DICK MERRIWELL'S BEST FORM;

OR,

MASTER OF HIMSELF.

By BURT L. STANDISH.

CHAPTER I.

FOOTBALL PRACTICE.

Football was in the air. Everyone seemed to be talking about it. In dormitories, on the campus, and at the Fence this topic invariably came up whenever a bunch of men got together to chat and gossip. It was generally agreed that Yale would have an unusually strong team for the great game against the Crimson, which was to be the final grand clash of the season; but it was likewise admitted that, according to every indication, Harvard would also have a great eleven.

The squad went out to the field day after day. It had already been weeded out and reduced by the elimination of hopeless material. Everyone knew the weeding process must continue, but the sore and battered candidates who were new men seeking football glory continued to hang on tenaciously. Some of them, it is true, were sick at heart as well as sore of body, but their pride prevented them from quitting. It is by this test of endurance that the early reduction of the squad is usually carried on, for, no matter how well a new man may perform at the start, should he be the unfortunate possessor of a "yellow streak" all his cleverness and skill is not considered of value beside the bungling inexperience of another chap who has sand and bulldog grit.

As yet, of course, there was no such thing as secret practice. That would only come some weeks hence, when all the undesirable material had been eliminated, and the team was getting down to work after the rounding up and finish of form which must be acquired in order to meet and hold at bay the ancient enemy whose tepees are pitched upon the banks of the Charles.

Among the new men a few had already attracted considerable attention and created more or less comment and discussion. One of these was the young Indian, Joe Crowfoot. Even fellows who had no use for Indians were compelled to acknowledge that it seemed likely Crowfoot would be able to "deliver the goods." Many who were not prejudiced displayed genuine enthusiasm over the redskin recruit.

For Crowfoot was swift-footed, quick-eyed, hard as iron, supple as a sapling, and fearless as a lion. He likewise was the possessor of an active brain and a considerable knowledge of the game. In many instances this last supposed-to-be favorable qualification
The coach had given Merriwell charge of the fellows working with the dummy, and Dick seemed sending them at it with something like unfeeling harshness. For it is no simple matter for a sore and weary greenhorn to tackle the dummy fiercely and hard without flinching. Even at a distance Elwell and Fair could see that at least two or three of the group had no relish for the work, although they were obeying orders and apparently seeking to do their best.

"I say, Samp," said Lance, in a low tone, "I didn’t think it of Merriwell."

"Think what?" asked Elwell, surprised.

"Why, I thought he had more feeling. He doesn’t seem to have any consideration for those chaps. Now take that fellow who’s just been tackling. Merriwell kept him at it like a slave driver, and any one could see it hurt him."

The Hoosier lad laughed.

"Why, how’s he going to tell whether a feller has nerve or not unless he tries ‘em out that way? They’ve got to stand for it, Lance, and they can’t show the white feather. The feller you jest spoke about never can make the team. He hain’t got the sand."

"But he tackled pretty well. He did better than the one before him."

"Oh, he tackled purty fair," confessed Samp; "but he had to be drove at it, and he flinched. The other feller was bungling, but he jest slammed himself at the thing red-hot. If he can get the knack of doing it right, mebbe he will win out."

"Oh, look at that!" cried Lance.

A tackling had grabbed at the dummy, pulled it part way down, and then lost his hold. The stuffed figure shot up into the air, while the weight at the other end of the rope came down and struck the prostrate tackleer between the shoulders, making him grunt.

The fellow got up slowly and backed away, making a wry face.

Then Merriwell called to the candidate to watch him tackle the dummy, and watch him closely.

Swift in his rush, he charged at the figure, flung himself headlong and elasped it properly. While making that flying tackle he elsum to the dummy figure with the tenacity of a leech, bringing it down handsomely.

"That’s the style, Morse," he said. "Now try it again."

"Let me get my breath, won’t you?" muttered Morse. "Don’t hurry a fellow so."

"Oh, very well," said Dick. "I’ll not hurry you at
all. You needn’t bother any more to-day. Next man—Robinson.”

—Robinson stepped out.

CHAPTER II.

FELLOWS WORTH KNOWING.

Morse realized instantly that he had made a mistake, yet he started to growl as he turned away. To his dismay, he suddenly discovered that the head coach had approached and was standing near one of the upright supports for the dummy. Instantly the man knew he was doomed for the discards, the coach being a man who would stand for no back talk, and who seemed to have very little sympathy for a shirking or faltering candidate.

Such fellows as failed to make the team usually regarded Coach Bill Fullerton as an unfeeling, cold-blooded, heartless brute; on the other hand, the successful men came in time to know that beneath Fullerton’s frigid armor there lay a big, kind, sympathetic heart. While the man had no patience with a fellow who betrayed “the yellow streak,” he could have infinite patience and sympathy for a luckless chap with plenty of pure grit and the physical inability to make good.

Never was a man of his team seriously hurt that Bill Fullerton did not suffer as deeply as the injured fellow. Day by day the men who practiced beneath “Old Bill” came to understand him, admire him, even love him, and when the season drew near its close and the time of the last great game was at hand, Fullerton invariably had a team, every man of whom would have followed him to the death-bellching mouth of cannon on the battlefield.

And this was why Fullerton had so often succeeded in whipping into shape a winning eleven when astute critics had claimed the material to make up a crack team was sadly lacking.

The successful football coach must possess peculiar and unusual qualities, and Fullerton had them.

Flushed and resentful, Morse retreated, whispering to himself:

“Why didn’t I notice Old Bill? If I’d seen him I’d tackled that dummy again, even if I broke my neck. Merriwell’s to blame. He knew Fullerton was watching. He’s giving off orders as if he thought himself the head coach.”

In his heart Morse permitted anger against Dick to lift its head like that of a venomous serpent aroused from torpor.

Meantime, Dick, having forgotten the fellow who had failed, was attending strictly to his work with others. If a man did well Merriwell had no hesitation about saying so.

The two watching freshmen, who sat well down on the seats, were talking earnestly, when of a sudden Samp Elwell gave Fair a nudge, hissing:

“Keep still! Here come some of Merriwell’s particular friends.”

Three fellows approached and seated themselves near the freshmen. One was a lively, jolly-appearing little chap known as Tommy Tucker. Another was Tucker’s roommate, a fat, genial, phlegmatic youth who sometimes served as the butt of ridicule for Tucker, and whose name was Bigelow. The third, long, lank, and solemn, was Blessed Jones, funereal in appearance, but really a kind-hearted man and one who could enjoy a joke as thoroughly as anybody.

“Hi! hi!” chirped Tucker. “Look at that fellow tackle. Dick’s coaching ’em at the dam. Thought you were coming out for the team, Jonesy?”

“My old man would not listen unto it,” explained the solemn chap. “He holds to the opinion that college baseball is about enough for me. You know I had a pretty hard scrub to get by in my studies last year.”

“There are others,” chuckled Tucker. “According to my governor, my rank is always rank. Still, I’ve managed to pass somehow.”

“Why do you always call your father the governor?” inquired Jones.

“Because he vetoes so many of my bills,” was the little fellow’s instant answer, which caused Lance Fair to clap his hands over his mouth to keep from laughing aloud.

“Bright boy,” gurgled Bouncer Bigelow sarcastically. “You’re getting back into form, Tommy. Ever since the night Merriwell told about the Indian squaw who got stuck on you in the Elk Mountains and made herself a widow in order to marry you, you’ve had an awful case of grouch.”

“I didn’t like it,” admitted Tucker. “I thought it rotten of Dick to tell such a yarn about me.”

“Wasn’t it true?” asked Jones.

“That was what made it so rotten,” said Tommy; “it was. So help me, at one time I fancied Bright Cloud was going to bear me off bodily to the bosom of her tribe and make me hitch up with her. Say, wouldn’t I look well as an Injun? Wouldn’t I make
a handsome old brave? Think of me decorated with paint and dirt and feathers and crawling things, squatting over a feast of roasted dog along with a bunch of real aborigines. Gee! it's a wonder my hair didn't turn gray. I tell you, I worried some."

"And now," remarked Bigelow, "they say worry kills more people than work."

"That may be true," nodded Tucker; "but nothing worries me so much as work."

"A man is a chump to worry over anything," said the fat fellow. "I don't. I'll get along somehow in this world. Why, my face is my fortune."

"Big," said Tucker, quick as a flash, "always remember poverty is no disgrace."

At this Bigelow tried to thump his companion, and Lance Fair again held his hand over his mouth to suppress a burst of merriment.

"Those are the kind of fellows Dick Merriwell chooses as his friends, Samp," murmured Lance. "Aren't they a jolly bunch? Isn't that little fellow witty?"

"He sure has a fund of repartee," agreed the Hoosier; "but I fancy he's living in constant danger of sudden assassination. Somebody is going to kill him some day."

Jones arose with a yawn and stretched his long arms.

"I've got to take a walk," he said. "I'm getting lazy. I'm getting all out of form. The only man I know who keeps in form when he's not training is Merriwell. He never relaxes. He always comes back from vacation in as good condition as he was at the close of the season. Come, Bigelow, you need a walk. It will do you good. It will take off some of that superfluous flesh."

"Huh!" grunted the fat fellow. "Don't you believe it."

"Why not? Exercise is a great thing to reduce flesh."

"Don't you believe it," repeated Bouncer. "Not for yours truly."

"Why not?"

"Because every time I take exercise I get up an appetite and eat scandalously and put on more flesh thereby."

"Then, verily I say unto you that you should diet."

"I've tried it."

"With what result?"

"Excruciating anguish, horrible sufferings. If I should try again and die it would serve me right."

"Rotten pug," said Tucker.

"They're all rotten when you don't crack 'em,

grunted Bigelow. "You're the only real original wit who always says bright things."

Tucker jumped up.

"I'll promenade along with you, Jonesy," he said.

"We'll let Big stay here and vegetate."

"Huh!" grunted the fat fellow, puffing as he rose. "I'm not going to hang around by my lonesome."

Fair and Elwell watched them depart.

"Fellows worth knowing," said Lance, "and I believe that's the way with all of Dick Merriwell's crowd."

CHAPTER III.

THE MAN WHO WON.

A square-shouldered, bright-eyed young man with hair cut "dead rabbit" and cap perched over his ear came along and nodded to the freshmen. They nodded in return, although neither of them remembered having seen the man before.

"Watching the practice, eh?" said the stranger, seating himself alongside in a friendly fashion. "Dreaming of days to come when you'll go in for football yourselves, I suppose? It's a great ambition, but although many are called few are chosen. Going to try for your class team, either of you?"

"I dunno," answered Elwell.

"I'm not," said Fair. "I wouldn't be any good at the game. Samp might."

"Yes, Samp might," agreed the friendly chap. "He's something of an athlete. My chum tells me he was a hard man to down in the wrestling matches."

"Your chum?" said Elwell inquiringly. "Who's that?"

"The noblest red man of them all, Chief Joe Crowfoot."

"Oh, the Indian?"

"Yep," smiled the stranger. "That's him tackling the dummy now. Look at him. Why, even Dick Merriwell can't do the trick prettier."

Young Joe Crowfoot had taken his turn at tackling the dummy, and two performances satisfied both Merriwell and Fullerton. In fact, Dick had known in advance what the Indian youth could do, but he wished Fullerton to see Crowfoot go after the dummy.

"Oh, he's a corker," laughed the fellow who had joined Fair and Elwell. "I suppose some chaps wouldn't room with him because he's an Indian, but I'll tell you now that he's whiter than half the men I know. Dick Merriwell is ready and willing enough to call Joe friend, and any friend of Merriwell's is
good enough for yours truly, Billy Reach. That’s
me.”

“Oh, you’re a sophomore,” said Elwell, in surprise.
“Ain’t you rather careless being so friendly with a
couple of freshmen?”

“Oh, I don’t know,” laughed Reach. “I’m an in-
dependent case. We sophs sort of rubbed it into you
freshies, and I for one am willing to bury the hatchet
and let it remain buried as long as you behave. If you
get giddy any time in future we’ll have to spank you
again. But we’re not going to call for the assistance
of any seniors. I doubt if your friends, Clay and Car-
lin, will either of them be anxious to take any further
hand in such affairs.”

“So you know about that, do you?”

“Yep; but I wasn’t in it. I didn’t have any hand in
giving you that little swim in the river. You know you
hurt Mr. Clay’s pride dreadfully when you put up that
practical joke on him.”

Fair laughed as he thought of the day he had
dressed as a girl and led Dunbar Clay into picking
him up on the street and walking with him across the
campus, upon which Elwell had gathered a great body
of students to witness the fellow’s discomfiture when
he should learn the truth. Clay’s rage over being thus
tricked and made the laughstock of the college had
caused him to vow vengeance upon Fair and Elwell;
but he had obtained small satisfaction through his
efforts, the outcome of which was generally known by
such college men as were interested.

“Dunbar Clay likes Dick Merriwell—I don’t think,”
laughed Billy Reach. “Oh, I know how he and Carlin
tried to trim Fair at a game of smudge on the train.
I know how Merriwell showed them up. My chum
Crowfoot told me about it. Say, I’ve got a little story
that may interest you fellows. When it comes to poker
playing Joe Crowfoot is the real thing. We room in a
house next to yours on York Street, you know. A
couple of fellows by the names of Griffith and Rhoades
room in the same house with us, and they have both
been bitten by Carlin and Clay. I told them they were
getting skinned by a pair of sharks even before I knew
about that business on the railroad train. They thought
I was mistaken because they couldn’t catch either of
those chaps cheating. I didn’t know Joe could play
poker himself until he was invited into the game one
night. I looked on, for I’m not much with cards. I
likewise haven’t an abundance of wealth to lose. I
thought Joe, knowing what he did about those fellows,
was a chump to sit in with them. Say, I changed my
mind, all right. You should have seen him skin those
sharpers. I don’t know how he did it, but he cer-
tainly trimmed them to the queen’s taste. He had me
in distress to start with, for he began a loser. Do you
know, he was baiting ‘em, that’s all.

“When he had ‘em fairly hooked he proceeded to
sink the gnff. They proposed raising the limit, and
Joe objected. Then he seemed to get angry and an-
ounced that he was willing to throw off all restric-
tions and accept the sky as the limit. That was just
what they wanted. You should have heard old Clay
protest he had never played such a game in his life.
Oh, it was amusing—that is, it was after the whole
thing was over. At the time I felt like falling on
Crowfoot bodily and dragging him away. I told him
he was an idiot, but he never blinked an eyelash. He’s
the coolest cucumber I ever saw. Third pot after the
limit was thrown off proved to be a ripper. I couldn’t
even get a peep at Joseph’s cards, he held them so
close. When he kept raising and those fellows kept
coming back I nearly had a bad case of heart failure.
You know Crowfoot made some money vacation time.
He picked up a bunch of horses out among his Injun
friends, herded ‘em to the nearest railway point, and
shipped ‘em to Chicago, where he sold ‘em for a good
figure to a concern that runs a horse-auction business.
When I saw him boosting the pot in that game I said
to myself that his wealth was gone. I thought he’d go
broke right there. He didn’t. When the show-down
came he had the winning hand, though Carlin held a
king-high full house and Clay spread out four hand-
some queens.”

“What did Crowfoot have?” asked Elwell eagerly.

“Four-bullets,” grinned Reach; “four fancy fat aces.
Say, you should have seen the faces of those two
sharks. Clay tried to raise a fuss. He had discarded
two cards, and he claimed that one of his discs was
an ace. I thought there was going to be a rough house
right there, but Crowfoot called attention to the fact
that Clay’s discs still lay on the table before him,
right where he had dropped them. Nobody around
the table had meddled with the discs. Clay turned
those cards over, and one was the nine of hearts
and the other the jack of spades. Then Clay swore
that the nine spicker was the one card of the two he
had discarded, but that he had not held the jack. He
averred on his honor that, in place of the jack, he had
put down the ace of diamonds. It was no go, for
there the cards were. Still, Clay actually seemed to
believed what he was saying. About that time Crow-
foot began to get riled, and I was expecting to see him
reach for Clay’s scalp. Griffith and Rhoades were
agitated. They pleaded for peace, and eventually Clay acknowledged that he might have been mistaken, although he didn’t believe he was. Ten minutes later another big pot came up, and Crowfoot scooped that with a small straight flush held against four aces in Clay’s own hand. It cleaned out both Clay and Carolin. Sore? Why, those fellows were raw to the bone. Two fiercer men you never saw. They had to quit busted, and my friend Joseph walked off with the coin in his war bags.”

“How do you account for it?” asked Fair. “How do you explain it? How could Crowfoot win against those cheats?”

“I don’t explain it,” laughed Reach. “All I know is that he did it. I asked him how he won, and he simply smiled and replied that he did so because he held the top hand both times. There’s an Injun to be proud of.”

“I’m right glad he sunk the knife in those rascals,” cried Elwell.

“Sh!” hissed Reach. “Here he comes now, along with Merriwell. They’re coming this way. Mum’s the word. Maybe Crowfoot wouldn’t like it if he knew I’d been babbling.”

With their arms across each other’s shoulders, Dick Merriwell and Young Joe Crowfoot approached. The Indian said something which amused Dick, whose merry, musical laughter floated to the ears of the three fellows on the seats. That Dick considered Joe his bosom friend he indicated to all beholders by his action.

CHAPTER IV.

SELF-CONTROL.

A number of men in football togs had assembled at one side of the field directly in front of the freshmen. In the group was Brad Buckhart, the Texan, who roomed with Merriwell, and who was almost as well known to the public as Dick himself.

It was evident that Merriwell and Crowfoot intended to join this group. Nevertheless, Fair and Elwell saw Dick look in their direction and felt sure he had recognized them.

“Don’t bow, Lance,” muttered the Hosier. “If he wants to recognize us here he will do so. Let him speak first.”

To the pleasure of both, Dick nodded and smiled, and Crowfoot likewise bowed with a certain grave dignity.

Bill Reach chuckled.

“The chief,” said he, “never forgets his manners. Sometimes you wouldn’t think it possible for him to smile, but I give you my word he can enjoy a joke as well as anybody.”

Fair and Elwell had touched their caps in answer to the recognition of Merriwell and Crowfoot. Being recognized by the Indian sophomore they did not consider anything of special significance, but to have Dick Merriwell smile and nod at them before all those chaps scattered over the seats was really something in which they took pride.

Many a fellow in Dick’s position might have worried over the maintaining of a certain sort of dignity and reserve, but Merriwell somehow possessed the ability to hold the respect of every one and still be thoroughly democratic. This is something few men can do. In most instances the chap who tries to be half-fellow-well-met with all classes will discover to his surprise that he has lost the respect of certain persons who instinctively know that they are beneath him in some way, and who therefore hold that he should treat them with proper reserve. The fellow who can hold the regard of such men and maintain an outward seeming of friendliness with them is a natural leader of the multitude. The reserved and distant chap may become a leader of a certain sort, but always he will maintain his authority by sheer force, and never can he have the power to exact the willing and devoted service which comes from love and admiration as well as respect and fear.

It must not be fancied that Dick Merriwell did not possess dignity, but he was not compelled, like many fellows, to be forever mindful of this and on his guard lest he should lower it. Therefore he could frolic and romp and have a thoroughly good time of a wholesome sort without the slightest harm to himself. Never had he even for a moment assumed the pessimistic and worldly-wise pose affected by so many college men of his own class. To tell the truth, such affectation amused him, and he laughed at those chaps who pretended to know it all, feeling sure they were due to learn how little they really knew as soon as they should graduate and go forth into the world to hustle for themselves.

Crowfoot, who had been working at practice, drew a blanket about him and squatted upon the ground, Indian fashion. The blanket hid him to his chin, and, bareheaded as he was, even though his straight black hair was cut short, the characteristic look of his race suddenly seemed pronounced and accentuated.
Two or three others were sitting upon the ground. Buckhart squatted.

"Hail, Wind-that-roars-in-the-night," said the Texan. "Likewise rain and snow, if you choose. Gents, you here behold in your midst the sure enough chief of a once mighty tribe of warriors."

"Oh, cut it out, Brad," remonstrated Crowfoot. "I'd rather be one of the Yale eleven than the chief of a tribe."

"Whoop!" exploded the Texan. "What do you think of that, now! That's the Yale spirit, you bet your boots. All the same, Joseph, I fear that your old grandpaw, Shangowah, would not be wholly pleased should he hear you make such a remark."

"My grandfather," said Joe, "desires above all things else that I should learn the wisdom of the white men, and I have learned that the time has passed when the chief of a tribe really amounts to much. We must become American citizens and follow their methods in choosing and electing our representatives and leaders. Among my people it may seem of some importance that by blood, birth, and the usual rites and ceremonies I am now their chief; and, although I have come to know how little that really means, I shall use my supposed power for the proper advancement of those willing to recognize that influence."

Spoken in a quiet manner that was wholly lacking in boastfulness, these sensible words seemed to add to the dignity of the young Indian.

"You're certainly learning a great many things among the palefaces, Joe," observed one of the group, Hugh Higsen by name, at the same time winking in a queer, significant manner.

"Your old grandpaw would be a-plenty surprised if he knew how much of the white man's wisdom you have acquired," said Buckhart. "I'm certain afraid you'll find it more or less difficult to convert the old gent to some of your principles and theories, for I presume you'll preach abstinence from the use of firewater, avoidance of the evils of gambling, and the shunning of various other vices of the same detrimental sort. Now, with all his estimable qualities, you must know that Shangowah sometimes tickles his palate with firewater, and when it comes to card playing he's just about the slickest poker player I know. He's apparently so innocent and green at it! Every time he gets into a little game of poker with card sharps they think they are going to trim him without half trying, and they don't wake up until he's sunk the knife deep into them and turned it round a few times. He's always supplied with coin of the realm which he's garnered from galoots who confidently expected to skin him down to his eyeteeth."

Hugh Higsen slapped his thigh and roared with laughter.

"Now," he cried, "I know where Joe gets his cleverness with the pasteboards. It's inherited talent."

Crowfoot said nothing, but his eyes met those of Dick Merriwell, who was gazing at him gravely and searchingly. Nor did Dick make a remark.

As for Buckhart, he pursed his lips and whistled softly, following which a smile flitted over his face; but he also failed to take up Higsen's words.

In the pause which followed some one spoke of football, and the course of conversation shifted.

That evening Merriwell came forth from Durfee and found a large number of men strung out along the line of the Fence. As the air lacked the chill of a few nights past, those fellows had gathered there to smoke and gossip.

Walking toward one of the larger groups, Dick heard a man saying:

"Another cut in the squad. Old Bill lopped off the heads of seven men to-day. He's fast throwing out the deadwood."

"Assisted by Dick Merriwell," snapped a familiar voice. "Oh, yes, we got it in the neck, all right. I was one of the assassinated. I'll admit that I'm sore, too. Here I've hammered myself stiff and lame at practice, and simply because I was lame and didn't choose to put myself in the hospital tackling the dummy to-day, I get it in the neck. Fullerton wasn't really the man who cut me off; it was Merriwell, and he's making room for his particular friends by getting rid of a lot of dangerous chaps who might make good and fill up the vacancies to the exclusion of those friends of his."

Immediately Dick pressed through the little knot and faced the speaker.

"I presume you don't realize how absolutely untrue and unjust your words are, Morse," he said quietly. "I had nothing whatever to say about the cut to-day. I've never suggested the dropping of any candidate. That's not my business, and I wouldn't think of insulting Fullerton by telling him what he ought to do in that line. Wait a minute, Morse; let me finish. Fullerton asked me to help a little in the coaching, and I agreed. If I have any friends who are candidates for the team and they can't make good without scheming or underhand work on my part, they will never get onto the eleven. When you make such a public
statement as I heard you make just now, you are saying something that is absolutely false."

"Oh, I'm a liar, am I?" blazed Morse, starting forward.

Dick did not move an atom in his tracks. His hands remained at his sides, and he betrayed no alarm over the threatening movement of the angry chap.

"Whenever you make such statements," he repeated calmly, "you are telling what is false. Possibly you thought you were speaking the truth. Possibly you thought I must be using my influence with Fullerton. I didn't call you a liar. When I call a man a liar I mean that he is telling what he knows to be false."

"A quibble!" rasped Morse. "A dodge! You practically called me a liar. Simply because I was sore and battered and didn't go at the dummy as if built of iron you dismissed me."

"You asked me not to hurry you. I told you I was in no hurry and called on another man. You know it is not customary for a bunch of fellows in practice to stand round and wait for some one to take his time. You answered me in an irritated tone of voice, and it happened that Fullerton heard you. It was unfortunate that you did that. It was also unfortunate that, on account of your lameness, you betrayed reluctance to tackle the dummy. I presume that had something to do with Fullerton's decision to drop you."

"You knew he was watching. For the last three days you've kept me pounding at it in hopes of using me up. You had it in for me, Merriwell, and you can't deny it. It's all right. I'll get back at you, and don't you forget it. I've got my opinion of you. You're a fellow who has pushed himself forward by brazen nerve. I don't deny that you're something of an athlete, but I do claim that there are plenty of others just as good—or better. And no one can make me believe that you didn't single me out and work me to the limit for the purpose of getting rid of me. You succeeded."

"A few moments ago," said Dick, "I made as clear as possible my idea of a man who lied. Let me add now that you're making statements which I feel sure you know to be false."

At this point Morse lost his head completely. He was so angry that he would have struck Dick had not several of the group interfered. He even sought to tear away from them and rush at Merriwell.

"He's a liar himself!" frothed the fellow. "He's a cheap dog, though he poses as something fine and manly! I say you're a cheap dog, Merriwell! Pick it up if you dare!"

Dick's blood was hot in his veins, and for a moment he came near losing his self-control. Immediately, however, he mastered himself and succeeded in preserving his calmness.

"Some day," he said, "you may realize that all this is cheap talk. You've called me several dirty names, Morse, but I think you will be sorry."

He turned and walked away, apparently deaf to the insults Morse flung after him.

CHAPTER V.

THE STRUGGLE UPWARD.

With a quick, lithe step Crowfoot hurried after Dick Merriwell and overtook him.

"Dick," he said, "I don't know how you controlled your temper. I thought sure you would hit that nian."

"The desire was strong enough, Joe," Merriwell admitted; "but I resisted it. I'm glad I did."

"Yet," said the young Indian, "if I didn't know you were unafraid of any man living I might have fancied you afraid of Morse. Others may think that."

"That some people may think so doesn't make it so, Joe. The fellow who is forever worrying over what others think about him betrays unmanly weakness."

"Sure," agreed Crowfoot. "Why shouldn't I know that? Am I not aware that many a fellow who pretends to be friendly with me secretly regards me as beneath him because I am an Indian? If I permitted this to disturb me I'd find myself in a rotten state of mind most of the time. You, Dick, are the one man who seems to forget that there is a difference between us."

"A man's real manhood is not measured by the tint of his skin, Joe."

"No, but color makes a difference, just the same. Because I am your friend, other cronies of yours seem to accept me as their friend. Nevertheless, we both know the shallowness of it. The test came when one of those pretended friends of mine learned that I held his sister in high regard and she seemed to care for me. In an instant friendship was forgotten and I was reminded that my skin was red. Dick, that came near being the finish of my efforts to get an education. At first I was so bitter that I resolved to go back to my people and live as they had lived before me. Had I done this, I should have carried in my heart eternal hatred for all white men with the exception of two, yourself and your brother."
"And that would have been a terrible mistake, Crowfoot."

"Yes, it would have been a mistake," agreed Joe, as they turned up Elm Street. "A mistake for which white men and friends of yours would have been responsible. Not you, Dick, for you can't be held blame-worthy for the doings of your friends. This very feeling has led to much of the misunderstanding and hatred between red men and white. The Indian is naturally a proud man. In these days of many degraded Indians this may not seem possible, but who is responsible for the fallen condition of my people? Who has made them liars and cheats and drunkards? The white man! There were always tribes of low and degraded Indians, but there were likewise other tribes of a higher order, who entertained a sense of honor as exalted as that of the best whites. Study and observation have shown me that there are whites in the big cities and in certain rural regions as low and degraded as the worst Indians. But you or any other man would not point them out as fair specimens of all Caucasians. Let an unthinking white man observe a number of dirty, lazy, drunken Indians loafing around an army post or some town on the outskirts of your so-called civilization, and he immediately forms the belief that they are fair samples of all Indians."

"Unfortunately that is true," admitted Dick. "But what's the use of discussing this matter, Crowfoot? Between us there is an understanding. I hope that you will have sufficient wisdom and good sense to avoid taking up the evil practices and vices of certain white men. Ever since I heard that fellow Higson say he understood at last how you had acquired skill at poker I've been wondering what he meant. Have you taken to card playing, Crowfoot?"

Without a moment's hesitation the Indian answered:

"I play cards sometimes, Dick."

"How did you acquire the habit—perhaps I should say the practice?"

"Dick, when my old grandfather brought me to Bloomfield I was a genuine wild, untrained, uncivilized savage. I could understand comparatively little of English. I had been taken from my people, my friends and my relatives, and brought into the midst of a strange people of different color, blood, habits, and customs. I was to be left there. I knew it, but I can't make you understand how I felt about it. I can't give you any idea of the unspeakable dread in my heart. It even seemed that death would be preferable to such a fate. In spite of all Shangowah had said to me about white men, I, who had been reared to suspect, shun, and hate them, could not dismiss or wholly repress my natural aversion and repugnance for all palefaces. The journey we had taken had been long—very long indeed. Ere starting upon that journey I had not fancied one could travel such a great distance without coming to the end of all things. And there I was to be left; far, far away from home and kindred."

"It was pretty tough, Joe," admitted Dick sympathetically, as Crowfoot paused a moment.

"It was something fierce," nodded the young redskin, who had acquired to some extent the idiomatic slang of the day. "For a time after Shangowah's departure I nearly died of homesickness. Only for the sincere and persistent kindness of your brother I fancy, stubborn and determined though I am, I might have given up. A hundred times I thought of running away from Bloomfield. A hundred times I dreamed that I had done so and that I was making my way back to the land of my people. In those dreams I labored and struggled and toiled on toward the setting sun. I fled, with weary steps and slow, from the hated land of the palefaces, but always it seemed that the white man's villages and towns pursued at my heels. Always it seemed that his great houses of wood and stone were chasing me that they might fall on me and crush me to death. I tried to hide from them in dark and lonely places, but they hunted me out and sent me again dragging my leaden feet in flight across the world. By day they loomed mighty and terrible on the trail, and by night I could see their thousands of lighted windows gleaming like fiery eyes through the darkness behind me. Oh, how I hated those fearful houses of the palefaces! How I longed for the tiny tepees of my people and the big open world where there was plenty of room to move and breathe!"

"At night when I was not dreaming such dreams as these it was seldom I could sleep at all. I awoke stifled and smothered by the knowledge that I was imprisoned in one of those hated buildings of stone. It is true the dormitory was built of brick, but to me those bricks seemed like tiny stones, cut and squared and set together, one upon another, and fashioned thus to form solid walls by the skill and magic of the white man, which seemed like black sorcery. Many a night I rose and hung out of my open window, listening to the voices of nature, which were calling me—forever calling me. Sometimes I crept forth from the dormitory, having found a method by which I could leave it, and stole away across the grounds, across the fields and into the woods. One night—I'll never forget it!—I found another boy out there in the woods, and we talked a
little. He, too, had sneaked forth to listen to the call of nature, and between us we discovered a bond of sympathy, which grew stronger and firmer as the days went by. That fellow was Dale Sparkfair.

"It was a good thing for me that among those boys who shunned and scorned me and called me 'Injun' I found at last one who could sympathize and understand—one who could also fight, and was not ashamed to fight for an Indian. A thousand times I had longed to fight some of those sneering fellows, but, remembering the words of my grandfather, I had felt I owed it to Strong Heart to remain peaceable and submissive. It was Sparkfair who satisfied me that even Frank Merriwell would not expect me to submit like a covering c ur to injustice and persecution. It was Sparkfair who convinced me that I had a right to fight for my honor and defend my own sense of justice.

"Well, I fought. I taught them to respect me, Indian though I was. Many of them continued to hate me, and some hated me even bitterly; but there were a few who betrayed something resembling a friendly liking for me, and gradually my lot became somewhat easier. It was Sparkfair who coached me in my studies. It was Sparkfair who taught me to read and write. But it was Frank Merriwell who aroused in me a genuine thirst for knowledge—not the mere rudiments of knowledge, but for the acquisition of what might be called a finished education. And when this thirst was aroused, nothing but drinking deep and full at the well of knowledge could quench it. I studied night and day whenever I could. For a time my efforts were somewhat rambling and misdirected, but eventually I learned to follow the right courses, and the encouragement and praise of Strong Heart made music in my soul.

"Then I met you, Dick—I met you and came to know you. When I knew you I knew also a greater and broader purpose, for I resolved to get a college education. I made up my mind that I would fit myself for college, and when I had heard you talk a while of Yale there was no other college for me in all the world. I, an Indian, would become a Yale man! I, an Indian, would study and graduate with honors from Yale University! No longer was I haunted by the dreams of old. New dreams came to me, and in them I saw afar the beautiful buildings of Yale beckoning me. I saw the campus smiling an invitation. I saw the trees of the campus holding out their arms to me. And sometimes I woke myself crying, 'I am coming! I am coming!' I dreamed of other things, too, Injun Heart—I dreamed of the baseball field and the football gridiron. Once you prophesied the day when I should wear a Yale uniform and be the backstop of the varsity nine, with you on the slab. In my dreams that day came, and, as you had said, I was there catching for Old Eli, defending the blue. I heard the bands playing in my dream, and I heard the crowds cheering. I heard them singing 'For God, for Country, and for Yale.' It was all very real and true to me, and when I woke my heart was glad, for I knew it would surely happen.

"Then I studied even harder than before, and Frank Merriwell was afraid I would break down. He tried to hold me back, but nothing could check me. Once it had seemed that impassable mountains, their peaks touching the sky, lay between me and the goal for which I had set forth, the acquiring of the white man's wisdom. But as I climbed those mountains they dwindled, and sank and melted away so that finally I could look over them into the happy land of promise where the sun was shining, the flowers blooming, and the birds singing."

CHAPTER VI.

THE LURE OF THE CARDS.

"You know," continued Joe, "how I came at last to Yale and succeeded, to the surprise of many, in passing my examinations and entering. But then once more I found myself lonely and alone. Once more I found myself an alien and a stranger in the midst of an unsympathetic people. Oh, I know you were faithful and loyal, Dick. I know you did everything in your power to make it easier for me; but I was a freshman and you two classes above me. You had your friends, your studies, and your labors in many directions. You were the greatest athlete in college, famous upon the diamond and the gridiron. If I were to let you spend much time upon me I would be taking you away from other things which rightfully demanded your attention. So I kept by myself and lived and studied alone. At last it had become easy for me to study and to keep up with those in my own class. It had become easy, and I found more or less time in which I might rest. I could not always be studying or reading or applying myself to books. I spent some time watching the college games and sports, and more time wandering far into the country and the woods.

"But there were times when, alone in my room, there was nothing much to do. Many is the hour while I was studying at Farnham Hall that Sparkfair had sat near, playing solitaire with a pack of cards, ready
to answer any question I might ask him. I had watched him a little, and so learned, without seeking to learn, how to play the game. One day last year I bought a pack of cards and took them to my room, where I used them to while away a little time at solitaire. You know how, ere the season was over, I was called to play on my class eleven because of the injury of another player, and the seeming utter inability to fill the position thus left vacant. I had learned football at Farnham Hall, and I——”

“You became the sensation of the freshman team last year, Joe,” put in Dick.

“Well, at last I succeeded in killing some of the prejudice against me, and finally a few fellows made friendly advances. At first I was resentful and held myself aloof, but after a time I decided it was folly to do that, and I accepted them for just what they proved themselves to be and no more. At last I had made some associates, but no genuine bosom friends. Those fellows dropped around to my room occasionally, and sometimes they found me playing solitaire. They took to inviting me to their rooms, and at last I went.

“One night I visited the room of a fellow who was entertaining a little party at cards. They were playing poker, Dick, and I watched the game. Before that evening was over I had become interested and knew a little something of the values of different hands. I likewise learned something of the value of nerve and bluff and the study of every man’s style in playing.

“One day, looking through a bookstore, I chanced upon a book which told all about the fine points of poker playing. It was a secondhand book, and I bought it cheap. I took it home and studied it until I knew every word of its contents from cover to cover. No longer did I play solitaire for amusement, but, sitting alone in my spare hours, I dealt poker hands around the table and played the game with imaginary antagonists.

“Besides teaching the legitimate game of poker, my book told about all the tricks of card sharps and gamblers. So it happened that one night as I was again watching a poker game I was invited to take a hand. The play was for small stakes. The ante was a penny, the limit ten. I sat into the game for the amusement of it and won a dollar and forty-seven cents. During the course of the game the fellow in whose room we were playing provided a lunch. At the end of the game I refused to take my winnings and insisted that it should go toward paying for that lunch. After that I was often invited to play.

“On another occasion, while watching a game for stakes higher than I cared to risk, I detected one of the players cheating. I first saw him steal a card from the discards. Continuing to watch, I detected him dealing crookedly. Immediately I was filled with contempt and anger for the fellow, but instead of exposing him I asked the privilege of taking a hand in that game. I sat in and waited for my opportunity to get at the cheat. It came in due time. I fixed him with his own crooked tricks, far more cleverly executed. When he rose from the table he had lost all his money. There were other losers. The cheat departed in sulky rage, and then I made the others who had lost accept from my winnings enough to make them whole.

“Among those who pretended to be my friends I found at last one who seemed genuine and sincere. We’re rooming together this year, Billy Reach and I. I like Billy. As I was successful in making some money during my vacation, we have two fairly comfortable rooms in a house on York Street. A year ago such rooms would have seemed luxurious to me, for we’ve got rugs on the floors and a couple of nice easy-chairs, and some books and pictures, and, everything considered, we’re pretty well fixed. If my old grandfather should visit me to-day I fancy he would think me living like a millionaire, and I’m not at all sure that he would be pleased. I’m not looking forward to a visit from him, although——”

“You never can tell,” laughed Dick. “Old Joe came to Bloomfield shortly after Frank put me into the school there, and he remained for some time.”

“He was younger then. Now he’s a very old man.”

“I can’t see that he looks a day older than he did years ago when he first came to my valley home away out in the Rockies. I know he’s always telling about his old age and his rheumatism, and how he soon expects to pass on to the happy hunting grounds, but there’s a great deal of guff in it, Crowfoot. When necessary, he can run like a deer, and he has stamina and staying qualities to wear out the best of men on a march. He can fight, too. His hand and his eye are both quick as a flash of light. It wouldn’t surprise me if Shangowah lived for twenty years to come to teach young men how puny and frail they really are. Nor would it surprise me if to-morrow you or I should find him demanding admittance at our doors.”

“But, Dick, if he comes here what will you do? You can’t receive and entertain him.”

“Can’t I!” cried Merriwell. “Let him come and you shall see. I’m ready to share my worldly possessions with Shangowah. If he comes here he shall be received as my friend—my greatest and oldest friend.
No matter how he appears, that’s the reception he will be given. Let him come in his greasy buckskins, soiled blanket, and tattered feathers, and it will make no difference to me.”

“I believe you, Dick,” said Joe quietly. “You’re a man who never forgets and never goes back on his friends. The changes circumstances and fortune may bring to you do not alter your heart. I know, Dick, that my old grandfather would die for you; and I have tried, when the opportunity presented, to prove that I also am your staunch, sincere friend.”

“Don’t I know it, Joe? You don’t have to tell me. And I hope you believe in me also.”

“There never has been a doubt concerning you since I came to know you, Dick.”

A moment of silence followed, and then Crowfoot took up the thread of his story.

“A while ago you told me of two crooks who attempted to cheat a freshman at cards upon the train. One night my roommate, Reach, came in rather late and explained that he had been watching a little poker game. I didn’t question him, but he volunteered information regarding the players, and I was interested when he named Hugo Carlin and Dunbar Clay. He said he thought Clay a great poker player, as he usually won. He likewise said the fellows who had been playing with Carlin and Clay were chumps to match their skill against such men. Those fellows were Owen Griffith and Porter Rhoades, both of whom I know. As far as I could learn, Griffith and Rhoades were being systematically skimmed by those card sharps.

“Having arrived at that conclusion, I was seized by a desire to get into the game and test my skill by matching it against those rascals. I sought the opportunity, although seemingly it came about through pure chance, and a few nights past I took a hand in a game with them. Reach thought me daft, and he tried to prevent me from playing. I saw Carlin acting as a stool pigeon for Clay. I saw Clay deal crookedly, holding back the cards he wished for himself, and, when I fancied I had discovered the range of his ability at such things, I went after him.

“I got him, too, Dick. I trimmed him to the bone, and I did it in just two hands. He hinted that I had cheated, but he couldn’t prove it. What did I do with his money? I kept it. It was stolen money. It didn’t belong to him, anyhow. If I knew who it did belong to I’d give it to them. That’s the whole story, Merrivell.”

Crowfoot stopped abruptly. They had reached Hamilton Park, and Dick said:

“We may as well turn back.”

For three or four blocks they walked in silence. At last Merrivell spoke.

“I’m sorry you learned that game, Joe,” he said.

“Sorry?”

“Yes.”

“Why, Dick?”

“Because I know the fascination of it. Already you have yielded to that fascination. It will get a hold on you. It will grow stronger and stronger. You say you know not whose money it was you won from Clay, and yet a few moments before you told me that Griffith and Rhoades were heavy losers.”

“I tried to make them divide my winnings. They wouldn’t touch a cent of it.”

“Of course not. The fellows who did let you divide in other games were cheap chaps. Griffith and Rhoades have every reason to suppose you won that money fairly and squarely. They must believe that you risked your money in the game and were therefore honestly entitled to your winnings. They can’t dream that, in order to punish a pair of cheats, you resorted to trickery yourself.

“That’s not the worst of it, Crowfoot. The man who seeks to retaliate upon a dishonest person by adopting similar dishonest methods hurts himself. He may not be aware of it at the time; he may fancy the methods no more than proper when used against such a rascal. Nevertheless, he has weakened the moral fabric of his nature. In time that weak spot will grow weaker and become a break. There’s no question about this.

“Unfortunately, Joe, you’re not only learning a great deal of the white man’s wisdom, but you’re learning many of his vices. You acknowledge that card playing has a great fascination for you. It also has a fascination for Shangowah, your grandfather. He’s a clever poker player, and I doubt not that, for all of the tricks you have learned, he could sit down and beat you handsomely, and all your knowledge would be unavailing in detecting him at it. You did the same thing with Dunbar Clay, all of which goes to show that there is no rascal so shrewd and skillful in his rascality that he may not meet his master in the same line.

“But, Joe, let’s imagine what might happen, but that which we hope never will happen. Let’s imagine that you graduate from Yale and return to your people to work for their uplifting and advancement. Let’s imagine that something—some unforeseen circumstance or calamity—weakens your resolve, turns you
from your purpose and leads you to abandon the effort. Let's say that you relapse into the careless, indifferent, unambitious life of the average Indian of to-day. Embittered and disappointed, you fling aside all your fine resolutions and make no further effort to live a life of high purposes. The man who does not advance must retrograde—he must go back. Started in the wrong direction, you take up these vices and practices you should abhor. You become a loafer, a drinker, and a gambler—and a cheat!

"For a time you are successful. You have learned tricks at cards and it is easy for you to win from the simple and unsuspicious. In that way you get plenty of money to spend for fire-water and such few necessities as you need. But some day you sit into a game with another rascal who is shrewder than you, and he exposes you at your cheating. This may happen in a rough frontier town. If so, they will Lynch you, Crowfoot. And would not that be a fine finish for the ambitious career of Young Joe Crowfoot, the Indian graduate of Yale! Wouldn't it give those persons who claim that all Indians are degraded creatures, and any effort for their advancement or uplifting is folly, a fine chance to blow and point out the proof of their claims!"

Crowfoot did not speak again until they reached and crossed Orchard Street.

"How is it, Dick," he suddenly asked, "that you hold Shangowah in such esteem? He plays cards for money, and he wins by whatever skill the occasion demands. Sometimes he drinks whisky. Why is it that these practices—vices, you call them—do not lead you to turn from him in disgust?"

"Joe, ere I knew Shangowah he had acquired such habits. He's now far too old to give them up. More than that, I doubt if I, with all my skill at reasoning and argument, could convince him of their pernicious nature. Realizing the uselessness of such efforts, I have not and shall not waste my time by making the attempt. It is not Shangowah's vices that I admire; it's his virtues and higher qualities. As a friend he's loyal and staunch, and he would cut off his hand rather than lift it to harm one whom he believed honest and square. He is also the possessor of a high order of intelligence. Nevertheless, he would be a greater man to-day if he had not acquired those vices of which we speak. There is no telling how much harm they have done him.

"At present I'm not going to exact any promises of you, Joe, for the keeping of promises is irksome. But I want you to think this matter over carefully. Will you?"

"I will, Dick."

CHAPTER VII
SELFISH AMBITION

A few friends of Rodrick Morse, and one or two who were not his friends, ventured to tell him that he had made a blunder. Those who were not his friends spoke very plainly; at least one of them told him he was an ass. His friends were sure he had done something that would make him deuced unpopular, and that they were right Morse soon found out.

For when the story of the affair at the Fence became current gossip Rod Morse could not help observing that many fellows whom he knew well and some who had even been on almost familiar footing with him were inclined to shun him and give him the cold shoulder. Indeed, one of his former friends—at any rate, a fellow he had regarded as a friend—passed him the cut direct.

They were ashamed of him, disgusted with him, thoroughly disdainful of a man who could not take his medicine without squealing. Even Morse himself, when the affair was over and he had cooled down somewhat, realized that he had blundered in publicly "making a holler." Even though he had felt doubly assured that Merriwell had somehow been concerned in Old Bill's decision, Morse would have hurt himself by raising a row over it on the campus or in any public place where Yale men gathered. For Merriwell was so popular with the great mass of undergraduates that the majority of them held the conviction that, having been asked to aid Fullerton in coaching, he had a right to express his opinion regarding the qualifications and fitness of any man trying for the team. That, as Dick had asserted, he did not do this, was almost universally understood, although a few sore-headed fellows pretended to disbelieve it.

And so Morse, who had worked hard to get onto the team and become a man of some note in college, instead of a mere nonentity amid the great mass of students, suddenly found that he had attracted considerable attention to himself, but it was attention of a nature most undesirable. The fellow was one who craved recognition, fame, prominence, and position above the masses. In his freshman year he had cut loose at a fast pace, seeking to be known as a leader of the sporty element in his class. This had brought him into many difficulties and, through neglected studies, up against "conditions" which had filled him
with dismay, redoubled by a letter from his father in which that gentleman "dressed him down" handsomely for his escapades, and concluded by stating that his college career would terminate and he would go to work for himself if he failed to pass.

Then Morse had worked and plugged almost fiendishly both night and day in the effort to overcome those "conditions" and pull through at the final examinations. He ceased traveling with the sporty fellows and became something of a "hermit." He grew nervous and thin and irritable. He was wild-eyed with dread. He employed two tutors to pound into his head the knowledge necessary to meet the emergency he dreaded. And he passed by the narrowest margin possible.

Morse had learned one lesson to his advantage, and he profited by it, for in his sophomore year he was quite another man. Among his former comrades of the fast set he missed several faces, and he knew that more than one freshman who had misspent his time with beer steins and pipes and cards and roystering companions would return no more to Yale. He shivered when he realized how, by scarcely more than a hair's breadth, he had escaped a similar fate. And vainly those former comrades sought to lure him back to the old haunts and the old ways. Occasionally he thought of them, with their pipes and their mugs of beer, roystering away the night hours in song and so-called good fellowship, and a yearning stirred within him. But that yearning was suppressed and held in check by fear, and not a single misstep did he make.

However, as has been stated, he was not content to slide along as one of the ordinary unrecognized amid the great mass of men at Yale. He saw other men pointed out as fellows of more or less prominence and fame, and he thirsted for such adulation. He longed to feel when crossing the campus that there were men watching him and saying to one another, "There goes Morse, the great Morse, the famous something or other."

Among the students there was one who, even in his freshman year, had attracted considerable notice, and who as a sophomore quickly became known by sight, at least, to almost every Yale man. This was Dick Merriwell, and Morse, studying Merriwell, decided that, for the fellow who possessed the ability, the simplest way to become famous in college was to take up athletics and get onto some regular varsity team. He furthermore concluded that the members of the eleven received the most attention, were the best known, and therefore if he could make that team he would surely reach the goal of his ambition.

Now let it be noted that Morse did not go into athletic training either from love of the work, a desire for his own physical betterment, or an ambition to defend Yale's colors against those who might seek to lower them. He was actuated solely by his secret yearning for recognition and fame.

In his sophomore year he worked hard and faithfully, and met early disappointment by elimination from the squad of football candidates. Nevertheless, he believed another year of physical training would fit him for a successful try at the eleven. Refusing to be discouraged, he kept at the work persistently and methodically, and improved greatly. He likewise made a study of football as taught and played at Yale.

During the summer months, however, failing to feel the stimulus of contact with other men who were working to keep themselves in the best form, Morse grew careless and neglectful, with the result that the early hammering he received on coming out with the football squad used him up in a most annoying manner. Therefore, after some days of this pounding, he had flinched in practice and shown for a single instant that lack of heart which if detected by Old Bill Fullerton in any man was sufficient to put that individual candidate into the ranks of the unqualified and not needed.

But the foolish talk Morse had made to Merriwell had hurt him even more. Given time to think it over in cool blood, he realized that beyond doubt Fullerton would hear about it, and henceforth, with Old Bill as head coach, his chance of making the eleven could be represented by that oval Arabic numeral which, standing by itself, expresses nothing. He was down and out. All his labor must go for naught.

He was sorry he had been foolish enough to make such a mistake, but his sorrow did not bring any feeling of shame for his accusation of Merriwell. Instead, the hatred for Dick which had been born in his heart grew daily and became deeper and more intense. His face wore a sullen expression which was significant of his ill-concealed mental condition.

Finally, after a few days, Morse, having abandoned hope, turned to drink. He did not royster and carouse with the jolly fellows who hit it up from pure pleasure and good fellowship. Instead of that, he sulked by himself and drank alone.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PLOTTERS.

One night fate threw Morse in with a trio of men who were likewise drinking, and who all professes
a pronounced hatred for Merriwell. These men were
Dunbar Clay, Hugo Carlin, and Edgar Brighton.
While the last named could not complain of any injury
Merriwell had ever done him, he seemed fully as
venomous toward Dick as were the others.

With their drinks before them, these fellows sat at
a round table in the big room of a resort patronized
by a certain class of students. Brighton and Clay were
drinking beer, but such "slop" did not satisfy Carlin
and Morse, who preferred whisky. All were smoking.
Morse had resumed his old practice of consuming six
or eight packs of cigarettes a day. Clay was smoking
his briarwood pipe. Carlin and Brighton had cigars.

"It was a bad break, Morse, old man," drawled
Clay, in that slow, affected manner of his. "You should
have known better. As long as you entertained
the slightest ambition or hope of ever making the Yale
eleven you should have kept your mouth closed about
Merriwell, no matter what you thought of him."

"There's yet a chance," muttered Morse. "This is
his last year. I stay a year longer."

"But there's no chance for you," asserted Clay.
"You killed your chance. Fullerston won't forget, and
there will be plenty of others, Merriwell scoundrels,
who will likewise remember. It will stand against you
to the end of your days at Yale."

"That's right," nodded Carlin. "You can't get out
from under it now, Morse."

"I'm glad," said Brighton, "that I've had sense
enough never to get mixed up with that fellow. All
the same, it would give me the greatest satisfaction to
see him pulled down a few pegs."

"You see, Morse," purred Clay, "Merriwell is work-
ing for the certain benefit of a friend of his who is
trying for the team, and the more dangerous men he
can eliminate the better chance that friend will have."

"Whom do you mean?"

"The Indian."

"Crowfoot?"

"Sure."

Carlin showed his short, thick teeth in a vicious grin.
"To hear you speak of Crowfoot in that placid,
gentle tone of voice any one would fancy you loved
him, Dunbar," he said.

"I'm willing to admit," said Clay, "that I've got a
little feeling against the redskin. Of course I don't
desire him the way I do Merriwell, but still I owe him
something, and I'll like to settle."

It was Brighton's turn to grin.

"Oh, you got up against some one who could match
you at your own game," he chuckled. "You've
trimmed the rest of us right along, but Crowfoot had
too much luck for you."

"It wasn't luck," declared Clay. "The man
cheated."

"Why didn't you accuse him?"

"I made a few remarks, but I lacked proof. He's
a clever whelp with the pasteboards. I don't know
how he got hold of that ace which I discarded when I
filled my fours in the first big hand, but he stole it off
the table somehow. I know I put the ace down in
front of me, yet when my two cards which I had
dropped on the draw were turned over neither was an
ace. By accident in discarding Carlin turned over a
king. I held four queens. I knew there was an ace
and a king in the discs, and therefore I felt it
would be impossible for Crowfoot to beat me unless he
held a straight flush, and, like myself, he had drawn
two cards. Considering the fact that he had bet heav-
ily before the draw, and he knew the value of different
hands, there was no chance whatever that he was draw-
ing to fill a straight flush. Therefore, gentlemen, you
can see I had every reason to figure it out that my
four queens made absolutely and positively the top
hand. I felt like shooting him when he laid down
those four aces. I'll admit that I was surprised, and
I'll further admit that I was carried off my feet when
my discs—or the cards I supposed I had discarded
—were turned up and neither of them proved to be an
ace."

"How do you imagine he did it?" asked Brighton.
"I haven't been able to figure it out," admitted Clay.
"How he could have secured that ace right before the
eyes of all of us sticks me."

"Isn't it possible you were mistaken?"

"Mistaken—how?"

"In thinking one of those cards you dropped before
the draw was an ace."

"No," said Clay, "with unusual vigor and emphasis,
"I am not mistaken. The Indian cheated. I'm also
satisfied that in the final hand he got his straight flush
against my own four aces in a crooked manner."

"A man who can cheat you when you're watching
him is a wonder, Dunbar," said Carlin.

Clay shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't intend to be skinned by any crooked tricks," he
said. "If it happens once, as this thing did happen,
I'm going to get back at the man some day. I'm wait-
ing for my chance at Crowfoot, but he is disinclined
to play any more. Can't seem to get him into another
game, you know. I've had to call for money from
home, and now I'm ready to tackle the Indian again."
"Isn't it rather odd," said Brighton, "that Crowfoot, being so friendly with Merriwell, should play poker? You know poker playing is something Merriwell does not countenance.

"That Indian, like other Indians, has a thirst for gambling, and I imagine it wouldn't be difficult to arouse his thirst for drink. He's a fellow who could be easily started on the highroad to such practices, and when an Indian goes in for those things there's no limit."

"If he should follow it up," said Clay, "he wouldn't last long either as a candidate for the eleven or a member of it. Merriwell is anxious and ambitious to get Crowfoot onto the team. It would hurt him if the Indian failed. It would be a body jolt for him. Isn't there any way we can help Mr. Crowfoot along on the downward path?"

"If there is," growled Morse, "let's help him—let's give him a loving push."

"If we could only get him into another game!" murmured Clay. "If we could start him drinking! He seems inclined to dodge us now."

"Look here," said Brighton, "I have an idea. By Jove! it might work."

"Tell us," urged Carlin, while Morse betrayed equal interest.

"To-morrow night," said Brighton, "there's going to be something doing out at the Woodland Athletic Club. There are to be some fights and a few wrestling matches. It's a special occasion for certain reasons which I'll explain to you, gentlemen, under pledge of secrecy. You've heard of Harry Paxton, I presume?"

"Paxton?" said Clay. "Oh, yes, he's the New Haven chap who made such a record as an amateur wrestler, isn't he?"

"That's the man."

"What about him?"

"You know Paxton's father is rich, and his people move in the best society. It hurt them to have Pax going around wrestling at scraps and meeting professionals who happened to come along this way and challenge local wrestlers to go against them in public. But what aroused old man Paxton was the knowledge that Harry had become a member of the Woodland Club. Although that club is supposed to be a straight athletic organization, you know it's really a swift sporting club. More than half the members never were athletes and never could be, and even a larger part of them are sports and fast trotters. The club is run as an athletic organization mainly as a bluff. Behind it all lies the fact that there's plenty of heavy gambling going on at the Woodland."

"Oh, yes," nodded Clay a bit impatiently, "we know all about that."

"So did old man Paxton," chuckled Brighton, "and therefore when he found Harry belonged to that club there was something doing. He ordered the boy to resign his membership. Further than that, he informed Paxton that he would have to give up wrestling, stating that unless he did he would be cut off from any share of the Paxton fortune—in short, disinherit. As Harry Paxton hasn't any particular relish for work, and isn't qualified for anything of the sort, he wisely decided that he'd better hearken to the old gent's admonition."

"Go on," urged Clay.

"Well, Paxton quit, that's all. Now I'm going to let you into the secret under pledge of strict confidence. To-morrow night, as I stated, there will be some fights and a few wrestling matches at the Woodland. I have received a card. I can get others—five or six of them, if necessary. Harry Paxton will wrestle to-morrow night. His antagonist will be the Indian wrestler, Hatchet. Paxton will appear as an unknown."

"Bosh!" said Carlin. "He can't do that. Everybody knows him."

"I understand," said Brighton, "that he will wear a mask sufficient to make it impossible for any one to swear that he is Harry Paxton, of New Haven. If the old man hears about it and accuses him he will deny everything."

"Well," drawled Clay, "I don't see how this concerns Crowfoot."

"I'm coming to that. I know Billy Reach, Crowfoot's roommate, pretty well. Reach is a little ass. He talks a great deal with his mouth. I can get him out to the Woodland Club to-morrow night, and I have an idea that I can induce him to bring Crowfoot along. Crowfoot will want to see Hatchet, the Indian, wrestle with Paxton. If Reach urges Crowfoot he will take in the affair at the Woodland. I can fix it with Billy so that he won't mention my name in the matter. He will simply spring on Crowfoot the two cards I'll supply."

Morse was listening intently and frowning a bit.

"Well?" invited Clay, still impatient.

"If we can get Crowfoot out to the Woodland, why can't we pull him into a poker game? It ought to be easy. Reach thinks now that Crowfoot is the greatest poker player in the country. He will be jolly well
pleased over the idea that his Indian chum is going into a game to skin you again, Clay. There you'll have your opportunity. It will be up to you."

Clay removed his pipe from his lips and sat looking at it intently, evidently in deep thought.

"If you can catch the Indian cheating—" began Morse eagerly.

"If I can't detect him," said Clay, "I fancy, with the assistance of Carlin, I can put up a job on him which will make it seem absolutely certain that he has cheated. We can do this and expose him. We can disgrace him and get him kicked out of the Woodland. Then it will be up to us to see that the story circulates. That ought to hurt Mr. Crowfoot a great deal and Dick Merriwell not a little."

"Sure!" exclaimed Rod Morse, thumping the table with his fist. "That's the stuff! Do it! As long as I've been sacrificed to help boost the Indian, it will give me great joy to see the redskin knifed. Say, Brighton, can you get cards for all of us?"

"Sure thing," nodded Brighton. "I'll guarantee it."

"Then do it. Work your end of this game and leave the rest to Clay and Carlin. Get the Indian out there, get him into the cardroom after the bouts, and let them expose him."

"I'll play my hand for all there is in it," promised Brighton. "Let's drink to the success of our little scheme. Here's luck."

They lifted their glasses and drank.

CHAPTER IX.
AT THE WOODLAND CLUB.

The Woodland Club was ideally located amid a grove of heavy old trees on high land. From the broad veranda could be obtained glimpses of the Sound. The club provided a garage for automobiles, and the nearest trolley point was only half a mile away.

Although it was distinctly known that gambling was carried on in the club, many of the members were men of prominence and influence, and thus far no effort had ever been made to molest the organization.

Almost every afternoon a large number of well-dressed, prosperous-looking men of all ages from twenty years up to sixty-five could be seen in the rooms of the clubhouses. On the main floor were the offices, reading room, writing room, smoking room, and dining room. The dinners served at the Woodland were famous, and it was in the dining room only that guests or club members could obtain liquors upon that floor. Those familiar with the place, however, were well aware of a cozy, well-appointed bar upon the floor above, convenient to the cardrooms.

The club had an "atmosphere." The offices were plain enough, to be sure, but from them one might step into the big smoking room with its elegant fireplace and roomy, comfortable, leather-covered chairs. In this room men lounged and gossiped. Adjoining the smoking room was the reading room, provided with all the latest periodicals, carefully kept in order and placed upon two long tables. The floor was carpeted, and the walls adorned with appropriate pictures. There was another fireplace in this room, before which the members who wished to peruse the papers or magazines might sit in comfort whenever the weather outside held a chill.

At one side of the reading room was the writing room, provided with a table and several desks, all of which were supplied with the club stationery. In this room several large cards were displayed bearing the single word, "Silence."

On the opposite side from the smoking room was the billiard room, furnished with the finest tables, and here the spectator might not only see some interesting games between club members, but also on frequent occasions some clever exhibitions by experts brought there to amuse those who took interest in such things.

In the basement were the bowling alleys and the arena for athletic contests. Although the greater part of the basement was underground, it was thoroughly ventilated by the most improved methods of supplying pure air, so that the gathering down there of a crowd sufficient to pack the place never made the atmosphere unbearable or even slightly offensive.

It was in the great room on the upper floor that the club had displayed some lavishness in furnishing and decorating. Here the carpet was thick and heavy beneath the foot, the walls done in brown leather and adorned with many paintings of a really high order of execution, even if of questionable taste in the matter of subjects. The green cloth-covered card tables had been especially made for the use to which they were put, and the chairs for the players were heavy and conducive to such comfort as might make one forget the passing of the hours. Drinks were served here by liveried attendants, but no man was supposed to indulge to the point of becoming offensive in any way whatever. Indeed, the member or the guest at the Woodland could not quicker get himself into disrepute than by overindulgence in liquid refreshments.
One night the rooms of the club were thronged with members and guests who had been drawn thither by an unusual attraction. All knew a number of boxing bouts between clever amateurs were to take place in the arena. There was also to be some wrestling, and one of these matches had awakened considerable interest among those wise ones in whose ears a hint as to the identity of the "Unknown" who would meet Hatchet, the Indian wrestler, had been whispered.

For the members of the Woodland had been very proud of their champion, Harry Paxton, and had greatly regretted the necessity of his withdrawal from the club. It may be that a few of the older members held to the belief that Paxton’s father had been wise in putting a check to the wrestling career of his son, but others ridiculed the action and called Grover Paxton an old fool.

The bouts in the arena were scheduled to begin at an early hour, in order that those who wished might have no difficulty in returning to the city by trolley. Eight o’clock would mark the starting of the sport, and at nine the Unknown and the Indian were to wrestle.

It was 7:35 when two young men presented their cards at the outer door and were admitted. Immediately another youth, who had seemed to be waiting for them, came hurrying forward with outstretched hand. The last was Edgar Brighton.

"Hello, Reach, old chap," he cried, seizing Billy Reach’s hand and giving it a warm shake. "Glad you came early. I see you brought your friend."

"Yes," laughed Reach, "I told Joe he’d ought to see Hatchet wrestle. Brighton, shake hands with Joe Crowfoot."

Young Joe accepted Brighton’s hand and gripped it in return for the enthusiastic clasp the fellow gave him.

"That little go will be worth seeing, fellows," said Brighton. "Of course we expect Paxton—I mean the Unknown—to get the best of it, even though it is universally acknowledged that Hatchet is a great wrestler. I suppose, Reach, you gave Crowfoot a hint as to the identity of this Unknown?"

"Oh, sure," nodded Billy. "I told him not to say anything about it, but that wasn’t necessary. Say, Joe is the stiffest clam you ever saw. He doesn’t talk, anyhow—that is, not a great deal. Sometimes he says as many as three or four words in succession. Once he took my breath away by telling me a little story that must have used up fully a minute of his valuable conversation.”

Crowfoot smiled.

“Sometimes I talk more than I should,” he said. “Oh, we all do that,” agreed Brighton. “Come on, fellows, and I’ll show you round.”

“You act as if you were a member,” said Reach.

“I’ve got a thirty-days card,” explained Brighton. “Charlie Hobbs procured it for me. While it is good I am, in a way, about the same as a member. I have all the privileges of the club.”

He conducted them through the various rooms on the main floor, meeting one or two men whom he knew and to whom he introduced them. They descended to the basement and peeped into the arena, where two men were putting up the ropes around the platform on which the bouts were to take place. Then he showed them the bowling alleys, and they watched a number of bowlers in shirt-sleeves who were hard at it.

“Later,” whispered Brighton, “I’ll take you upstairs. You mustn’t miss that. I believe the big room upstairs is closed to-night until after nine o’clock.”

Returning to the main floor, they saw a number of men in the smoking room who were gathered around two persons who had lately entered.

“By Jove!” breathed Brighton. “I believe one of those chaps is the Unknown. Yes, it is. See, he’s wearing a mask.”

“That seems foolish to me,” said Reach, as they pressed closer.

The fellow who had attracted so much attention was a finely built young man in plain dark clothes. His face was completely hidden by a close-fitting gauze mask. Not a glimpse of his features could be obtained.

“Th’at’s Paxton,” whispered Brighton. “Isn’t he put up just about right? Wait till you see him stripped. I think he’s the handsomest built man I ever saw.”

“How about Dick Merriwell?” laughingly inquired Reach.

“I won’t even except Merriwell.”

Crowfoot took the measure of the masked fellow.

“He looks good,” said Joe, in a low tone. “He ought to wrestle if he has the skill.”

“Skill!” exclaimed Brighton guardedly. “You bet he has it! I don’t believe there’s a man in the city can throw him.”

“Oh, I don’t know,” said Reach. “I happen to know a pretty good man who——”

“Of course you mean Merriwell?”

“No, I’m referring to Joseph Crowfoot, Esquire. I happen to know that Joe can wrestle some.”

“Oh, cut it out, Billy,” protested the Indian.
The Unknown's companion, who stuck close to his side, was a singular-looking, rather hideous person. He had straight tow-colored hair and wore heavy spectacles. His skin was dark, and from the left corner of his mouth to the lobe of his ear ran a repulsive scar. It seemed that this scar drew his mouth a bit to one side, and it looked as if, at some time, he had been gashed frightfully with a keen knife.

This person, Brighton soon learned, was a friend to the Unknown, called Silent Steve Joy. He spoke to no one, but Brighton, listening to the low words of a man who was explaining to some friends, heard that Joy had lost his tongue, which had been cut out many years before by some ruffians led by an enemy. It was said that there was a long story connected with this affair, and furthermore that the instigator of the mutilation had disappeared within twelve months after the occurrence. What had become of him no person knew unless it was Joy himself, and if he knew Joy had kept his secret. The scar upon the man's face had come from a knife wound made at the time of this frightful affair.

"Gee! he fascinates me!" whispered Reach, staring at the silent man.

"Come on," said Brighton, pulling at Billy's elbow, "the arena is open. The crowd is going down now. Let's get good seats."

With the drifting crowd they once more descended into the basement.

CHAPTER X.

IN THE ARENA.

Swiftly, but in the most orderly manner, a stream of human beings, murmuring as it came, flowed down the broad stairs and filled the seats which surrounded the rope-encircled platform. Although the most of those men were smoking, it was marvelous to note how the ventilation purified and cleared the air, at the same time keeping the place at a temperature which was both cool and comfortable.

Scores of electric lights, properly distributed and placed, illuminated the room. Above the platform swung a huge shade, suspended by chains, and from the hidden depths of this ground-glass electric bulbs shed a soft, even glow which alone would have been sufficient to light every part of that roped-in space.

As the gathering spectators found seats to suit their fancy, there was much talk, joshing, and laughter, and a surprising lack of coarseness and profanity. Indeed, the man who permitted himself to swear anywhere in the rooms of the Woodland Club could not escape a notice and a warning to refrain from such conduct in future. If he proved heedless and forgetful he was certain some day to receive a summons before the governing committee of the club, and he was lucky if he escaped notification that his resignation from the club would be acceptable.

Of course there were many men present whose dress, looks, and bearing indicated of a certainty that they were not gentlemen born and bred. Nevertheless, these had acquired a certain amount of that veneering which sometimes serves as gentlemanly disguise. Here and there could be seen a solitary individual, sometimes two or three together, who had chosen to wear the tuxedo. Their broad, immaculate shirt bosoms gleamed in the light of the electric bulbs, undorned even in a single instance by diamond studs.

Crowfoot and Reach looked the crowd over with interest.

"By George!" said Billy, "it's a clean-looking bunch. The old women and the cranks who are inclined to knock this club seek to give the impression that it is formed by a lot of tough, cheap characters."

"Just so," nodded Brighton. "Such people are narrow-minded or fanatical. You know how many persons hold to the opinion that sparring bouts or wrestling matches must be horribly brutal affairs. Admitted that the ordinary prize fight for a purse and to a finish has repulsive and brutal elements, I claim that a sparring contest between well-matched men, in which the limit is a reasonable number of rounds, may be as harmless as a ladies' sewing circle."

Crowfoot smiled faintly.

"I fear you exaggerate a bit," he said. "Such a mild exhibition as you mention would hardly satisfy the fighting instincts of a gathering of men who had ever seen a real fistic go. There's no getting around the fact that sparring exhibitions appeal to the primitive fighting strain which exists, even if suppressed and held in restraint, in every man of full blood and vigor. The Caucasian has it in him just as much as the Indian, although his way of living may enable him to conceal it more successfully."

"Sounds like logic," grinned Reach.

"Oh, well, such encounters when properly conducted are harmless," declared Brighton. "If human beings must have something to appease their natural taste for fighting, what can they find that is better or more acceptable between men of nearly equal cleverness and ability?"

"Hello!" muttered Reach, his eyes on three fellows
who were seating themselves a short distance to the right; "there are some chaps we know."

The trio were Carlin, Clay, and Morse. "Oh, yes," nodded Brighton, who had secretly been watching for the appearance of those chaps, "they are Yale men. I know 'em. There's Rod Morse, the fellow who gave Dick Merriwell such a tongue lashing."

"And made a consummate ass of himself," said Reach. "Morse did himself more damage than he knows by his disgusting exhibition of spleen and jealousy."

"Oh, he lost his head," admitted Brighton, seeking to apologize for Morse. "He felt pretty bad over his failure, of course."

"But that didn't justify him in blackguarding Merriwell. Any other man but Merriwell would have punched his face."

"Why didn't Merriwell?"

"Because he's too much of a gentleman. He wouldn't think of getting into a scrap on the campus."

"That's not the complete explanation," said Crowfoot. "Dick didn't strike Morse because he is thoroughly master of himself. I know he must have been angered by the man's insults to a point almost beyond endurance. No one supposes that he was afraid of Morse."

"Nun-no," faltered Brighton. "I fancy he could whip Morse, all right."

"And if he had," said Joe, "if he had resented the fellow's lies and slander by a single blow, he would have lowered himself—in a way, he would have placed himself on the same level with Morse."

"Oh, well," said Brighton, "I fancy Morse realizes now that he made a mistake, even though he may still feel certain in his own mind that he was right in laying the blame of his early elimination from the squad at Merriwell's door."

"Any one who thinks that, whether it is Morse himself or another," said Crowfoot a trifle warmly, "is a fool. I've heard that this fellow Morse claims that Dick is working to give me a surer chance of making the team. If I thought that, if I fancied for a moment that I couldn't get onto the team through my own unaided efforts and my ability to demonstrate that I was a better man that some rival candidate, I'd throw up the sponge tomorrow—I'd quit trying. Nor will I thank Merriwell or any other man for assistance that will push me ahead of some more deserving or equally worthy candidate."

"And you take it from me, Brighton," chimed in Reach, nodding his head sharply and repeatedly, "that Joseph Crowfoot means what he says. He doesn't want any of Merriwell's help."

"It's only natural that friends should stand by each other," muttered Brighton.

"Sure," agreed Crowfoot, "and I know I can depend on Merriwell to stand by me when I need him, just as he may depend on me to stand by him in a time of emergency. Yet I also know he would not thank me for any such assistance, were it in my power to give it, as Morse claims Dick was rendering in my behalf."

"Oh," grinned Reach, "I guess Mr. Morse has dropped to his proper level. He's associating now with the right kind of men for him. But if he's got money in his clothes he'd better keep a grip on it."

By this time the seats were nearly filled. On each of the four sides of the square platform human beings were packed in solid tiers, each receding tier rising above the one before it, and those at the extreme rear being fully twelve feet above the level of the front rows. On every hand men were discussing the merits of the various boxers and wrestlers who were listed to appear. There was a great hum and murmur of voices. Tobacco smoke rose in tiny wreaths and hazy clouds and was quickly carried away by the constantly changing atmosphere.

There was a murmur and a modest outbreak of handclapping as the timekeepers, referee, and other officials came forth by a narrow alley, cut through the tiers of seats at one side, and paused for a moment to consult. Following this the referee, a rather thick-necked, narrow-hipped young man, mounted to the platform and lifted his hand for silence.

There was another burst of applause from those who knew the man on the platform and were pleased that he should appear in the capacity for which he had been selected. As this clapping subsided, the referee spoke.

"Gents," he said, "the first bout to-night will be a four-round go for points in the bantam class between Shaver Murphy and Kid Harrigan. Five-ounce gloves; Queensberry rules."

Stools were placed in opposite corners of the roped space. Then came the boxers, with their attendant seconds, who were bearing buckets of water in which swam huge sponges. The little chaps, stripped down to fighting form, climbed to the platform and seated themselves upon the stools, being covered immediately to their chins by blankets.

There was another slight delay while the referee consulted with the other officials, after which first one
and then the other of the boxers were introduced, being applauded impartially by the audience.

A set of boxing gloves were tossed into the ring and examined. These proving satisfactory, the referee watched the seconds as each fastened the gloves upon the hands of his man.

A gong clanged sharply.

Immediately every light in the arena save those hidden by the huge platform were turned off.

The boxers flung aside their blankets, stepped forth briskly to the centre, touched their gloved right hands after the usual form, retreated a bit and squared away.

An instant later they were at it.

CHAPTER XI.

A CHALLENGE ACCEPTED.

For the most part the boxing bouts were fast, scientific, and clean enough to satisfy the spectators. Three quickly pulled off goes resulted in a draw, a fairly acceptable decision in favor of a local boxer and a surprising knockout by a man who had seemed to be getting the worst of it up to the middle of the final round.

In the semi-darkness outside that bright spot of light which included the roped platform and a narrow border beyond, cigars gleamed redly like sifful stars, and the voices of men made a low, deep murmur. Occasionally, in spite of usual restraint, a telling blow or a clever piece of strategy evoked a repressed shout from the spectators. Once there was a cry of "Foul! foul!" but, the offender protesting it was unintentional, his opponent promptly declined to accept any advantage it might have given him.

It was truly fascinating to watch those lithe, pantherish, skillful contestants down there in the glare of the white light. It gave the unaccustomed spectator a queer indescribable sensation, and even the mildest and most lamblike person in the audience could not refrain from an occasional exclamation or shout of approval over some fine bit of work. It is true, blood was shed, but, as a rule, he who bled the most smiled the most, for those men smiled on each other even as they fought most fiercely, and sought by every possible legitimate means to knock their opponents out.

So intent was Crowfoot upon what was taking place that he failed to see a man who climbed up through a passage amid the seats and worked his way nearer between two rows. Finally this man spoke in a low tone.

"Is this Mr. Crowfoot?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," was his answer.

"I understand that you're a clever amateur wrestler."

"I've never made any pretense of being a wrestler, sir."

"But I've been told that you're good at it. Hatchet, the Indian who was to meet the Unknown here to-night, has failed to appear. It's too bad. It's going to be a tremendous disappointment. I don't know how we can satisfy the crowd unless—unless you'll consent to wrestle in Hatchet's place."

"I haven't any intention or desire to do such a thing, sir."

"But can't you be induced? It really looks as if the Indian had lost heart, and that's too bad."

"Possibly," said Crowfoot, "Hatchet learned that which every one here seems to know."

"What do you mean?"

"That your Unknown is not really an unknown—that he is instead a very well-known and famous amateur wrestler."

"Possibly you're right," admitted the man. "Still, it's too bad that Hatchet squealed, for he has claimed that he could throw this same fellow who was to meet him to-night. You're an Indian. Out of pride you might show that you're not afraid. If we can offer any inducements in any way whatever—"

Joe cut him short.

"If you mean money or a purse or anything but honors, sir," he said, "you're making a mistake. I'm not a professional wrestler—not even an amateur by any claim whatever. I see no reason why I should provide amusement for these people."

"Oh, all right," said the man. "I'm sorry you look at it that way. We'll have to admit that our Indian has gone back on us and we have no one to fill his place."

"Why don't you do it, Crowfoot?" asked Brighton.

Billy Reach awoke.

"Sure. Go ahead," he urged in a whisper. "By Jinks! I'll bet you can throw that fellow. I know what you can do. I'll back you."

"It would have been different," said Joe, "if I'd come here with any idea of wrestling."

Reach knew it would be useless for him to argue, and he relapsed into silence.

A short time later the Unknown, shrouded in a blanket, appeared in the ring accompanied by his singular, scar-faced, silent second.

While the crowd was looking for the appearance of the Indian wrestler, the referee stepped out, called for silence, and spoke.

"Gents," he said, "it is with great regret that I have to announce the failure of the Indian wrestler, Hatchet, to appear to-night."

At this a chorus of groans rose on every side.

"Our Unknown is here, gents," the referee went on—"here and ready to wrestle with Hatchet or any other amateur weighing not over one hundred and eighty-five. This, gents, is him."

He waved his hand toward the Unknown, who rose and bowed in response to the applause. It seemed that the man's eyes twinkled almost mischievously through the twin slits in the close-fitting mask. They were dark, piercing eyes, and for a single moment
they seemed looking up through the shadows toward that row of tiered seats on which sat Young Joe Crowfoot. Joe leaned forward a bit and stared hard at the masked wrestler.

A brief period of silence was followed by a rising murmur on every hand.

"Why don't somebody try him?" was the question spoken by scores in the crowd.

The audience was greatly disappointed.

"I understand," continued the referee, "that there's a pretty clever Injun wrestler here to-night, and an effort has been made to induce him to uphold the honor of his brethren. Unfortunately, he don't seem inclined to accept. One Injun squealed and the other dissent."

Crowfoot was still staring at the eyes of the masked Unknown.

"Gee!" whispered Billy Reach, nudging Joe; "that's rubbing it in. Gosh! I wish you'd show 'em."

"I will!" said Joe suddenly, as he started to rise.

"I'll wrestle!"

A shout went up.

"Hold on! Here he comes! Here's your Injun!"

It was impossible to suppress the roar from the crowd.

Billy Reach scrambled after Crowfoot.

"I'm in this," he said. "I'm your second, Joe."

Descending to the platform, Crowfoot spoke to the referee, who then announced to the spectators that some little time would be required by the Indian to make ready for the match.

Joe and Reach disappeared along the narrow alleyway leading to the dressing rooms.

CHAPTER XII.

SPLENDID WRESTLING.

Provided with trunks and wrestling shoes, it did not take Crowfoot long to strip down and get ready.

Reach was in a flutter of eagerness and excitement.

"Joe," he kept saying, "Joe," you can throw him—I know you can. You'll do it, sure."

"If I can I shall," assured the young Indian.

To save him, Crowfoot could not tell why, having looked into the eyes of the masked wrestler, he had been suddenly possessed by an intense desire to pit his skill against that of the man. Before that he had not entertained even the remotest intention of wrestling.

"Ready, Joe?" asked Reach.

"Yes," was the answer.

Billy seized a blanket and threw it round his redskin chum, whom he proudly followed forth by that narrow passage which led to the arena.

The Unknown, his silent, scar-faced second, and the crowd were impatiently waiting. They were surprised that the Indian should have made ready and reappeared so soon.

As Joe climbed into the arena he knew all eyes were fastened upon him. He could feel the concentrated gaze of that gathering. Dimly he could see the banks of human beings rising on either side. In the front rows their faces were faintly perceptible, but this was not true of those who sat farther back.

The referee and other officials consulted with Crowfoot and the Unknown. It was agreed that a single fall should decide the contest, and that the struggle would be barred.

Again and again the eyes of Crowfoot sought those of the masked man, but now the latter avoided Joe's gaze.

"Gents," said the referee, again speaking to the audience, "it gives me pleasure to announce that the whole Injun nation ain't affected by cold feet. I guess mebbe you'll see something like a wrestling match, after all. One fair fall settles it. The Injun who will take Hatchet's place gives his name as Lahgohama. This is him."

"Hurrah for Lahgohama!" piped a small voice far back in the gloom, and the great crowd laughed.

A wrestling mat had been spread upon the platform.

"Ready, shake hands," said the referee.

The contestants rose. Crowfoot dropped his blanket from his shoulders, and together with the stool it was removed by Billy Reach.

There was a murmur of admiration as the spectators surveyed the lithe-limbed, supple yet muscular figure of the young Indian.

There was another murmur as the Unknown tossed aside his blanket and stepped forward with outstretched hand.

Never had any one present seen a more perfect specimen of physical manhood. From head to heels the masked fellow was splendidly put up. His skin was firm and smooth as marble, with a healthy pinkish tint. Although he was a wrestler, he was not overburdened with huge, unsightly muscles. Nevertheless, it was apparent that every inch of him was hard and firm and muscular. As to his condition, there could be no doubt but that he was in absolutely perfect form.

The hands of the wrestlers touched, and once more Joe felt a strange fascination which he could not understand—a singular electrical thrill that stirred him in every nerve fibre of his being.

Both men had rubbed their feet in rosin, and with the referee between them they poised themselves for the clinch.

The referee stepped aside, and the wrestlers sprang forward, circling, crouching, seeking holds. Twice the Unknown reached and attempted to grapple, and twice he was baffled by Crowfoot's rapid twisting, sidelong escape.

Then they came together and clung fast. Neither had obtained the slightest advantage, much to the delight of the watching crowd.
Billy Reach, quivering as if chilled to the bone, was whispering:

"Go after him, Joe! Down him! Rush him! You can do it!"

The silent man smiled a hideous smile.

Twisting, writhing, whirling, straining, those wrestlers swayed hither and thither across the mat, their every movement watched by the alert referee.

Suddenly, as if greased, Crowfoot squirmed partly from his opponent's clutch, securing a waistlock. Down to the mat went both men with a thud.

But as they fell the Unknown twisted in mid-air, breaking Joe's hold and coming down on all fours. When the Indian attempted to pounce upon him he escaped, rising to his knees, and met the follow-up attack.

In this manner, each man upon his knees, the Unknown not only succeeded in baffling Joe, but secured a waistlock. Like a flash he sought to lift the Indian and throw him.

Equally quick in his movements, Crowfoot threw his arms outside those of his opponent, brought them underneath and clasped his hands, forcing the Unknown downward and seeking to roll him over.

Again there was a shout, for once more the youth of the copper skin seemed to have an advantage.

Billy Reach actually hopped up and down as he softly panted:

"Got him, Joe! Over with him now! He can't get away!"

But even as Billy whispered these words the Unknown broke the Indian's hold, wrenched himself clear, and leaped backward to his feet with a most amazing spring.

Crowfoot seemed to know in advance exactly what the fellow would do, for he likewise sprang up, following aggressively and seeking to get another hold.

The crowd murmured, for the course of the match, swift and thrilling, was surprising the spectators, who had fully expected to see the Indian on the defensive and the Unknown pushing him from the clang of the gong to the fall, which, it had been feared, would come all too soon.

But now it seemed that Crowfoot had been led into eager aggressiveness by the mask, for, as the Indian reached, the Unknown caught his wrist with both hands, jerked him forward, turned, stepped outside and behind his nearest leg, twined an arm about his and threw him across an outthrust hip.

"Ahh!" cried the watchers.

"He's down! he's down!" shouted several.

But Crowfoot, striking on his side, spun over like a cat.

Down came the Unknown, grasping the Indian about the body directly beneath the arms. In this position they were head on, each with his knees upon the floor. The white arms of the Unknown seemed to pull Crowfoot forward, and then the masked youth's hands slipped up over and behind the Indian's head, getting a full Nelson hold.

But ere this hold could be used to advantage, the Indian drew his knees far beneath him, hugged his own arms tight to his sides and firmly around those of the white wrestler, flinging his body upward and backward at the same time.

The Unknown's heels made a half circle in the air.

"Oh!" shouted the watchers.

Somewhat, even as he was being turned and flung backward in that manner, the wearer of the mask gave a snap with his feet and a jerk which caused his arms to slip beneath the now perspiring arms of the redskin. As his feet struck the floor with his back arched the Unknown made another writhing twist, and this cleared him and enabled him to turn so that he was in position to face Crowfoot and defend himself from further attack.

"By Jove!" said one of the spectators; "that's the best wrestling match I ever saw. Both those men are swift as lightning."

Although such fiercely rapid work was necessarily of a most exhausting nature, neither wrestler exhibited signs of distress. Naturally, they were breathing somewhat heavily, but no attempt was made to grapple and hold for a rest.

Not one of the sparring bouts had aroused such keen interest and excitement as this wrestling match. The aggressiveness of the Indian awoke admiration, but it was the cleverness of the white man in escaping from apparently certain defeat that brought tremendous bursts of applause from the crowd.

Each time Joe secured an advantage Billy Reach throbbed with excitement, and each time Crowfoot was baffled Billy dolefully groaned his disappointed regret.

As they rose, Crowfoot shot forward headlong like a man making a flying tackle. Out he flung his arms, grasping the Unknown low, and permitting his hands to slip down to the man's knees.

Such an attack should have carried the white youth off his feet. Instead of that, he clapped his hands on the back of Crowfoot's head and threw his weight forward, forcing Joe to the floor and falling with him. Feinting for a half Nelson hold, the wearer of the mask swung swiftly alongside of Crowfoot, having reached beneath his body and grasped his far arm above the elbow. With a heave and a roll the Caucasian sent the redskin over.

For the first time it seemed as if one of the wrestlers failed to take advantage of an opening, and this was the white man, who permitted Joe to bridge and spin over on his face, thus avoiding a fall.

"Too bad! too bad!" muttered scores of voices.

Naturally, the sympathy of the crowd was with the white man, even though the clean, square, fair and clever work of the redskin had lifted him immensely in the estimation of every one.

"Not yet!" panted Joe, as he rose to meet the following nip of the white wrestler.

"Not yet," laughed the masked fellow softly.
"We'll give them satisfaction. It wouldn't be quite right to cut it off too short."

Crowfoot felt a hrob of anger and resentment, for it seemed as if his opponent meant to infer that he had purposely declined to make the most of an advantage which would have given him the decision.

"I ask no favors," palpitaded Joe, as they grappled again.

"Oh, that's all right," murmered the still laughing white man.

In a twinkling the redskin tried for a cross-buttoc. The Unknown instantly turned sidewise, grasping Joe across the body in front with his right arm, at the same time throwing his left behind the Indian's back and securing a perfect hold for the Cornwall heave. Crowfoot attempted to stop this by securing a neck hold, but momentary dismay felled his heart, for he realized that he could not check the fall. Down they went, but even as they dropped the white man hissed:

"Twist! Turn!"

Crowfoot himself could not have told why he obeyed, but, as if moved by the will of his opponent, he abandoned the neck hold, which seemed like his only salvation, and made a writhing, squirming twist with his entire body.

The crowd had shouted even more loudly than ever on beholding the Unknown's successful effort at the Cornwall heave, but it shouted again as the slippery redskin twisted free and fell on all fours instead of the flat of his back.

"Good!" sibilated the Unknown, as Joe met him and they grappled and held fast for a moment.

Crowfoot was amazed. Why had this man failed to hold him and batter him down to the mat? Then came the thought that the white man actually held him in such disdain and contempt that he was willing to toy with him for a time in order to amuse the spectators. This was sufficient to arouse all the savage resentment of Young Joe's nature.

As they came up he lunged for a crotch hold and secured it. Forgetting the agreement, he shot up his right arm for a half strangle.

The Unknown grabbed his wrists with one hand and clapped the other against the elbow, making a shoulder twist which stopped the attack in a twinkling.

"Steady!" he said. "You came near forgetting then."

"Foul! foul!" cried many voices. But the wearer of the mask shook his head and lunged at Crowfoot.

Joe's defense was amazing.

Finally the Indian resorted to Dick Merriwell's favorite trick of the "flying mare." Catching his opponent's wrist, he jerked the fellow's arm across his shoulder, palm upward, at the same time turning until the white wrestler was behind his back. With a heave, he snapped his antagonist fairly over his head and pounced upon him, flattening him out with his shoulders to the mat.

The referee sprang forward, stooped, slapped Crowfoot on the back and cried:

"Fall!"

There was a moment of dead silence in the arena, and then a roar of resentment from the crowd.

"Foul! foul!" came from every side.

The Unknown rose quickly and made a sweeping one-arm gesture for silence.

"I was not thrown by a foul!" he cried clearly and distinctly. "It was a fair, square throw."

"He tried to foul him! he tried to foul him!" clamored the disappointed witnesses.

"Oh, no," asserted the masked youth. "He simply forgot the rules for a moment. There was no harm done by it. The decision belongs to him."

Amazed by such generosity, all Joe's anger and resentment vanished instantly. He was not to be outdone. They saw that he wished to say something.

"Keep still! keep still!" cried men on all sides of the platform.

The uproar subsided.

"Gentlemen," said Joe, "I shall refuse to accept the decision in my favor, for twice he might have thrown me and he declined. He is a better man than I."

"If he declined to take advantage of his opportunities," said the referee, "that's his own loss. The throw was fair and square, and Lahgohama wins."

Squealing with delight, Billy Reach leaped through the ropes and hugged Crowfoot.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE EXPOSURE.

When their blood had cooled somewhat, the crowd admitted that the decision was just, at the same time blaming the white wrestler for his failure to secure the fall he might have obtained were he was defeated by the flying mare.

While Reach and Brighton were rubbing Joe down in the dressing room, Clay, Carlin, and Morse entered. They were all very complimentary. Nevertheless, Joe persisted in maintaining that his opponent was the better man and should have won.

Dressed and in company with the students, Crowfoot ascended to the smoking room, where he was introduced to a number of prominent club members. The following matches in the arena seemed to hold little interest for the greater part of the crowd, as a stream of men flowed upward from below.

"I promised to show you the upper rooms, fellows," said Brighton, addressing Reach and Crowfoot. "I think they are open now."

Carlin, Clay, and Morse followed them upstairs, and they were admitted to the big cardroom, where a number of games were just starting. After they had looked the place over, Clay suggested "a small game of chip."
Crowfoot objected.
"Not to-night," he said. "It's getting late."
"Oh, we can play a while," said Clay. "I haven't got a great deal of money with me, so we'll make it a light game. You can't refuse, Crowfoot, for you carried off a lot of my coin, and it's only fair to give me a chance to try to get it back."

In this manner Crowfoot was finally induced to sit into a game, with the understanding that it was not to last more than three-quarters of an hour.

Gradually the crowd gathered in the cardroom, where those who did not care to play could amuse themselves by watching the games in which others participated. Around each table a group of spectators gathered.

Crowfoot was resolved to play on the defensive, giving Clay as little chance as possible to get back at him. Whenever Clay or Carlin dealt, the Indian was cautious about coming in, and several times he declined to draw cards when the hand dealt him was most promising.

"Seems to me," laughed Clay, "you've got a case of cold feet, Crowfoot. You're not playing the game you did last time we sat down together."

"It isn't my night," said Crowfoot. "I didn't care to play anyhow, but you sort of insisted."

"Bah! it isn't my night, either," said Carlin, flinging down his cards. "This game doesn't interest me. It's too tame. Excuse me, fellows. I think I'll withdraw."

Cashing in what few chips remained before him, Carlin rose and sauntered away.

The game continued. At last Crowfoot took a sizable pot, being called by Clay, who held a handsome full hand against four ten spots displayed by the Indian.

The moment he saw Joe's hand, Clay started a disturbance.

"I've been watching him!" he cried. "He made up that hand and held it out! They aren't the cards that were dealt to him!"

"Are you aware, young man," said a gentleman who had been standing near, "that you're accusing the winner of cheating."

"Yes, I'm aware of it," said Clay. "I've played with him before, and it's cost me good money. I made up my mind to watch him to-night. That's why I coaxed him into this game. I've caught him. This pack of cards is short. I ask you, sir, to count it."

The gentleman who had just spoken was the one to whom this request was made.

"I'm a director in this club," he said. "My name is Henry Brown. Cheating is not countenanced here. If the pack is short, where are the missing cards?"

"In the Indian's pocket," declared Clay. "I saw him slip them into the right-hand pocket of his coat while he produced the made-up hand from the opposite pocket. The cards he got in the deal and the draw will be found in that pocket."

Crowfoot thrust his hand into the pocket of his coat and produced five cards, which he tossed upon the table.

"I did not put them there," he said. "That's right," cried a clear voice, "and here is the man who did."

The masked Unknown had been watching the game, together with his silent companion of the scarred face. As he spoke he seized Hugo Carlin, who was attempting to retreat quietly through the crowd that had begun to pack around the table.

Carlin was amazed and infuriated.
"You lie!" he snarled, seeking to strike the accuser. But his wrists were grabbed and held with a clasp of iron.

"Mr. Brown," said the Unknown, "I gave you a tip about this dirty business. You were watching. What did you see?"

"I saw," answered Henry Brown promptly, "that man put those cards in the Indian's pocket. Gentlemen, this is a put-up job to disgrace the Indian."

Henry Brown was known to every member of the club, and all were aware that his word could be relied on. In an instant the tide of sympathy turned against Dunbar Clay and his accomplice. On every hand were scowling, angry men who seemed to threaten the two rascals with bodily harm.

The protests of Carlin and Clay seemed to arouse the resentment of these men to a still higher pitch.

"What will we do with them?" cried one.

"Kick them out," came from another.

"Gentlemen," said Henry Brown, "we want no disturbance here. We can't afford it, for it would do the club a great deal of harm. These rascals who put up the job can never enter our doors again. We'll simply conduct them outside and let them depart in shame and disgrace."

Through all this affair Billy Reach had been aghast and dumb. Now he began spluttering his indignation, although no one gave him any attention.

Already Brighton and Morse were trying to get away. No one checked them, and they made the utmost haste to depart.

Dunbar Clay and Hugo Carlin were escorted from the cardroom and the clubhouse by a delegation of men who told the fellows what they thought about them and let them go.

Crowfoot offered the masked Unknown his hand.
"I owe you thanks, sir," he said. "You're not only a better wrestler than I, but you have placed me unspeakably in your debt by exposing those scoundrels. I don't know why you did it, but——"

"That's all right," laughed the masked fellow. "I was very glad of this opportunity to prove that no honest men can afford to have anything whatever to do with Clay and Carlin. There's an automobile waiting outside, Crowfoot. We're going back to the city in it. Will you come along?"

"If there's room——"
“Plenty of it. There’s room for you and Reach.”
They descended the stairs, followed by the silent man. At the door a touring car waited, with the chauffeur in his seat. A number of the Woodland Club members accompanied them and cordially bade them good night.

“It’s unnecessary to request gentlemen to say nothing of this unfortunate little affair,” said Henry Brown. “If the story got out it might arouse some unpleasant talk. We feel sure neither of those rascals who were exposed will say anything about it.”

“Nor will we, sir,” promised the wearer of the mask. “Good night, everybody.”

“Good night, good night,” called the group upon the steps; and away sped the automobile.

* * * * * *

The sound of many footsteps caused Brad Buckhart to look up from the book he had been conning while waiting for his roommate to reappear.

“Pretty time for Dick to be coming in,” muttered the Texan. “And he’s bringing a bunch with him.”

The door opened to admit the masked Unknown, followed by his scar-faced companion, Young Joe Crowfoot, and Billy Reach. Reach still seemed benumbed and dazed by what had taken place. Expectant of something to follow, he dropped upon a chair and sat there, eyes, mouth, and ears wide open.

“What the devil—” began Brad.

“This thing,” said the wearer of the mask, “is mighty hot and uncomfortable.”

The mask was removed, exposing Dick Merriwell’s flushed and smiling face!

“What have you been doing now, pard?” asked the wondering Texan. “I saw your grease paints and make-up outfit scattered around in the bathroom, and I opined you was up to something.”

Joe Crowfoot looked Dick over silently for several moments.

“I didn’t believe it could be you,” Joe finally said; “and when you refused to take advantage of your chances in that wrestling match I wondered. Where is Harry Paxton?”

“I’ll introduce him to you,” laughed Dick, “just as soon as he can get that stain and grease paint off his face. Paxton, you’ll find cocoa butter and soap and water there in the bathroom.”

“Then I’ll try to make myself appear a little more presentable,” laughed the man who had hitherto seemed speechless.

“I made him up,” explained Dick. “Isn’t that a realistic old scar I painted on his cheek? Doesn’t that wig look like the real thing?”

“I didn’t know myself when I looked at my reflection in the glass,” said Paxton.

“Dick,” said Crowfoot, “I don’t understand this business now. Will you kindly explain?”

“The explanation is simple, Joe. That fellow Brighton who invited you out to the Woodland tonight talked too much. He gave the whole plot away to a supposed-to-be friend under pledge of secrecy. I can’t name the fellow to whom he told it, for I have promised not to involve him in the affair. He came to me and put me wise. I hunted up Paxton, who informed me that his father had got hold of the whole business and made him promise on his honor that he would not wrestle to-night. Why Hatchet failed to appear to-night is a mystery not yet explained. In order to get into the club without alarming the chaps who had fixed up such a nice little game to ruin your reputation, Crowfoot, I decided to take Paxton’s place. You will observe that he and I are of almost the same height, build, and weight. Of course he couldn’t visit the club as Paxton, for then the crowd would get wise. I told him I’d make him up in a disguise that couldn’t be penetrated. He had some doubts at first, but—”

“They vanished after you exercised your art upon me,” said Paxton. “But I knew somebody would recognize my voice if I talked. Merriwell was able to imitate my voice excellently after a little practice, and that carried the thing through. It was great sport.”

“Why didn’t you throw me in that wrestling match, Dick?” asked Crowfoot.

“I intended to, Joe,” was the frank answer; “but I made a mistake in procrastinating. You caught me with my own pet trick and threw me. Joe, a short time ago I had a little talk with you about poker playing. This experience should teach you the folly of such a practice and the danger in getting mixed up with men who play cards successfully for money. If good luck had not put me wise to the plot against you, you would have been branded to-night as a cheat. I say, Joe, I wish you’d promise me something.”

“What is it, Dick?”

“Promise me that while you’re a student at Yale, at least, you will never again play cards for money. Is that asking too much?”

“No, Dick,” said Crowfoot instantly. “I give you my word of honor, and here’s my hand on it.”

THE END.

THE NEXT NUMBER (706) WILL CONTAIN

Dick Merriwell’s Prank;

OR,

The Exposure of Archie Ettinger.

THE "TIGEROS" OF COPAN.

They were an odd-looking pair. One, who carried the spears, was very short, only more than four feet six inches high, but nearly as broad. He was long, with tremenously muscular legs, arms, and shoulders. His companion, the man with the machete, was long and thin, a mere lath, lamp-post, sapling-pole of a man. He stood considerably over six feet in height, and his lanky black hair, coarse as a horse's tail, hanging nearly to his waist, made him look even taller.

At a glance Carston recognized their calling, although he had very seldom met Indiana who hunted the jaguar in the fashion of their Aztec or Toitoe forefathers. He gave them food and drink, and, when they had satisfied hunger and thirst, asked their business with him.

The tall man answered in the curious sing-song tones of the free, mountain Indian.

"Señor," said he, "great is your fame as a tigero. We have come far to learn your secret. Many tigeres have we caught upon the spears and cleft with the machete, but for every one we have killed you have slain fifty. So it is said."

"Ay, it is said," added the short Indian in the same high-pitched tones, "it is said, but can the great hunter show their hides?"

"Oh!" thought Carston, "you are jealous. Cachuteos, aren't you?" he asked.

"We are from Quauhtemalan—the land of the Eagle," rejoined the long Indian.

"Guatemala. Same place," said the hunter curtly. "Now, what is it you want?"

"We have become a mock," said the short Indian. "Since the world began our fathers have been tigeros, even as we are, and held in honor. But now men point at us the finger of scorn."

"Why?"

The tall Indian answered: "Señor, the alcaldes of our pueblo lost two cows and three calves last moon, señor—by the tigeres, Don Arturo Viteri lost six calves and a cow, señor—by the tigeres. Others have lost cattle—by the tigeres, señor. But it was Don Arturo who told the alcaldes that we were only fit to kill cubs and tigerettes, and bade him command us to come to you and learn our trade."

Carston laughed. "I know Don Arturo," he said. "Many times in the old days he has hunted with me in Guatemala. Where is your pueblo?"

"On the Copan River, señor."

"Copan is in Honduras?"

"Si, señor. Our pueblo of San Antonio is on the border."

"So Don Arturo has sent you to me, ten days' journey, to show you born tigeros how I destroy the devourers of cattle? Come along?"

Carston led them to the room he called his armory. The walls were hung with oldWinchesters, Springfields, and Sniders; in racks were the latest magazine products of the gunsmiths of England and the United States. "I shoot them with these," he said. "But now there are few left to kill. It is weeks since I heard of a tigre in Chiapas."

As the Indians glanced round the room their eyes sparkled. Carston charged the magazine of one of his newest weapons and explained the action.

"Ah!" exclaimed the short Indian, "but if the señor only had spears and a machete?"

"I wouldn't have killed so many. But I have always wanted to try the old method."

"Then come with us," cried the tigeros together eagerly.

"Where are the tigeros?" the hunter asked.

"At Copan," said the wielder of the spears. "Among the old palaces and the great estatus—the idols, as some call them—in the vast forest, where only we tigeros dare venture because of the wild beasts and other tigeros. And in the old temples and courts of the ancient people many tigeros find refuge. From there they come at night to ravage the fincas and haciendas."

The hunter was interested. He had met very few Indians who spoke of the courts and temples and palaces when describing the immense ruins and monoliths hidden in the forest here and there in Mexico and Guatemala. To nearly all Indians the ancient teocalis and temples were just old houses—casas antiguas—nothing more. These men were very different. They were taught to whom the traditions of their people had been handed down.

"It is a long journey," he rejoined, "but I will go with you. Tomorrow. Rest now. What are your names?"

The tall Indian answered: "We are brothers. Bernardo and Pablo el Tigero. I am Bernardo."

Having made the strange Indians comfortable in hammocks on the veranda, the hunter sought his wife and told her his decision. "I shall take Manuel. You had better stay at home. It's an awful journey: no roads to speak about."

As usual, Mrs. Carston objected. "Where you go, I go," she said.

But the hunter was firm. So, having provided a couple of mules for the tigeros, the party set out early next morning for the ancient, many centuries deserted City of Copan, near the border of Guatemala and Honduras, a journey of between two and three hundred miles.

Six hours later, accompanied by Juan Bueno, Mrs. Carston followed.

As the hunter had declared, it was an awful journey. From the slopes of Tacama in Chiapas, Mexico, looking south and east into Guatemala one sees many great peaks, mostly volcanoes, dead, or merely smouldering. Occasionally one or more of them breaks out and spreads a gray rain around, as recently did Santa Maria de Guatemala, belching thousands of tons of cinders and scoria, setting even the long quiescent Tacama, miles away, smoking, and covering the coffee fincas on its sides and spurs with reddened silica.

Among these mountains led the track to Copan. Through the steamy valleys they traveled when they could, in dense forests whose very tree of age exposed to the fierce sunlight bore on trunks and branches myriads of orchids and tillandias and many another parasite. But mostly they were climbing up or clambering down steeples that in other lands would be called awful precipices, or struggling through narrow barrancas carved out of the solid rocks by mountain torrents, camping where they might find food for their animals, until at last they struck the Copan River.

Fragment of many mysterious conversations Carston had overheard on the way, and he gathered that the tigeros intended to astonish him and show him hunting the like of which he had never seen before.

Eventually, after traveling upriver for two days, they arrived at a great wall facing the stream and parallel to it.

"Copan," said tall Bernardo, stretching out a long, lean arm.

"Copan," echoed Pablo.

A stranger unfamiliar with the ancient cities of Mexico and Central America would have seen nothing more than a huge cliff overgrown with shrubs and trees which jutted out from its face and grew from its peak. The top was level, and a part of it was about thirty feet high, but Carston knew well enough that it was the work of men, not of nature.

"Where are the tigeros?" he asked.

"It is the wall there, señor. There are the great teocalis and temples, many estatus," said the squat Pablo. "There the tigeres dwell, señor."

Close upon sundown they crossed the river at a ford beyond the limit of the wall, and by a much overgrown track entered the dense forest, which covered and almost hid the ancient city. As the sun sank they emerged in a glade apparently filled with ruinous stone buildings.

"Here is our casa," said Bernardo, halting before the nearest edifice and swinging back a rude wicket of strong saplings which blocked the ancient doorway. It was the hall of a palace large enough to lodge an army. In one corner, just visible in the dim light, were a hearth, utensils, and rude beds. There was food for man and animals, water and aguardiente. At a great altar the Indians tethered the mules and horses and brought them sacate. They holding the hunter and his mazo rest on the hide beds, they disappeared.

As soon as they had gone Carston turned on the little electric lamps which he was rarely without, and examined his lodging. The walls were of stone, the window apertures were eight or ten feet from the stone-paved floor. Save for the wicket gate which closed the ancient doorway, there was no place of ingress, except for the mules and bats and other insects. Beside the gate stood a stout wooden bar. The hunter fixed it in its sockets on wicket and posts.

"We can sleep safely now," Manuel, he said, and, turning out his light, he stretched his arms, ravened at the great wall, and fell asleep.

Safe they were, so far as they knew, but sleeping was not
an easy matter. The light was no sooner extinguished than the forest arose. Never had the hunter heard such an awakening. Roars, sudden as claps of thunder, and screams were accompanied by dismal booming howls. The howlings seemed to come from all points, and the whole forest seemed to throb with the unprecedented thundering roars, groans, and cater-waulings, from below.

"It's a place of evil spirits, señor," the mozo muttered, in great alarm.

"It's a place of tigres and cats and howling monstrosities," Carston rejoined. "The tigres and the cats have scented our animals; the monkeys are howling because they can't help it. When they find the tigres and the cats they will run away." But they did not. As the night advanced the roars, groans, and screams multiplied, redoubled. Many times they heard the scratching of claws on the wicket gate and the sound of blows that shook the stout wooden bar in its sockets. The horses and mules, tied near the ancient altar, plunged about in terror. Manuel was in a great fright.

"There are hundreds of tigres!" he gasped hoarsely. "There are certainly a great many," said the hunter. "They seem to be marching round the place in troops. The Indians said there were plenty of tigres at Copan, and there are." Throughout the night the hungry clamor continued, and never ceased till the day dawned pale shafts of light through the window apertures. After the uproar the silence which followed the sudden dawn seemed uncanny.

Very early the tigress came and were admitted. Pablo carried the beef tied in a cloth, and the pair of bears, each with about nine feet long, the other three feet shorter. With Bernardo came a pack of littles of dogs of a mongrel native breed.

"Now, señor," said Pablo, when Manuel had lit a fire and made coffee, "we are ready to show you how we hunt the tigre. We have spears for you, if you dare venture to use them," and his broad face wrinkled in a contemptuous grin.

To the evident surprise of the tigros Carston accepted the challenge and chose a pair of spears, bidding his mozo follow closely with a rifle. He did not care to trust his life to a machete stroke in the event of the spears failing, as Pablo had doubtless done times without number.

The moment the word was given the little dogs plunged into the undergrowth, which grew thickly round the ruined palace. Immediately one, the leader of the pack, whined. It would have been singular, indeed, if they had not "found" at once. The tigros stepped forward, Pablo holding a spear in either hand, with Bernardo at his back, machete on shoulder. Carston copied the squau Indian's example. Manuel following him boldly. Pushing through the dense brush, the four emerged into another glade, in the centre of which stood a massive carved monolith ten feet high, with a dented mask behind it. In front of the idol the dogs had halted, trembling and whining. Being of a wild breed, not one of them barked.

Pablo shouted an order, and the pack, still quivering eagerly, advanced in a line, the dogs of cut snuff and cut stare hardly disappeared when they rushed back, each with its tail between its legs, and scuttled into the undergrowth. Carston laughed loudly at the ridiculous spectacle, but his hilarity was short.

"Beware, señor! Beware!" cried the Indians together. Scarcely had the words been uttered when a monstrous jaguar, a male, trotted out of the cave, with its ponderous head lowered and its massive shaggy fur bristling up. Two more jaguars, also males, followed, counterparts of the first. The three crouched in an irregular line about two yards apart, with their yellow eyes glaring ferociously, and their backs bristling from head to tail.

"Maldito!" exclaimed the mozo behind Carston. "Take the rifle, quick, señor! There are two too many." "No!" said Carston. "I will go after them."

Out of a corner of his eye Carston saw Pablo drop on his right knee, holding the spears extended and sloping toward the angry brutes, the longer first, the shorter behind, the butts of both resting on his knee. In time he followed the tigero's example. For a space of five seconds, perhaps, the savage animals crouched; then, with short roars, like claps of thunder, they sprang high in the air, with open mouths and pounding feet, and out head, upon their foes.

A "fear" of them came at the hunter. He had no time to think, no time to exhort Manuel to stand firm and fire, no time even to assess the situation. He leaped upon his horse and behind him, hardly conscious of them, and then the butts of his spears flew up and knocked him over on his back. The jaguar he had trans-

fixed fell upon him and lay there snarling, gasping, biting, and rending. Carston gave himself up for dead, but to his amaze-

ment the great brute did not touch him with claw or tooth. It was tearing and rending, not at the hunter, but at part of the lower entrance, which, as it came out at its shoul-

ders and broken off. Presently the tigre rolled off him, and Carston, deluged with the brute's blood, sprang up and looked around.

At his feet lay Manuel's rifle. Seizing it, he blew out the spitted tigre's brains. Pablo was scrambling to his legs. He had transfixed his tigre with both long and short spear. The animal lay there, the head hanging. Bernardo, standing with his brother as the latter knelt, had split its skull with his machete. But where was the mozo?

A scream of terror overhead drew the hunter's attention. He glanced upward. Clinging to the end of a great branch which stretched over the glade was Manuel. Close behind, almost touching him, was the wounded tigre, whose attack he had diverted from his master by running away. Throwing up the rifle Carston fired. The great cat let go its hold and fell, but dropped upon its feet, and, furious with rage and agony, sprang upon the hunter, who, for the second time in that desperate fight, went down.

In that instant two shots rang out and the tigre rolled over dead.

"I was just in time, Dick," cried Mrs. Carston, as she rode up, followed by James. "I gave me at home when you next go hunting tigres with spears."

Carston struggled to his feet in amazement, gasping for breath. Scarcely sixty seconds had elapsed since the jaguars had trotted out of the cave, but they had been the most crowded moments the hunter had ever experienced.

"Nell!" he panted, "how—did you—get here?"

"Followed your trail, of course," was the answer.

"No!" said Pablo, dripping blood from his arms and bodies and bunches of leaves the tigros walked up.

"Well, Don Richard," said Pablo, grinning maliciously, "how do you like the spears? You did well for a beginner—very well."

"Very well," echoed Bernardo; "but it is fortunate there were rifles also."

"You're right," rejoined the hunter; "and to the rifle I'm going to stick in future."

That was only the beginning of the tigre-hunting among the ruins of the ancient city of Copan.

Having obtained supplies from his old friend Viteri, who were brought by Don Antonio Carston decree, and delivered a week, at the end of which period the two tigros were rich men, as riches go among Indians. Counting cubic, the party killed nineteen jaguars, to the great credit of Pablo and Bernardo, who received from the government ten dollars a head, and to the great advantage and satisfaction of the cattle breeders of the Copan district; but the hunters did not again have to encounter three full-grown males at the same time.

PIGEON MESSENGERS.

Pretty pigeons of Australia carry packages and messages between Hobart and Maatsuyker Island lighthouse, a distance of about seventy-five miles. Last November they called a physician for a lighthouse attendant and probably saved his life. Three birds are liberated with messages every three weeks, and when accident or illness occurs three additional birds are set free. These birds in all are used for the service. While messages have not always reached their destination, the service has nevertheless been highly satisfactory. The messages are written on a piece of paper tied under the bird's wing, and the marine board has in view some cellu-lolated cases which may be adjusted under the bird's wing, and in which a good deal of information might be carried.

The birds are fed on grey peas of good quality, get plenty of green and fresh water, and are kept thoroughly clean. They are also allowed at their station plenty of opportunity for needful exercise. That Maatsuyker Island lighthouse, which has a most isolated position, could secure three messages in twenty-four hours after he had been sent for by pigeon post has suggested important possibilities for more general use of homing pigeons for such service. Trophies are to be provided for homing competitors as a signal honor to the best of their carriage. There are about twenty thousand of these birds in Australia.
to that which is best. In the start "Tip Top," with its stirring motto, "a clean mind in a healthy body," was an innovation in boys' literature, and many watched the experiment with considerable curiosity; but the faith of the publishers was not misplaced, for quickly that vast army of the better class of American lads gathered around our standard, and faithfully have they stood by us through all these many years, working for the extending of "Tip Top's" silent influence. It is to the earnest enthusiasm of just such sensible boys as you, Henry, that this wonderful little publication owes much of its astonishing popularity.

I have been reading your excellent magazine for the last five years. At first my employer, a graduate of the U. of P., objected to my reading "Tip Top," or what he called "blood-and-thunder stories." I handed him one—"Dick Merrivell's Regret"—and told him that, if, after he had read it through, he still objected, I would discontinue reading them. He now can hardly wait for it every Friday. I first introduced "Tip Top" in the Young Men's Catholic Club, which has a membership of ninety-five, and now nearly every member reads it. Yours respectfully,
New York.
Cornelius S. Regan.

We have a niche in our list of good fellows' names, and yours seems peculiarly fitted to fill the gap. Look and see if its appearance among such honored company will not cause us to present our compliments to your respected employer. We feel certain that he must have been fond of college sports in those days he loves to recall.

(A letter from Wisconsin.)

I have been buying "Tip Tops" for the past two years, and will take the opportunity to tell you I couldn't get along without them. I like Frank and Dick and try to follow their example. Old Joe Crowfoot and young Joe Crowfoot are my favorites, besides Frank and Dick, for they set me wild with enthusiasm, and it is just like eating ice cream to read about them. Old Crowfoot is quite a favorite among the boys, and they all think he is a foxy fellow. I gave my friends some of my copies, and now they read "Tip Top" when we have some to spare. I realize, with my best wishes to Burt L, and hoping to hear more about Old Joe Crowfoot.
Reinard Hackbart.

Undoubtedly you will, for Old Joe is as tough as leather and liable to see a century.

(A letter from New York.)

I have never yet communicated with you, but now I just can't refrain from taking a pen and giving my opinion of "Tip Top." To come directly to the point, "Tip Top" is second to none. Sugar A. No. 1. The average American boy chooses from among the many wise and beneficial morals presented to him by the little magazine. I had the first paper I read given me by a friend about three years ago. Ever since then I have been a loyal Tip-Topper. I lend my papers to friends and request them to return them, but they give them to their friends, and that's the last I see of them. But I don't care, because in so doing I make myself a factor in the distribution and "pushing ahead" of "Tip Top." Wishing Burt L a long, prosperous life, I remain truly,
Harold F. Rivenburgh.

Your name, Harold, has been inscribed upon that imperishable scroll where we honor our fellow workers. Some day we may print a complete roster of those names, every one of which stands for "Tip Top" loyalty.

Why do we read "Tip Top"? Whooop! that's a cinch. We started five years ago, and after we read it once, there was no use trying to quit, so we are still at it, and expect to be as long as Burt L hands them out. Our favorite character is Dick, but a very close second is the "wild and woolly." Brad Backhart, whom any fellow should be glad to have as a "pard." Dick and Brad are certainly a hot pair, and keep things lively wherever they land. Of the "old fock," next to Merry we are great admirers of "Handsome Jack." Readers, in our pleasure, should enter a beauty contest. He is a dandy, and keeps you wide awake constant and regular while reading of his efforts to save his complexion from fading away. The best number we have read is
TIP TOP

WEEKLY.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

EDITED BY PROF. FOURMEN.

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

FRANK MERRIWELL’S BOOK OF PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT.

THE ART OF BOXING AND SELF-DEFENSE, by Prof. Donavan.

U. S. ARMY PHYSICAL EXERCISES, revised by Prof. Donavan.

PHYSICAL HEALTH CULTURE, - - by Prof. Fourmen.

Chicago, Ill.

Your measurements compare favorably with the average athlete of your height. You can add to the biceps by further bag punching, if you care for it. I think you would do well to just hold your own.

(A letter from Ohio.)

PROF. FOURMEN. I have read "Tip Top" for some time, and have always been interested in your departments, therefore I take the liberty of asking you about my measurements. I am 5 feet 6 inches tall; weight, 145 pounds; chest, 42 inches; waist, 32 inches; hips, 34 inches; shoulders, 10 inches; arms, 18 inches; biceps, 9 inches; triceps, 10 inches; calf, 14 inches; ankle, 9 inches. How are my measurements? Are my biceps properly developed? Thanking you in advance, I remain a "Tip Top" reader and admirer.

A. ROULLETTE.

PROF. FOURMEN: As I have been a reader of "Tip Top" seven years, I take the liberty of asking a few questions. I am 21 years 1 month old; weight, 140 pounds, stripped; height, 5 feet 8¼ inches; neck, 15¼ inches; around shoulders, 10¼ inches; around chest, 37 inches; expanded, 39½ inches; waist, 20 inches; biceps, unflexed, 11 inches; flexed, 12¼ inches; forearm, 10¼ inches; wrist, 7 inches; thumb, 10¼ inches; ankle, 9 inches. How are my measurements? Are my biceps properly developed? Thanking you in advance, I remain a "Tip Top" reader and admirer.

Chicago, Ill.

Your measurements compare favorably with the average athlete of your height. You can add to the biceps by further bag punching, if you care for it. I think you would do well to just hold your own.

(A letter from Ohio.)

PROF. FOURMEN: I have read "Tip Top" for some time, and have always been interested in your departments, therefore I take the liberty of asking you about my measurements. I am 5 feet 6 inches tall; weight, 145 pounds; chest, 42 inches; waist, 32 inches; hips, 34 inches; shoulders, 10 inches; arms, 18 inches; biceps, 9 inches; triceps, 10 inches; calf, 14 inches; ankle, 9 inches. How are my measurements? Are my biceps properly developed? Thanking you in advance, I remain a "Tip Top" reader and admirer.

A. ROULLETTE.

PROF. FOURMEN: As I have been a reader of "Tip Top" seven years, I take the liberty of asking a few questions. I am 21 years 1 month old; weight, 140 pounds, stripped; height, 5 feet 8¼ inches; neck, 15¼ inches; around shoulders, 10¼ inches; around chest, 37 inches; expanded, 39½ inches; waist, 20 inches; biceps, unflexed, 11 inches; flexed, 12¼ inches; forearm, 10¼ inches; wrist, 7 inches; thumb, 10¼ inches; ankle, 9 inches. How are my measurements? Are my biceps properly developed? Thanking you in advance, I remain a "Tip Top" reader and admirer.

Chicago, Ill.

Your measurements compare favorably with the average athlete of your height. You can add to the biceps by further bag punching, if you care for it. I think you would do well to just hold your own.

(A letter from Ohio.)

PROF. FOURMEN: I have read "Tip Top" for some time, and have always been interested in your departments, therefore I take the liberty of asking you about my measurements. I am 5 feet 6 inches tall; weight, 145 pounds; chest, 42 inches; waist, 32 inches; hips, 34 inches; shoulders, 10 inches; arms, 18 inches; biceps, 9 inches; triceps, 10 inches; calf, 14 inches; ankle, 9 inches. How are my measurements? Are my biceps properly developed? Thanking you in advance, I remain a "Tip Top" reader and admirer.

A. ROULLETTE.

PROF. FOURMEN: As I have been a reader of "Tip Top" seven years, I take the liberty of asking a few questions. I am 21 years 1 month old; weight, 140 pounds, stripped; height, 5 feet 8¼ inches; neck, 15¼ inches; around shoulders, 10¼ inches; around chest, 37 inches; expanded, 39½ inches; waist, 20 inches; biceps, unflexed, 11 inches; flexed, 12¼ inches; forearm, 10¼ inches; wrist, 7 inches; thumb, 10¼ inches; ankle, 9 inches. How are my measurements? Are my biceps properly developed? Thanking you in advance, I remain a "Tip Top" reader and admirer.

Chicago, Ill.

Your measurements compare favorably with the average athlete of your height. You can add to the biceps by further bag punching, if you care for it. I think you would do well to just hold your own.

(A letter from Ohio.)

PROF. FOURMEN: I have read "Tip Top" for some time, and have always been interested in your departments, therefore I take the liberty of asking you about my measurements. I am 5 feet 6 inches tall; weight, 145 pounds; chest, 42 inches; waist, 32 inches; hips, 34 inches; shoulders, 10 inches; arms, 18 inches; biceps, 9 inches; triceps, 10 inches; calf, 14 inches; ankle, 9 inches. How are my measurements? Are my biceps properly developed? Thanking you in advance, I remain a "Tip Top" reader and admirer.

A. ROULLETTE.

PROF. FOURMEN: As I have been a reader of "Tip Top" seven years, I take the liberty of asking a few questions. I am 21 years 1 month old; weight, 140 pounds, stripped; height, 5 feet 8¼ inches; neck, 15¼ inches; around shoulders, 10¼ inches; around chest, 37 inches; expanded, 39½ inches; waist, 20 inches; biceps, unflexed, 11 inches; flexed, 12¼ inches; forearm, 10¼ inches; wrist, 7 inches; thumb, 10¼ inches; ankle, 9 inches. How are my measurements? Are my biceps properly developed? Thanking you in advance, I remain a "Tip Top" reader and admirer.

Chicago, Ill.

Your measurements compare favorably with the average athlete of your height. You can add to the biceps by further bag punching, if you care for it. I think you would do well to just hold your own.

(A letter from Ohio.)

PROF. FOURMEN: I have read "Tip Top" for some time, and have always been interested in your departments, therefore I take the liberty of asking you about my measurements. I am 5 feet 6 inches tall; weight, 145 pounds; chest, 42 inches; waist, 32 inches; hips, 34 inches; shoulders, 10 inches; arms, 18 inches; biceps, 9 inches; triceps, 10 inches; calf, 14 inches; ankle, 9 inches. How are my measurements? Are my biceps properly developed? Thanking you in advance, I remain a "Tip Top" reader and admirer.

A. ROULLETTE.

PROF. FOURMEN: As I have been a reader of "Tip Top" seven years, I take the liberty of asking a few questions. I am 21 years 1 month old; weight, 140 pounds, stripped; height, 5 feet 8¼ inches; neck, 15¼ inches; around shoulders, 10¼ inches; around chest, 37 inches; expanded, 39½ inches; waist, 20 inches; biceps, unflexed, 11 inches; flexed, 12¼ inches; forearm, 10¼ inches; wrist, 7 inches; thumb, 10¼ inches; ankle, 9 inches. How are my measurements? Are my biceps properly developed? Thanking you in advance, I remain a "Tip Top" reader and admirer.

Chicago, Ill.

Your measurements compare favorably with the average athlete of your height. You can add to the biceps by further bag punching, if you care for it. I think you would do well to just hold your own.

(A letter from Ohio.)

PROF. FOURMEN: I have read "Tip Top" for some time, and have always been interested in your departments, therefore I take the liberty of asking you about my measurements. I am 5 feet 6 inches tall; weight, 145 pounds; chest, 42 inches; waist, 32 inches; hips, 34 inches; shoulders, 10 inches; arms, 18 inches; biceps, 9 inches; triceps, 10 inches; calf, 14 inches; ankle, 9 inches. How are my measurements? Are my biceps properly developed? Thanking you in advance, I remain a "Tip Top" reader and admirer.

A. ROULLETTE.

PROF. FOURMEN: As I have been a reader of "Tip Top" seven years, I take the liberty of asking a few questions. I am 21 years 1 month old; weight, 140 pounds, stripped; height, 5 feet 8¼ inches; neck, 15¼ inches; around shoulders, 10¼ inches; around chest, 37 inches; expanded, 39½ inches; waist, 20 inches; biceps, unflexed, 11 inches; flexed, 12¼ inches; forearm, 10¼ inches; wrist, 7 inches; thumb, 10¼ inches; ankle, 9 inches. How are my measurements? Are my biceps properly developed? Thanking you in advance, I remain a "Tip Top" reader and admirer.

Chicago, Ill.

Your measurements compare favorably with the average athlete of your height. You can add to the biceps by further bag punching, if you care for it. I think you would do well to just hold your own.

(A letter from Ohio.)

PROF. FOURMEN: I have read "Tip Top" for some time, and have always been interested in your departments, therefore I take the liberty of asking you about my measurements. I am 5 feet 6 inches tall; weight, 145 pounds; chest, 42 inches; waist, 32 inches; hips, 34 inches; shoulders, 10 inches; arms, 18 inches; biceps, 9 inches; triceps, 10 inches; calf, 14 inches; ankle, 9 inches. How are my measurements? Are my biceps properly developed? Thanking you in advance, I remain a "Tip Top" reader and admirer.

A. ROULLETTE.
TIP TOP WEEKLY.

runner? What position am I best qualified to play on a football team? How much should I weigh? I have prepared a course from "Frank Merriwell's Book of Athletic Development," and I am following it faithfully. Thanking you in advance for your kindness, I am respectfully,

McComb, Miss.

You lack about 13 pounds in weight and 1½ inches about the chest, but this is not so bad, and the fact of your being concerned is proof that you will apply an immediate remedy. You should make a good runner if your wind holds out.

Prof. Fourmen: I have been reading "Tip Top" for some time, and would like to have some questions answered. Below are my measurements. Age, 14 years; chest, normal, 30½ inches; expanded, 31½ inches; height, 5 feet 8 inches; weight, 122 pounds; G. G.

Los Angeles, Cal.

You fail to give your height, which is essential. Judging by weight you might be 5 feet 6 inches; by chest, 5 feet 4 inches, and by waist, 5 feet 10 inches. Which is it?

Prof. Fourmen: As I am a constant reader of "Tip Top," I will take the liberty of asking you about the measurements of myself and brothers. Anything that helps to build up your manhood like "Tip Top" does should have the unqualified support of all lovers of the greatest of God's works—mankind. My measurements are as follows: Age, 14 years 6 months; weight, 140 pounds; chest, 34 inches; expanded, 35 inches; height, 5 feet 10 inches; waist, 31 inches; biceps, 11 inches; expanded, 11½ inches; calves, 13 inches; ankles, 10 inches; neck, 13 inches; wrists, 7½ inches; forearm, 11 inches; reach, 30 inches. Would I make an all-round athlete? I do not believe in your newspaper school where you can work your way through. These are my brother's measurements: Age, 21 years; weight, 181 pounds; waist, 34 inches; chest, 38 inches; expanded, 30 inches; height, 5 feet 11½ inches; biceps, normal, 12 inches; expanded, 15 inches; calves, 13½ inches; ankles, 9½ inches; neck, 15½ inches; wrists, 8 inches; forearm, 13 inches. He runs the 50-yard dash in 7 seconds. Would he make an all-round athlete? Thanking you in advance, I am

Lewiston, Mont.

A LOYAL Tip-Topper.

Your height calls for 135 pounds, waist is too large, and your chest should be 30 inches. I would advise you to devote particular attention to increasing your lung capacity. I know of no school where you could work your way, sorry to say. But you can accomplish wonders at home by religiously following a set daily routine of athletic work. Your brother is hardly in shape at present to pose as an all-round athlete. First of all he weighs 17 pounds more than he should, then his waist is 4 inches too large, and his chest almost 2 inches short of what it should be. If he chooses he can make a splendid athletic man of himself.

(A letter from New Brunswick.)

Prof. Fourmen: I am one of the many boys who enjoy reading the "king of weeklies"—"Tip Top"—and I am going to give my measurements, and would like Prof. Fourmen to state if they are as good as the average or not, as I am a runner. Age, 14 years 1 month; weight, 95 pounds; height, 5 feet 3 inches; chest, 34 inches; normal; expanded, 35 inches. I am not much at short distance running, but over 1 mile I am fair; I can go a mile in 6 minutes 15 seconds. I do not use tobacco of any kind or strong drinks. Would you kindly tell me where I can obtain books treating on running? I challenge any runner in the United States or elsewhere at any distance from one mile to one hundred. I am as yet an amateur, but am willing at any time to turn professional. Hurrah for Frank, Dick, Butt L., and Street & Smith.

George L. White.

You can secure such a book through your newsdealer. There are many published. As you say, you are light in weight, some 10 pounds under the standard, but your chest is all right and I can readily see you should have good wind.

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 averages—the members of which play the greatest number of games, score the most runs and have lost the least number of games, will be declared the winners. Of the two winning teams, the one having the higher 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.

1909—TIP TOP BASEBALL TOURNAMENT COUPON.

NAME OF TEAM.

TOWN.

STATE.

POSITION.

NAME OF TEAM.

Pitcher

Catcher

1st Base

2d Base

3d Base

Short Stop

R. Field

C. Field

L. Field

WINNER

FINAL SCORE

MANAGER
EARLY NUMBERS OF THE
TIP TOP WEEKLY
ARE PRESERVED IN THE NEW MEDAL LIBRARY

The following books in the NEW MEDAL LIBRARY contain numbers 1 to 417 of the TIP TOP WEEKLY. Many of the individual numbers before 417 are entirely out of print so that the thousands of boys who are interested in the early adventures of Frank and Dick Merriwell and who want to read everything that was written about them, will welcome this opportunity to secure their favorite reading in a form that is more readily preserved. PRICE, FIFTEEN CENTS.

150—Frank Merriwell's School-days. 328—Frank Merriwell's Prosperity.
162—Frank Merriwell's Chums. 332—Frank Merriwell's Stage Hit.
189—Frank Merriwell Down South. 344—Frank Merriwell on the Boulevards.
197—Frank Merriwell's Hunting Tour. 352—Frank Merriwell's Double Shot.
201—Frank Merriwell in Europe. 356—Frank Merriwell's Baseball Victories.
205—Frank Merriwell at Yale. 359—Frank Merriwell's Confidence.
217—Frank Merriwell's Bicycle Tour. 368—Frank Merriwell's Generosity.
233—Frank Merriwell's Athletes. 377—Frank Merriwell on Top.
237—Frank Merriwell's Skill. 380—Frank Merriwell's Luck.
244—Frank Merriwell's Return to Yale. 386—Frank Merriwell's Reward.
260—Frank Merriwell's Vacation. 401—Frank Merriwell in Kentucky.
269—Frank Merriwell's Cruise. 404—Frank Merriwell's Power.
276—Frank Merriwell in Maine. 410—Frank Merriwell's Set-back.
280—Frank Merriwell's Struggle. 413—Frank Merriwell's Search.
300—Frank Merriwell's Hard Luck. 422—Frank Merriwell's False Friend.
300—Frank Merriwell on the Road. 428—Frank Merriwell as Coach.
304—Frank Merriwell's Own Company. 431—Frank Merriwell's Brother.
312—Frank Merriwell's College Chums. 437—Frank Merriwell's Support.
316—Frank Merriwell's Problem. 440—Dick Merriwell at Pardise.
324—Frank Merriwell's New Comedian. 446—Dick Merriwell's Promise.
449—Dick Merriwell's Rescue.
452—Dick Merriwell's Narrow Escape.
455—Dick Merriwell's Racket.
458—Dick Merriwell's Revenge.
461—Dick Merriwell's Ruse.
464—Dick Merriwell's Delivery.
467—Dick Merriwell's Wonders.
470—Frank Merriwell's Honor.
473—Dick Merriwell's Diamond.
476—Frank Merriwell's Winners.
479—Dick Merriwell's Dash.
482—Dick Merriwell's Ability.
485—Dick Merriwell's Trap.
488—Dick Merriwell's Defense.
491—Dick Merriwell's Model.
494—Dick Merriwell's Mystery.
497—Frank Merriwell's Backers.
500—Dick Merriwell's Backstop.
503—Dick Merriwell's Western Mission.
506—Frank Merriwell's Rescue.
509—Frank Merriwell's Encounter.
512—Dick Merriwell's Marked Money.
515—Frank Merriwell's Nomads.
518—Dick Merriwell on the Gridiron.
521—Dick Merriwell's Disguise.

Published About July 18th. 524—Dick Merriwell's Test.
Published About August 3rd.
527—Frank Merriwell's Trump Card.
Published About August 6th.
530—Frank Merriwell's Strategy.
Published About September 16th.
533—Frank Merriwell's Triumph.
Published About October 5th.
536—Dick Merriwell's Grit.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, NEW YORK CITY