

“I don’t know about that.”

“He’s pretty near the foot of the list.”

“They’re all hitters in that bunch, and some of them have to stand down on the batting order.”

Bryce was a tantalizing base runner, one of the kind who dances off the sack, trying to lead a pitcher in throwing wild to catch him. This he now did, clapping his hands and capering off toward third. Twice Merriwell took a throwing signal from Buckhart and wheeled like a flash to snap the ball to second, but each time Bryce danced back in safety, laughing provocingly.

“Don’t delay the game,” sneered Weems from the coaching line. “Keep him throwing, Brycey; he’ll put it out into the hayfield pretty soon.”

Mullen made no effort to drive out a long hit. Instead of that, he reached beyond the plate and bunted Dick’s first ball, which had been pitched wild, as a coxer.

Bryce, having a good start, flew on the way to third, while Mullen suffered at first the penalty of his sacrifice.

“That’s baseball,” said Hartman. “Only one out, and Bryce at third. They will tie the score. It’s a chance to play the squeeze, if they want to try it.” Riley may not be a heavy hitter, but it’s only necessary for
him to dump the ball into the diamond and Bryce will score."

Trench said nothing, watching the course of events with great eagerness.

Merriwell signaled to Buckhart and met him just in front of the plate, speaking a low word or two to him.

The Holy Cross men felt and saw that Yale was prepared for the squeeze play, and Moore, coaching at first, shouted some words which seemed to have no particular significance, yet really were instructions to the batter and base runner.

Bryce jumped away from third as Dick pitched, making a fake start for the plate. He stopped short and retreated almost instantly, but behind him Cohen had covered the sack and was ready for business. Dick had pitched the ball high, thus preventing a bunt, and sending it into Buckhart's hands in such a way that Brad was ready to throw instantly.

Behind Riley's back the Texan caught the ball and lined it to third with lightning-like rapidity.

Weems shrieked at Bryce:

"Get back! get back! Look out!"

"Look out! look out!" cried Moore from the opposite side of the diamond.

Bryce lunged with outstretched hand, but the ball spanked into Cohen's grasp, and Joe tagged the Holy Cross man an instant before the latter's fingers reached the sack.

"Out at third!" cried the umpire.

The Yale crowd roared, and Lynn Hartman came near having heart failure.

"Of all the fool things I ever saw," snarled Hartman. "Now, wasn't that jackass playing! It's simply awful! It makes me sick!"

"They don't want to joke with that man Buckhart," said Trench. "He's a great thrower. That puts the kibosh on Holy Cross."

"I don't believe it. I don't believe it."

Weems was claiming that Cohen had blocked Bryce, but the umpire silenced him. However, Moore took it up in desperation and insisted that there had been blocking.

"Get a phonograph, get a phonograph," laughed Buckhart. "That will save the wear and tear of your voice."

The umpire was annoyed, and well he might be, for from first to fast it had been a game of irritating happenings.

"Get back onto the coaching line," he ordered, addressing Moore. "You're interfering with the game.

The man was out. I say he was out, and that settles it."

"No use," called Weems, "we can't get a fair deal."

"If I hear anything further of that nature from you," said the umpire, "I'll put you out of the game."

It was plain that he meant precisely what he said, and Weems closed up promptly.

Riley got a scratch hit, which would have scored Bryce had the latter not permitted himself to be caught.

"It's simply rotten luck!" hissed Hartman. "Look at that, Trench! The score would have been tied if that man Bryce hadn't tried his monkeyshines."

"Perhaps so."

"Perhaps so! Why, you know it, if you know anything. Bryce could have scored easily on Riley's hit."

"But perhaps Riley wouldn't have hit the ball if Bryce hadn't been put out."

"Why not?"

"Perhaps Merriwell wouldn't have permitted it."

"Well, of all sickening things! You seem to think Merriwell can prevent hitting whenever he pleases. You ought to know better. It's a shame two are out, for here's Paulton up again. He's been hitting right along."

"But according to your theory, it's now his time to fail."

"Not Paulton. Against Harvard he made three hits in four times at bat. His failure was a long drive into the field which scored a man from third."

"I'll go you a big silver cart wheel that he doesn't get a hit now."

"Done."

Hardly had Hartman spoken that word when Paulton smashed the ball hard, sending it out on the ground to the left of second base.

Darrell made a lunge at it with his outthrust hand, but missed completely, and Riley went to third.

"You win," said Trench.

"Now look at it! look at it!" sibilated Hartman.

"Two men on bases, and there would be only one out if Bryce hadn't made a fool of himself. Rafferty bats. They will tie the score. Merriwell is having his troubles again."

"It's our game," shouted Moore, his voice full of confidence. "Go into it, Rafferty!"

Buckhart dropped a wide ball, and Paulton took a chance, going down to second.

The Texan's judgment told him he could not stop the man, and he did not throw.

"A hit does it now!" came from Moore. "A good, safe single turns the trick, Raff!"
Weems cackled furiously at the runners. Merriwell tried a high one on Rafferty. "Two balls!" said the umpire, as the batter refused to reach.

A moment later a sharp in shoot caused the batter to leap back, He was not hit, but Buckhart came near having a passed ball.

"Three balls!"

"He's going to walk you, Raf!" came from Moore. "Come down here, Mullen. I bat next."

Dick examined the ball and tossed it to the umpire. "Stitch broken," he said. The umpire put in another ball.

"That's a good one," chuckled Moore, trotting across toward the visitors' bench. That's the one you can hit a mile, Raf. Remember I bat after you."

"In the next inning," muttered Buckhart. Rafferty knew the game, and did not try to land on the speedy close one which Merriwell shot over. The ball clipped the inside corner, and the umpire called a strike. Rafferty had dropped his bat and started for first.

"Come back," chuckled Buckhart. "Don't be in such a hurry."

The batsman picked up his war club and squared himself again.

Merriwell was not hurrying, nor was he wasting time. Perfectly deliberate and calm in his movements, he continued his work in the box, and Rafferty got a high drop, at which he decided to strike when he saw it coming over in a manner which indicated it would be good.

The ball hit the upper side of Rafferty's bat and went into the air.

Like a flash of lightning, Buckhart tore off his mask, whirled, looked upward, located the ball, and went after it.

A gust of wind carried the ball farther and farther away, but the Texan stretched himself amazingly and reached it as it came down. It stuck fast in the pocket of Brad's big glove, and Rafferty's exasperation was expressed by the manner in which he fiercely flung his bat toward the bench.

"Well, they didn't score, after all," said Trench. "No, and it was all the fault of Bryce," snarled Hartman. "Look at Weems. Isn't he disgusted? Isn't he ugly? He would like to fight this minute. I'll guarantee he's literally thirsting to get his hands on Merriwell."

"If he gets his hands on Merriwell, perhaps he'll have his thirst quenched."

"That was pulling out of a bad hole, fellows," laughed McGregor, as he came trotting in from the field. "Let's see if we can't get a safer lead. Who's up? You, Devon? Come, now, don't spoil your record to-day. You've been hitting like a fiend, and you've scored two of our runs."

"I'll get another hit if it's in the wood," promised Pipe Devon.

He tried hard for a hit, reaching out with his long arms and long bat and smashing a ball which Riley had kept wide. It was a fly into right field, but Driscoll was forced to sprint hard in order to touch it. He got there, however, and pulled the ball down.

Devon, who had raced to first, turned back, shaking his head sorrowfully.

"Never mind that, Jones," encouraged McGregor. "Keep right after him just the same. We want one run, at least, and we've got to have it."

Blessed Jones looked as if he would feel the greatest grief in case he happened to hit the ball, but still he hit it. It was a stringing line drive, of which Bryce made a most sensational one-hand catch.

"Two gone, Riley!" said Moore. "Get the next man! We've got to hold them! It's easy enough!"

Although Claxton had made a creditable performance the last time he was up, he now experienced a feeling of uncertainty, which he vainly tried to throw off.

"I will hit it!" he whispered to himself. "I must, and I will!"

He was altogether too anxious to hit, something which Riley seemed to divine, for the Holy Cross man pulled him with the first two balls handed up, neither of which Rob touched.

"You've got him, Frank," said Moore. "He's your victim."
"Look out for those wide ones, Clax," called McGregor.

The Virginian knew he had been fooled into striking at what must have been balls, and he resolved to use better judgment. It seemed likely that, having deceived him in such a manner, Riley would still seek to lure him into biting at the bad ones, and he resolved not to repeat the error.

Now Riley was a pitcher who made it a rule to try to read the batter's mind for the purpose of doing just what he was not expected to do. In this case he decided that Claxton would be looking for him to continue bending them wide or putting them over bad. Therefore, with all the speed he could command, he whipped over one on the inside corner.

Too late Claxton saw that the ball might be good. He could not get his bat round to meet it, and therefore he let it pass, hoping the umpire would call it a ball.

"Three strikes; you're out!" came sharply from the umpire.

"This is Holy Cross' last opportunity," said Trench. "If she can't score now, Yale has the game."

He heard Hartman grinding his teeth together, but not a word came from Lynn's lips.

Tom Moore slashed ineffectively at two balls pitched to him, and then dropped a little dopy Texas leaguer over the infield.

Hartman was electrified.

"That's the first man up," he whispered, as he straightened himself on his seat. "Now there's something doing. Just you keep your eyes open, Trench. If they ever can tie the score again, they'll put the game on ice."

O'Hagan declined to nibble at Merriwell's teasers, and when Dick finally put the ball over, the Holy Cross batter bunted.

Moore went stretching his legs toward second, while O'Hagan tried hard to beat the ball to first.

Dick got the sphere and took pains to make a perfect throw to Claxton, who held it.

"One gone, Lynn," said Trench.

"And Moore on second. A two-sacker ties the score, and even a good single may do it. I tell you this game is not over."

Driscoll was calm and grim, and Merriwell found him another man who would not try for the bad ones. Nevertheless, Dick fooled him with two handsome shots, and the crowd shouted for a strike out.

Having a bit of leeway, Dick tried a high, wide one on Driscoll. The batter did an unexpected thing, for he reached far over the plate and caught the ball within an inch of the end of his bat, putting it into deep right field.

It was a fly, and Moore leaped back onto second. Riley was on the coaching line at third.

"Ready, captain—ready!" he palpitated. "I'll give you the word! You can make it! Ready now! Go!"

Lamb had been forced to leg it after the ball. He was running almost directly away from third base when he made a fine catch. He turned as quickly as possible and threw to third, but Moore was too fast, and he reached the sack safely.

Two were out; one run was needed to tie; Moore was on third, and Weems was at bat.

Never in his life had Wicked Weems longed with a more intense longing to smash out a clean, hard hit. Furthermore, he was filled with a sort of confidence that he would do it.

But now Merriwell was pitching as if life and fortune depended on his performance. The first ball to Weems looked fine. Nevertheless, it shot upward with a little jump, rising over Wick's bat as he struck.

"Strike!" snapped the umpire.

"Get him, Dick—get him!" implored Pipe Devon. "It will settle everything! Cook his goose!"

Weems set his teeth, with his upper lip lifted a little in the middle. His face wore a sort of wolfish snarl, and his eyes gleamed wickedly.

"He's going to hit," said Hartman. "He's just as sure of hitting the ball as any man could be."

"No man could be, with Dick Merriwell pitching," said Trench.

Weems was ready with every nerve tense, hoping and desiring to meet Dick's speed fairly. But now, right at this critical point, Merriwell, after using a delivery which seemed to prophesy a swift one, handed up the slowest sort of a slow ball. It came with such
exasperating slowness from Dick's hand that something actually seemed holding it back. In spite of everything he could do, Weems struck too soon.

The wolfish snarl broke forth in a sound which was the height of rage expressed without words. Weems heard the crowd laugh, and his face burned like fire.

"He's your meat, Merriwell!" shouted Devon. "You've got him cold!"

Dick smiled on Weems with an expression that was almost sweetness itself, and that smile added, if possible, to the batter's rage. Of a sudden something like a haze seemed to gather before Weems' eyes. Ere it passed, Merriwell whistled over a high, swift ball which cut the plate in halves.

Weems seemed to see something flit past, but it was the spank of the ball into Buckhart's glove which told him that Dick had pitched.

"Three strikes!" cried the umpire. "Out!"

Then Wicked Weems did the trick which proved conclusively that all his previous dirty playing had been intentional. This time there was no excuse for it, yet he flung the bat at Merriwell.

A roar of rage came from the Yale crowd. Weems saw them pouring down onto the field in a perfect cataclysm from the stand, and he took to his heels, running for the clubhouse.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FIGHT.

That night Merriwell, playing a friendly game of billiards with Halcomb Blinn at the club, was the recipient of many congratulations. One after another, friends, acquaintances, and college men generally, drifting into the billiard room, took occasion to express their approval or admiration, which caused many interruptions of the game, not a little to the annoyance of Blinn.

"Come, Merriwell, old man," said Halcomb, "stop talking baseball or I'll bury you. I've got a twenty-seven point lead now, and only thirty-one more to go."

"I'll have to wake up if I'm going to be anywhere near you at the finish," laughed Dick, chalking his cue.

"Really, if a man is going to play real billiards, he's got to put his mind on it."

A large number of spectators had lingered to watch the game, and others came sitting in, singly or in small groups.

Dick tried to settle down and give Blinn a game of it, but succeeded rather poorly for a time. Halcomb gathered still more of a lead and threatened to run the game out with his opponent far in the lurch. Finally he missed, with only four points necessary to complete the century mark.

"It is true," he observed, "that billiards and baseball don't go well together. I'm afraid you'll have to try it again, Merriwell, when you're in better condition and there's not so many interruptions."

At last Dick put all outside matters away and concentrated his mind on the game. With deliberation and care, yet without any show of worry, over the possible result, he started a run which set the marker shoving up the buttons with mechanical regularity.

"He's liable to trim you now, Blinn," said some one among the watchers. "He's a hard man on the finish, as he demonstrated to-day."

Dick did not seem to hear these words; he heard them, but his mind was so centred on billiards that he might as well have been deaf.

Twice the balls rolled badly, and twice he gathered them with skill and cleverness. But again they got away from him, and he was compelled to pause for study and deliberation. There was absolute silence in the room as he chalked his cue, frowning the least bit at the perverse ivories. The spectators even seemed to forget to pull at their pipes, cigars and cigarettes. Merriwell was now only eleven points behind Blinn. If he made this shot and got into position for the next one, it seemed that he would have a fair chance to run the game out.

At last Dick decided on his course of action. He played a cushioned carom off the spot ball to the red. His own ball rolled slowly and gently toward the red, with a slight twisting movement which threatened to carry it a hair too far to one side.

Dick leaned over the table and watched closely. He
“That will be about enough for me to-night,” he said.

“I think,” observed Blinn generously, “you might have beaten me only for that fellow Weems. I must say that any club member displayed bad taste in bringing that man here.”

Dick put on his coat and prepared to depart. He left unaccompanied, and turned his steps toward Durfee.

Two blocks away he came upon a little group of men who were standing on the sidewalk in front of a vacant lot. He would have passed them, but one of the group recognized him and sprang out, blocking his path.

“Oh, here you are!” cried the voice of Weems. “I wanted to go back there. You’ve got a nasty tongue, haven’t you, Mr. Merriwell? Around New Haven you seem to be the whole show, but I don’t think you’re so much myself.”

Without a word, Merriwell attempted to step aside and pass the man, but Weems caught him by the coat. Quick as a flash, Dick struck the fellow’s hand down.

“Keep your dirty fingers off me!” he exclaimed hotly. “I don’t care to get into a mix-up with a man of your reputation.”

“I think that’s right,” sneered Wickson. “You’re a big case of bluff, Merriwell. You insulted me a short time ago. No, hold on; you’re not going to get away. I demand satisfaction.”

“What sort of satisfaction?”

“Satisfaction with light gloves or bare fists, whichever you choose. I prefer the latter.”

“You mean fight, do you?”

“That’s what I mean.”

“Well, I’m not going to fight you, Weems. I wouldn’t disgrace myself in such a manner.”

At this the fellow laughed tauntingly.

“You’re afraid!” he declared. “You know what you’d get. You haven’t the nerve. You’re a coward.”

“You lie!”

At that Weems attempted to hit Dick, but his blow was parried, and he received a return punch that sent him reeling.

“Not here! not here!” palpitated Hartman. “The
cops might interfere. Get between them, fellows. If there's going to be a fight, let's get off the street."

"Let me get at him!" roared Weems, trying to break away.

Dick stood still, making no further effort to pursue his way, for now something throbbed and tingled within him that made him long to give Weems a thrashing.

"Here's a vacant lot," said Trench. "They can have it out right here. Come on."

"Yes, come on, Merriwell, if you've got the nerve to face Weems," said Hartman.

Dick unhesitatingly followed them into the vacant lot.

Wickson Weems, snarling and growling, tore off his coat, vest, collar, and necktie.

"Get ready, Merriwell—get ready!" he cried. "I'm going to give you a jolly good pounding. I'm going to give you the handsomest walloping you ever had in your life."

Dick removed his coat and tossed it, together with his cap, to one of the men.

"I'm ready as soon as you please," he said in a low, cold tone. "All I ask is plenty of room and no interference from outsiders."

His fighting blood was up, now that this thing had been forced on him.

Weems did not delay. Putting up his guard, he closed in on Merriwell, and the eager, excited spectators saw a swift and furious display of fistwork. Although Weems pressed the fighting at first, he could gain no advantage, and he soon discovered that for every blow he landed he received at least two in return, some of which were good, stiff punches. He got one on the nose that started the blood. Once they clinched, but Hartman forced them to break, hissing:

"No wrestling. It's to be a fist fight. Stand up to it."

As Lynn leaped back and the combatants went at it again, Foster Trench grasped Hartman's arm.

"If you're inclined to sport," he said, "I'll go you a ten spot that Merriwell whips Weems."

"Make it twenty," said Hartman instantly.

"Twenty it is."

Once Dick received a jolt on the chin which dazed him temporarily and forced him to give way and do some fast stepping in order to keep beyond the enemy's reach while he recovered.

"You've got him going, Weemsy!" panted Hartman. "Finish him up! Keep at him! That's the stuff!"

Seeing Merriwell reentering and dodging thus, Weems believed Dick had lost courage, and he grew careless in his endeavor to make short work of the encounter. Suddenly he received a smashing blow that sent him down to his knees, and he only saved himself from falling at full length by putting out his hands for support.

Dick stood over the man, waiting for him to rise.

"Get up," said Merriwell—"get up, Weems, and give me a chance to hand you some more of it. I'm not half satisfied yet."

Wickson leaped backward as he rose, and now Merriwell took the aggressive. From this point on Dick did not let up on his opponent. Repeatedly, Weems made a stand, but each time he got the worst of it, and soon he began clinching whenever he could.

"Break them, Hartman—break them!" cried Trench. "Remember this is to be a fist fight."

But Hartman had grown worried, and he was not nearly as anxious to quickly break the grappling men, seeing that Weems was holding on to recuperate. Nevertheless, they were forced to break eventually, and the fight progressed, growing fiercer, with Merriwell forcing matters.

"He's got Weems going," muttered Trench. "I knew he'd do it—I knew it."

Smack!

Again Dick had landed a swinging blow, into which he put the weight of his body, and this time Weems measured his full length on the ground.

"He's out," said someone in the silence that followed.

"No—no, I'm not," mumbled Weems, lifting himself with an effort. "I'm not out."

Dick stood back now and gave the fellow plenty of time to rise and steady himself.
“I could have put you out,” he declared; “but I’m not satisfied. You promised me a thrashing. You’re going to take your own medicine, and it gives me particular satisfaction to hand it to you.”

Never in his life had Merriwell taken more savage joy in a fist fight. All his scruples against fighting were thrown to the winds, and his heart was leaping with satisfaction and delight as he again went after Wickson Weems.

“This is for your dirty ball playing,” he cried; and an instant later he smashed Weems on the mouth. Although he did not realize it, the fellow’s face was cut and bleeding in many places, and Dick’s cuffs and shirt sleeves had been bespattered by blood.

Weems fought with the blind despair of a dying man who knows his case is hopeless. He even tried to use his feet, and he would have resorted to any foul measure possible if only he could have found a way to do Dick up.

Even Hartman knew Weems was whipped when the fellow clinched once more and clung fast to save himself.

Then a most amazing thing happened. The ground beneath the feet of the fighting men suddenly dropped away, leaving an opening just large enough to admit their bodies, and they shot downward from sight as if bound for the bowels of the earth.

CHAPTER X.

A TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE.

Neither Merriwell nor Weems knew what had happened as they felt themselves dropping into that black hole. Downward they scooted along a dank, slippery incline, but finally fell together, still holding fast to each other, into what seemed to be a bed of mud. Earth and stones rattled down around them and poured over them, but miraculously they escaped serious injury.

For some moments neither could speak. Weems was the first to open his lips.

“For heaven sake, what’s happened?” he mumbled.

“Where are we?”

Dick could not answer that question. He struggled to his feet and struck his head against what seemed to be a ceiling of stone or brick. The air was unpleasant with foul odors. The darkness was absolute and impenetrable.

“Merriwell! Merriwell!” called Weems.

“Yes?” said Dick.

“Where are we?”

“I don’t know.”

“What happened?”

“The ground gave way beneath us.”

“Have we fallen into a pit or an old cellar?”

“I don’t know.”

“How are we going to get out?”

“I don’t know that, either.”

“Can’t we get back through the same hole?”

“Perhaps so.”

Dick was feeling around with his hands, and finally his fingers touched something which moved, and then another shower of earth and stones poured down into the place.

“Great Caesar!” he muttered; “that’s dangerous.”

“What is it? What have you found?”

“The hole we came through is choked full. I nearly started an avalanche. The roof of this place is ready to give way right here. We’re liable to be buried any moment beneath tons of earth.”

“For heaven sake, let’s move! Let’s go somewhere.”

Dick had backed away, and he felt Weems’ hands clinging to him.

“ haven’t you a match, Weems?” he asked.

“Yes, I’ve got matches. No, I haven’t, they’re in my coat. Haven’t you got any?”

“Not a match.”

They had retreated no more than ten or fifteen feet when another rattling, rushing sound, accompanied by a few splashes, told them that more of the mass of earth had poured down into the place.

Weems was shuddering with horror.

“We’re buried alive!” he groaned—“buried alive! We’ll never get out of here.”
"Let’s move a little farther away if we can," said Dick. "I can’t tell how large this place is, but it seems like an arch of masonry. The mud is nearly a foot deep. Yes, and here’s water—running water."

Stooping, he put his hand into a tiny brook which flowed about his feet.

"I have it!" he cried.

"What is it?"

"I know where we are."

"Then tell me—tell me!"

"I’ve heard about a brook that once flowed down through this part of the city. It was covered over, and we’ve dropped into it."

"It must have an outlet."

"It has at the harbor front."

"Then we can get out there."

"If the tide is down we can."

"If the tide isn’t down, what then?"

"It’s likely we’ll find our escape blocked. I have hopes that the tide is out, for it seems to me this place must be partly filled with water at high tide."

"Let’s hurry, Merriwell—let’s hurry!" quavered Weems. "What if the tide is rising? What if it shuts us in? Merriwell, we must stick together now. You had me whipped, I confess it. I didn’t believe you could fight like that."

"Forget it," said Dick. "This is no time to remember such things. It’s a case of life and death with us now. I’m as eager as you to get out of this fearful hole."

Clinging to each other, they made their way, stooping low, down the course of the brook, wallowing at times in that deep mud. As they progressed the mud grew even deeper and more clinging about their feet. Weems was painfully panting and gasping like a person nearly overcome with exhaustion.

"Don’t leave me, Merriwell!" he entreated. "Stick by me. Don’t leave me, will you? For Heaven’s sake, don’t!"

"I won’t," promised Dick. "No matter how much I may have despised you, Weems, we’ll stick together now."

"Perhaps—perhaps," muttered Weems, "you had—

you had a right to—to be sore on me. If I ever get out of here somebody will settle for this! It’s criminal for the city to permit such a death trap to exist."

"Don’t think of forcing the city to settle at present; think of yourself and realize that you’ll be a lucky man if you ever see the light of day again."

The distance seemed interminable. The arch grew larger until they could nearly stand erect, but still the soft mud deepened, threatening to Prison their feet with its suction.

"We’re done for, we’re done for!" whimpered Weems. "We can’t get out. Help me, Merriwell. I can’t drag myself along. What’s this? We’re in the water."

"Yes, we’re in the water. It’s growing deeper, Weems. The tide can’t be wholly down."

"It may be going out. Don’t you think it is?"

"I’ve been trying to remember how the tides run, and I’m afraid it’s on the flow."

"No, no, no!" cried Weems. "It can’t be! If it is, there’s no chance for us! It’s above my knees now! We’ve got to stop! We can’t go on!"

"We’ve got to go on," said Dick grimly. "We can’t stop. We can’t go back."

"Why not?"

"There’s no telling how high the water would rise in here. We could not remain here long and survive. It’s positively certain that we could not trace this brook back to the point where it passes underground. When we got back to the spot through which we came we might find it blocked by a cave-in. If it was not blocked that way and we sought to pass it, perhaps everything above our heads would drop upon us."

"Done for! done for!" groaned Weems.

"There’s only one way out. We must keep on."

"But the water is up to my hips now. I can hardly breathe, Merriwell. The air is foul here."

"I don’t know how far away the mouth of this tunnel lies," said Dick. "Can you swim, Weems?"

"Yes, I can swim, but I’m almost used up."

"You’ve got to swim for your life. It’s getting deeper rapidly."

The water was rising beneath their arms. Still they
were encompassed by deepest darkness, with no ray of light to cheer or guide them.

In a moment or two Dick stopped, for he was shoulder-deep in the water.

"It fills the passage just ahead, Weems," he said. "You go ahead and swim for it. I'll follow you. If anything happens to you perhaps I may be able to help you that way."

"I can't do it!" groaned the thoroughly unnerved man.

"Then I'll go ahead, and you must follow me."

"No, no!" was the distressed cry. "Don't do that! Don't leave me!"

"Time is precious. We're using up strength and nerve every moment we remain here. If you're going to swim for it, the sooner you do the better. I'm certain now that the tide is rising. It has risen a bit even while we've been standing here. Come, Weems, brace up and be a man. Swim for your life. Take a breath and dive for it when you have to. Hold on and swim just as long as you can."

"I'll—I'll try it, Merriwell. Say, Merriwell, where's your hand? Give me your hand. I don't believe either one of us will ever get out alive. Only for me you'd not be in this death trap."

"You're wasting time by talking. That does no good. Go on, man—go on."

"Good-by," said Weems in a husky whisper.

Dick heard him take in a sucking breath, then there was a slight splash, and Weems was gone.

After a moment or two, Merriwell followed. When forced to do so, he plunged unhesitatingly beneath the surface, swimming with long, strong, steady strokes. He held his breath until the strain began to tell upon him.

Suddenly he struck against a body, and then he was clutched by a desperate pair of arms, and he knew he was in the grasp of a drowning man.

Weems had given up.

Dick tore himself from the fellow's embrace. With the fingers of his right hand clutching Weems' hair, he struggled on, fighting desperately yet a little while longer for his life. He might have let Weems go, but he had promised the man he would stick by him.

"No use!" was the faint, hazy thought which passed through his head. "This is the end! It's all up now!"

Bright lights seemed to gleam before his eyes. Within his head there was a roaring sound, and it seemed as if his chest would be crushed by a tremendous pressure. At last he gave up, and his mouth filled with water. Then he rose—rose to the surface just outside the tide-covered mouth of the brook!

* * * * * * * * *

The newspapers told of the amazing and perilous adventure through which Merriwell and Weems had passed. The story was so sensational that hosts of readers thought it a fake. There were several Yale men, however, who knew it was true, for Hartman and the others, left behind when Dick and his antagonist vanished, had done everything possible to bring assistance, and laborers were ready to begin work opening up the hidden brook when word came that Merriwell and Weems were safe.

During the next three days Merriwell rested easy to recuperate from his fearful experience. Eventually he inquired for Weems, and learned that the man had left New Haven the day following the thrilling adventure.

And not a word of acknowledgment did Weems ever make for the service Dick Merriwell had done him, although to Dick he owed his life.

THE END.

□□□□□□□□□□

The Next Number (686) Will Contain

Dick Merriwell in the Marathon;

OR,

THE SENSATION OF THE GREAT RUN.

THE NOD OF DEATH.

CONCLUSION.

"It's ruin." Mr. Redmond said to Jim. "Those investments have gone wrong; it will take every penny I can realize to pay off my debts."

Jim had been overwhelmed, and when I thought saw signs of blight the other day. I'm ruined. I can see no way out." But his son had no counsel to offer, for his brain was bruised, sentenced.

"Now to try for that diamond," was the subject of his thoughts, and shortly he was deep in the Indian wilderness.

At last he came to a place of wild desolation, where the stealthy tiger lurked among the sun-dried bushwood—a place shunned by man, shunned by most beasts, shunned especially by the birds of heaven.

Jim, who had come all alone, saw before him, standing on the crest of a slight eminence, a ruined temple. The gigantic columns of the structure were almost lost to view in the dense jungle grass, vines and creepers trailing in caressing profusion around the mighty pillars. A thousand years must have passed since that huge structure was erected to the glory of an unknown god, and the builders had gone to the dust from which they arose centuries before. Yet still the temple stood—a monument of human handiwork.

As the lad stood there, almost overawed by the stupendous thing before him, he became aware of a sound in the jungle at his rear. He turned swiftly, flinging forward his rifle, and thought for a moment the grass had shaken, betraying the presence of an enemy. Once he fired, twice he fired, and the rustling ceased.

"I'll see what I've shot," said the lad, "after I've had a look for the idol." And he started forward hot-foot, the sense of awe leaving him as he called upon all his courage. In another minute he was within the temple walls.

It was like any one of a hundred that he had seen. Great pillars ran down the sides of what had once been a gigantic hall, the floor was paved with curious shattered mosaic. Had the lad been less intent on his quest, he must have marvelled at the splendor of this centuries-old temple; but his eye was caught by a vast monument that rose at the farther end of the cavernous apartment. He ran lightly along the shattered mosaics, tripping in his eagerness, and then stood again, silent and amazed. In his haste he had forgotten to reload his rifle, but he took no heed of this, for there was that before him that drove all minor considerations before his mind.

High above his head, raised in stately majesty upon a dais, stood there an idol—not one of the many Hindu idols, but one that he had never seen before. Its size was tremendous; Jim saw, looming high, that it stood close on forty feet high. The carving of the wonderful head and shoulders was marvellous; in spite of the size of the god, every detail was completed with infinite patience. The eyes were large, it seemed tangible, the hands, the fingers were capable, the fingers, the skull of a lion, was alone. But what attracted the lad's eyes far more readily than the marvelous perfection of the carving was the great flame of fire that blazed in the eyes of the monster head, and shone like a flash of lightning as the afternoon sun sloped through the corridors, and Jim flung one hand up to his eyes to screen his dazzled sight. Then, as he stood there motionless, he heard once again that faint, dull sound like the tread of an animal. He removed his hand and drew back the hammers of his gun, peering to right and left among the scattered columns, but nothing was there. Then suddenly a dark figure flitted past an opening and emerged into the open. It was Yahbooh Ali, the overseer.

"Stand back!" cried Jim sternly, "or I fire." The rifle went to his shoulder, but the desperado advanced without fear. Jim drew trigger—only the click of the falling hammer answered the pull. He rammed one hand down to his belt in haste, but before he could withdraw the revolver was on him. Jim was seized in a roar of swayed arms, thrown heavily on the stone, his lenses reeled before a terrible blow, and when he recovered them he found himself trussed like a fowl to one of the great pillars. Yahbooh Ali stood with a sable.

"So the sahib has reached the place of the idol?" said the man mockingly, as Jim struggled with his bonds. "Very good. There is a small matter of a beating which shall be repaid presently. Yahbooh Ali! This fellow menace is a thief, a thief, declared to be taken of mischief, and Jim braced himself to meet the fate that he read in the bloodshot eyes. But evidently the miscreant had some other scheme than speedy punishment, for he eyed the lad and then the idol fearfully.

"So, Jim Sahib, have you sought the great stone, too? I have found it. I have watched you all the way, and when the time was ripe I struck—surely. It is good. Yes. Yesterday thou hadst the upper hand; to-morrow—who knows?"

"Let me scoundrel!" cried the lad. "Once let me get free, and I'll, I'll—"

He stopped, for the man's face had gone a curious ashen hue with wrath. Then there would be no to-morrow for thee, Jim Sahib," he said blantly. "I will have thy heart's blood for the insult thou didst put upon a high-caste Hindu. But not yet. First, I will take the idol, for the evil spirits will not dare to molest me when a sahib is here. That was why I allowed thee to gain the temple—ha, ha, but it was a brave idea. Then, when I have the stone, I will attend to that other matter."

As if fascinated by the man's actions, Jim watched him closely. Yahbooh Ali was slowly climbing the idol's body. His supple toes clung to every crevice in the carving, his strong hands gained hold on every jutting knob. Upward he went, breathing heavily, but always rising nearer and nearer to where the diamond flashed and scintillated. After what seemed like a second, but was in reality ten minutes, the man stood erect on the giant shoulder, and put out a hand to seize the idol's head.

The serene face of the god seemed to glow with an awful wrath as his sacristie hands touched it, but the man cared naught for that. He slapped the idol familiarly on the nose, and at the sound of the crash he then raised his hand. For a second the sharp chisel that he had taken out of his sash hovered over the gold setting of the diamond, then the edge ran down the old metal, and Yahbooh Ali, the stone, and strength. One twist he gave, and another, laughing gleefully. The diamond stuck fast, and, with a sudden curse, he released his hand with the left hand, and threw all his weight on the chisel. And at that the god made a sigh. The huge head nodded slightly; before the man could start back, the thing happened. There was the sound of grating stone on stone, the head rocked again, and with the sound an avalanche fell rumbling downward; and as it fell it struck the astounded Hindu, swept him from his feet, and hurled him to the ground. There was a crash that shook the building, a cloud of dust, one long scream that died away into a choking gurgling.

When Jim opened his eyes, the dust was slowly settling. There was not the slightest sound now in the desecrated temple; but something black was slowly creeping from beneath the tremendous mass of stone that lay on the temple floor. Jim watched it fascinated, and with a strange, sick feeling realized that it was blood. And then the whole tragedy grew plain before his eyes. The monster head, slumbering over a ton, had fallen right onto the man and had crushed him into shapeless mass. The god had spoken, and his voice had blasted Yahbooh Ali.

But something else Jim noticed—noticed with the first gleam of consciousness that he had seen before he was bound. The long, keen knife had fallen from the dead man's sash as he dropped, and the force of the Hindu's descent had sent the weapon hurtling high. It had fallen almost on Jim's feet. Stretching to his utmost, he could touch it with his toe, and after many painful struggles the knife was in his hand. To sever the ropes that held him was the work of a moment; he stood up, breathing heavily, benumbed and chilled with the horror of what he had seen. But curiosity drove away all lassitude, and he drew near to the idol's head. He laid his hands on the great stone, but could not move it. One brown hand and arm stretched out from under the heavy weight, and when the lad touched it, it was cold. Yahbooh Ali was dead. And as the lad explored farther, he saw the cause of that sudden climax. By a cunning arrangement of springs and levers, the faintest touch on the diamond set machinery to work that would cause the head to fall upon any one who presumed to touch the stone in the forehead.

In spite of Yahbooh's efforts the gem had not been dislodged, and it took the lad more than an hour's hard work to get the diamond out; but finally it reposed safely in his pocket, and, with a parting slap on the idol's cheek, Jim turned to leave the temple. He gave one mumbled "good luck," but the庙 was soundlessly crossed. And none may tell of the rejoicing in Jim's home when he presented the diamond to his father.

THE END.
in getting quite a number to join and take the weekly, and meet at my aunt's house and let me read it to them, hoping in their turn to get them interested, so when I leave I shall be so in love with it they will all take it. We want to commence with 668; also want the one entitled "Frank Merrill's Protection; or, The Man Who Went Wrong." I think that is the one where old Billy gives such a good temperance lecture—No. 669. I hope this will reach you in time to get the copies back by Saturday. Yours sincerely, M. E. Jones.

Your request has been complied with, and you can rest assured we appreciate all you say in connection with "Tip Top." Lack of space prevents our printing your charming letter in full. There has been no other "Tip Top" published in this country, but over in London a weekly by that name prints adventure stories of the character you mention.

Three cheers and a tiger for our most excellent magazine, "Tip Top." Although we've been reading "Tip Top" almost as long as we can remember, we have never written to the Applause column before. We think "Tip Top" is without doubt the king of weeklies. Our favorite characters are Dick and Brad, Frank and Bart, Elsie, Inza, and June. Next to Frank and Dick we both think Bart, dear old Bart, should rank. Although most all the boys and girls of Vian read "Tip Top," we have never found any letter from here, so we thought we would try our luck. With best wishes to Mr. Standish and Street & Smith, we remain a trio of true Tip-Topers.

Vian, Okla.

E. A. E., TEXT, AND BOY.

Thank you, friends.

I have long been an interested but somewhat distant reader of the "Tip Top Weekly," and would now like to say a few words in regard to this most famous publication. I think it is the best weekly published for all persons of any age or sex, because it is both interesting and instructive. When I read a "Tip Top" I always feel that some learning and instruction is impressed upon my mind and remains even after the story has been forgotten. A number of us boys used to have a "Tip Top" club, but it is now disbanded, yet the king of weeklies still remains among the members that are left. The stories relating to Frank's School of Athletic Development, and to his home life, are certainly wonderful. If everybody could take "Frank Merrill" for a model, I'm sure there would be less suffering in the world. Could you kindly give me the address of Prof. Fourmen? I would like to send him my measurements, but do not know where a letter will reach him.

Hoping to see your answer in print, and wishing long life to the author and publishers of "Tip Top," I remain, yours very truly,

Portage, Wis.

A letter to this office will reach Prof. Fourmen. We thank you for the kind words you write about "Tip Top's" mission. It is very pleasant to feel that the little magazine occupies so warm a corner in the hearts of thousands of young people; such a fact always proves an incentive to further effort to uphold character among our boys.

(A letter from Connecticut.)

I am a girl and I know that "Tip Tops" are mostly read by boys; but upon reading one I found there was just as much in them to interest a girl as a boy. Ever since then I have been a silent admirer. Several of my girl friends have laughed at me for reading them; but when I loaned them one they were as much interested as I was. I get them every week, and when my sister and I am not too busy, we take them and read them aloud to our friends. My favorites are Dick, Frank, Bart, Brad, Claxton, and Elsie, Inza, Wishing Mr. Standish, Street & Smith, "Tip Top," and all its readers a long and happy life, I remain forever a loyal Tip-Topper.

It is kind of you to write after this fashion. We have attended to the request mentioned in your postscript.

I have read your king of weeklies, "Tip Top," for about two years. At first I used to read them on the sly. One day I got the loan of one called "Dick Merrill's Regret." I thought that would be a good one to try on my mother. After the
finished reading that one she wanted me to get some more for her. She had been prejudiced against five-cent weeklies, but after reading the Merriwells, I have had no trouble about bringing them in the house since. I like "Tip Top" not only because it amuses but for the good it does the boys of this continent. The "Tip Top" Weekly is, to the most widely spread juvenile weekly I know of. It has qualities that can be found in no other boys' publication, either here or in old England. If all men and boys were like the Merriwells there would be less amateurism and socialism in the world. Dick and Frank have made "Tip Top" favorites; next to them are Burt Hodge, Brad Buckhart, Tobbo, Dave Flint, and all Dick and Frank's Fardale and Yale chums. I close with "three cheers and a tiger" for Burt L. Standish and "Tip Top." "A Tip-Topped." Petrolia, Ontario, Canada.

We are pleased to print this chum's letter, and would only too gladly comply with his request, but he failed to sign his name. Write again, Young Canada. You know a good thing, all right.

(A letter from Texas.)

I have been a constant reader of "Tip Top" for about ten years, and am frank to confess that I ought to clean and uplifting magazine it has no equal. Every issue of it appeals to the better nature and genuine manhood in a boy. It upholds honest ideals, as that breed never found, and exalts the immortal and dishonest person, regardless of pedigree. Now, just a word in praise of Burt L. Standish: Having traveled through several of the Western states, it has been my pleasure to visit some of the scenes described in past copies of "Tip Top," especially the mining and ranching districts, and for giving an accurate, intelligible description of mining and ranching. Mr. Standish has a wonderful talent. We "Long Horns" know something of ranch life and are interested in that I--A Ranch in Wyoming. Let's hear from it again. With three cheers for Frank and Dick, I am a true friend to "Tip Top." C. S. MASON.

That is just what others in the East say of the Yale stories, even natives of New Haven being loud in their expressions of delight; while Maine people recognize the hand of a master in connection with the stories dealing with life under the pines and hemlocks—for the author has his summer home there. Mr. Standish, therefore, seems to be a many-sided writer, and better informed in connection with popular American sports than any other living authority.

(A letter from Illinois.)

Here's to the best publication in the world next to the bible. "Tip Top" is a winner, for it has all kinds of readers, for ministers even read it, as shown in the Appliance column. If "Tip Top" is for everybody, every boy there would not be any bullies or weak boys, as "Tip Top" spurs every boy to build his body up. Frank Merrill's School of Athletic Development is the greatest thing in "Tip Top," for in his school he has to deal with all kinds of characters. Willie West is a fine lesson, for strength alone is not everything, as is shown by how he fights Hunk Branch. He is also morally brave, as is shown when he confesses that he set the school on fire. I have read "Tip Top" about two years and have gotten two persons to read it. I have had many hot arguments, for many boys talk against "Tip Top" because it tells their weak points and they do not care to know about their faults, such as smoking, drinking, and many other bad habits. Lots of times I have almost fought to defend and am willing to stand up for it against anybody. I think June is the girl for Dick, for she has the most faith in him and is not a bit like Doris. Hal Darrell is too good a fellow, for he is true to her, but she is not to him. I like Dick and all his friends; I also feel sorry for Bob Corliss, for I do not think that he is a bad fellow, for he put Elmer Hix out of his room and does not squelch that he was beaten. Frank and his friends are all fine, it must be lots of fun for Browning out at the ranch with his boys, for with deep snow they can have lots of fun. Writing a long life to Mr. Burt L. Standish and Street & Smith. Your friend.

That is one boy's opinion, but we are not afraid to venture the assertion that Citizen Beck is backed up by an army of other readers in all he says.

(A letter from Idaho.)

Prof. Fourmen: I have been a reader of "Tip Top Weekly" for three years, and take the privilege of asking your opinion of my measurements. My other letter must have reached the wastebasket. Age, 20 years; height, 5 feet 6 inches; weight, 150 pounds; chest, normal, 30 inches; expanded, 32 inches; waist, 27 inches; forearm, 11 inches; biceps, 11½ inches; breadth of shoulders, 18 inches; waist, 20 inches; thighs, 21½ inches; legs, 14 inches; ankles, 9 inches; hips, 34 inches; neck, 15 inches. 1. How are my measurements? 2. I take exercise every night and morning. Yours truly, an Idaho kid.

JAMES HARPER.

Waist a couple of inches too large, as might be expected when you are over 30 pounds heavier than the average. Try and cut some of this down. Chest is fine, though, an inch to spare.

(A letter from Iowa.)

Prof. Fourman: I have read "Tip Top" for many years, and I always found it very enjoyable. I would like very much to ask you a few questions in regard to my measurements. Height, 5 feet 9 inches; chest, normal, 30 inches; expanded, 32 inches; waist, 26½ inches; neck, 13 inches; forearm, 11 inches; wrist, 65 inches; weight, 125 pounds; age, 15 years 3 months. Am I too tall for my age, and what are my weak points, and what should I do for them? I like baseball very much, and do you think I can develop into a good first baseman, because first base is the position I always play? Hoping to see this in print, and thanking you very much, I am, respectfully yours,

LEW BENSON.

You have certainly shot up, and as it is impossible to change this condition, the only thing you can do is to try and broaden out. You should make a good first baseman, but if you picked up a few inches about the chest it would help you as an all-round player. You should weigh 147 pounds and have a normal chest girth of 38 inches.

Prof. Fourmen: Below are given the measurements of two brothers. Please advise who is the better built, and who has the better chest.

Elder: Age, 16 years 7 months; height, 5 feet 7 inches; chest, 34 inches; expanded, 38 inches; waist, 28 inches; neck, 13½ inches; wrist, 7 inches.

Younger: Age, 14 years 9 months; height, 5 feet 5 inches; chest, 33½ inches; expanded, 37 inches; waist, 27 inches; neck, 13 inches; wrist, 6½ inches.

Please advise if both would make good boxers. Yours respectfully,

WILLIAM JENNINGS.

Baltimore, Md.

Elder's chest should be 36 inches, younger, 34 inches. The latter only lacks half 2 inches of being correct, while the elder is 1 inch off. I can see no reason why both should not be good boxers, providing you are quick on your feet, and can stand punishment.

Prof. Fourmen: Although I have written to you in your department before and have received answers through the Questions and Answers column, yet I think I have improved in
some points. I would like to have you read the measurements which I will submit. My age is 29 years; height, 5 feet 10½ inches; weight, 156½ pounds; chest, contracted, 36 inches; normal, 38 inches; expanded, 41 inches; waist, 20 inches; shoulders, 19 inches; biceps, normal, 12½ inches; flexed, 13½ inches; calves, 15½ inches; thighs, 22 inches. Since writing before I have taken a systematic course of training, mostly in the early morning. Thanking you in advance for any criticisms, I remain, loyally...

A CONSTANT SUBSCRIBER.

Penobscot, Maine.

Your weight is all right, chest might be an inch larger with profit. Waist is exact. On the whole you have built yourself up to a point very close to being perfect. I congratulate you, B. E.

PROF. FOURMEN: I am an old timer, having read every "Tip Top Weekly" from No. 1 to date and all the books in the Medal Library that I could buy. I started reading "Tip Top" way back in the nineties and have never got tired of them. I have gotten lots of my friends to read them, too, and they like them as well as I do. Would you mind answering a few questions about my measurements? Age, 17 years 6 months; height, 5 feet 9½ inches; weight, striped, 182 pounds; neck, 16¼ inches; around shoulders, 40½ inches; chest, 38½ inches; expanded, 41½ inches; biceps, 12 inches; expanded, 14 inches; forearm, 12 inches; waist, 31½ inches; wrist, 7½ inches; thighs, 22½ inches; calves, 15½ inches; ankles, 11 inches; reach, 79½ inches. What are my weakest points? I have one of your manuals and like it very much. Hoping this don't reach the wastebasket, I close with three cheers for Burt L. and all concerned. A Newark boy.

Newark, N. J.

H. S. M.

You are in splendid shape. There is only one fault to find, and that is really of minor importance—you measure 2½ inches around the waist more than you should to be in perfect trim.

PROF. FOURMEN: Being a constant reader of "Tip Top," I take the liberty of asking a few questions. I would like to be...

TIP TOP WEEKLY.

come an athlete and especially a baseball pitcher. I have ability at this but my arm is not strong enough to put speed in the ball. I do not smoke, drink, or chew. I am 15 years 6 months old; height, 5 feet; weight, 100 pounds; chest, normal, 30½ inches; expanded, 32½ inches; wrist, 6 inches; thigh, 15½ inches; forearm, 14 inches; biceps, 10½ inches; calves, 12½ inches; waist, 30 inches; neck, 12 inches; shoulders, 16 inches; knee, 13½ inches. I play all games, although I do not like football much. Is it good to go swimming every day in summer? How can I reduce my weight and waist if they are too large? It's me...

Meriden, Conn.

You are right about your waist—it should be 24 inches. Cut down a little on your feed, and take more exercise, also work the muscles of the body more in your physical programme. The swimming will not hurt you, but never stay in until you feel weak or your lips get blue.

PROF. FOURMEN: As I have been a reader of your wonderful "Tip Top Weekly" for the last six months, I think that you won't mind me asking you a few questions. 1st. I have had my two wrists hurt since I was a little boy, so my father made me use wrist bands, but they didn't make my wrists better. Are wrist bands good for the wrists or not? 2d. Are my measurements good? Age, 15 years; weight, 103 pounds; height, 5 feet 1 inch; chest, 32 inches, normal; expanded, 36 inches; neck, 12 inches; biceps, 9 inches; forearm, 9 inches; wrist, 6 inches; calf, 13 inches; thigh, 18 inches; waist, 27 inches; ribs, 30 inches. My records are: Standing broad jump, 7½ feet; high jump, 4 feet. What would you advise me to do in regard to my bad wind? My shoulders are, from end to end, 16 inches. Hoping you will receive this, I remain, "A LOYAL Tip-Topper.

Tucson, Ariz.

You will probably outgrow the weakness. Use them judiciously, taking as much exercise as seems good. Measurements gill edge. Run with your mouth closed, and take every means possible to hold a long breath.

TIP TOP BASEBALL TOURNAMENT FOR 1909

The great 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 of the members of which you play the greatest number of games, score the most runs and have lost the least number of games, shall be declared the winners. The winning teams, the one having the highest average, will be declared 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. No 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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NAME OF TEAM...

TOWN...

STATE...

OPPONENT'S NAME...

POSITION... NAMES OF TEAM...

PITCHER...

CATCHER...

1ST BASE...

2ND BASE...

3RD BASE...

SHORT STOP...

B. FIELD...

C. FIELD...

L. FIELD...

WINNER...

FINAL SCORE...

MANAGER...
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