

TIP TOP WEEKLY

An ideal publication

for the American Youth

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

No. 342.

Price, Five Cents.

DICK MERRIWELL'S ABILITY

OR
THE YOUNG GLADIATORS OF THE GRIDIRON



BY
BURT L. STANDISH

DICK LAUNCHED HIMSELF HEADLONG THROUGH THE AIR, AND BROUGHT THE TERROR CRASHING TO THE GROUND.

Tip Top Weekly.

(LARGE SIZE.)

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

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

- 310—Dick Merriwell's Life Struggle; or, The Veiled Woman of the Woods.
- 311—Dick Merriwell's Tramp Chase; or, The Awakening of Scudder.
- 312—Dick Merriwell's Nine; or, Trouncing the Regular Team.
- 313—Dick Merriwell's Danger; or, Solving a Strange Mystery.
- 314—Dick Merriwell Accused; or, The Life of the Nine.
- 315—Dick Merriwell's Trick; or, Paid in Their Own Coin.
- 316—Dick Merriwell's Daring Leap; or, Bound to Get There.
- 317—Dick Merriwell's Delivery; or, In the Face of Desperate Odds.
- 318—Dick Merriwell's Nerve; or, Up Against the Real Thing.
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- 326—Frank Merriwell on Deck; or, Getting Into Mad River League.
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- 328—Frank Merriwell's Honor; or, Defying the Boss of the League.
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- 330—Frank Merriwell's Fracas; or, Hot Times in Mad River League.
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- 332—Frank Merriwell's Turn; or, The Greatest Game of the Season.
- 333—Dick Merriwell's New Ball; or, The Boy Wonder at His Best.
- 334—Frank Merriwell's "Ginger;" or, Winning an Uphill Game.
- 335—Dick Merriwell's Stroke; or, Unmasking the Man of Mystery.
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- 337—Dick Merriwell's Return; or, Back Again to the Old School.
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- 339—Dick Merriwell's Mercy; or, The First Game on the Gridiron.
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- 341—Dick Merriwell's Set; or, Friends and Foes at Fardale.
- 342—Dick Merriwell's Ability; or, The Young Gladiators of the Gridiron.
- 343—Dick Merriwell's Mascot; or, By Luck or Pluck.

With TIP TOP No. 285 begins the now famous Fardale Series, in which Dick Merriwell has entered the good old school at which the career of Frank Merriwell also began some years ago. Thousands of young Americans will want to read of the fine things that Dick Merriwell has done, is doing and will in the future do.

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Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1902, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C.

No. 342.

NEW YORK, November 1, 1902.

Price Five Cents.

DICK MERRIWELL'S ABILITY:

OR,

The Young Gladiators of the Gridiron.

By BURT L. STANDISH.

CHAPTER I.

NEW SIGNALS.

"104—92—56—27—44—190."

The quarter-back called the numbers clearly, quickly and sharply. The players formed, however, with some confusion and hesitation. There was a turning twisting, forward movement, and the left half-back shot out of the revolving formation as if plunging against the center of the enemy's line.

"That's better," commented Dick Merriwell, captain of the Fardale eleven; "but we were rather slow about it, fellows."

The team was practicing on Fardale Field, and a new and revised set of signals was being used.

Treachery and the exposure of former signals had made it necessary to adopt a new code, and the team had not yet acquired familiarity with the new, so that

all the players worked together swiftly and without hesitation.

"Ding my picter!" exclaimed Obediah Tubbs, the fat boy, who played center, wiping the sweat off his forehead. "I can't always seem to ketch on whether the old ball is goin' through center or round the end."

"Hi hallow," said Billy Bradley, the Cockney youth, "that hit bothers me somewhat, don't you know."

"Aw, aw—weally!" mocked Ted Smart, the little quarter-back. "Hi ham surprised!"

"Stop that jollying!" commanded Dick, who objected to fooling on the field, for he fully believed that serious, steady work was required by any team that meant to reach the highest point of success. "Get round here, fellows, and I'll try to make it so plain you can't misunderstand."

They gathered close about him. In the distance a number of loyal followers of the team were huddled

on the seats, where they had gathered to watch the practice. Perhaps this statement should be modified somewhat, as all those on the bleachers could not be designated as "loyal followers," as in a little group apart by itself were huddled several members of the revised and reorganized Wolf Gang, any one of whom would have betrayed the eleven with the desire to hurt Dick Merriwell.

The sun was shining brightly on this autumn afternoon, and the air was just cool enough to be invigorating.

"Our signals last year," said Dick, "had the merit of being very simple and easy to understand. But this was also a drawback. With old and experienced players those signals could not have been used, as old hands would have read them before half a game had been played through."

"That's right," nodded big Bob Singleton, who was an experienced player for a lad of his years.

"We were compelled to revert to them again this year in one game when we received information that our new signals had been communicated to the enemy."

"By the way," spoke up Don Kent, "you hinted that you might be able to expose the traitor who did that trick, yet you have exposed no one."

"I thought at one time that I would be able to show him up," said Dick; "but things did not pan out as I anticipated."

"And you don't know who the traitor was?" asked Harry Dare.

"I suspect," said the captain.

"But you can't prove it against him?"

"I may be able to some time."

Dare nudged Hal Darrell, whispering:

"He evades the question. He knows, but there is some reason why he won't tell."

Darrell did not seem to notice.

"The bad feature in our signals last year," Dick went on, "was the use of a letter to designate a player, instead of a number. We resolved to drop that this year. Still it seemed best to have a code of signals so simple that we could all learn it easily and make no

mistakes in becoming confused on the field by failing to understand what was called for. Now, the signals we are trying to-day are perfectly simple."

"Are they simply perfect?" inquired Smart, who could not keep still; but Dick paid no attention to him.

The players are designated by a series of odd numbers, beginning with eleven and running up to twenty-nine. Now, for instance, Kent, what player is represented by the number thirteen?"

"Right tackle," answered Don, promptly.

"That's mum-mum-mum-me!" chattered Chip Joliby, the lank boy. Bub-bub-bub-but I'd like to have the nun-nun-nun-number changed. Thirteen is unluckily."

"What's nineteen, Tubbs?" asked Dick, quickly.

"Eh—eh—nineteen is—is left guard," answered Obediah.

"Hi am hit," said Billy Bradley.

"Yes, you're 'it,'" agreed Smart. "You're 'it' all the time, though you may not suspect the fact."

"There is no reason why you should have the least trouble in understanding this set of signals," averred Captain Dick. "We begin with the right end of the line and so straight across. Right end is eleven, right tackle thirteen, right guard fifteen, center seventeen, left guard nineteen, left tackle twenty-one, left end twenty-three. Then comes the quarter-back as twenty-five, the right half-back as twenty-seven, the left half-back as twenty-nine, and the full-back as thirty-one. These numbers are the only odd numbers to be used in our code of signals, and therefore any odd number called designates a player. All even numbers designate plays, or are meaningless, being thrown in to blind the enemy and prevent detection. Isn't that plain enough?"

"I s'pose so," said Tubbs; "but why didn't ye begin with one an' run up on odd numbers from there, instid of beginnin' at 'leven?"

"Because that would have been so very simple that it might have invited detection. The range of odd numbers from eleven to thirty-one cannot be hard to remember, and they are all the odd numbers you will be called on to remember. Next you have to remember

that the signal for special formation is always one hundred or over; for instance, tackles back being one hundred, tandem play is one hundred and two, revolving formation is one hundred and four, and so forth, as I have explained before."

"I reckon we've got that all down, pard," said Brad Buckhart.

"And these signals for special formations are always given the first or second number of the complete signal. If by chance any of these numbers are used after the second number is called it is meaningless and has been thrown in as a blind. Get that?"

"Oh, my head! my head!" sighed Obediah Tubbs.

"Shut up!" growled Buckhart; "or you'll have a head!"

"Now, the signal for any special formation is always given the first or second number. The signal for the player who is to handle the ball may be thrown in anywhere. But immediately following the number designating the player comes the signal for the play that is to be attempted. Don't forget that."

"That's heasy," admitted Bradley.

"Billy, what does four call for?"

"Haround the right hend."

"That's right. Tubbs, what is eight?"

"Raound the left end," squeaked the fat boy.

"Sixteen, Shannock?"

"Double pass."

"And in case of a double pass," explained Dick, "the two numbers calling for the players who are to work it will be called in succession just before the signal for the play. For example, if 27—29—16 is called, it means that the ball is to go to the right half-back, who is to pass it to the left half-back on the criss-cross. If 29—27—16 is called, the ball goes to the left halfback, who passes it to the right half-back. And this criss-cross may be worked with other players, which will call for other numbers."

"That ought to be clear enough for any galoot!" exclaimed Buckhart.

"You 'ave a great 'ead on you!" exclaimed Bradley, with a surprising effort at sarcasm.

"Look out!" squeaked Tubbs, grinning all over his

moon-like face. "He jest threatened to give me a new head."

"This is serious business, fellows," said Dick, in a manner that checked them and again brought them to full attention. "The report from the White-Fairport game shows us that we have a big job on our hands Saturday when we go to Fairport, and we can't waste a single moment of precious time fooling. We barely defeated White in the last few minutes of play, and that by considerable good luck——"

"Not by a blamed sight!" exploded Brad Buckhart. "There was no luck whatever about it! Don't try to rob yourself of the glory of that dash, captain, for we won't stand for it. You hear me chirp! You won that game by one of the handsomest runs through center that was ever made."

"Well, I'd never made it if it hadn't been for Obediah's great interference," confessed Dick.

Whereupon the fat boy flushed and grinned with delight, for praise from Dick was something to fill his soul with exceeding great joy.

"Oh, I jes' done all I could to knock 'em over," he said, modestly, although modesty had not seemed to be one of his prominent qualities when he first arrived at Fardale.

"That was enough," nodded Dick. "It gave me the opening and prevented me from being tackled and brought down, when such a thing would have meant defeat for Fardale. Now, fellows, considering what a fight we had to make to pull that game away from White, what sort of a show do we stand with Fairport?"

"What was the score between White and Fairport Saturday?" asked Darrell.

"Fairport defeated White fifty-six to nothing. White could not even score! Think of that! White must have been completely outclassed. And White nearly downed us here on our own field!"

"I tremble!" said Smart.

"Have you heard the particulars of that game?" asked Dare.

"Not yet; but we shall when Gorman and Savage

get back. They went to see it, and had to stay over, as there was no Sunday train to bring them home."

"It couldn't have been anything like a flukey game," said Singleton; "and so it seems, judging from our exhibition with White, that we are not in Fairport's class."

"That's the way it seems," said Dick; "but I don't believe anything of the sort. We defeated Fairport last year, and we'll do it again. But we must get down to work. We must work like dogs. We must be absolutely perfect on signals and plays before Saturday."

"One thing," said Shannock. "Why do you use three numbers to designate a through the center play?"

"We don't use three numbers. We use any one of three numbers, twenty-two, forty-four or eighty-eight. In case of repeated attempts to buck center it enables us to vary our signal, so that the enemy will not be likely to catch on. That's all."

"Here cuc-cuc-cuc-cuc——" cackled Jolliby, excitedly.

"Whistle," advised Smart.

"Here cuc-cuc-cuc-comes Gorman and Savage!" chattered Chip, pointing toward the gate.

"Now we'll hear all about the game between White and Fairport," grunted Singleton.

The boys were eager enough to hear, and they immediately flocked toward the newcomers.

CHAPTER II.

MANAGER AND CAPTAIN.

Abe Gorman was the manager of the Fardale football team.

Joe Savage was interested in athletic sports of all kinds, having managed various athletic teams at different times during his first two years in the school. However, as he was inclined to be something of a "sport," and had frequently wagered money on the results of contests in which Fardale took part, he had fallen beneath the ban of the faculty, the fiat going forth that he was to have nothing further to do with handling Fardale teams.

Gorman was not the most popular man who could have been selected for the responsible position he held; but he had been considered a hard worker, and his selection had rather met the approval of the faculty.

From the very first there had been more or less friction between Gorman and Dick Merriwell. Abe had started out to run things his way, and it was some time before he could realize that his authority was not absolute, that he was not in command of the men on the field and that he was expected to look out for the finances and business end of affairs much more than anything else. This was a great disappointment to him, as he was a fellow who thoroughly enjoyed being "the whole show."

In his heart Gorman was jealous of Dick Merriwell, although he tried to conceal the fact. At the start, he had been delighted in the thought that his position would enable him to order Dick about; but he soon found that, while the captain of the eleven was willing and ready to listen to suggestions, he did not take kindly to outright orders or to being called down in the least.

Gorman had fancied he could put any one he chose on the team, and this had caused considerable friction; for Dick had insisted that the candidates should come out for trial and approval, and that no man could be given a regular position on the eleven who could not prove by demonstration that he was the best available chap for the place.

The manager had grown "sore," but he found it policy to try to hide his feelings. It is not certain that he would have felt disappointment had Fardale lost some of her opening games, for in that case he could have criticised Dick and claimed that he had made mistakes by not taking advice.

Indeed, there were a few to whom Gorman expressed doubt concerning Dick's "ability" to carry things through as they should be. When the previous year was spoken of, Abe immediately called to mind the fact that Dick had not been captain of the eleven. True, Dick had captained the baseball team for a while, and had seemed successful; but Gorman averred that

his success came more from his wonderful ability as a pitcher who could make monkeys of batters than from his capability as captain of the nine.

Gorman was clever in argument up to the time that he lost his temper. When he lost his temper he became perfectly unreasonable. But he was wise enough nearly always to hold a tight grip on his temper, knowing that he generally did himself an injury when he flew into a passion.

One thing that annoyed him more than anything else was the fact that Dick Merriwell seemed to read his thoughts and understand his motives. He was uneasy beneath Dick's searching black eyes.

Abe had chosen to witness the game between White Academy and Franklin in preference to remaining home to see Fardale play. He said he wished to watch the work of the Franklin team to get points on them. He would try to discover their weak spots, so that he could prepare his own team to make the most of their weaknesses.

Now he was back, and Savage, who had accompanied him, followed him onto the field where the Fardale team was practicing.

Eager to hear about the game between Fairport and White, the members of the team, together with several substitutes, gathered about Gorman and Savage.

It was noticeable that Gorman's face wore a rather downcast, discouraged look, while Savage smiled cheerfully and greeted one of his friends on the team with the whispered information that he had "gathered twenty bones" through Fairport's success.

"Well," was the question asked by somebody, "what about the game?"

"Fairport had everything her own way," said Gorman, gloomily.

"And White got it where little Willie had the tonsilitis," put in Savage.

"That Fairport team is a corker," said Gorman.

"Is it pretty fast?" asked Dick.

"Pretty fast!" exclaimed the manager of the Fardale team. "You should have seen it walk through White! Fellows, White never had a show to score."

"Oh, come off!" exclaimed Savage. "White had

the ball on Fairport's ten-yard line once and lost it by a fumble when every play for the last ten times had been a good gain."

"That's all right," said Gorman, shaking his head. "They were bound to slip up. Besides, Fairport was making a stiff stand."

"The trouble was," explained Savage, "that White lost its courage early in the game."

"The trouble was that White was outclassed," declared Abe, positively.

"Fairport played fast from the very start, and White was taken by surprise. Why, those fellows from White thought they had a snap. They were ready to bet anything they had that they would take the game with ease. Several fellows did bet that Fairport would not score. That's right!"

"Got their heads swelled because they came so near beating us, I reckon," said Buckhart.

"Well, the swelling was reduced," laughed Savage.

"But they have the greatest fullback I ever saw," said Gorman. "Great! He's a giant!"

"I thought you meant that he was a great player," said Dick.

"I did mean that for one thing. He's a terror! He was the fellow who raised hob with White."

"If he'd been taken out of the game," asserted Savage, "White would have stood an even show."

"What's his name?" asked Darrell.

"Belden. He is over six feet tall, though they say he's only sixteen years old, and he's built for his height."

"Is he swift?"

"Swift! Wait till you see him! He can run like a deer, and he's so strong that he carried half the White team more than twelve yards on his back before he went down. And when it comes to kicking, he has anybody I ever saw skinned to death. He made the White fullback look like a kid."

Dick Merriwell frowned, but said:

"Then it seems that he is the backbone of the Fairport team? Take him out, and the team would not be so very fast?"

"Oh, yes it would!" exclaimed Gorman. "Take

him out and put a fairly good player in his place and Fairport will beat anything in the way of a school team in this State."

Dick frowned more than ever.

"It's plain you have a poor opinion of your own team!" he exclaimed. "I like to hear a manager talk like that to his team! It is excellent!"

"Might as well tell the truth. You asked me questions. Did you expect me to lie?"

Dick did not answer this question, but turned to Savage.

"What do you think?" he asked.

"Oh, we've got a show!" laughed Joe. "If we just set our teeth and go right into it, we may win. Of course we've got a show!"

"But it's a mighty slim one," averred the manager.

"I'm not so sure of that," said Savage. "You know what happened last year. We surprised those teams that were expected to down us, and we made a clean record. We've made it clean thus far, and—"

"The season's just begun. Besides, we have no such team as we had last year. The best men, like Cogswell, Blair, Munn and Burrows, are out of it or gone, and we're seriously weakened."

Dick was nervous, but he let Gorman finish. Then he slowly and distinctly said:

"You are the first manager I ever knew to make such talk in the presence of his team. It's a first-class way to take all the ambition and spirit out of a team. It almost seems that, for some reason, you want to discourage the fellows—that you would enjoy seeing them beaten."

"You know better than that!" snapped Gorman, flushing hotly. "You know I want to see the team win, and if you hint at the opposite you lie! That's plain enough!"

Dick started as if an electric thrill had passed through him. Some of the color left his face, and into his dark eyes there came a dangerous gleam. He stepped a bit nearer Gorman.

"Perhaps this is as good a time as any to say what I have to say to you, Mr. Gorman," he observed, in a tone of voice that was even, low and singularly dis-

tinct. "I have tried to avoid this, but I see that it is impossible. You and I cannot get along together as manager and captain of this team. You have done everything possible to balk my efforts to bring out a winning team. Why? Simply because you are sore on me for not putting a personal friend of yours into the team. You——"

"You have filled it with your personal friends!" panted Gorman, quivering with rage. "You can't deny that! That's what's the matter with it! It's made up from your set! Everybody knows that!"

"I have taken the fellows who proved themselves most capable. Singleton is playing his old position. Shannock has been retained. Darrell made good last year, and he is doing well this year. Kent was in line last year. Dare qualified by good fast work, Tubbs is a plebe. Buckhart, Jolliby, Bradley and Smart are doing pretty well. I have a friendly feeling for every fellow on the team. But the assertion that I have made the eleven up from my particular friends because they were my friends is maliciously false, and any fellow who makes it knows it is false."

Gorman had often imagined himself smashing Dick Merriwell, hitting him in the face, knocking him down, and then knocking him down again when he got up. He had rejoiced in the thought of doing such a thing as that, and now—

CHAPTER III.

A NEW ENEMY.

He tried it!

Quick and hard he struck at Dick's mouth, snarling: "Take that, and see if——"

But he missed.

Dick had been watching him narrowly, and he knew just the instant when Abe became so infuriated that he was going to strike. Quick as the manager launched out his fist, Dick was ready, and he ducked to the right, avoiding the blow.

Up went his right hand, he caught Gorman's left wrist, swung Abe onto his back and with a heave flung the fellow over his head.

The players scattered as they saw Gorman's heels sweeping through the air, and Abe came down with a thud flat on his back on the ground. There he lay staring up at the blue sky, wondering what had happened to him.

"Why didn't you soak him, pard?" panted Buckhart, in Dick's ear.

Dick simply shook his head.

The boys looked on without making a move as Abe Gorman sat up and glared at Dick.

Gorman realized that he was no match for the young athlete. He had anticipated taking Dick by surprise and getting in a blow that way. The shock of his fall took all the desire to fight out of him, but it left his heart just as full of rage as ever.

In a moment he had been converted into a bitter enemy for Dick Merriwell. Before that he had simply disliked Dick because there was a misunderstanding and disagreement over the handling of the eleven; but now he was ready to do anything in his power to hurt the young captain of the team.

Gorman got up without a hand being extended to aid him. The fellows who had been sitting on the bleachers were gathered about now. Among them were several chaps who were Dick's enemies, but Gorman had never shown any particular friendliness toward them, and so they did not offer to aid him.

The manager's face was very pale when he stood on his feet before Dick. For some moments he was in such a state of mind that he could not speak. When he did speak, his voice was hoarse and shaking.

"It's all right! I've put up with all kinds of insolence from you, Merriwell; but this business ends it. We're done! As long as you remain on the eleven I'll have nothing further to do with it. I'll resign my position as manager at once."

"It may be a good thing for the team," was the only comment Dick made.

"We'll see! we'll see!" grated Gorman, as he turned away. "You have wanted to run everything as you liked," he flung over his shoulder. "Now run it. We'll see what kind of ability you have to make a win-

ning team. And Fairport will wipe you off the map! Don't you forget that."

Dick stood quite still, making no reply. On his face there was a strange look.

"It's good riddance to bad rubbish, pard," said Buckhart.

Still Dick said nothing.

Some one laughed, causing the captain to look round. It was Chester Arlington, who had come down from the bleachers when the encounter took place.

"That's right," said Chester. "Now we'll see how Mr. Merriwell can run a team when he has everything his own way."

The color mounted to Dick's face. He took two swift steps toward the fellow, his hands clinched.

"Get off this field!" he commanded, sharply. "You have no business here!"

"Show your authority!" sneered Arlington.

It seemed that Dick would seize him, but the young captain held himself in hand.

"Go on," he said. "You know you are not permitted on the field when the team is practicing."

"Didn't know it was practicing at present."

"We are going to resume practice right away."

"Oh, all right! I'll go, then. Come on, fellows, let's leave the earth to the great and mighty Merriwell."

Arlington, Stark and Crauthers walked away together, laughing tauntingly.

"Dern them!" growled Buckhart. "I'm going to—"

"You're going to practice with the rest of us," said Dick, cutting him short. "Don't spend any further time standing round, fellows. We've got to hustle to get in a good afternoon. We need the practice."

"I guess that's right," said Harry Dare. "According to the report, we'll need more practice than we'll get if we stand any show of beating Fairport."

Dick turned toward the speaker.

"That's bad talk, Dare," he said. "No matter what the odds may be against you, don't be a quitter. We can beat Fairport, and we are going to do it."

"Perhaps so; but it doesn't look like it." Gorman said—"

"Lots of things that he should not have said. Line up, fellows, and we'll try those signals and plays some more."

As they were forming, Buckhart found an opportunity to say to Dick:

"This split with Gorman will be a good thing for the team, old man."

Dick shook his head.

"You don't think so?" asked Brad, surprised. "Why, you know he was no good for the team. There are lots better fellows who will fill his boots."

"That may be," said Dick; "but I'm sorry the thing happened just as it did."

CHAPTER IV.

ARLINGTON'S SCHEME.

Abe Gorman made good his threat to resign as manager of the eleven. He did so without delay. Philip Warne, the chairman of the athletic committee, urged him to reconsider.

"See here, Gorman," said Warne, "you are doing a thing that will be sure to hurt the eleven."

"I can't help it," said Abe, stubbornly.

"It's early in the season, and we have made no preparations to change managers. If you'll wait a week until we can look around and see who—"

"Not a minute!" exclaimed Abe, fiercely. "I've stood all I can from Merriwell, and I am done!"

"It will be almost certain to bring about a feeling of uncertainty on the team, and this is bad just before a hard game, the same as this one with Fairport is certain to be."

Still Gorman was obdurate.

"I'll never have a thing to do with anything with which Merriwell is connected from this day on," he said.

That settled it.

Gorman made "no bones" of telling his reason for resigning. He declared to everybody that Merriwell

was determined to be the "whole show," and for that reason they could not get along.

"Let him run the team now," he said. "We'll see what he does. Mark my word, Fairport is going to rub it into us awfully. Then there will be a howl go up! Then some of these chaps who are so stuck on Merriwell will sing a different tune! Wait and see!"

Gorman was confident that Fairport would win. He believed he had viewed the matter without prejudice, and it was his opinion that Fairport had much the stronger team without the aid of "Buster" Belden, the giant full-back. Belden was a terror, and he made his team so strong that there seemed no chance in the world for Fardale.

Arlington watched for an opportunity to speak with Gorman privately. Finally he found it, and said:

"Look here, old man, I saw your affair with Merriwell, and I want you to know that you have my sympathy."

Gorman said nothing, for he had not liked Arlington.

"Of course," Chester went on, "you know all about my own trouble with that fellow. He and I have had it pretty hot, and I must confess that he's beaten me every go. But I'm not a chap to stay beaten. If I can't do a fellow up one way, then I look for another method. I have a way to do Merriwell."

The former football manager was interested, but he simply said:

"Yes?"

"Sure thing."

Arlington fancied Gorman would ask questions, but Abe did nothing of the sort, whereupon the millionaire's son volunteered:

"He's a fighter, you know. I've had enough from him to get my stomach full. I can't do him alone. But I know a chap who can."

"Not around here," said Gorman.

"He's around here now."

"Where?"

"In town."

"Where's he from?"

"New York."

"Oh, is it a man?"

"No; a chap about nineteen."

"How are you going to manage it?" Gorman was asking questions at last, and Chester smiled

"I've got a slick scheme."

"Unfold it."

"Merriwell has been taking billiard and pool lessons at odd times from his brother."

"Has he?"

"Yes; and he's pretty clever for a youngster, they say."

"Well, what of it?"

"He will receive an invitation to-morrow to attend an exhibition of trick billiard and pool playing to be given in the clubroom back of Casey's place."

"Well?"

"He'll go."

"How do you know?"

"Oh, I've found out he's been waiting for a chance to see some of that fancy work. He's said so. Wants to see how the shots are made."

"What if he does go?"

"He'll get the worst thrashing he ever received in all his life."

"Who'll give it to him?"

"Professor Rapp."

"Who is Professor Rapp?"

"The billiard and pool expert. He is a corking fighter, Gorman. I know all about him. He can do Dick Merriwell up in less than three minutes."

"Well, why should he put himself out to get into a fight with Merriwell and do him up?"

Arlington winked and grinned.

"Professor Rapp didn't stumble into this town by accident," he explained.

"Why, you mean—"

"He was sent for."

"By you?"

"That's a good guess."

Gorman began to see through the scheme.

"You sent for him to come here to get into a fight with Merriwell and do him up?"

"That's what I did," laughed Arlington. "And

we'll fix it so Merriwell will not be likely to play football Saturday, you bet. To-morrow is Friday. He'll get mixed up with Rapp to-morrow night, and Rapp will put him out of commission for a few days. He won't be able to explain. He won't care to confess that he's been fighting, and it will look bad for him. Oh, I tell you, Gorman, this is the beginning of Merriwell's downfall!"

Now, Abe Gorman had never thought much of schemes of this sort, but his hatred of Dick made him ready for anything.

"I'll have nothing to do with it," he said; "but——"

"You'd like to see Merriwell get his medicine?"

"Yes, it would give me great pleasure to see him get a good gruelling."

"Come to the exhibition of trick billiard and pool playing. You shall be one of those invited. I'll see to that. There will be plenty of fellows there who'll enjoy seeing Dick Merriwell done up proper?"

"I'll come," nodded Abe.

CHAPTER V.

TWO BLOWS.

"My next shot, gents," said Professor Rapp, "will be shootin' trough ten balls. Youse all know how hard it is ter freeze t'ree balls, take out der middle one witout wigglin' der odders, an' den shoot der cue ball t'rough between der two balls left. Ain't one in fifty can do it. I'm going ter freeze up der whole fifteen balls in t'ree lines of five each, like youse see me doin'. Den I'll remove der middle balls witout movin' der odders. Dat leaves an openin' right down t'rough der middle, wit five balls on each side—like dat. Now, gents, I places one of der balls taken out of der middle on der spot, like dat. Den I places de cue ball back here, an' I'm goin' ter shoot right down t'rough der openin' here an' put der object ball in der pocket witout touchin' or movin' one of dese ten balls."

"Derned if it can be done!" muttered Brad Buckhart.

"Wot's dat?" exclaimed Professor Rapp, who was

nothing more than a boy, though he had unusual shoulders and a huge neck. "Who said dat?"

"I allowed it couldn't be done, partner," said Brad, promptly. "There ain't no galoot living can shoot through that place without moving some of those ten balls."

"Dat shows wot a jay youse are," commented the "professor," who, however, was much disappointed, as he had fancied the remark came from Dick Merriwell, who stood beside Buckhart.

The room was filled with tobacco smoke. About fifty spectators had gathered to witness the exhibition, and for another purpose, which had not been advertised.

Buckhart was the only friend Dick had in all that crowd. The others were mainly toughs of the village, or were such fellows as Crauthers, Hogan, Stark and Watson from the academy. Chester Arlington was there. Also Abe Gorman, although Abe kept apart by himself, watching and waiting.

Rapp had been carrying on his exhibition for nearly half an hour, and Dick Merriwell had not made a comment in all that time, much to his regret. He was waiting for Dick to say something, which he meant to pick up at once and thus draw the Fardale lad into an encounter.

Having placed the balls, the fellow who was giving the exhibition struck the cue ball a sharp draw-shot blow, which caused it to rise slightly from the table and pass over the balls, although it was done so quickly that the eye could scarcely see it rise. The object ball was driven into the pocket, and the ten balls remained undisturbed.

"Dere!" exclaimed the "professor," turning sharply on Dick. "I tol' yer I could do it, an' you said I couldn't."

"I beg your pardon," said Dick, quietly. "I did not say you couldn't."

"G'wan! Yere's another! You did say it! D'yer mean ter call me a liar?"

"No, I do not mean to call you anything at all."

"Well, I done it, jest as I can do youse!"

Dick saw in a twinkling the fellow was looking for "trouble," and he half suspected the trap.

"Say, come off!" exploded Buckhart. "What's the matter with you? Go on with your exhibiting. I was the one who said you couldn't make the shot, and I reckoned you couldn't. I'll take it back. You did it fair and proper."

But Professor Rapp was impatient, and he did not propose to miss this opportunity to bring about the encounter, for he had been paid to thrash Dick Merriwell, not to give an exhibition of trick pool and billiard playing.

"I ain't a-talkin' to youse," he said. "Dat odder feller has been lookin' on an' sayin' I was no good all der evenin'."

"I have said nothing of the sort before this," said Dick, who felt his blood getting warm; "but I am tempted to say so now."

Immediately the "professor" dropped his cue and squared away.

"Come out here!" he invited. "I'll show dis crowd I'm good enough fer der likes of youse! I can scrap jest as well as I can play pool."

"Keep your eyes open for fair play, Brad!" muttered Dick. "It's a put up job! We're in for it."

Buckhart was startled, for he had not thought of that.

"Great tarantulas!" he exclaimed.

"I am not seeking any trouble with you," said Dick, quietly. "I have attended strictly to my own business since coming here. If you wish to pick a quarrel with me—"

"Oh, I made me talk plain enough fer youse ter understand, I t'ink! I don't stan' fer cheap talk from anybody anywhere I goes. You've gotter fight ur eat dirt."

"I'm not in the habit of lunching on dirt," said Dick; "so I presume I'm in for a fight."

"Hurrah!" cried some of the young roughs in the room. "That's the stuff!"

"Well, I wish I had a pair of guns!" thought Buckhart. "Then I'd see that Dick got fair play."

"If there is going to be a little difficulty," said the low-browed man who ran the billiard room, you will have to retire to the next room, gents, where you'll not be likely to disturb any one passing on the street."

"Come on, Merriwell!" said Crauthers. "If you've got sand enough to meet Professor Rapp, just come into the next room."

Had Dick been able to get out without fighting it is not at all certain that he would have remained; but he realized that the doors had been locked and that the only thing he could do was to meet the thick-necked young chap who had challenged him.

Dick saw through the whole trick. He had suspected something all along after arriving and seeing the crowd that had assembled. Now his suspicions were convictions.

"If they don't give you a fair show, pard," said Brad, "they'll have this old maverick at 'em!"

Dick soon found himself in the rear room.

Professor Rapp had stripped off his vest and rolled up his sleeves, showing a pair of muscular arms.

"Where are the gloves?" asked Buckhart.

"Wot gloves?" cried the "professor." "Dere ain't goin' ter be no gloves in dis business."

"Go into him, partner!" urged Buckhart. "Give him the hustle of his life."

Dick divested himself of his outer garments and made preparations. He was quite cool outwardly, though inwardly raging because he had permitted himself to be drawn into such an affair.

Casey, the proprietor of the place, had come in from the bar, which was in front.

"I'll jest referee this, young gentlemen," he said.

"I am quite satisfied," said Dick, who had heard that Casey admired fair play in a fight, although he might descend to crooked actions in other things.

"Come on, ye young dude!" cried Rapp, as he stepped out. "I'm waitin' fer youse."

Dick walked out to meet him, the excited and eager spectators having been forced back to a certain line on every side.

Merriwell caught a glimpse of Chester Arlington,

who was whispering in the ear of Abe Gorman, and through his brain flashed the thought that these were the fellows who had put up the job.

"All right," he mentally said. "Let's see how it pans out. I am going to do my best to prove a match for this fellow."

Rapp was confident. He believed himself easily more than a match for the somewhat slender-appearing young cadet, and he fancied he was about to earn his money with great readiness.

"Are yer ready?" he asked.

"Hold on!" growled Casey. "I'm doin' this!"

So he took charge and gave the word that sent the two boys at each other.

Rapp had skill enough, and Dick remained on the defensive for some time, watching the work of the other and leaving no opening. This led the fellow to grow careless, and he made several attempts to get in and begin earning his money. Once he hit Dick on the breast, and once a light blow on the cheek.

But the foot work of the cadet and his cleverness with his hands was a revelation to the hired ruffian. He grew angry to think he could not force Dick into a corner, and with his increasing anger his carelessness also increased.

Dick seemed afraid to make an offensive move, and this added to Rapp's contempt for him.

But all the while young Merriwell was looking for his opportunity.

It came at last.

He landed fair and hard on Rapp's wind, and then smashed him a terrible blow on the point of the jaw.

Those two blows were the only ones delivered by Dick.

They were enough. Professor Rapp was sent heavily to the floor, where he lay stiff and done for, knocked out.

Casey proceeded to count the fallen fellow out.

When Rapp recovered, three minutes later, he sat up, looking around and demanding:

"Where is he? I'm all right! Where is der bloke?"

"Aw, git up an' slide outer here!" said Casey. Ye're a mark, that's what you are! He done you easy!"

Then Rapp, struggling to his feet, saw Chester Arlington regarding him with contempt and disgust. He hurried to Chester, crying:

"Where is that feller? It was an accident! I demand anudder go wit him!"

"Go die!" said Arlington. "I warned you to look out. I told you what he was; but you thought yourself too good, and you let him do the thing I told you he might do. You're a big bluff!"

"Gimme my money!" snarled Rapp. "You agreed ter pay me ter dis job——"

"If you did it, but you failed. Merriwell did you up."

"An' you won't pay?"

"No."

"Nutting?"

"Not a red."

"Den it's up ter me ter settle wit youse!" cried the young thug, as he sailed into Chester and proceeded to give him the thrashing he had failed to give Dick Merriwell.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GAME BEGINS.

| FARDALE. | FAIRPORT. |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Shannock..... | Right end..... |
| Jolliby..... | Right tackle..... |
| Bradley..... | Right guard..... |
| Tubbs | Center..... |
| Dare..... | Left guard..... |
| Kent..... | Left tackle..... |
| Buckhart..... | Left end..... |
| Smart | Quarter-back..... |
| Merriwell..... | Right half-back..... |
| Darrell..... | Left half-back..... |
| Singleton | Full-back..... |

It was thus the two teams lined up on Fardale Field on the day of the great game between Fairport and Fardale.

Something remarkable about Fairport was the fact that not one of the men who played on her team the previous season appeared on this occasion. The team was new and strange throughout to Fardale.

Besides that, it was apparent at a glance that Fairport had a much heavier team.

There were not a few who hinted at "ringers" and crookedness, but the team came with the full sanction of Fairport behind it.

Chester Arlington managed to limp out to the field, aided by a cane, to witness the game. One eye was covered by a bandage, and he was badly battered and used up. He had told a fine story about trying to stop a runaway horse, but there were those who knew well enough how it was that he happened to be in such a pitiful condition.

Arlington was in anything but a pleasant frame of mind, but he had heard enough from Abe Gorman to make him long to witness this game, in which Fardale was to be shown up as weak and no match for its antagonist. To see that Chester had ventured out, for all of the fact that he knew he might be the object of no small amount of chaffing.

He had not believed Dick Merriwell would be in condition to play this day, for it had been his settled conviction that the young thug he had engaged would put Dick out. Something quite different had happened.

Arlington stood by himself at one side of the field as he saw the teams preparing to begin play. He saw them scatter over the field for the kick-off, and heard the cheering of the cadets. The band was playing a lively air, and everybody seemed in fine spirits except Chester.

For Abe Gorman, who touched Arlington on the shoulder at this moment, was grinning.

"Hello!" said Abe. "So you're out. My, but that fellow did——"

"Don't speak of that!" snarled Chester, savagely. "How about this game? Is it going all right?"

"Fairport will win in a walk."

"Are you sure?"

"I know it!"

"I hope so!"

"Just you keep watch. They are ready to start. I want you to watch the work of that big fellow you can see away there on Fairport's side. He is a warm

bunch. Just see how he tears things to pieces. That's 'Buster' Belden, Fairport's terror, and he'll make some of these fellows who go against him look like straw men."

A sharp whistle sounded.

"They're off!" panted Arlington.

Fardale had the kick-off, and Darrell was the man selected for the work. He advanced slowly on the ball, then lifted it with his toe, and it sailed through the air.

Faber was the man who returned the kick, for it was returned promptly, and he drove the ball past Darrell into the hands of Singleton.

Big Bob took time to smash it handsomely, and it seemed that he singled out Belden, for the yellow egg sailed straight at the giant fullback of the opposing team.

Belden returned the kick, but the ball went out of bounds, where Dare fell on it.

Then it was brought in for the first scrimmage, and the two teams lined up.

"Now you watch close," advised Gorman. "There is going to be something doing in a very few minutes."

Fardale slammed into Fairport's center, making a gain of only a yard.

Then a try was made round the right end, which resulted in a gain of three yards.

Then another bucking of center, which gave the necessary yard to secure a first down.

"What's this?" exclaimed Arlington. "That doesn't look right!"

"Wait," advised Gorman. "Wait."

Encouraged by this success, Fardale continued the battering tactics until forced to try a kick. That kick was a failure, and it came near proving disastrous, for Wells came through and blocked the ball, which flew off into the hands of another Fairport man. A mix-up followed, and out of the scrimmage shot a huge figure.

"Look!" cried Gorman. "There he goes. Belden has the ball!"

It was true. Belden, the giant full-back of the

opposing team, had the ball, and he went tearing right through the center of Fardale's line. Like an irresistible force, he hurled tacklers aside. They were bowled over one after another. On he went, while the Fairport crowd rose up and began to scream.

It was wonderful how that giant tore his way through and darted out from the midst of the players. He seemed to have a clear field before him, and off he shot for Fardale's goal.

"They'll never catch him now!" said Gorman, confidently. "It is a touchdown for Fairport at the very— Look at that!"

The whole pack was after Belden, but one fellow was overhauling him. The giant could run swiftly, but one there was on the field who could make better speed. Little by little Dick Merriwell drew closer and closer. With distended nostrils and flashing eyes, he bore down on the big fellow.

Nearer and nearer to Fardale's line came Belden.

Then Dick launched himself through the air in a headlong plunge, making a flying tackle from the rear, and brought the terror of the gridiron crashing to the ground.

CHAPTER VII.

ONE INCH FROM THE LINE.

What a mad roar of joy went up from the Fardale bleachers! A moment before the great mass of cadets had been dumb with suspense and dread; now it was wild with relief and admiration for Dick Merriwell's magnificent flying tackle.

The terror of the gridiron had fallen with a mighty shock to the ground, for Dick had brought him down instantly.

But the ball was close to Fardale's goal—so close that this grand tackle seemed but a temporary checking of Fairport's progress.

The Fairport rooters cheered Belden's great run. And so the rival clans barked and bellowed at each other from opposite sides of the field.

"Pard," panted Brad Buckhart, as the mass untangled and rose, "that there was the greatest work I ever saw! You hear me whisper?"

Dick did not seem to hear. He was watching Belden; he noted that the big fellow did not rise readily and easily; he noted that he was pulled to his feet.

"How much is he shaken up?" Dick asked himself. "If he's not winded or hurt, it will be hard work to keep them from pushing the ball over."

Fairport was resolved not to give the cadets a chance to recover. There was no delay about lining up. Fardale had failed to make a delay by pretended injury of one of her players.

But Dick hoped Fairport would defeat her purpose by their very eagerness. Belden, the giant, was the strongest man to hammer the ball over in a case like this, and he had been thrown hard. Would he be strong enough and fresh enough to make the needed gain?

Dick seemed to read the thoughts and plans of the enemy. Fairport believed there would be no trouble in pounding right through the line of the home team. Belden thought himself invincible. He would be sent in.

Now, Dick gave a signal himself, and it warned his team to look out for what was almost certain to come.

They were ready. Two lines of grim young gladiators crouched with their noses almost touching. They glared at each other grimly, their jaws setting, their arms rigid, their muscles taut. And then—

Slam!—into the Fardale line went Belden with the ball. Bolles and Atwood pushed him. Vickery, Wells and Tapley were trying to tear open a hole for the big back to get through.

In that savage impact players seemed to shoot up into the air. There was a slight swaying, followed by a sudden yielding—a recoil!

But it was Fairport that swayed back, and the attempt to pound a hole through center had failed.

Worse than that, a yard had been lost!

A sound like the hissing of rockets and the booming of cannon came from the Fardale bleachers. The entire mass of cadets were up and roaring.

The grand stand, where sat the girls and ladies, was fluttering with red-and-black, and it added its shrill note to the volume of sound that swept across the field on the clear, cold air.

The cadets had held the enemy in check. The mighty Belden had failed to hurl his massive body through that line. His interferers had opened up no

hole for him. Those pushing against him had pushed in vain.

It was something worth cheering for, in truth. This was the work that sent thrills running over every witness. This was the work that brought out the best mettle of the young athletes engaged.

Could Fardale hold fast again?

"All right, boys!" cried Dick. "That's the stuff! That's the way! Do it again!"

Belden was disappointed and disgusted.

"What's the matter with you fellows?" he growled at the forwards who had failed to make an opening for him. "Get into the game!"

They did not answer him, although Vickery muttered to himself. Vickery was a big fellow, but Tubbs was larger. Vickery had looked on the fat boy with scorn.

"A big, flabby dub!" he had mentally decided. "They've put him there for his size, and he's all fat. He hasn't muscle enough to play cats-cradle."

But now Vickery was wondering if he had not made a mistake about the fat boy. Obediah was deceptive in the extreme. But one thing he demonstrated, which was that he seemed as immovable as the eternal hills when he planted himself with the intention of staying on a certain spot. He was like a mighty tree with its roots deep planted in the ground.

Vickery said something to the captain of the team. The captain nodded, with a quick glance toward Obediah.

"They won't try him again," decided Dick, although it seemed that such a plan was just what was meditated. "They have found out what he is."

If they did not try again the attack must come at one side or the other. With the ball so near, it was not probable Fairport would make an effort to carry it round the end as long as she believed a weak spot could be found in the cadets' line.

But Dick was watching closely. He knew the unexpected might be attempted, and it would not do to be caught napping.

Again they crouched, again the ball was snapped and passed, again there was a rush and an impact.

Smith and Tapley had jumped into Dare and Kent, trying to force them apart. Bolles dashed himself in between the forwards of his own line, seeking to aid them in making the opening, and—thud!—Belden went into Bolles.

But Darrell was there, little Smart had his shoulder

to Dare's back, Merry came over like a flash and backed them up.

The line swayed, and this time it was in the wrong direction.

Only for a moment.

It steadied again, and the ball was down.

But Fairport was cheering wildly.

Fardale was silent.

Was the ball over?

It seemed so from the wild demonstrations of joy rising from the visitors' side of the field.

Wait a minute; it is best not to be "too previous."

There was measuring, a pause, and then a signal from the linesman.

Then it was that the Fardale bleachers roared again, for it was a third down, and the ball yet remained on the right side of the line.

But the yellow egg was down just one inch from the line.

One little inch, and that was all!

Airport had another chance, but the needed gain must be made. What would she do? Was she confident?

The quarter-back seemed to hesitate, and the captain said something.

"Oh, dear! I'm so frightened!" sighed Ted Smart, who was crouching in readiness, fairly trembling to get the scrimmage.

For Ted was a little scrapper, in spite of his size, and he enjoyed the clash and excitement of the game.

In this moment, as Airport prepared for this desperate effort to make a touchdown, the visiting crowd broke out into an encouraging cheer.

Then from the Fardale bleachers rose a mighty chorus. The cadets were singing "Fardale's Way."

"It's no use trying, it's no use crying,
It's no use raising Cain;
We don't fear you, we'll be near you
When you come again;
When you bump us, what a rumpus!
Plant ourselves to stay;
Then we'll ram you, buck and slam you
In the good old Fardale way."

This was inspiring. Yet there were many who feared that Airport would make the desired touchdown.

Once more Belden was given the ball, but as he seemed about to plunge into the line he passed it to Atwood. Airport's left half-back went into Kent.

Again it seemed that Dick Merriwell had divined the

trick. Belden was permitted to tear through between Bradley and Tubbs, while the backs supported the left wing of the line.

And the ball went down without a gain!

No wonder the Fardale bleachers seemed covered with a lot of lunatics! This was the kind of fighting to inspire them.

Airport had lost the ball on downs.

Dick Merriwell wasted no time in preparing for Fardale's play. It would not do to take chances. A slip or a fluke might prove disastrous; so a kick was resorted to immediately.

The backs of the visiting team knew what was coming, and they ran back for the kick. Still Merriwell came near driving the ball over Belden's head, and the giant was compelled to take it on the run.

Buckhart made a dive for the big fellow, but Belden showed himself amazingly nimble and avoided the Texan.

Right, left, in, out and around went the giant. Two other would-be tacklers he bowled over. He was a terror, indeed. When he got fairly in motion it seemed almost impossible to stop him. No wonder he was known as "Buster" Belden.

Dick saw what was happening. It was the unexpected, and such a thing could not happen very often in a game between two teams that were somewhat near evenly matched.

Belden was coming like the wind. This time he was bound to make a touchdown.

Captain Merriwell set his teeth. Every muscle in his body was strained, every nerve at its highest tension. As Belden came down, Dick closed in on him.

The giant saw him. He knew Dick had stopped him before, but now he vowed that nothing of the kind should happen.

But try as he might he could not dodge that pantherish youth. Again Dick shot through the air, tackling low, and again the terror crashed to the ground.

But Belden had carried the ball through almost the entire Fardale team, and the writhing mass of players were on both sides of the line.

Was the ball over?

No!

Again it was down just one inch from the line!

CHAPTER VIII.

DESPERATE WORK.

A second time had Dick Merriwell baffled the terror of the gridiron, and there was every reason why the Fardale cadets should cheer for him. They did cheer. Thinking of the great stand the team had made a few minutes before, they sought to give the players encouragement to repeat the performance.

But this was the very first down, and surely Fairport could push the ball over in three attempts.

Dick was feeling pretty desperate, for he saw that Fairport was keeping Fardale constantly on the defensive, and this made the home team look weak.

Something was the matter; that was plainly evident.

Fardale was given little time to think. The visitors were determined to push the game while things were going their way.

Smith and Vinol were called back of the line. There was a peculiar tackle-back formation, and then—

Thud, crash, strain—the struggle was on again. The shock was great, but the cadets had the fighting spirit, and they held the enemy in their tracks, for all of the battering force of the backs, which was concentrated to push the ball over.

The line held. The ball was down, and it was not quite as near the line as it had been on the first down.

Hope rose once more as it was seen that the cadets had again made a gallant "last ditch" stand.

"Good work!" exclaimed Dick. "Keep it up, fellows—keep it up!"

Could they?

Jolliby was down. He lay stiff and still upon the ground. The water-bucket was brought in a hurry and water was dashed upon him. A sponge-full of water was rubbed over his face and squeezed into his mouth. He revived slowly and got on his feet just in time to stay in the game. Then he winked at Dick, saying:

"I gug-gug-gug-guess we needed that time to get a breath."

Clever Chip! He had not been injured, but he had worked the game to give the team time to recover and prepare for the next assault.

Dick glowed. Jolliby had wit in a time of stress. The little rest had freshened the boys and made them ready for the desperate attack that was certain to come.

Fairport had found Fardale strong in resisting a battering-ram assault on the line. The cadets had

seemed rather weak in tackling swiftly and bringing down a runner on a broken field.

Dick was watching every move. In Fairport's next formation the tackles were left in the line. The half-backs and full-backs grouped themselves behind the line. Plainly the ball was going to one of them, but it was hard to tell which one.

Something, however, led Dick to suspect that Bolles was the man chosen. He believed this because the grouping seemed to indicate that Bolles was the man who could take the pass—only with more difficulty than the other two. Dick fancied this was a trick to add to the deception.

Vickery fiddled with the ball between his legs. It was a moment of intense suspense. Dick feared that he might make a mistake, but he knew that seconds counted in stopping the ball when it was so near the goal line. A mistake now would be disastrous.

Vickery snapped the ball to Callahan, who made a handsome pass.

As Dick had anticipated, the ball went to Bolles, who sprang out to take it and was off like a shot.

Captain Merriwell had heard that Bolles was a hurdler. Right here he looked for an effort to hurdle. He dashed in toward the point in the line at which Bolles aimed.

Up into the air leaped Dick. As he did so, Bolles came up from the other side of the line. But for Dick's remarkable judgment the Fairport half-back would have cleared the line and made a touchdown. As it was, the two half-backs met in the air, and Dick had hurled himself upward and forward with such force that he drove the other player backward and fell upon him as he went down.

It was a sensational piece of business, and again Fardale had good reason for her mad cheering.

Bolles lay still upon the ground when Dick got up. He was down and out!

They carried him from the field and turned him over to the care of a doctor.

A substitute by the name of Inman took his place.

Fardale's defense was most exasperating to the visitors. The loss of Bolles seemed to discourage them for a moment. They did not rally quickly.

"If we can get them going," thought Dick, "it will not be so hard to win this game."

The bleachers were roaring for Merriwell. And the grand stand shrilled his name.

Chester Arlington was not on the bleachers. In

company with "Professor" Rapp and two other sporty-looking strangers, he had been watching the game, standing in the crowd at one end of the seats.

"It beats anything how that fellow Merriwell always seems to blunder into the right thing!" he said, peevishly. "Now look at that play."

"Say, it was a bird!" declared Rapp. "Dis Merriwell is der real t'ing. If yer don't believe it, look et me mug an' see. He's der first kid wot ever left a mark on me."

"Well, you'll have a chance to even it up," said Chester. "We can't stay here longer. The half will be up pretty soon, and we must be ready."

Rapp seemed to hesitate.

"It's a rough deal," he said, as if wishing to back out of something.

"Well, you stand by me, or you don't get your money!" grated Chester. "That's flat!"

"You t'rew me down las' night," said Rapp; "but yer promised ter make it all right ter-day."

"If you helped me pull off this other little game of mine."

"Well, it's poor business, but I has ter have me money."

At this moment Fairport made her next assault on Fardale. The ball went to Inman, who rushed at the line; but, with remarkable quickness, Belden passed behind him and took the ball, going round the end.

Darrell went out to meet Belden. Merriwell did not have time. Smith broke through and blocked Singleton, which left Hal alone to cope with the giant of the gridiron.

Darrell did not hesitate or falter. He flung himself at the big full-back.

At the same instant, Belden hurled himself headlong through the air.

Darrell tackled and brought him down, but the ball was over the line, and Fairport had made a touchdown.

CHAPTER IX.

A HOT FIGHT.

The gymnasium being close to the football field, it was the custom at Fardale between halves to leave the field and trot over to the gym., where there could be some brisk rubbing down and preparation for the final set-to.

The first half ended with the score 6 to 0 in favor of Fairport, Fardale having failed to score.

As Dick was leaving the field some one thrust a note into his hand. He opened it at once, and this was what he read:

"CAPTAIN MERRIWELL:—I have heard something which I must tell you at once. Come to my room. Don't fail. You must know it before you begin on the last half, or you will lose the game. Don't fail to run up between halves. I would come to you if I could. Come alone." OLIVER STONE."

Oliver Stone was one of the athletic committee who had been friendly to Dick. Dick knew he was ill in his room, which he had been unable to leave to witness the game.

"This is very strange," thought young Merriwell. "I wonder what it means."

He read the note over again, seeking to discover a hidden meaning.

"Come alone," he repeated, reading the final words. "He has something to tell me. Who gave me this note, anyway?"

He had not observed who thrust it into his hand as he was passing through the gate.

"Well, I'll go," he decided.

The others had trotted on toward the gym. He turned toward the academy, and away he went, for he knew he would not have much time to spare. His rub in the gym. would have to be cut out.

"But it may be worth it," he thought. "Stone is square as a brick. He wouldn't bother me now unless it was something of the greatest importance."

Up the stairs and straight to Stone's room he went. When he knocked on the door a voice called:

"Come in."

As Dick pushed that door open he was attacked by a feeling of uneasiness, a sense of danger. Something seemed to warn him that all was not right.

Instantly he was on the alert.

But as he stepped in something swooped down over his head and he was seized by several hands.

A blanket had been cast over his head to muffle any outcry he might make.

But for that feeling of danger which came on him like a breath from the room the moment he opened the door, Dick would have been wholly and utterly unprepared.

But that feeling had placed him on the alert, and he began to fight the moment the blanket descended upon him. He tried to fling it off, but he was dragged down.

His hands were caught, but his feet were free, and Dick could use his feet in a most lively manner, as he immediately demonstrated. He kicked out in all directions, and with such rapidity that it seemed impossible to avoid his heavy shoes.

Twice he landed fairly, and to his ears came a muffled cry that was half a groan.

This happened before he was dragged off his feet, but as he went down he partly tore aside the blanket, catching a glimpse of the room. He saw that he had been set upon by several persons, and then one of them jumped on his head, spreading out the blanket and crushing him to the floor.

"Grab his legs!"

He heard the words. Again his feet flew, and again some one was struck by them. This time he heard and felt a thud on the floor, as if the person hit had gone down.

Dick succeeded in getting one hand clear from the blanket. With it he reached over and grasped the fellow who was holding his head down and smothering him.

In that moment the strength of Dick Merriwell seemed concentrated in his effort. He pulled the fellow over with a sharp jerk.

Other hands were on Dick, but all of them could not hold him then as he came out from beneath that blanket.

He had one fellow down. Two others were on his back. A fourth was doubled up a few feet away, as if he had received a blow in the stomach.

All of those fellows had handkerchiefs tied over their faces.

"Look out!" panted one. "Jump on him again! Pull the blanket over his head! He's getting away!"

"Oh, yes!" grated Dick. "Jump on me! You have done it! I'm going to do a little jumping! Ha! ha! ha!"

His laugh rang out strangely. It seemed a peculiar time for him to laugh like that.

He had turned on his hands and knees, pinning down one twisting chap. Another was on his back. Dick tipped his head forward and then suddenly flung it far back. The back of his head struck the fellow in the mouth who had leaped on him and loosened his teeth, besides cutting his lip. That fellow dropped off as if stunned.

"Four to one!" panted Dick. "Well, give me half a show, and I'll hold my own with all of you!"

They expected he would raise an outcry the moment his head was free from the blanket, but he did not seem to think of doing anything of the sort. He might have shouted for help, and it is almost certain he would have brought some one hurrying to that room.

But all of his fighting blood was aroused. He was furious to think they had attacked him in such a way. He would show them that four cheap ruffians were not enough to handle one fellow with honest fighting blood in his body.

So he thumped the fellow who had tried to smother him with the blanket, and got up for all of another fellow who clung to him and sought to trip him after he had butted the one on his back in the mouth.

Somebody struck him a glancing blow with a weapon that seemed like a slung-shot. It would have floored him had it hit fairly. As it was, he staggered and was dazed for a moment.

In that moment his feet was clutched by the fellow on the floor. Another fellow gave him a push, and down he went. Yet a third pounced upon him.

But Dick kicked in the face the chap who had grasped his feet, and he was put out of the scrimmage for the time.

The one on Dick's back slugged him several times, and he did not strike a baby blow, either.

"It's getting interesting!" grated young Merriwell.

As if it had not been interesting enough before!

In some manner he suddenly hurled the fellow off his body, and then he was up again.

"Now, sail in!" he cried. "Come on, the whole of you!"

They seemed dazed by the wonderful fight he had made, and they hesitated.

"Well," said Dick, "if you won't sail in, I'll have to."

And he proceeded to do so. He had decided that he could handle them all with anything like a fair show, and he started in to demonstrate the correctness of this belief.

"He's der devil!" said one of the fellows.

Dick laughed again—that wild, reckless laugh that came from his lips when he was thoroughly aroused

"Thank you!" he exclaimed. "Under the circumstances I don't mind being called that by a chap like you. But, if I am the devil, I wonder who you are."

"Keep off!" snarled the chap, as Dick pinned him up and rushed him into a corner.

The handkerchief seemed to bother him, but he handled his fists rather skillfully.

"You ought do better with that thing off," said Dick, as he closed in, made a snatch, and tore the handkerchief from the face of his antagonist.

"Hello, Professor Rapp!" he exclaimed. "I had an idea that it must be you. Why, you had a fancy you could eat me up alone last night; but now you come at me with three friends to aid. You must have changed your mind, professor."

"I jest said you was der devil!" returned Rapp. "Ye're der greatest scrapper wot I ever seen."

"Thanks!" laughed Dick. "Take my advice, professor, and stick to your fancy pool playing. It will——"

Then one of the others came up behind Merriwell and smote him over the head with the slung-shot.

Dick pitched forward, and Rapp caught him as he fell.

The fellow who had struck Dick lifted the weapon to strike him again.

"Dat's the limit!" came from Rapp. "Wot yer want? T'ink yer goin' ter kill him?"

"It's the only way to keep him down."

"Well, youse'll out it out."

"Why, you——"

"He's seen me mug. T'ink I'm goin' inter dis fool business any deeper? Well, I guess nit!"

"You don't get your money if——"

"Money! You go ter-blazes! I'll make your old man fork ter keep dis t'ing quiet, if you won't come down wid der dough. I can tell how yer put up der job, an' dat will make you look mighty fine—I don't t'ink! All right, all right! Pay or not, as yer dern please! Anyhow, dis business quits here. It's a fool thing anyhow. Wot if he didn't show up ter play der last half? W'y, dey'd say der game was lost because he was outer it! Youse ain't got sense enough ter see dat ye're workin' plum against yerself."

"I've got sense enough to see that you're a two-faced thug, and I——"

Rapp lowered Dick to the floor and turned on the speaker.

"Looker here!" he snarled; "I'm goin' ter slug der mug offen youse! I've stood all wot I'm goin' ter take from a stiff like youse!"

Then he struck the other fellow, who went reeling against the wall.

At this moment the door opened and Oliver Stone

himself, in a bath robe, stood in the doorway. Stone stopped and stared, amazed beyond measure at what he saw. The fellows in that room, with the exception of Dick, started back.

Stone seemed to realize at last that some astounding thing had taken place in his room, and he turned and ran, shouting an alarm.

"Get!" hissed the fellow Rapp had struck, which was Chester Arlington. "He'll have us in a scrape in a minute! Get out of the building if you can!"

They fled from the room, leaving Dick lying on the floor.

CHAPTER X.

SO NEAR AND YET SO FAR.

There was a window in a room at the top of the academy from which one could look out and see onto the football field. The room was occupied by two freshmen. Oliver Stone, being unable to go to the field, had asked if he might occupy that room and watch the game from the window, a privilege which had been given him.

But Stone was feeling pretty rocky, and the excitement of the first half had been too much for him. When the half was over he began to feel very bad. The relapse from the strain was too much for him, and he finally decided that he would be compelled to return to his own room and go to bed.

Thus it happened that Oliver appeared in his own doorway and saw something that astounded him beyond measure.

His cries soon brought others to the scene. They went to his room with him and found Dick just sitting up, looking extremely bewildered.

The room was in confusion, chairs being overturned and the furniture generally disarranged.

It was some moments before Dick could remember what had happened. There was a great swelling on his head where he had been struck.

"The game!" he exclaimed. "What about it?"

"Never mind that," said some one. "Who attacked you here? Tell us."

"I don't know them all," said Dick. "They had handkerchiefs tied over their faces. Stone saw them. He can tell you better than I."

"I didn't recognize one of them," said Stone.

"Somebody go tell the fellows what has happened," urged Dick. "I must be in that game when it starts again. This matter can be taken up after the game."

He was rather weak from the effects of the blow, but his head was bathed with cold water, and he lost little time in hastening away to the field.

The game had been delayed for him to return, Fairport generously agreeing to the extension of time.

The crowd had wondered what it meant. They saw Dick had not returned to the field with the Fardale team, and all sorts of rumors flew from mouth to mouth.

"We're done for!" said one chap. "The doctor has taken Merriwell out of the game. Says he can't play any more for a month."

"What's the matter?" asked another.

"Don't know yet, but they say it's serious."

Then came one who told a vague yarn of an attack being made on Dick, who had been seriously, perhaps fatally, hurt.

This created doubt, excitement and consternation. The cadets sought further information, but they asked one another the questions, which added to their doubt and uncertainty.

Then there was a stir, a murmur, a shout, a great cheer. For Dick was seen hurrying onto the field in his football suit, accompanied by several fellows.

They greeted him handsomely. He joined his men, who had been wondering over his absence, spoke a few words to them, and the two teams spread out on the field.

The second half began.

Dick was sore on himself for being led into a trap, and he felt that it was fortunate he had come out as well as he had. When the game was over he would give his attention to the running down of the four ruffians who had decoyed and attacked him in Stone's room.

Dick was determined to put Fairport on the defensive as much as possible in the last half. The visitors had succeeded in keeping Fardale on the defensive in the first half, and now the tables must be turned.

With this in mind, he had spoken a few words to his men as he rejoined them.

Strange as it may seem, the team fancied Dick's disappearance during the time between halves had been for the purpose of studying out some method of winning the game. Some of them said Dick had gone off by himself to meditate on the game. They took no stock in the story that he had been attacked.

The second half opened with some lively kicking by both sides. Then Belden got the ball and started

on a run through the field. But Kent brought the big fellow down.

That was bad for Kent, as one of Belden's heels struck him on the chin and split it open, so that it was necessary to sew it up at once. This put him out of the game, and his place was taken by Gardner, a plebe.

With the ball down twenty yards from the center of the field, Fairport resumed her battering-ram assaults on the Fardale line.

Success crowned the efforts of the visitors until the ball had been carried clean to the center of the field. There it was lost on an off-side play.

At last Fardale had her chance, and all were anxious to see what she would do.

Dick spoke something to Smart, who gave the signal.

The ball went to Singleton, who dashed forward with it, being protected by a wedge that struck the line between Vickery and Wells.

Just outside the wedge ran Dick Merriwell, keeping slightly behind Singleton.

Fairport concentrated her efforts on tearing the wedge to pieces in order to reach the home team's full-back.

For a distance of six or eight yards the wedge plowed along, and then it began to go to pieces before the assault of the enemy.

At this juncture, just when the Fairport men were coming through to clutch him, Singleton skillfully tossed the ball out to Dick, who was watching and waiting to receive it.

Dick had not been given much attention, and now he found almost a clear field before him. Tucking the ball under his wing, he shot away like a streak.

After him trailed the players. Before him was Belden, who had kept back from the fray for the purpose of bringing down a runner who might come out of the ruck with the ball.

Roar! roar! roar!

Go it, Merriwell! Hear the cadets thundering! They are screaming your name.

Dick did go it. He hoped to get past Belden, but the giant was fast on his feet, and he turned in and pulled the runner down on the thirty-yard line.

But Dick had made a splendid gain of twenty-five yards.

The Fairport players were disgusted. The trick had been simple enough, yet they had failed to tumble to it.

But they were surprised when Fardale seemed to swing right into the same play for the next assault, Dick keeping outside of the wedge, which struck the line and was torn to pieces quickly.

Vinol looked after Merriwell this time, being ready to tackle him the moment the ball was passed out.

Right there was where Fairport was fooled again, for the ball was tossed out to Darrell on the other side of the wedge, and Hal made fifteen yards before being downed.

This was the kind of work to arouse excitement, for now the ball was down only fifteen yards from Fairport's goal.

Twice had the visitors been tricked, and it was pretty certain they would not permit themselves to be deceived again by the same kind of a play.

"On the jump!" called Dick.

"On the jump!" repeated Smart.

It was the signal for the old "ends around" play of the previous season.

Fardale had won most of her important victories on that play, which had surprised and fooled the opposing teams; but now, as the ends began to swing back, the Fairport men got in swiftly and hurled them right and left, breaking up the formation in a twinkling and spoiling the play.

"That worked lovely!" exclaimed Smart, as the ball was downed without a gain.

Dick made no remark, but he realized that Fairport had been coached to break up that play, a thing that could be easily done if it was attempted in the right manner.

Dick was thinking swiftly. Time was precious, and false moves were costly.

Would it do to try the wedge again? He saw that Fairport knew how to break up that formation readily. The pass as the wedge had gone to pieces had proved effective twice, but Dick was satisfied that it would not go a third time unless sprung quickly when not expected.

A word to Smart, and then—

"90—104—29—44."

A revolving formation, with Darrell in the center, struck the middle of Fairport's line.

The signal was taken accurately, and the play was made without a moment of hesitation.

The twisting mass pushed forward three yards before it was torn to pieces.

A small gain had been made.

But that was not enough to be satisfactory to Dick. "Everybody at it!" he called, as the players prepared to form again.

It was the signal agreed upon for the "center-back" play that had worked so well in the last game.

Fairport was surprised when Smart went into the center and Tubbs retired to full-back, with Singleton at quarter.

What sort of a game was this? Plainly Fardale had weakened her line at center.

Some of the Fairport players laughed derisively.

Dick saw that every man was strained up and ready to jump into the play with vim. Everything depended on the quickness with which the play was made—that and the strength and stability of Obediah Tubbs.

Smart seemed to hesitate. Vickery started too soon and was sent back by the referee. Then the ball was snapped and Vickery was on the little fellow in a twinkling.

But Fairport's big center was surprised when he failed to bowl the little fellow over with perfect ease. He was further surprised when Singleton, having deftly made the pass, reinforced Smart.

Then came Obediah with the ball, smashing into center, with two or three fellows behind him to add their strength to his impetus.

Tubbs was like a huge battering-ram. Smart and Singleton had checked Vickery, while Bradley had managed to push Wells to one side. There was a small opening, and into this Obediah projected his huge body.

Players were knocked aside, and the fat boy went through. Then he was clutched by various players. One got him about the legs, but he did not go down. He walked on. They clung to him like leaches, and still he pushed ahead. It was a wonderful sight to see him keep on his feet so long and make progress with so many trying to drag him down.

But even Obediah could not stand up forever before the assaults of the enemy, and at last he fell like a mighty mountain.

But the ball was down four feet from the goal line.

Only four feet from a touchdown! So near—and yet so far!

CHAPTER XI.

ALMOST—NOT QUITE.

"What's the matter with old Fardale?
She's all right!
She can fight!
She's always in the game,
And her work is never tame;
She'll get there, just the same;
So—
What's the matter with old Fardale?"

The cadets were singing one of their songs of the gridiron and the diamond. It was a thrilling moment. With scarcely more than a yard to make, the Fardale team was ready for the assault.

Could Fairport stand up to it and make a sensational "last ditch" play?

The "center-back" had worked even better than Dick had dared hope. It had taken the enemy by surprise; but there was a strong probability that it would not prove so successful on a repetition.

For all of this, Dick was determined to try it. A gain of four feet meant a touchdown.

"All together now!" called Dick. "Get right into it! Here is where we score!"

"You bet your boots!" exclaimed Buckhart, who had been fighting silently up to this point, but who now woke up. "Here is where we slam her right over! You hear me chirp!"

Vickery leaped at Smart like a flash when the ball was snapped. Ted went down, but the referee did not see him clutch Fairport's big center about the legs. It was a foul, but such things were hard to detect in that plunging mass of players, and it spoiled Vickery's plans.

Ted was battered and nearly killed, but he hung to those legs long enough to enable Singleton to butt a hole in the line.

Obediah Tubbs went through that hole, for all of those who tried hard to stop him, and hundreds of cadets howled themselves black in the face, for a touchdown had been made at last.

Dick was happy. He longed to make the try for a goal, but decided that he would not be greedy. So he punted the ball out and it was caught by Darrell.

The position made it necessary to kick for the goal at an angle, but Darrell was confident. Dick held the ball.

Back of the posts Fairport lined up, ready to rush at the first opportunity.

A wind had risen and was sweeping across the field.

Dick lay on his stomach and held the ball carefully, with the seam up. At a distance Darrell balanced himself and seemed to sight along the seam. Lower, lower went the ball. If it touched the ground Fairport would charge.

Suddenly Darrell went at the ball, his leg swung back, his foot went forward and—plunk!—away sailed the oval.

Some of the Fairport forwards leaped ahead and upward, their hands stretched into the air; but it rose above them, and they could not stop it.

"It's over!"

A cry of joy from the Fardale seats; a groan of dismay from the opposite side.

As it rose, however, the wind caught it and bore it swiftly to one side.

"A miss!" bellowed somebody from the Fairport side.

Then a hush. The ball struck one of the uprights above the bar, glanced off and dropped.

It was a failure, and the cadets were filled with unspeakable dismay, while the visitors shouted for joy.

One there was who wore a Fardale uniform and who could not repress his satisfaction, even though he had professed to be friendly with Darrell. It was Chester Arlington, who had reappeared among the spectators.

Hogan and Crauthers were with him.

"The jig is up!" said Chester. "They'll not get another chance like that. A goal would have tied the score."

Somebody touched him on the arm.

"I have a little business wit' youse!" said a voice that made Chester start.

"Rapp!" he gasped. "Why, I thought you were gone!"

"Not yet," answered the fellow.

"You'd better get out lively!"

"I will w'en I have settled wit' youse."

"Settled?"

"Dat's wot."

Arlington glanced round nervously, discovering that several persons in the immediate vicinity were watching them wonderingly.

"You're a chump!" he whispered, touching a bruise on his cheek. "I think it's pretty well settled."

"I guess not!" returned the bruiser, instantly.

"Dere's somethin' comin' ter me."

"I don't want to be seen talking to you," said Chester.

"Den come outside," invited the fellow. "Tell yer wot, if ye don't come I'll stay right here."

"You'll be arrested."

"Dat's all right. Can't scare me off wit' dat. I'm goin' ter see Dick Merriwell arter der game is over."

That brought Chester to terms in a hurry.

"Go ahead," he muttered. "I'll follow you outside."

CHAPTER XII.

THE BITER BITTEN.

"I want dat hundred plunks wot you promised me fer comin' here," said Rapp, as he faced Chester outside the grounds.

Arlington was pale, but his face wore a nasty look of determination.

"See here, Rapp," he said, "you know the agreement we made."

"Sure."

"You were to knock the fellow out so he would be in no condition to take part in the game."

"Well?"

"You fizzled—you didn't do it."

"I done me best."

"That makes no difference; you failed in your part of the contract, and therefore there is no reason why I should pay you money."

"Is dat so?"

"It is."

"Say, you tolle me dat I'd find him easy meat; you know dat."

"I thought a professional-like you would be able to knock him out in a hurry."

"Well, ye see you lied ter me an' got me inter dis business dat way. But dere's no use makin' talk about dis business anyhow. I've gotter have me dough, an' have it I will, dat's flat. So fork over lively an' I'll skip."

Chester's lips curled.

"You may think me a mark, but you'll find I am not. I'll fork over nothing. If you remain here until after this game is over you'll be arrested."

"I s'pose dat's right."

"Sure thing. Merriwell saw you. You are the only one he recognized."

"Dat's all right."

Arlington did not like the way Rapp said this.

"What do you mean?"

"I know who der odders was."

"You mean who—"

"Do youse t'ink I'm a chump ter be pinched an' not say a peep, w'en you're goin' back on me like dis? Well, you'll find out dat I ain't!"

"Why," said Chester, "do you mean that you'll blow?"

"On you—yes."

Arlington looked as if he longed to fly at the thick-necked "professor."

"If you do—" he snarled.

"What will you do? Better not be a fool. Come down wit' der dough an' I'll git."

"I haven't got it. I'll send it to you."

"Oh, yes—I don't t'ink! Yer can't work dat racket on me. I stay right here till I git me needful."

A cheer came from within the inclosure. Arlington shrugged his shoulders at the sound, for the cadets were cheering, and it seemed to indicate that a brilliant play of some sort had just been made by the Fardale team.

"I can't waste my time here!" he snapped. "I want to see that game!"

"I'm willin' fer you ter see it arter we has settled."

"I'd like to thump the face off you!" panted Arlington.

"I don't doubt it, pal; but youse ain't built right. Dick Merriwell is der fust kid wot I seen dat can do dat."

Chester bit his lip.

"See here, Rapp," he said, "I have but thirty dollars to my name, and part of that is in my room."

"Come on ter yer room den."

"But the game—"

"Ter thunder wit' der game! Come on. I ain't goin' ter fool wit' youse no more."

Rapp tried to place a hand on Chester's shoulder, but Arlington exclaimed, fiercely:

"Don't touch me with your dirty paws! I'll give you what money I have and no more!"

Then he struck out for the academy, and the pugilist followed, grinning in a satisfied manner.

Arlington did not look round. He knew the fellow was behind him. Straight to his room he went, and Rapp watched him open a drawer in his desk. From the drawer Chester took some money. To this he added some from his pocket.

"There!" he grated, flinging it on the table; "that's every cent I have! Take it and go!"

The other coolly picked it up and ran it over.

"Twenty-nine dollars!" he said, in a contemptuous way. "Wot d'yer take me fer?"

"It's all I have, and so you'll have to be satisfied."

"Is dat so?"

"It is."

"Wot's der time?"

"Almost three-thirty," said Arlington, pulling out his handsome watch and glancing at it.

Rapp coolly took the watch from Chester's hand, doing it so quickly and deftly that the railroad magnate's son was relieved of the ticker before he realized what was happening.

"Dis is wort' somet'in'," said the "professor," as he coolly pocketed watch, fob and all.

"What?" cried Arlington, in great rage. "You don't mean to take that?"

"Don't I? Mebbe not."

"It's worth a hundred dollars alone."

"Mebbe so, but I couldn't git half if I had ter soak it. So I ain't even yit, pal. Dat's a handsome spark you has on yer finger. I t'ink I'll take dat."

"Not on your life!" cried Chester. "Why, that ring cost a hundred and fifty!"

"Dat's good. Take it off an' fork it over."

Chester refused, whereupon Rapp coolly sat down and announced that he would wait until Arlington decided to do as requested.

Chester realized at last that he was bitten. He wanted Rapp to get away from Fardale, and he dared not have the fellow round when the football game ended. So, when the pugilist promised to get out in a hurry, Arlington sorrowfully pulled off his diamond ring and handed it over.

"So long, pal," grinned Rapp, as he walked out of the room. "Take me advice an' let Dick Merriwell alone. It will cost yer too much ter do dat fly guy up."

Chester hurried back to the field. Just as he reached the gate there came a wonderful uproar from within. He hurried through to find the players carrying Dick Merriwell round the field on their shoulders, while the cheering crowd was swarming after them.

"What's happened?" he asked, clutching a man by the arm.

"Merriwell just kicked a goal from the field and won the game!" was the joyous answer. "Hooray! hooray!"

THE END.

The Next Number (343) Will Contain

Dick Merriwell's Mascot;

OR,

BY LUCK OR PLUCK.

Besides being one of the best schools in the country, Fardale is also one of the merriest. It couldn't be otherwise with the two Merries on deck! Well, that isn't a bad way to put it! Here is a good tip to land our readers on Top. READ THE NEXT NUMBER. But, first of all, get a bottle of Side Ache Oil, so that you may be able to rub your aching ribs after you get through reading about what our good Professor Gunn did at the Mask-Dance in Farmer Snodds' barn. In the words of Ted Smart, "Oh my, oh my! Wasn't it sorrowful! I never had such a sad time in my life!" And then that football game. Can you wonder that the cadets' hearts slipped right down into their shoes when they saw those Trojan Giants? Looks pretty dark for Fardale! The Giants are going to sweep Fardale off the sod. Now look! Behold, the expected is happening! There goes one of the Trojans down the field with the ball. It is the full-back. Fardale's team has melted away like mist. See, he has two powerful interferers ahead of him. The goal is twenty yards away, and Dick alone stands to defend it. Can he do it? Surely those Trojan interferers will bowl him over. There is not a chance to save the day—but wait! Something new and strange has happened. A flash through the air, a crash to the earth, and Dick Merriwell has thrown the runner. How did he do it? Read No. 343 and see for yourself.



NEW YORK, November 1, 1902.

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238 William St., New York City.

APPLAUSE NOTICE.

It has been truly said that the Applause Column is read the world over. The first reason for this vast popularity is because the column appears in what is universally admitted to be the king of all published weeklies,

The Winner of the Grand Prize at the Paris World's Fair,

TIP TOP WEEKLY.

But the second reason is just as important and cogent, namely, the high excellence of the letters written by our readers, which appear in this column. Indeed, these letters have been so highly praised that Street & Smith, always anxious to serve and benefit their great public, have decided to offer twelve valuable prizes for the twelve best letters received from Tip Top readers in the next six months. These twelve prizes will be

TWELVE GOLD FOUNTAIN PENS

of the highest grade.

Now, then, all our ambitious young letter writers will be anxious to win one of these fine prizes. All you have to do is to follow these directions:

Write a letter to Tip Top Weekly, discussing any feature of the famous publication, its characters, plots, athletics, contests, tournaments or anything that impresses you especially; then write across the top of it "Prize Letter," and send it to Street & Smith. So that the contest may be absolutely fair, the readers of Tip Top are to act as judges, and the letters which receive the greatest number of votes will be awarded the prizes. Come on now, boys and girls! Show us which one of all our young Shakespeares are the best letter writers.

APPLAUSE.

PRIZE LETTER NO. 5.

I think that Tip Top is the best weekly published. I also think a great deal of the characters, and am greatly interested in the sports, and also the school stories, as they remind me of the days when Frank went there. Great credit should be given to Burt L. Standish and Street & Smith for this wonderful weekly, as it has done a great deal of good for boys and girls. I close wishing success to all who read this weekly, and especially to Burt L. Standish and Street & Smith. ALBERT ERNY.

Elizabeth, N. J.

Here is another one out for a prize. Good luck to it.

PRIZE LETTER NO. 6.

I have been reading the Tip Top Weekly for years, and I find it the most interesting and entertaining book I have ever read. And I will say that B. L. Standish is one of the best authors I ever read, and also that Street & Smith print it in a good type, which does not strain the eyes in reading. The plots and athletic contests are the best ever heard of. Mr. Bradford, the rascally president, got his just dues when Mad Mose put an end to him. Frank and Dick Merriwell are the finest boys ever heard of. When Frank and Inza get married I hope he won't forget his old schooldays at Fardale. Jack Ready still keeps up his mirth and would make anybody split from laughing at him. I think Frank's fight for the pennant was at great odds, but our old friends came out on top.

G. B. DEGANT.

Wheeling, W. Va.

Another competitor. Good luck to you when the vote is taken.

PRIZE LETTER NO. 7.

I have been reading Tip Top about a year, and find it the best book I ever read. There is no trash nor anything bad in it. Frank and Dick are all right, and so is Bart and Brad. I like to read about athletics, as I am a good athlete. Some contests are close ones, but the Merriwells always play fair and win. Football will soon be out and I'll be glad, for I play left end. Dick will be a dandy player. I hope Dick will captain the Fardale team. Wishing success to Tip Top, all its friends and mostly to the celebrated author, Burt L., I remain,

JOHN J. McCABE.

Westfield, Mass.

Here is another prize letter. We think it is a good one. How large a vote will it draw?

PRIZE LETTER NO. 8.

I only "discovered" Tip Top a few weeks ago, and my great regret is that I didn't do so long before. I buy each number as it comes out, and I am getting all the back numbers that I can. In fact, I hope to get every one of them, from the very beginning, before I am through. I have just finished reading the latest, No. 336, and am very glad to see that my hero and favorite, Dick Merriwell, is going back to dear old Fardale. I am looking forward to No. 337 most eagerly. I got several more back numbers yesterday, and among them was No. 293—"Elsie and Inza in the Hands of Kidnappers." I think it is perfectly fine, one of the very best that I have read yet. It combines almost all the Tip Top qualities in a most delightful way, and I advise all Tip Toppers who haven't read that number to do so right away. So there is to be a double wedding soon? What a glorious time that will be! It is lots of pleasure to anticipate it beforehand. I think the couples are beautifully matched—fiery-tempered and hot-headed, but noble Bart, with dear, sweet, gentle Elsie; and Merry, well-controlled, calm, and cool, with daring, spirited Inza. I think Elsie is my favorite, but I love Inza, too, for she is a noble, beautiful girl, and I would not have things any different. Besides, is not Elsie perfectly happy with Bart? I hope that Doris Templeton, Felicia Delores, and Zona Desmond will be bridesmaids at the wedding. And perhaps in a few years there will be another double wedding, when Dick will be united to the choice of his heart, lovely, golden-haired Doris; and his sweet little cousin, Felecia, to Hal Darrell. Why can't Hal and

Felecia learn to love each other? I think it would be a lovely match, and lots of other Tip Toppers say the same thing. I should like to see handsome, "apple-cheeked" Jack Ready introduced to Zona Desmond, for I think they would be charmed with each other. I know Brad Buckhart is supposed to be "smashed" on Zona, but she doesn't care anything about him, and even he does not seem to care enough to let it worry him any. It seems to me that Jack Ready would be much better suited to her. I see that Tip Top is offering prizes now for the best letters. To be "in the swim," I'll have to mark this as a "prize letter," but, of course, I haven't any idea of its ever taking a prize. Yours forever,

HELEN B.,
Newark, N. J.

An Enthusiastic Admirer of Tip Top.

To be in the swim is to be with Tip Top, and you are with us heart and soul. Being a prize letter, we wish to compliment you on it. Please send your street address.

PRIZE LETTER NO. 9.

I wish to enter the Prize Letter Contest. This is my opinion of the Tip Top Weekly. I have read the Frank Merriwell stories since the first number was published. I remember how, when Frank first came to Fardale, he found Bart Hodge beating a little fellow, who was selling stuff at the station, and how they became enemies. How Frank, by his fairness in all things, won Hodge for his best friend. I have followed Merry through school, until he went traveling with Professor "Hot" Scotch. How, after traveling and going to college for some time, Professor Scotch loses Frank's money. Frank goes to work on a railroad as an engine-wiper, and raises himself to be an engineer. Then, leaving this, he becomes an actor in a dramatic company, and he writes a play called, "True Blue." Afterward, he enters college, and is first in everything, baseball, football, and on the crew. He graduates from college and finds his brother, Dick, who enters Fardale after a season of exciting adventures. Then Frank and Dick go out West to the Mad River region, and play with their team, representing Tip Top. After a hard struggle against crookedness and dishonesty, they win the pennant, as seen in No. 336 of the Tip Top Weekly. I wish to say that I have read other weeklies, and though some were good, yet none of them can compare with Tip Top. None of them have such good characters, nor is any story told in the same way that Tip Top tells it. I think of the characters in the stories, Frank, of course, is the best, though Bart is not far behind. Dick is a good character, but we have not seen very much of him yet. The girls play an important part in the stories, as do Frank's and Dick's friends, too numerous to mention. Taken as a whole, I think the Tip Top Weekly is, and always was, and always will be, an ideal publication for the American youth.

ROBERT HARDING.
Palmer, Mass.

Here is a fine, clear-cut, clever review of Tip Top and its leading features. Who can do better?

PRIZE LETTER NO. 10.

I think your Tip Top Weekly is the best paper published. I have read it for some time, and will read it as long as it is published. My favorites are Elsie, Doris, Felicia and Inza, but, of course, it is understood that I mean Frank and Dick also. I am trying to be like Frank in my every-day life, and find it is the best way to live. He and his brother are good examples. Wishing Tip Top hearty success, also Burt L. and Street & Smith.

New Orleans, La.

OTTO MEINE

A New Orleans letter for the prize list, and a good one, too. Please send your street address.

I have been a reader of the Tip Top Weekly for quite a while, and as I have never seen any letters from here in your Applause Column, I write a short one to let you know what I think of Tip Top and its author, Mr. Burt L. I think Mr. Stan-dish is a great writer, and is doing a great deal of good. I like most all of the Tip Top characters. But Dick and Brad are my favorites. When will Dick return to Fardale? I think Doris is the girl for Dick and Felecia for Darrell. I like Elsie better than I do Inza. I am glad that the wolf gang was broken up.

Well, as this is my first time, I will close with best wishes for the Tip Top and Burt L.

G. E. DELANO.

Leighton, Ala.

That is right. Let every town be represented in the Applause Column. You know by now that Dick is back again, working hard for dear old Fardale. Let us see what he will do on the gridiron.

I see there is another "swell head" by the name of Jack Levy, of Appolo, Penn., who thinks Bart ought to be put out of Merry's flock. He would not think so if his brain were on a balance, but I am sorry to say, I think there must be a screw loose in his coco. Well, as I am wasting too much time and space on such an insignificant Bart Hodge hater as the honorable J. L., I will close, wishing success to Bart, Frank, Dick and Street & Smith.

Nashville, Tenn.

E. D. M.

Another of Bart's staunch friends heard from. The anti-Hodgeites are strong in their opinions, but with such good friends as you and others are on Bart's side he is most secure.

I can let you know that I have read a few copies of the Tip Top Weekly, and it is all right. I like Frank, but Dick is just as good. Snowflake Charley is my hero. Please publish this in Tip Top. I would like to see it in print.

CHAS. DALY,

Ashtabula Harbor, Ohio.

Asst. Foreman Hanna Dock.

Thank you for your Tip Top enthusiasm. Keep it up and you will not be disappointed.

I have been reading the Tip Top for some time. I take the privilege of writing, and to tell you how much I like your weekly. I think it's O. K. All American boys ought to read it. As to the girls, Doris is for Dick and Felecia for Hal. Three big, long cheers for Frank and Dick, and their friends. I remain,

Springfield, Mass.

DANIEL HARTMAN.

Glad to hear your opinion of Tip Top. That is what they all say. O. K. stands for Tip Top.

I have been reading your publication since Frank Merriwell got into the Mad River League. I had begun to think that Snowflake Charley was a good boy and was surprised to find out that he was Black Bob. I am sorry he was killed, for I thought that he would have come out to down Rawdon Bradford, in the end. Hans Dunnerwurst is the most comical one in the bunch. Barney and Bruce are all right, but Bart, Dick and Frank are the heroes. Burt L. Standish is a good writer. Jack Ready, the beautiful baby that can be easily spoiled, I don't think. I would like to see some Southern boy become Dick's true friend at Fardale, when he returns. Hoping you will put this in print, I remain, your constant subscriber,

W. E.

Memphis, Tenn.

Yes, you have chosen the right boys for your heroes. There are none better than Frank and Dick, and surrounded, as they are, by so many good friends, with many sterling qualities, is it any wonder that Tip Top forms an ideal publication for the American boys? You would like Dick to have a Southern friend at Fardale. What is the matter with Brad. Of course, he is from the Southwest, but, nevertheless, he hails from that fine country south of the Mason and Dixon line.

I have been a reader of the Tip Top for two years, and admire the book greatly. I have learned a great many things through this publication. Next week I will send you a picture of the Young Indians baseball team. Hoping you will give this your kind attention, I remain, yours,

JAKE SLUTZKY.

Manager Y. Indians, Indianapolis.

Delighted to hear that you have benefited by Tip Top. It is what we wish for all our readers. By all means send us the picture of your team. We will be pleased to have it.

Having read your dear, good stories in Tip Top Weekly for about three years, I am going to write a few lines in your Ap-

plause Column to let all my friends know what I think about the grand characters in the Tip Top. Dick can't be beat. He will be president of the United States before long, and poor Snowflake Charley had to die at last, and also Pisen Bill. He was all right. He had the real stuff in him. I think Dick should have Doris. I would like to ask you a question: Have you got back numbers on hand. I would like to get the first numbers if you have them. Please let me know. Great success for Tip Top and Burt L. I remain, yours truly,

A. N. NELSON.

Rolfe, Iowa.

After three years' experience with Tip Top you should indeed be a competent judge of its goodness. You can procure the back numbers by writing to Street & Smith, 238 William street, New York City.

I enclose you herewith twenty-five cents in postage, for which you will please send me five copies of the Tip Top Weekly, "an ideal publication for the American youth," beginning with No. 330, entitled, "Frank Merriwell's Fracas; or, Hot Times in Mad River League." I was so delighted with the last lot of weeklies I purchased of you some time ago that I feel under obligations to respond in token of my appreciation of same. Well, Frank and Dick are certainly leading Rawdon Bradford a hot pace, and the teams in the league, why they're not in it! I am anxious to know how Frank and Snowflake Charley are getting along. I don't fancy the duck, somehow, but I guess he will prove to be all O. K., by and by. I wish the Tip Top would be published twice a week instead of once. Well, well, I see a great many of the readers express their desire to see Dick and Felecia marry. Well, since the Inza-Elsie question has been settled contrary to my wish I am unable to make any choice, as I fear if I did it would turn up like the above question; therefore, I will act wise and not express my thoughts any further. Wishing a long and happy life to the Tip Top, its author and Street & Smith, I beg to remain, an ardent reader,

FRANK WOODRING.

Vine Grove, Ky.

We have sent you the copies you requested. I am glad you are so pleased with the stories, and you do show wisdom, indeed, in waiting to see the Felecia-Doris question settled without forming an opinion now. It is too early to definitely determine, and when it is a certainty you can rest assured it will be the best thing.

Have read a great many of your wonderful Tip Tops. I am very fond of all the characters, but mostly so of Bart Hodge. I take the liberty to say that I think Bart would make a good hero, such as Frank and Dick, only of a different sort. I close, wishing Bart and Frank good luck. Yours, L. S. W.

New York City.

Many thanks for your warm praise of Tip Top. You are certainly the right kind of a friend, and in having you as one of his Bart can fear no enemy.

Well! I want to warn everybody before they read this that it is to be a regular whirlwind of a letter, and those that like a milk-and-water epistle had better pass it by. Oh, I am so angry about some of the letters in the Applause that I can hardly see! I won't mention the names of any of the writers of them, for that would hardly be polite, and though I have a temper, I trust that I shall never do anything ungentlemanly. I simply seek to show some of these Tip Toppers their error, and to try to guide their benighted minds to the ways of wisdom. Perhaps, if I were to reason it out, instead of flinging it at their heads, they might see the truth of what I say more clearly; but I cannot control myself to do so. To come to the point, Dick must marry Doris! There, I have said what I wrote this letter to say. But I haven't finished yet. The Doris-Felecia controversy is on now, and it will be a hot one, I suppose, but the Dorisites can rely on me. I shall do all in my power to bring our side to victory. Rally, Dorisites! Fling out your banners, unsheathe your swords, and I will be your leader! Write your letters to the Applause; set forth your testimony for our golden-haired queen, Doris. All hail, Queen Doris! I am her champion, and the champion of all her champions—the commander-in-chief of her army. I will lead you, Dorisites, for I am of strong mind, and my head is cool, though my fervor in the

cause burns at white heat! What are all and everyone compared to Doris? Nothing! Nothing! And Felecia, less than nothing. Ah, Dick Merriwell, it will be a sad and sorry day for you if you choose for your wife this pretty, dark-eyed cousin of yours in preference to the beautiful girl whom you love! Not that I mean to say anything against Felecia. She is sweet and attractive—very dear and lovely at times—and she is the girl to make Hal Darrell happy. But never, ah, never, compare her to our Doris. Do not mention her in the same hour! Doris—ah, I can never do her justice by any description. She is nobly grand, pure and sweet—a veritable queen! She far excels either Elsie or Inza, combining the noblest, loveliest qualities of the two. She loves our grand and noble hero, Dick, with a deep, true love, and she is fully worthy of him, which Felecia never, never can be! And, too, Dick loves Doris! Who can doubt it, after all, all that has passed between them? They cannot—happy, happy thought!—break the chains that bind them to each other. Never! Never! Never! We salute thee, our beautiful and beloved Queen Doris! We will battle for thee to the last—to the glorious victory—the happy ending of thy love story. Thou art well fitted to be the wife of this magnificent prince! Rally, Dorisites! Send in your tributes to our blue-eyed queen! Let your letters pour in fast and furious, and completely overwhelm the feeble opposition of our enemies, the few Feleciaites. And Queen Doris sits on her golden throne and watches us do battle for her. And there is a lovely smile on her fair face as the prince bows before her! Now, I will come down to plain talk for a moment. Don't think I am quite insane, Tip Toppers. I really think that I am in possession of all my faculties, but my enthusiasm carries me away. And I am ever, ever

Newport, R. I.

A WHITE-HOT DORIS CHAMPION.

That is a letter indeed, and one well fitted to muster up a large army in defense of your lady Doris. If you had lived in mediæval times you would have been a gallant knight and a hard fighter, but in these modern days the same courage, bravery and chivalry that inspired the olden knights to go from one end of the earth to the other in a good cause, can be used at home on our own battlefields, and be just as fair a fight and triumphant a victory as in the chivalrous days when brave knights returned to lay their swords at my lady's feet. Your letter will no doubt inspire many of Doris' friends to the defensive side, and I prophesy a strong party of Dorisites. If all are as fervent as you then we may look for some heated discussions over the Felecia-Doris question; but let us remember that both girls are fine ones, and that when the question is finally settled as to whom our young hero shall marry, we shall one and all want to say it was the right one. In you Doris has a strong champion, and your enthusiasm is great. It will serve to gather a large group of Tip Top readers together in the interest of Dick's future welfare.

I went to one of my friends one day and he gave me a Tip Top Weekly to read. I read it, and have read every one I could get hold of since. I have read both Frank Merriwell and Dick Merriwell, and think they are both tip top. I like "Dick Merriwell at Fardale" best. I have read all of the Tip Top Weeklies out West, and shall be glad when Frank and Dick get back to Fardale again. Hoping to see this in print in the next paper, I remain, yours truly,

Petoskey, Mich.

R. RAY BAKER.

Your friend who gave you your first copy of Tip Top was a friend, indeed, so it seems, since you have so eagerly read every number since. We do not wonder that "DICK MERRIWELL at Fardale" should be on your list of favorites.

I have read a great many Tip Tops, but this is the first time I have written to you. All hail! the great Frank Merriwell, the king and chief of us all. He can play baseball, I tell you, and football, too. And all hail! Dick Merriwell, Bruce Browning and all the rest. They won the championship for Tip Top, and did it good and true. And all hail! Felecia Delores, the mascot of Tip Top baseball nine. Rah! rah! rah! for Elsie and Inza, and rest of the baseball nine.

This is real enthusiasm for you—one who knows a good game of baseball and is no less a judge of football. Follow Dick to Fardale, and see what he will do there this year.

TIP TOP FOOTBALL ALL AMERICAN TOURNAMENT

FULL PARTICULARS OF THE GREAT
ALL AMERICAN TOURNAMENT

AND OTHER FOOTBALL FEATURES
WILL BE FOUND EVERY WEEK IN

TIP TOP WEEKLY

550 REGULATION RUGBY FOOTBALLS
AWARDED AS PRIZES

THE GREATEST PRIZE OFFER EVER MADE



FOOTBALL RULES OF 1902.

FIELD, ETC.

The game shall be played upon a rectangular field, 330 feet in length and 160 feet in width, inclosed by heavy white lines marked in lime upon the ground. The lines at the two ends shall be termed goal lines. The side lines shall extend beyond their points of intersection with the goal line. The goal shall be placed in the middle of each goal line, and shall consist of two upright posts exceeding 20 feet in height and placed 18 feet 6 inches apart, with horizontal crossbar 10 feet from the ground. The game shall be played by two teams of eleven men each. The officials of the game shall be a referee, an umpire and a linesman. The football used shall be of leather, inclosing an inflated rubber bladder. The ball shall have the shape of a prolate spheroid.

THE VARIOUS KICKS.

A drop-kick is made by letting the ball drop from the hands and kicking it the instant it rises from the ground. A place-kick is made by kicking the ball after it has been placed on the ground. A punt is made by letting the ball drop from the hands and kicking it before it touches the ground. A kick-off is a place-kick from the center of the field of play, and cannot score a goal. A kick-out is a drop-kick, place-kick or punt made by a player of the side which has made a safety or a touch-back. A free-kick is a term used to designate any kick when the opponents are restrained by rule from advancing beyond a certain point.

SCORING.

A touchdown is made when the ball in possession of a player is declared dead by the referee, any part of it being on, over or behind the opponents' goal line. The point where the touchdown is marked, however, is not where the ball is carried across the line, but where the ball is fairly held or called "down." A touchback is made when the ball in possession of a player guarding his own goal is declared dead by the referee, any part of it being on, over or behind the goal line, provided the impetus which sent it to or across the line was given by an opponent. A safety is made when the ball in the possession of a player guarding his own goal is declared dead by the referee, any part of it being on, over or behind the goal line, provided the impetus which caused it to pass from outside the goal to or behind the goal line was given by the side defending the goal. Such impetus could come: (1) from a kick, pass, snapback, or fumble; (2) from a kick which bounded back from an opponent; (3) in case a player carrying the ball is forced back, provided the ball was not declared dead by the referee before the line was reached or crossed. A safety is also made when a player of the

side in possession of the ball commits a foul which would give the ball to the opponents behind the offenders' goal line; also when the ball, kicked by a man behind his goal line, crosses the side line extended behind the goal line.

A scrimmage takes place when the holder of the ball places it upon the ground and puts it in play by kicking it forward or snapping it back. The scrimmage does not end until the ball is again declared dead. The ball is always put in play from a scrimmage, except in cases where other specific provision is made by the rules. If, after the snapper-back has taken his position, he should voluntarily move the ball as if to snap it, whether he withdraws it altogether or only momentarily, the ball is in play, and the scrimmage has begun.

A fair catch consists in catching the ball after it has been kicked by one of the opponents and before it touches the ground, or in similarly catching a punt-out by another of the catcher's own side, provided the player while making the catch, makes a mark with his heel and takes not more than one step thereafter. It is not a fair catch if the ball, after the kick, was touched by another of his side before the catch. Opponents who are off side shall not interfere in any way with a player who has an opportunity to make a fair catch, nor shall he be thrown to the ground after such catch is made unless he has advanced beyond his mark. If a side obtains a fair catch, the ball must be put in play by a punt, drop-kick, or place-kick, and the opponents cannot come within ten yards of the line on which the fair catch was made; the ball must be kicked from some point directly behind the spot where the catch was made, on a line parallel to the side line.

A goal is made by kicking the ball in any way, except by a punt, from the field of play over the crossbar of the opponents' goal. If the ball passes directly over one of the uprights it counts a goal.

OFF SIDE.

In a scrimmage no part of any player shall be ahead of the ball when it is put in play. A player is put off side if the ball in play has last been touched by one of his own side behind him. No player, when off side, shall touch the ball except on a fumble or a muff, nor shall he interrupt or obstruct an opponent with his hands or arms until again on side. No player can, however, be called off side behind his own goal line. A player being off side is put on side when the ball has touched an opponent, or when one of his own side has run in front of him, either with the ball, or having been the last player to touch it when behind him. If the ball, when not in possession of either side, is touched when inside the opponents' ten-yard line by a player who is off side, it shall go as a touchback to the defenders of that goal.

THE BALL IS DEAD:

Whenever the referee or umpire blows his whistle or declares a down.

When the referee has declared that a down, touchdown, touch-back, safety or goal has been made.

When a fair catch has been heeled.

When it has been downed after going out of bounds.

When the ball goes out of bounds after a kick before touching a player who is on side.

LENGTH OF GAME.

The length of the game shall be 70 minutes, divided into two halves of 35 minutes each, exclusive of time taken out. There shall be ten minutes intermission between the two halves.

Time shall not be called for the end of a half until the ball is dead, and in case of a touchdown, the try-at-goal shall be allowed. Time shall be taken out whenever the game is unnecessarily delayed or while the ball is being brought out for a try-at-goal, kick-out or kick-off, or when play is for any reason suspended by the referee or umpire. Time shall begin again when the ball is actually put in play. No delay arising from any cause whatsoever shall continue more than two minutes. Any delay thereafter shall be penalized.

TO START THE GAME.

The captains of the opposing teams shall toss up a coin before the beginning of a game, and the winner of the toss shall have his choice of goal or kick-off. The ball shall be kicked off at the beginning of each half, the kick-off at the beginning of the second half being made by the side that did not first kick off at the beginning of the game. The teams shall change goals after every try-at-goal following a touchdown, and after every goal from the field, and also at the beginning of the second half. Whenever a goal following a touchdown has been tried or a goal from the field has been kicked the side defending that goal shall kick off, the two teams changing goals before this is done. *Be sure to notice this change of rules.*

At kick-off, if the ball goes out of bounds before it is touched by an opponent, it shall be brought back and kicked off again. If it is kicked out of bounds a second time it shall go as a kick-off to the opponents. If either side thus forfeits the ball twice, it shall go to the opponents, who shall put it in play by a scrimmage at the center of the field. At kick-off, if the ball is kicked across the goal line, and is there declared dead when in the possession of one of the side defending the goal, it is a touch-back. If the ball is not declared dead, the side defending the goal may run with it or kick it the same as if it had not crossed the goal line. If it is declared dead thus in possession of the attacking side, it is a touchdown. At kick-off and on a punt or drop-kick from a fair catch, the opposite side must stand at least ten yards in front of the ball until it is kicked. On a kick-out, the opposite side cannot stand nearer the goal than the 25-yard line, except on a kick-out made after a drop-kick upon a first down inside the 25-yard line, when the 10-yard line is the restraining mark.

BUCKING.

Charging is lawful, in case of a punt-out or kick-off, as soon as the ball is kicked; and the opponents must not charge until the ball is kicked. In case of any other free kick, charging is lawful: (1) When the player of the side having the free kick advances beyond his restraining line or mark with the ball in his possession; (2) when he has allowed the ball to touch the ground by accident or otherwise. If such lawful charging takes place, and if the side having the free kick fails to kick the ball, then the opponents may line up five yards ahead of the line which restrained them before charging. In that case, the side having the free kick must kick the ball from some point directly behind its mark, if the free kick resulted from a fair catch, and in other cases from behind the new restraining line.

INTERFERENCE.

Before the ball is put in play no player shall lay his hands upon, or by the use of his hands or arms, interfere with an opponent in such a way as to delay putting the ball in play. Any such interference shall be regarded as delay of game. After the ball is put in play, the players of the side that has possession of the ball may obstruct the opponents with the body only, except the player running with the ball, who may use his hands and arms.

The players of the side not having the ball may use their hands and arms, but only to get their opponents out of the way in order to reach the ball or stop the player carrying it. Before the ball is put in play in a scrimmage, if any player of the side which has the ball takes more than one step in any direction, he must come to a full stop before the ball is put in play. At least five players of the side having the ball must be on the line of scrimmage. If five players, not including the quarter-back, are behind the line of scrimmage, they must occupy one of the three following positions, viz.: (1) All five of such players may be inside the positions occupied by the players at the ends of the line of scrimmage, in which case two of these players must be at least five yards back of this line; or (2) if one of the said five players be outside of the position occupied by the player at the end of said line, then only one other of these five players must be at least five yards back of this line; but (3) all five of these players may be nearer than five yards to the line of scrimmage, provided two of them be outside the positions occupied by the players at the ends of said line. In this rule "outside" means both feet outside the outside foot of the player at the end of the line.

DOWNS.

If a player having the ball is tackled, and the movement of the ball stopped, or if the player cries "down," the referee shall blow his whistle, and the side holding the ball shall put it down for a scrimmage. As soon as a runner attempting to go through is tackled and goes down, being held by an opponent, or whenever a runner having the ball in his possession cries "down," or if he goes out of bounds, the referee shall blow his whistle and the ball shall be considered down at that spot. There shall be no piling up on the player after the referee has declared the ball dead.

If, in three consecutive downs (unless the ball crosses the goal line), a team has neither advanced the ball five yards, nor taken it back twenty yards, it shall go to the opponents on the spot of the fourth down. Exception—A team may not retain possession of the ball by taking it back twenty yards a second time unless the ball in the meantime has been in the possession of the opponents. When a distance penalty is given, the ensuing down shall be counted the first down, unless this should result to the advantage of the offending side, when the down and the distance to be gained shall remain the same.

If the ball goes out of bounds, whether it bounds back or not, a player of the side which secures it must bring it to the spot where the line was crossed, and there either: Touch it in with both hands at right angles to the side line and then kick it at least ten yards toward his opponents' goal (neither side need be on side when the ball is thus put in play); or walk out with it at right angles to the side line, any distance not less than five nor more than fifteen yards, and there put it down for a scrimmage, first declaring how far he intends walking.

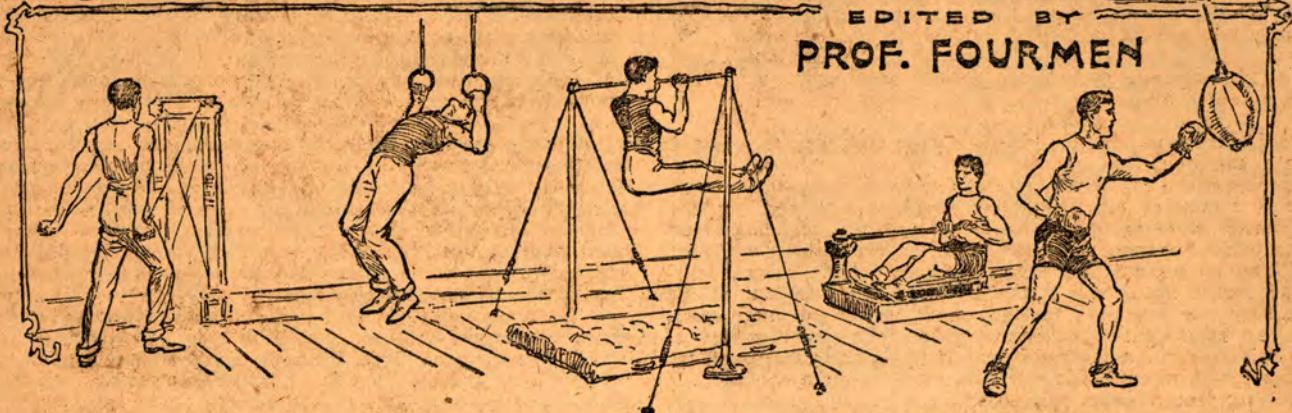
GOAL AFTER TOUCHDOWN.

A side which has made a touchdown must try at goal, either by a place-kick or a punt-out. After the try-at-goal, whether the goal be made or missed, the ball shall go as a kick-off at the center of the field to the defenders of the goal. If the try be by a place-kick, a player of the side which has made the touchdown shall hold the ball for another of his side to kick at some point outside the goal on a line parallel to the side line passing through the point where the touchdown was declared. The opponents must remain behind their goal line until the ball has been placed upon the ground. The referee shall signal with his hand when the ball is placed on the ground. If the try-at-goal is to be preceded by a punt-out, the punter shall kick the ball from the point at which the line parallel to the side line, and passing through the spot of the touchdown, intersects the goal line. The players of his side must stand in the field of play not less than five yards from the goal line. The opponents may line up anywhere on the goal line except within the space of ten feet on each side of the punter's mark, but they cannot interfere with the punter. If a fair catch be made from a punt-out, the mark shall serve to determine the positions as the mark of any fair catch, and the try-at-goal shall then be made by a place-kick from this spot, or any point directly behind it. If a fair catch be not made on the first attempt the ball shall go as a kick-off at the center of the field to the defenders of the goal. The holder of the ball in any place-kick may be off side or out of bounds without vitiating the kick.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

EDITED BY

PROF. FOURMEN



Prof. Fourmen: I would consider it an everlasting favor if you would suggest to me what means—if any—could I employ in order that I may grow a little more. I am only 5 feet 3 inches, and am twenty years and three months old; my weight is 118 pounds. I constantly work indoors, and outside of my height I am in first-class condition. I would like to see an answer in Tip Top, if an answer is possible, and forever oblige,

A SOUTHERN READER.

You probably will not grow very much more after having reached that age, but exercise and following a general course of training will do all for you that can be expected.

Prof. Fourmen: I am a reader of Tip Top Weekly, and think I will ask a few questions in behalf of my brother, Philip, who is seven years old, and wishes to correct a few weaknesses. 1. He wants to know how to strengthen his neck, and reduce his waist. Here are his measurements: Height, 3 feet 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches; age, seven years three months; reach, 45 inches; height to sternum is 36 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; height, sitting, 25 inches; biceps, 7 inches; forearm, 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches; calf, 10 inches; thighs, 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ -13 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches; waist, 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; weight, 55 pounds; neck, 10 inches; shoulders, 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; circumference of shoulders, 28 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; chest, contracted 25 inches, normal 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches, expanded 26 inches. 2. How are these measurements for a seven-year-old boy? 3. Philip wishes to know what diet and exercises he should take. Please answer in the Tip Top columns. With many thanks for your time, we are,

H. J. AND PHILIP ELLIS.

Your brother is a well-developed boy, and bids fair to be on the high road to becoming a good young athlete. Have him follow my instructions in Nos. 265, 266, 268, and 269 of Tip Top, for a regular course of training. As to diet, follow my article on that in No. 369 of Tip Top.

Prof. Fourmen: Being a constant reader of Tip Top, I take the liberty of asking a few questions. How are my measurements for a boy past his seventeenth birthday? Height, 5 feet 6 inches; weight, 113 pounds; chest, normal 31 inches, contracted 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches, expanded 33 inches; waist, 30 inches; neck, 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; biceps, 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches; forearm, 9 inches; thigh, 16 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches; calf, 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches. What is the best exercise for me to improve my wind? I am very short-winded. I use two-pound dumbbells; are they heavy enough? Thanking you in advance for your answer, I remain,

A TIP TOP ADMIRER.

Your chest has not enough girth, and you are under weight for one of your age and height. Read and follow carefully my article on the chest, in No. 333 of Tip Top. To improve your wind, take breathing exercises. One-pound dumbbells are better weight for you. You will have more satisfactory results.

Prof. Fourmen: I am a constant reader of Tip Top, and also interested in athletics. Please oblige me by telling what you think of my measurements. Age, sixteen years; weight, 124 pounds; chest, normal 32 inches, expanded 34 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches; biceps, 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; neck, 14 inches; forearms, 10 inches; calves, 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; waist, 29 inches. I can jump 8 feet on a standing broad jump, and 14 feet running broad jump, and also 4 feet 6 inches on a running high jump. I use two-pound dumbbells, chest

weights, and punching bag. Thanking you beforehand, I remain, yours sincerely,

PAUL SMITH.

Your measurements are about the average for one of your age. Use only one-pound dumbbells, as you will procure more beneficial results. Keep on with the chest weights and punching bag, for they are both a good means to exercise.

Prof. Fourmen: Having read Tip Top for several years, I feel at liberty to ask you a question or two. How are these measurements and records? Age, sixteen years; height, 5 feet 5 inches; weight, 120 pounds; chest, normal 32 inches, contracted 30 inches, expanded 35 inches; shoulders, 40 inches; waist, 29 inches; biceps, 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; forearms, 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; calves, 13 inches; thighs, 19 inches; wrists, 7 inches; neck, 14 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches; length of reach, 5 feet 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Standing broad jump, 9 feet; running broad jump, 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet; running high jump, 5 feet 2 inches; chinning the bar, seven times. These are just my natural measurements, for, although I have had outdoor work and big, wholesome meals, I have never trained regularly till within the last two weeks. I practice on the bar, and do several exercises without any apparatus, for about thirty minutes every night. Awaiting your answer in Tip Top's Question Column, I remain,

A. O. Z.

Your measurements and records are very encouraging, considering that you have had so little training. I want you to keep right on with your work, and let me hear from you soon again.

Prof. Fourmen: As manager of the Central A. C., I desire to enter them in your coming football contest. The practice brought out some good players—a first and second team. The first team defeated the second team, 16—0. The first game of the season resulted in a victory over the Osgoods, 7—2; second game, with the Bradley Juniors, also resulted in a victory for us, 17—5; while the Kenmore A. C. failed to appear. September 29 is the game with St. Vincent's College and September 30 St. Columbkill Art School, and many other minor games. Yours truly,

T. A. GRAHAM.

Be sure to get in coupons for all your games. I am glad to hear from the brother of the former manager of last year's Tip Top championship team, the Buena Park Juniors.

Prof. Fourmen: Being a constant reader of Tip Top, I would like to ask you about my measurements and records. I am fourteen years nine months old, 5 feet 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches tall; weigh 116 pounds. I can run 100 yards in 12 4-5 seconds; running broad jump, 13 feet 4 inches; standing broad jump, 8 feet; running high jump, 4 feet 1 inch. As I had typhoid fever last winter, I know my records are not up to standard. Thanking you in advance, I remain, yours very truly,

L. L. A.

Considering your recent illness, your measurements and records are very fair. Keep on training and improving.

Prof. Fourmen: I have been interested in Tip Top from No 1 to date. I wish to know if there are any special defects in my measurements, and if so how to remedy them. My measurements follow: Age, seventeen years; weight, 137 pounds; height, 5 feet 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches; calves, right 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches, left 13

inches; thighs, right 18½ inches, left 18 inches; waist, 28 inches; chest, normal 34 inches, expanded 37 inches; shoulders, around 38½ inches, breadth 15½ inches; biceps, right, normal 9½ inches; left, normal 9 inches; neck, 13½ inches; reach, 73½ inches.

A CHICAGO LAD.

You do not seem to have any special weak point, but I feel sure a course of general training will benefit you greatly.

Prof. Fourmen: I am seventeen years old, height 5 feet 6 inches, and weigh 122 pounds. How do these compare? I am long-winded and can cover 100 yards in 12 seconds, and one-half mile in 2 minutes 34 seconds, and have never trained. Is this fast time? Running high jump, 4 feet 4 inches; standing broad jump, 7 feet 8 inches. How are these? I ride a bicycle a great deal, and walk a mile and a half every morning. I swing two-pound Indian clubs, have plenty of "wing," and am one of the pitchers in our team. Which way can a person put more speed to a ball, by the short-arm movement, or by a steady swing? I play half-back in our football team. Is this a creditable position? Thanking you in advance for the answers, I remain, M. S.

1. You should weigh 130 pounds.
2. Your records can be much improved by training.
3. Use the combined full and short-arm throw for speed.
4. Half-back is a very responsible and creditable position.

Prof. Fourmen: Seeing other boys' records in your invaluable paper, I thought I would send you mine, and see what you think of them. I am fifteen years old, and am 5 feet 11½ inches tall, and weigh 145 pounds. I can pole vault 8 feet 1 inch, high jump 4 feet 9 inches, put 12-pound shot 39 feet, running broad jump 16 feet, standing broad jump 8 feet, run the hundred-yards dash in 12 seconds, and run the fifty yards dash in 6 3-5 seconds. Do you not think these records very good? Yours truly,

S. F. BONNER.

Your records are very good. Keep in training, and you will succeed in doing better all the time.

Prof. Fourmen: I am a reader of the Tip Top, so I take the liberty of asking a few questions. 1. Which are best to exercise with, dumbbells or Whiteley exerciser? 2. Is 12 minutes upon rising and upon going to bed enough time for exercise? 3. How can I train for jumping?

H. H.

1. Both dumbbells and Whiteley exercisers are good, the latter especially so for broadening the chest.
2. Increase time gradually from 12 minutes to 20 or 25.
3. Get my article on jumping, published in Tip Top.

Prof. Fourmen: I am thirteen years ten months old, and weigh 105 pounds, and am 5 feet 2 inches in height. Would you please tell me what pound dumbbells I ought to use to develop a strong and healthy muscle? Please would you tell me what I could do for my arms and legs after an exercise. I feel so sore in my arms and legs I can hardly stand. Thanking you for your advice, I remain, yours truly,

GEORGE SCHWARZ.

1. Use one-pound dumbbells, and daily.
2. Always rub your arms and legs with alcohol after exercising, and you will find the soreness leaving you.

Prof. Fourmen: I have read your books. I will kindly ask you to answer a few questions: I am 5 feet tall; arms are 24 inches long, 34 inches around waist, weigh 135 pounds, and I am fourteen years old. I practice morning and evening at jumping. Do you think I am too heavy? What will reduce a person's weight? Will candy make a person fat? Please tell me what kind of food to eat. If you will answer these questions, I will be obliged. Yours truly,

CHRISSE HARSHBARGER.

Atwood, Ill.

You are some too heavy for your height. To reduce your weight, go into a regular course of training. Sweets tend to make one fat. Eat good, substantial food, avoiding starchy foods, cream, and fat meats.

Prof. Fourmen: As you are kind enough to offer to answer any questions we readers of Tip Top ask, I wish to ask you a few. What exercise is good for weak lungs? And what short gymnastics would you advise me to take morning and night to merely keep myself in good health? I haven't time to become an athlete, if I had the constitution, etc. I am twenty-three years of age, am 5 feet 7½ inches in height, and weigh only 118

pounds. That is under weight, is it not? How can I increase it? Thanking you in advance, I am, yours for the success of Tip Top,

G. H. N.

1. Breathing exercises are excellent.
2. Use dumbbells and Indian clubs.
3. You are certainly under weight. I would advise you to follow my course of general training found in Tip Top No. 265.

Prof. Fourmen: I thought I would write to you about my development. I am twelve years old, 5 feet tall, weigh 98 pounds. My chest measures 28 inches unexpanded, 30 inches expanded; waist, 25 inches; thighs, 19 inches; calves, 12 inches; forearm, 9 inches; wrist, 6 inches; neck, 12 inches. 1. Are my measurements good; if not, how can I develop them? 2. Is 5 feet a good standing jump? 3. I am very short-winded, and I would like to know how to become long-winded.

L. alias J.

1. Your measurements are good. Exercise freely to become well-developed and harden your muscles.
2. A 5-foot jump is a good one for a boy of your height.
3. Running and breathing exercises will help you.

Prof. Fourmen: I am nine years and six months old. I am 4 feet 4½ inches tall, weigh 60 pounds; chest, normal, 24 inches; chest, expanded, 25½ inches; length of arms from center of back to tip of fingers, 27 inches. My biceps measure 7½ inches, wrist 5½ inches; calves of my legs measure 9½ inches; my neck is 10½ inches around. What do you think of my measurements? What exercise do I need? Yours,

JOHN EARL WRIGHT.

Your measurements are good. Follow my course of general training in No. 265.

Prof. Fourmen: Will you please answer these questions through the Tip Top Weekly? Can I, and from whom can I, get a book on football, giving the advice as in what manner to train a football team and the tactics to use? And a book with different plays and sets of signals? Yours truly,

C. H. P.

The thing you are looking for in regard to football, you will find in No. 341 of Tip Top. Follow my articles for signals and plays.

Prof. Fourmen: I want to find out about those articles on baseball. Where can I get them, and how much do they cost? I read about it in Tip Top. An early reply will favor yours,

W.M. HOELLEIN.

You will find these articles in Tip Top, Nos. 266, 267, 268, and 269. To be had at any newsdealer's for 5 cents a copy.

Prof. Fourmen: Not seeing any letters to you from this city, I would like to ask you a few questions about myself. I am a boy fifteen years five months old, weigh 125 pounds, height 5 feet 3 inches, stocking feet. How are my measurements? Ought I to weigh more, or less? Tell me what exercise will make my arms stronger. Can you tell me what will make my neck stronger? I am bow-legged. Can you tell me what will make my legs straight? Hoping to hear from you in the next week's Tip Top, I remain, a constant reader,

PHIL M. LIVINGSTON.

P. S.—I work in a tobacco shop. Does it harm me? P. M. L.
You are about the average. Use dumbbells and chest weights to strengthen your arms, and chest weights with special head harness attachment for neck exercise. To straighten your legs, run on your toes, drawing your knees up in front as far as you can on each stride.

Prof. Fourmen: Will you please answer the following questions? I am sixteen years old, weigh 130 pounds, am 5 feet 8 inches high, can stand and jump 9 feet, run and jump 16 feet; can jump 4 feet 2 inches high; lying on my back, I can lift 75 pounds with my arms. How are these measurements? I have never taken any regular training, except bicycle riding. How can I better my condition? When training should you gain or lose in weight? Is walking on the hands, turning handsprings and airset, good practice? Yours respectfully,

J. L. R.

1. Your measurements are fair.
2. Follow the course of training I have prescribed in Tip Top No. 265.
3. Some athletes lose, while others gain weight.
4. This will strengthen the muscles of the arms.

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All American

Foot Ball Contest Conducted by
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The Greatest Prize Offer Ever Made in the United States for any Athletic Contest.

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

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This time than ever before. Get aboard when the first whistle blows and keep your places till you land some of the great crop of Footballs.

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Those teams having the best scores at the close of the Season will be declared the winners. The team having the best record will be declared THE TIP TOP CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM OF 1902, and in addition to regular prize will receive—An All Silk Pennant—bearing the legend which announces—Their Championship. All Official Scores will be published in Tip Top Weekly. The contest will be decided on the scores published in Tip Top. Don't miss a single game! A coupon for every game!

Read These Directions

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

Score Coupon for TIP TOP FOOT BALL CONTEST. (Cut out on dotted line.)

| | | | |
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| The _____ of _____ | F. B. Team Score _____ | The _____ of _____ | F. B. Team Score _____ |
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Get your teams in trim at once and get in your coupons for every game during the season.

Coupons will appear on Page Thirty-Two.