

No. 30

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ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY

JACK LIGHTFOOT IN THE BOX OR THE MASCOT THAT HODDOOED THE NINE

BY MAURICE STEVENS



The ball players hustled the frightened spectators out of the burning grand stand, and Jack led his nine in the good work.

Publishers' Note. "Teach the American boy how to become an athlete, and lay the foundation for a Constitution greater than that of the United States."—Wise sayings from "Tip Top." There has never been a time when the boys of this great country took so keen an interest in all manly and health-giving sports as they do to-day. As proof of this witness the record-breaking throngs that attend college struggles on the gridiron, as well as athletic and baseball games, and other tests of endurance and skill. In a multitude of other channels this love for the "life strenuous" is making itself manifest, so that, as a nation, we are rapidly forging to the front as seekers of honest sport. Recognizing this "handwriting on the wall," we have concluded that the time has arrived to give this vast army of young enthusiasts a publication devoted exclusively to invigorating out-door life. We feel we are justified in anticipating a warm response from our sturdy American boys, who are sure to revel in the stirring phases of sport and adventure, through which our characters pass from week to week.

ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY

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No. 30.

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Price Five Cents.

JACK LIGHTFOOT IN THE BOX;

OR,

The Mascot That "Hoodooed" the Nine.

By MAURICE STEVENS.

CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY.

Jack Lightfoot, the best all-round athlete in Cranford or vicinity, a lad clear of eye, clean of speech, and, after he had conquered a few of his faults, possessed of a faculty for *doing things* while others were talking, that by degrees caused him to be looked upon as the natural leader in all the sports Young America delights in—a boy who in learning to conquer himself put the power into his hands to wrest victory from others.

Tom Lightfoot, Jack's cousin, and sometimes his rival; though their striving for the mastery was always of the friendly, generous kind. Tom was called the "Book-Worm" by his fellows, on account of his love for studying such secrets of nature as practical observers have discovered and published; so that he possessed a fund of general knowledge calculated to prove useful when his wandering spirit took him abroad into strange lands.

Ned Skeen, of impulsive, nervous temperament, one of those who followed the newcomer, Birkett, being dazzled by the dash of his manner, and the free way in which he flung money around.

Lafe Lampton, a big, hulking chap, with an ever present craving for something to eat. Lafe always had his appetite along, and proved a staunch friend of our hero through thick and thin.

Kate Strawn, and **Nellie Conner**, some of the girls at Cranford.

Phil Kirtland, Jack's former rival, but who just at present was working on the ball team with Lightfoot.

Nat Kimball, an undersized fellow, whose hobby was the study of *jiu-jitsu*, and who had a dread of germs.

Brodie Strawn, a member of the Cranford baseball team.

Jubal Marlin, a Yankee lad whose love for money got him into many scrapes.

Wilson Crane, son of the town doctor, whose appearance was not unlike the bird his name indicated.

Mack Remington, a young hustling reporter.

Nick Flint, leader of the tough element in Cranford.

Kid Casey, the "wizard pitcher" of Tidewater.

CHAPTER I.

THE FALL OF JUBE AND WILSON.

"Here's to luck!" roared Jubal. "May the Cranford nine jist everlastin'ly squash the Tidewater Tigers intew bug dust!"

He held up a small glass containing liquor.

Wilson Crane held up another.

"Hip, hip, hooroar!" he howled.

The other boys in the room held up glasses and yelled for the success of Cranford.

"May the Cranford nine make 'em tuck their tails between their legs and run like a tin-canned purp!" Jubal went on.

"But if they're squashed into b-bug dust how can they run?" Wilson objected.

His face was flushed and his tongue stuttered a little.

Wilson and Jubal had fallen into the toils again.

About them at the table sat several members of the

Gang, among them and leading them being Nick Flint, the boy of the Apache face and tiger heart.

All were in Tidewater, on the morning of the day of the great baseball game between Tidewater and Cranford.

The last time the Cranford nine had come to Tidewater had witnessed their overwhelming defeat. Today they hoped to win a great victory and take out the sting of that memory of defeat.

This was known all over Cranford, and was the general desire of the Cranford people. But not of all of them. Among those who hoped for Cranford's defeat were Delancy Shelton and Reelward Snodgrass. And these two had hired Nick Flint and certain other members of the Gang to get Wilson and Jubal intoxicated so that they could not play in the game of the afternoon. Wilson and Jube were two of the best players; Wilson was a great runner on bases, and Jubal, being left-handed, was a puzzle to the pitcher. By eliminating these two, Delancy and Reel expected to so weaken the nine that another defeat, even more overwhelming, perhaps, would be registered against Cranford. They hated Jack Lightfoot, and as a consequence felt an intense desire to humiliate him, and they had been able to think up nothing else that was promising.

"No, of course, if they're squashed intew bug dust they can't run," Jubal agreed, answering Wilson. "We'll drink to the bug dust. Here's hopin' that they'll be squashed—squashed from the time they take up the bat until the very end."

"And may they never rise again!" howled Wilson, enthusiastically.

Then they drank, thus putting themselves to some extent in a condition to make impossible their wish.

Nick Flint winked knowingly to one of his associates.

"Fill 'em up again!" he urged; and took up the bottle to pour more liquor into the glasses.

But just then Jubal leaped to his feet with a squeal of delight and ran to the window.

Beneath it a hand organ had opened up; and when he looked from the window he saw a dark-faced man down there, grinding away at the organ, and a monkey in red clothing hopping about collecting pennies.

That was enough for Jubal, in his then half-intoxicated condition.

He jumped for the stairway.

"Here," called Nick, "don't go until we've finished this whisky!"

Jubal hesitated a moment, looking back as Nick poured some more of the liquor into the glasses. The

temptation to return and have another drink was strong on him.

Before Jubal and Wilson became members of Jack Lightfoot's nine, they had been members of the Gang. This was the thing which had now given Nick his means of getting a hold on them once more.

Jack had never positively ordered them to stop associating with the fellows who were known as the Gang, but both Jubal and Wilson knew that if they drank and made fools of themselves their stay in the nine would be very brief. Hence, they had for some time now kept clear of Nick Flint and his reckless crew, who were known to be among the worst boys in Cranford.

But meeting Nick, as it seemed to them by chance, and being in a somewhat hilarious mood because they had come over to Tidewater for a good time, they had permitted themselves to be tempted by Nick and their former friends to go to that upper room, where the sampling of a bottle of whisky naturally followed. They had not intended to become intoxicated. Very few persons start out with the deliberate intention of getting drunk.

"Come on back and we'll finish this!" said Nick, persuasively.

The hand organ was squeaking forth its tune.

"'Nother time," cried Jubal; "I got tew go daown naow and see that monk, by jings!"

He hopped through the doorway and went plunging down the stairs.

In spite of the attempt of Nick and the others to restrain him, Wilson Crane leaped up and followed Jubal.

When Jubal and Wilson reached the sidewalk they saw several children collected about the hand organ man, and the monkey hopping along the sidewalk, lifting its little red cap at intervals and holding out its cup for pennies.

Jubal, who had the reputation of being close-fisted, was never so when he had been drinking. He threw a quarter into the monkey's cup; and laughed when the monk sagely bit it as if to test its genuineness.

Wilson contributed a dime.

Then Jubal made a lunge for the hand organ, and, pushing the man aside, he began to turn the crank.

"Switch it ontew another tune!" he commanded.

The hand organ man, who appeared to be an Italian, complied, and Jubal began to grind out dolefully "The Wearing of the Green."

When Jubal had ground this out for a time he ordered the man to "switch on another tune."

The man had for some moments been eying both Jubal and Wilson in rather curious fashion.

"You take you'self away," he commanded, angrily. "Nit—not much!" said Jubal, clinging to the organ.

"Dis-a my org!" cried the man: "You give-a me my org or I break-a head!"

"Hold onto it!" shouted Wilson.

"By hemlock, ain't I?" He looked at the man, who was again trying to push him away. "Didn't I give ye a quarter jist now?"

"Yes, but that not-a buy da org. You leave-a da org!"

"Switch on another tune, I tell ye!" he commanded.

"See here!" said Wilson, crowding forward and staring fiercely at the man, for the purpose of scaring him. "You can't bluff us! We're onto you, old boy!"

The man fell back with a look of fright.

Wilson did not understand this, but he saw he had gained a point; so he continued to threaten the man.

"Look here, you!" he shouted, bluffing, when again the man tried to take the organ from Jubal. "We know who you are! I've seen you before, and I want to tell you that the police are looking for you!"

The man reeled as if a charge of shot had been fired into his face.

"You tell-a da lie!" he howled.

Wilson knew what he was doing well enough, but was simply made reckless by the whisky. Seeing now that he was scaring the man, he fired another shot.

"If you go to making a fuss here I'll put the police onto you!"

"I gitta da police!" cried the man, turning as if to start away.

He was about to catch up the monkey and take it with him, when, with a howl of rage, it leaped to Wilson's back, scratching and biting furiously.

The boys at the window upstairs and the children in the street yelled hilariously, to see Wilson thus assaulted by the little red-coated monkey.

The monkey had sufficient intelligence to know that in some unwarranted manner these young fellows were interfering where they had no right. So he set his claws in Wilson's hair and clawed like a veritable little fiend.

Seeing the diversion thus created by the monkey, the man snatched at the hand organ, pushing Jubal roughly by the shoulder, while Jube clung to the instrument tenaciously.

"Help! police!" yelled Wilson, as the monkey clawed him.

There was a patter of feet round the corner not far away.

"By gosh, the police air comin' fer ye!" cried Jubal to the man.

The man seemed to think so. He uttered an oath, which sounded strangely as if spoken in good English.

"I gitta da police!" he declared, as if catching himself in this; and he was off like a shot and gone before those pattering feet appeared.

The feet were not the feet of a policeman, but of a man who kept a shop round the corner and who had been drawn by the outcry.

"Take him off, the little devil!" squalled Wilson, as the monkey continued to rake his scalp.

Jubal dropped the hand organ to the sidewalk with a thud and went to the relief of his friend.

Then there was another lively scrimmage, in which, after receiving sundry bites and scratches, Jubal and Wilson came off victorious.

But the organ man was gone.

CHAPTER II.

A HILARIOUS TIME.

Nick Flint and his associates came hurriedly down the stairs and into the street, when they saw what had occurred.

Thinking that the hand organ man would soon return, Jubal began to grind the machine there in the street, while a crowd gathered round him and Wilson.

The monkey seemed undecided what to do. At one moment it started as if to run down the street in the direction taken by the man; then it hesitated and turned back, looking at the people and chattering angrily. Finally, with a spring, it leaped to one of Jubal's legs and ran up his body, and thence leaped to the top of the organ, where it sat, to the amusement of the crowd and the amazement of Jubal.

"Hey!" he shouted to it, after staring at it a moment, "why don't you git intew gear; why don't yeou do the collectin' act?"

The response was a squealing chatter and a show of glittering teeth.

"By granny, Wilson, if the monkey won't do the collectin' yeou'll haf' tew! Make a monkey aout of yerself, an' be quick about it. We'll collect from these people, and after takin' aout a commission for aour trouble we'll turn the rest of the cash over tew the owner."

Wilson was feeling just in the mood for a high old lark.

His cap came off his head, and holding it out he began to solicit money.

"You fellows are going to get yourselves into a whole peck of trouble if you don't look out," warned the storekeeper, who had come round the corner and now stood looking on. "You haven't any license to play a hand organ and collect money here."

"We've got a license, b' jings, tew have fun wherever we can find it!" shouted Jubal. "Shell aout, yeou people; we've borredered this hand organ and monkey fer a few minutes and we're workin' fer him."

"For the monkey?" said some one.

"Great hemlock, fer the owner of the organ and the monkey! We'll turn over the hull gol-darned proceeds tew him as soon as he comes back."

He was grinding out "The Girl I Left Behind Me!"

Having seen how the organ man shifted the tunes, he made a shift now, and the organ began to turn out "Sweet Rosie O'Grady."

"Ned Skeen ought to be here," said Wilson, when he heard that. "It's playing 'Oh, sweet Susie Powers; my dear little Sue! You're sweeter than flowers; without you what would I do?'"

He turned to the people, mostly children:

"Here, you—shell out! We're collecting for the organ man. We're also trying to collect enough to pay our fines with, if the police pinch us for this little fun we're having. Shell out!"

A man threw a nickel into the cap."

"Shell out!" begged Wilson, passing on.

When he came back he had collected twenty cents.

Jubal looked into the cap.

"Perty good!" he yelled, joyously. "Say, we've been running this thing less'n five minutes and you've got twenty cents! Twenty cents every five minutes would amaount tew—lemme see, what would that amount tew?"

He stopped the organ so that he might do a little mental arithmetic.

"Say, by gravy, that would amaount tew two dollars and forty cents an haour! And if we worked ten haours a day that would be over twenty-four dollars—nearly twenty-five dollars a day. Jee-whillikens, I never guessed there was as much money as that in the hand organ bizness! I guess I'll buy me one, and a monkey, and start aout."

Jubal never could resist the temptation to indulge in speculations concerning the amount of money possible to be made in various ways. He was always scheming for money.

"You won't need to buy a monkey, you're one yerself!" shouted a boy on the sidewalk.

Jubal's heavy laugh bellowed forth.

"I'll use Wilson fer a monkey! Haw, haw!"

He shifted to a new tune, and when he began to turn the crank the organ squeaked out "The Campbells Are Coming!"

The storekeeper grinned.

"That's right, too!" he said, with a laugh. "The cop on this beat is named Campbell, and he'll be after you fellows in a minute or so."

This almost startled Jubal. He stopped the crank and stared at the storekeeper. Then he laughed again.

"Oh, I guess not! We're jist havin' fun. We ain't stealin' anything, and as soon as the owner of this hinky-dink comes back he can have it and all the money we've collected."

The monkey was now sitting sedately on the organ.

It looked a while at Jubal and then at the people; and then, hopping from the organ to the ground, it held up the tin cup, to which it had clung, and began thus to solicit money.

"By gravy, he's adopted me as his master!" Jubal shouted. "See the little son-of-a-gun! Shell aout there, yeou fellers! When a monk comes collectin', like that, all togged up in red and bowin' tew yeou so beautifully, it's time fer yeou to shell aout."

Wilson and Jubal were both expecting the hand organ man to reappear at any time; and they were now prepared to surrender to him his property as soon as he appeared.

But he failed to come.

The policeman also remained away from the scene.

So Jubal continued to grind at the organ, and the monkey, backed by Wilson Crane, continued to solicit contributions.

A great crowd was gathering, for almost everyone who came along the street stopped. Many of them, when they understood the situation, contributed. They could see that these young fellows were members of the Cranford baseball nine, for Jubal and Wilson wore the Cranford baseball costume, with the Cranford letters on their breasts. The people could see, too, that these members of the Cranford nine had been "steaming up" a bit and were out for a howling good time.

Wilson and the monkey came back from their last collecting round with more than a dollar to the good.

Jubal yelled with glee when he saw that.

"A dollar, by granny, in less than ten minutes! Say, that would be at least six dollars an haour, if we could keep it up; and that would mean sixty dollars fer

a day's work of ten haours! Jew-rusalem! I'm goin' tew buy a hand organ and a monkey and go intew this bizness for good. Gol-darned if I don't! You'll go intew it with me, Wilson, won't ye?"

"Sure!" said Wilson, counting the money and dropping it into his pocket.

"Make another collectin' trip, yeou and the monkey; this crowd has got more'n a dollar in its jeans, an' I know it."

"Don't you think you'd better put the monkey and the organ in a store somewhere," suggested Nick Flint, "and telephone to the police?"

He wanted to get Jubal and Wilson upstairs again and have them "sample" the rest of that bottle of whisky. Out here the effect of the liquor would soon wear off, he knew. Even now they began to show signs that they would soon be thinking seriously of the consequences of what they were doing. Just now they were only bent on having a good time.

"Put the organ in the store and stop the collectin' and the fun?" Jubal demanded. "Nit, we don't! Shell aout there, yeou fellers, while I play ye another tune! This organ's got the colic, I guess, by the way it groans, sometimes. But I'll turn on another tune. Ah! there she comes—'The Irish Washerwoman'? I knowed I'd dig up somethin' lively this time. That tune's worth another dollar, the way I play it. Notice the effect, gents! I'm no two-by-twice Eyetalian, but a regular music perfessor, and I'm givin' ye yeour money's wu'th. So, shell aout and be liberal! Wilson, yeou an' the monk pass the contribution boxes ag'in."

Wilson went among the crowd again, yelling to them to be liberal and shell out, and got another ten cents, and a coat button.

Jubal stared at that button.

"By granny, we've milked this crowd dry, and we'd better be movin' on. Which way did that Eyetalian go? We'll foller him. But, by cracky, we're doin' so much better than he did that we'll have tew make him divvy up on this pile, er pay us a commission! Come along, monk! Wilson, h'ist the critter up here."

But Wilson was afraid to touch the monkey, which had ceased to try to collect and sat on the sidewalk as if bewildered by the turn of events.

Jubal was in so reckless a mood just then that he did not hesitate to stoop down, get the monkey by its chain and collar, and lift it at a swing to the top of the organ. Then he hoisted the organ up on his shoulder and moved down the street, with Wilson at his

side and a goodly portion of the crowd trailing behind him.

They did not see the organ man at the corner, nor any indication of his presence in the vicinity. When questioned, the people there did not know where he had gone, and the most of them said they had not seen him.

"Well, he likely went round this corner, fer he disappeared so gol-darned quick," said Jubal. "So we'll turn round the corner, tew."

On the street next above he lifted the organ and the monkey to the ground, and again began to grind out tunes, calling on the people who flocked about him to "shell aout."

The liquor was still potent, and both he and Wilson were still hilarious.

"Shell aout—shell aout!" he yelled. "We're naow collectin' funds tew pay the doctor's bills of the Tide-water Tigers after they git through with the game this afternoon. They're goin' tew be squashed intew bug dust, and they'll need a whole lot of sawbones and nurses to look 'em over when the game ends. The Cranford nine is goin' tew kill 'em this afternoon. Yeou people ought tew take pity on 'em, seein' that yeou belong tew the same taown, and pervide funds for the time of their need. So, all of ye, shell aout, while the collection box circulates among ye. Whoop 'er up there, Wilson!"

Wilson "whooped 'er up," and the monkey, falling into its old routine, hopped about, offering its tin cup and doffing its red-feathered cap to the laughing and shouting people.

For almost a whole hour Wilson Crane and Jubal Marlin kept this up, finding themselves at the end of that time near the spot where they had started.

The people had been generous; Jubal and Wilson had now nearly five dollars, as a result of their efforts.

But the organ man had not returned.

"I think we'd better go up into that room!" said Nick Flint, as he had said many times before.

Jubal and Wilson were now almost sober, and the possible seriousness of the situation began to dawn on them. They had had a lot of fun, but the thing was getting monotonous, and they were growing tired.

"Why in time don't that feller come back?" Jube asked, solicitously.

The storekeeper appeared again, but no poilceman. The small boys had hung to Jubal's procession, and the usual crowd, that sifted away at each removal, began once more to gather.

Jubal looked about. The temptation to "take up an-

other collection" stirred strongly within him. But he reflected that the money would not be his, even after it was collected. A sense of honor would compel him and Wilson to turn it over to the owner of the organ whenever that elusive individual put in an appearance.

"By granny, I guess I will go upstairs!" he said at last, in response to Flint's repeated urgings. "These sidewalks air hot as blazes, and I'm gittin' all sweated up. Wilson, how're ye feelin'?"

"Chipper," said Wilson; "but maybe we'd better go upstairs and wait there for the man to come back."

"Yeou're chipper because yeou haven't been luggin' this blamed old hand organ araound. It's beginnin' tew weigh abaout a ton."

"But think of the money!" some one yelled from the crowd.

"By granny, so long's we're collectin' it fer the owner of the organ that don't appeal tew me so much as it did, when I git tired."

There was a snicker of disbelief.

"Oh, he'll get it, all right!" another shouted, skeptically.

"You bet he will!" said Wilson. "We're not thieves, if—"

"If you are fools!" was exclaimed, as a finish to Wilson's uncompleted sentence.

"Well, we ain't goin' tew quarrel with yeou!" cried Jubal. "Say what yeou want tew. Yeou've been good, an' yeou've been generous. We're jist goin' upstairs tew rest. Mebbe we'll come aout bimeby an' play some more fer ye. An' if yeou see that Eyetalian, jist hand him the word that we're right up here with his property, an' he can have it any time by callin' fer it."

The crowd laughed, while some jeered.

"I guess we'd better go upstairs!" said Wilson, beginning to be anxious.

Forthwith they started upstairs, Jubal carrying the hand organ, with the monkey perched on it.

The little animal had grown quiet and seemed now perfectly satisfied with his new masters; a thing that they thought rather strange. Yet he would permit of no petting; but growled and showed his teeth whenever anyone sought to become too familiar.

CHAPTER III.

SOME SURPRISES.

Near the head of the stairs Jubal caught his toe and tripped, falling forward. As he did so, the organ

pitched from his shoulder, and went bumping and clattering down the stairway.

The monkey abandoned it with a chattering squeal as it fell; and hopped to Jubal's shoulders, while he still lay prostrate.

Wilson, who chanced to be behind Jubal, was almost knocked down by the falling hand organ; and now, with some grumbling, he went back downstairs to get it.

Jubal scrambled to his feet, trying to laugh, and put his hand on the head of the frightened monkey. It showed its teeth, and seemed about to sink them in his hand; then thought better of it, and permitted him to caress its head.

Several of the boys were laughing. But Jubal felt too uneasy now to laugh.

"I bet that gol-darned old hand organ is busted intew giblets!" he grumbled.

The words were hardly out of his mouth when a roar of surprise came from Wilson Crane.

He smothered it, when he saw that several people had followed him and his friends to the lower door. Then he caught up the hand organ, and, carrying it in his arms, moved his long legs quickly up the stairs. His big eyes were shining with excitement.

Jubal stood awaiting him, with Nick Flint. The others were going on into the room, which Flint had hired with Delancy Shelton's money.

"See there!" whispered Wilson, in a tense tone.

"The hand organ's busted!" Jubal exclaimed, anxiously.

"It seems to be, for a fact," observed Flint, who saw the hole which Wilson had indicated.

"But it's not that—it's not that!" said Wilson, in that tone of suppressed excitement. "Come on in and I'll show you. Don't let any of those fellows down there follow!"

He jumped into the room, and, Nick and Jubal following, Nick closed the door and stood with his back against it.

"What is it?" Jube demanded. "By granny, I reckon we'll have tew pay fer bu'stin' the hand organ!"

"You mean *you'll* have to pay for it—you and Wilson," said one of the boys.

"But, see here!"

It was Wilson who spoke, and then he brought from the interior of the old hand organ a big roll of paper money.

As one of the boys said afterward, Jubal's eyes stuck out "so that you could have shaved them off with a shingle."

Nick Flint uttered an oath of astonishment, and the boys all crowded about Wilson and the hand organ.

"I found the money right in there," Wilson palpitated. "When I stooped to pick up the hand organ, I saw it was broken, and there I saw this roll."

He held it up.

"Findin's keepin'," said one of the young fellows. "We'll divvy, and skip out of here."

"Nit!" cried Jubal, though he was staring at the money hungrily. "We ain't thieves yet. I allow that money belongs to the owner of the hand organ."

Nick Flint's dark eyes shone greedily.

"How much is it, do you suppose?" he asked.

Wilson put the roll on the little table and began to count it, with the other fellows hanging over him.

While he was thus engaged, Jubal slipped back to the door, turned the key in the lock, and then hung his cap on the key, thus covering up the keyhole, so that no one could see into the room from the landing.

Wilson was counting the money, when he came back, and he watched with excited interest as the big bills were peeled off one after another and flung on the table.

"Hands off!" cried Jubal, as some of the fellows began to reach out to examine the money.

One of the hands thus stretched forth belonged to Nick Flint.

"Hands off!" Jubal warned again. "Wilson found that money and he's goin' to handle it. I nominate him fer treasurer of this here club till the owner of the money comes amblin' along."

"It looks like counterfeit," explained Flint; "I wanted to see whether it was or not!"

"Hands off!" said Jubal. "Whether it's counterfeit or not ain't any of our bizness, as I see, so long as it don't belong tew us."

"Do you think I'd steal it?" Nick flung at him.

Jubal tried to grin. He knew that Nick was a thief by instinct.

"Well, yeou might! 'Twas me an' Wilson took possession of that hand organ, an' we've got tew see that the owner gits his money back when he comes fer it. Otherwise"—he tried to smile, to mollify Flint—"we might be held responsible fer the loss, ye see, if there should be any."

Nick Flint gave him an unpleasant look.

"You weren't always so infernal honest, Jube Martin! I've knowed you to steal apples and melons, and candy from the stores and cakes from the baker's!"

"But never money," said Jubal—"never money!"

What stealin' I done was fer a lark, ye see. I never stole anything in earnest!"

"And I never did!"

Wilson Crane had his long nose down over the roll of money, steadily counting, while the other boys looked on, hardly any of them daring to breathe. The whole thing seemed too remarkable for belief. And in the eyes of more than one was the same thievish light seen in the black orbs of Nick Flint.

The exciting experiences of the past minute or so had driven out of Jubal's brain the last befogging fumes of the liquor. He began to think now that he had acted the part of a fool, and the discovery of that money made him uneasy. He valued money too much to wish to have a large sum belonging to some one else in his possession and so stand the risk of having it stolen.

"There's a thousand dollars, already," said Wilson, still counting.

The bills were heaped up on the table.

"I'll bet it's counterfeit!" said Flint, hungrily.

But he saw that Jubal was watching him, and he did not put forth his hand to take any of it.

"Eleven hundred and forty-three dollars," said Wilson, concluding his counting.

It was a fortune, in the eyes of more than one of those boys.

Jubal found a piece of old paper lying on the floor.

"Wrap it up in this," he said to Wilson, "and write the amount on the paper, and put it in your pocket!"

Wilson wrapped the money in the paper and scribbled the figures. He was about to put it in his pocket. He, too, had come pretty well out from under the influence of the liquor.

"You take it," he said to Jubal, struck by sudden caution.

Jubal hesitated; but when again he saw the black eyes of Nick Flint fastened on it he took the package and rammed it well down in one of his pockets.

Having settled this matter, the boys turned their attention to the broken hand organ, only to discover that it was not broken, but that it had a secret pocket or drawer in one end of it, and that this had fallen open, or been knocked open, by the jolting fall down the stairs.

"By granny, I'll put it right back in there, where it belongs!" said Jubal, taking the roll of money from his pocket and placing it carefully in this receptacle, which he closed as carefully, hearing the hidden spring slide into place. "Fellers, this goes to show how good a thing this organ grindin' is. Over eleven hundred dol-

lars in there, ye see; an' I bet that Eyetalian collared every cent of it from the crowds that gethered tew hear him play."

He dropped back into a chair and surveyed the hand organ, which seemed an ordinary piece of property now.

The monkey had hopped to the table, and now sat there, looking curiously about with its shrewd, little, gray eyes.

"Don't it make yeou feel curious," said Jubal, "to think of it? That feller goin' raound playin' the poverty trick, and the monkey beggin' fer him? That's what it is—beggin'! And people givin' money tew him, when more'n nine times aout of ten he had more money than they did. But, by jacks, it makes me think what a good bizness it'd be tew foller—fer moneymakin'! Blamed if I ain't most tempted tew git me a hand organ and a monkey and try the trick. Why, a feller could lay up enough in a few months tew start hisself in bizness in the regular way. He could, for certain!"

"Have another drink!" Nick Flint invited, pushing a half-filled glass of liquor toward him across the table.

The monkey sniffed at the whisky, and drew back, chattering.

Jubal laughed.

"If that critter's got sense enough to let that stuff alone, I allaow I have."

The boys were much interested in the monkey and eagerly watched every movement it made.

"Oh, have a drink!" Flint urged. "Don't be a fool!"

When Jubal would touch no more of the liquor Flint begged Wilson to have another drink with him; and he drank some himself, smacking his lips to show how good it was.

But a sense of responsibility concerning that money kept Wilson from again touching the liquor.

Some of the other fellows in the room drank, and urged Jubal and Wilson to join them.

"I ain't goin' tew drink any more until I see haow this thing comes aout," said Jubal, with a sturdy air. "I'm allaowin' we hain't seen the eend of this thing yit. That policeman they talked abaout hain't showed up, but when he does he may want tew arrest us."

"Oh, you can trust to little Jack Lightfoot to get you out," said Flint, with a sneer.

Jubal did not like the tone, and he gave Nick a sharp look.

Seeing that neither Wilson nor Jubal would drink

again, some of the boys went back into the street, saying they wanted to see what was going to happen.

Suddenly a cry was raised that the Italian was returning.

Jubal and Wilson jumped to the window to look out, but saw only some people gathered below on the sidewalk.

"That was jist a scare," said Jubal, grinning, as he came back. "I'm thinkin' that one of aour own fellers hollered that."

Nick Flint was bending over the table, talking earnestly in whispers with one of his close friends.

Jubal glanced at the hand organ by the wall, and at the monkey on the table. The monkey chattered and showed its teeth.

Apparently the hand organ had not been disturbed.

Jubal began to fondle the monkey, trying to make friends with it.

"By granny, I allaow the fellers would like tew have yeou fer mascot of the nine," he said, rubbing its hair and drawing his hand softly over its head. "Haow'd you like that, monk?"

He turned to the other fellows in the room, and saw that Nick Flint had thrust the whisky bottle into his hip pocket and was moving toward the door.

"I think I'll go down and look round," said Flint, nervously.

Jubal glanced again at the hand organ, and was sure it had not been touched.

"Jist yell the word up, if yeou see the Eyetalian or the cop comin'," he requested.

Flint went out, closing the door after him, without speaking.

Then one of the other boys—the one Nick had been talking with in whispers—rose and went out, and Jubal saw one of those remaining look quickly in the direction of the hand organ.

A feeling that something was wrong came to him.

Taking the monkey on his arm, he moved over to the hand organ, and, finding the spring in the hidden door, he opened it.

The package of money was gone!

CHAPTER IV.

THE LOSS OF THE MONEY.

With a bellow of rage, Jubal Marlin dropped the hand organ and the monkey to the floor and leaped for the doorway.

Wilson Crane, who was at the window, looked about just in time to see him vanishing, and he saw the

monkey on the floor, chattering with wrath, for the sudden way in which Jubal had tossed it down had enraged it.

A glance served to show Wilson that the hand organ's secret drawer had been opened, and he spoke to the one young fellow who still remained in the room with him.

"Who opened that?" he asked, as he jumped toward the hand organ.

"I don't know!"

"Well, the money's gone!" Wilson snapped.

"Is it? Maybe you think that I took it?"

"Did you see anyone handling this organ?" Wilson demanded, sharply.

"Only Jube Marlin. He had it just now."

He arose from his seat at the table, with a slinking look that proclaimed guilty knowledge, but Wilson was too excited at the moment to notice this.

Reaching the stairs almost at a jump, Wilson saw Jubal at the foot, and saw him spring out into the street; then Wilson's long legs took him flying down the stairway and soon landed him at Jubal's side.

Jubal was looking about in the street.

"The money's gone," he said to Wilson, "and I'mbettin' that Nick took it—took it that time when that feller hollered daown here and me an' yeou went to the winder. Somebody opened the organ and took the money while we was there, and I know 'twas Nick. And naow he's skun aout."

Nick could not be seen, nor were any of the other boys who had been in that upper room visible except the solitary member of the Gang now descending the stairs after Wilson.

Jubal turned on him fiercely in the hall at the foot of the stairs.

"What do yeou know abaout this?" he demanded, clutching him by the shoulder. "Some one tuck the money aout of that old hand organ!"

"Perhaps you did!" was sneered back at him. "You're the only one that I saw touch the thing!"

Jubal's anger blazed forth. He lifted his fist; then let it drop at his side.

"I'll tell yeou who tuck that money," he declared; "it was Nick Flint, and you was knowin' tew it! I may be a gol-darned fool, and I guess I am, but I'm not an idiot. Nick Flint tuck that money while me an' Wilson was lookin' aout of the winder up there. But yeou bet he'll wish he hadn't 'fore he gets through with this! I'll have him arrested, by thunder, if it's the last thing I ever dew."

"See here, Jube," said the other, facing him, "better

go slow, if you're thinking of that. Nick Flint is no thief."

"Oh, he ain't! He's——"

"I saw that hand organ a good deal of the time, and you're the only one who was near it!"

"By granny, I believe yeou tuck it yerself! But I'll find aout, yeou bet!"

"Let me pass!" the other growled. "I don't intend to stay here to be insulted by you."

He flung himself out of the place, and, hurrying along the street, disappeared quickly round the nearest corner.

Wilson ran down to that corner and stared about; then came running back, while Jubal stood in the doorway as if he feared that something else might vanish if he did not stand guard there.

"By granny, that puts us in a hole!" he cried.

Several people began to come forward, hearing his words and noticing his excited manner.

"Where's the hand organ and the monkey?" one of them asked, recognizing Jubal as the hand organ grinder of a few minutes before.

"Upstairs!" said Jubal.

He laid a hand on Wilson's shoulder and drew the lanky youth inside.

"We're in a hole, Wilson!"

"I guess I know it," said Wilson, anxiously; "but it's not my fault."

"Whose is it?"

"Yours."

"Mine?"

"Yes, yours!"

"By gravy, that's tough! Didn't you an' me go into this thing together fer a little fun?"

"Yes, but why didn't you watch the hand organ? Why didn't you keep your eyes on it?"

"Why didn't yeou?"

"It wasn't in my charge. You had charge of it! If the money's gone it's your fault."

"If it's gone? Well, by granny, it's gone, all right, and I'mbettin' Nick Flint took it! Some o' them felles did. He tuck it, I reckon, and that feller run daown intew the street and hollered that the Eyetalian was comin' back jist tew give him a chance to take it."

Wilson turned back up the stairway.

"What will we do when the owner of the hand organ comes?"

Jubal followed, thoughtfully scratching at his head.

"By gravy, I feel like cuttin' aout; but that wouldn't dew. We was the ones that had the hand organ, and,

of course, we'd be charged with takin' the money. And it would look natural that we did, when the owner finds it's gone. What d'ye say? 'Twouldn't be sensible, ner the square thing, I reckon, if we was tew cut aout?"

Wilson began to see that he had placed himself in a very embarrassing situation. His father, Dr. Miles Crane, was one of the reputable and respected citizens of Cranford, and his family connections were good. Wilson had been called "wild," and his father had more than once taken him to task for associating with such fellows as Nick Flint, but whatever Wilson had done he had never openly sullied his reputation for honesty, though he had done things that came very close to the thieving line more than once, as when he had stolen liquor from his father's office with which to treat the members of the Gang. But what would his father say now, and what would his friends think and say, if he should be arrested, charged with stealing that money? The sweat came out on his face as he thought of it.

The monkey was chattering angrily from the top of the organ when they re-entered the room. He did not like to be left alone in that way, with the door closed on him.

Jubal went over and tried to pat him on the head, but he growled in a threatening way.

"Even the monk's gone back on us!" said Jube, trying to seem cheerful.

Wilson came over, and together they reinspected the organ's secret drawer, hoping against hope that the money was there and they had overlooked it.

But the money was gone.

The temptation was again strong on Jubal to bolt from the place and seek an escape from this unpleasant situation in a cowardly flight, and he said as much to Wilson Crane.

"The trouble is, Jube, that everybody on the street saw that we were from Cranford and members of the nine. If we hadn't had these baseball clothes on!"

"Yes, that's so, tew. We're in fer it, I guess. That hand organ man will be fer arrestin' us, when he comes back. But, by granny, I ain't goin' tew jist lay daown and take my medicine, when I didn't steal the money! Yeou've got the five dollars you and the monkey collected, and yeou can turn that over. And as fer the wad o' money that was in the hand organ, we'll have Nick Flint pulled fer stealin' it, an' git out of it in that way."

"But can we prove it against him? He'll deny it, and we didn't see him take it."

"But circumstantial ev'dence," urged Jubal. "Don't yeou remember abaout that feller who was sent to the penitentiary from Cardiff on'y last month, all on circumstantial ev'dence? Nobody seen him steal, and yit they proved that he did steal. One of the fellers who was in this room tuck that money, while we was lookin' out the winder. I think it was Nick Flint."

"And perhaps they'll claim that we took it and made a howl just to lay the thing onto them."

Wilson was growing nervous and uneasy.

"By granny, they'd have tew prove that we tuck it!"

"Well, now, don't you think the circumstantial evidence might be made to seem as strong against us as against them?"

Jubal shifted uneasily and again put out his hand to stroke the head of the monkey.

The little animal had come nearer, and seemed now to want the friendship of some one in its loneliness.

"By granny, why don't that man come back? Sing'-lar thing the way he cut aout!"

"Yes, it is. He's been up to something, and is afraid of the police. I scared him blue when I threatened him with the police."

"What if he don't never come back?"

"Oh, he'll come back, all right!"

"Yes, I reckon he will."

Jubal got up and walked uneasily to the window, carrying the monkey, which now permitted him to lift it in his arms. Its little gray eyes looked keenly into the street, and it chattered when it saw the moving people.

"Monk, what yeou reckon's become of yer master?"

The monkey chattered again.

"Yeou don't know. Well, by granny, I don't, neither. We're all in a hole, monk—yeou and me and Wilson."

He turned back from the window and walked across to where Wilson was sitting in a chair close by the hand organ.

"That comes from getting in with Nick Flint again and drinking his whisky!"

"I reckon it does, Wilson. Nick's a thievin' cuss."

"What do yeou suppose Jack will say? He's bound to find it out, of course."

Jube sat down, fondling the monkey.

"By granny, I been jist wonderin' if it wouldn't be the proper thing tew go to Jack with it right straight off. Jack's got a mighty level head."

"And have him rake us over the coals!"

"Do yeou think he will?"

"Of course he will. Maybe he'll take us off the nine."

You know he doesn't like Nick Flint and this drinkin' bizness."

"He never said tew me that he didn't."

"Well, we know it, just the same."

"He's baound tew find it aout, and it won't make it no worse tew go tew him an' tell him. Wouldn't surprise me if it got intew the Tidewater papers. Jewrusalem, if it should come aout in the paper this afternoon!"

Jube almost paled at the thought.

"Well, this makes me swear off on drinking!"

"Me, tew, by granny! We wouldn't made sich pesky fools of aourselves but for that whisky. I reckon if I had another drink, though, I'd feel more like seein' this thing through."

"Not another drop for me!"

"What do yeou say tew goin' tew see Jack abaout it?"

"I don't know."

Wilson was weakening.

"He ain't goin' tew be rough on us abaout it; 'tain't his way. And he'll know it, anyhaow. He's baound tew find it out. Or dew yeou think we'd better hunt Nick Flint up and paound the very old dickens aout of him, and make him fork over that money? I know he's got it."

"I don't know what to say."

Wilson's big eyes were even bigger than usual and his long, thin face looked distressed.

"We'll go tew Jack first, and then we'll find Nick, if he's in this taown, and we'll hammer the waddin' aout of him. What dew yeou say tew that?"

"Well, we've got to do something," Wilson agreed. "There'll be an officer along here pretty soon hunting for us, and I don't care to be pinched and maybe landed in jail for this thing."

CHAPTER V.

TELLING JACK LIGHTFOOT.

When Jubal and Wilson found Jack Lightfoot he was sitting with Lafe Lampton, Ned Skeen, Tom Lightfoot and some others on the steps of a boarding house.

Jube carried the red-coated monkey in his arms, shielding it as much as he could from the view of the curious, but the hand organ had been left behind with the storekeeper who had ventured to give them some warning advice when they interfered with the organ grinder.

Both Wilson and Jubal stopped in hesitation when they saw that Jack was not alone.

"I wish he was alone," said Wilson.

"I feel like runnin' like a tin-canned purp," Jubal confessed.

"What do you say to calling him out?"

"Yes, that's it; yeou call tew him, sayin' that we want tew see him a minute."

The boys with Jack were already looking at Jubal and Wilson, but Jubal's shielding arm kept them from seeing the monkey.

Jack left the group when Wilson summoned him.

"What's up?" he said, for he could see that Wilson's manner was strange and mysterious.

Then he beheld the monkey in Jube's arms, and his gray-blue eyes opened in wide surprise.

"Where'd you get that thng?"

"That's what we want tew tell you," said Wilson, his long, thin face flushed. "Walk down this way, for we don't want the other fellows to hear."

Jack stared at the monkey, and it regarded him keenly.

"How'd it dew fer a mascot" said Jubal, laughing nervously.

"Fine! But where did you get it?"

"Borrered it," said Jubal, mysteriously.

"It's this way," said Wilson, beginning his explanation; "we thought we'd have a little fun with a hand organ man we saw downtown. Jube wanted to play the hand organ for him, and the man objected. Just to scare him, I looked straight at him and told him that the police were looking for him."

"It scared him all right, tew," said Jube. "You'd ought to seen him go."

"You scared him so that he left the hand organ?"

"And the monkey," added Jube.

Wilson went on with his explanation.

"Nick Flint was in a room upstairs there, with—with some other fellows, you know, and when the man didn't come back we went up there, taking the monkey and the hand organ, for we didn't want to leave them on the street."

"You'd been up there before with Nick, I suppose?" said Jack, dryly.

"Y-yes, just a little while before. And so we went up there. Well, near the head of the stairs Jubal let the hand organ fall, and it tumbled down the stairs. I went down to get it, and I found, as I thought at first, that it had been split open at one end by the fall. And if you'll believe me, there was over eleven hundred dollars in money in it! I took it upstairs and counted it

"I don't know that I understand you," said Jack, with a twinkle in his gray-blue eyes. "Tell us what you know—if you know anything."

"Well, they're saying downtown that two of the Cranford baseball boys held up a hand organ man this morning and robbed him of his hand organ and his monkey, and—"

"That's a gol-darned lie!" Jubal fired at him.

"Then you tell me about it," Mack requested, getting into a reviewer's attitude. "I don't know anything about it. I'm just trying to find out."

"What were you doing at the police station?" Jack asked.

"I thought maybe the fellows had been arrested and I could get track of it there. But the police hadn't heard anything about it."

"We'll take a walk, then, and talk the thing over, and we'll tell you what we know about it."

They turned about, with Mack walking eagerly at their side, pencil and paper still in hand.

Jack told him in a few words what had been told to him, but exacted a promise from him before doing so.

Macklin was beginning to scribble, when Jack put up his hand and pulled the pencil off the paper.

"Remember your promise, Mack! If you're bound to give this thing to some paper you must give it out as I want you to."

"I don't want him tew give it aout at all!" Jubal grumbled.

"Nor I!" said Wilson.

"But, fellows," expostulated Macklin, "see what a story it is, and think of what a sensation it will make! I can get a newspaper beat on that!"

"By hemlock, I'll beat yer head in, if yeou do!"

"Macklin's going to put this in the paper just as I tell him to," said Jack. "It's a good thing he came along, for I've thought out a plan now which will save the necessity of going to the police station and laying in a complaint, and at the same time I think it will bring back that money."

Mack hesitated, fearing a good newspaper story was about to be spoiled, and the other young fellows looked at Jack inquiringly.

"You're going to give this story to the Tidewater papers?"

"Yes, I want to; and then send it to the *Guardian*, when I send in the report of the ball game, and perhaps wire a stick about it to my New York paper."

"Hold back your report to the *Guardian* as long as you can, and write something like this for the Tidewater press."

"Great scissors, aour names will be in the papers, after all!" Jubal grunted. "We was wantin' tew keep 'em aout."

"Say it's reported," said Jack, speaking to Remington, "that two young fellows dressed to *resemble* members of the Cranford baseball team tackled an organ grinder here in Tidewater to-day, and—"

Mack had begun to scribble furiously.

"And," Jack went on, speaking slowly, "that they took from him his hand organ and his monkey. As it chances, this hand organ man was acquainted with the captain and members of the Cranford nine, to whom he at once reported his loss. The monkey escaped from its captors and was recovered by its owner, but the sum of more than eleven hundred dollars, which was hidden in a secret receptacle in the hand organ, was taken from its hiding place and is still missing. This is known because the hand organ was found later with this receptacle rifled. The owner of the hand organ has reported the matter to the police, and the name of one young fellow, who was a leader of the roughs who attacked him—"

"Wow!" said Wilson, "that's *rough* on us!"

"The name of this young fellow is known. He lives in Cranford, and in the past has borne a shady reputation. The police are now shadowing him, and it is believed that his arrest will follow shortly, when his name and that of his confederate will be brought to light. As he seldom has any money, he will doubtless try to spend some of his ill-gotten gains, and that will help in his identification. That he can escape, or clear himself of the charge that will be brought against him, is impossible. But it is expected that the proofs of his crime will be found on him when he is taken."

"The hand organ man, who is an Italian, is aiding in the search. His monkey has been left by him in care of the Cranford nine, and there have been suggestions made to the effect that it will be used this afternoon by the nine as a mascot."

Jack smiled as he stopped.

"How is that?" he asked.

Jubal was gasping in bewilderment and amazement, and the big eyes of Wilson Crane had rounded to an unnatural size.

Mack continued to scribble for some seconds after Jack ceased speaking.

"Gee! You didn't expect me to keep up with that, did you?" he asked, his cheeks flushed. "But I got the points down, I think. Say, who were those fellows?"

Jack laughed.

"Mack, if I should tell you, you'd know more than I do."

"Then—then you don't know yourself?"

"I think I know. I'm just building a little fire to try to smoke the chap out of his hole, that's all. If you'll put that in—"

"Oh, I'll put it in, you bet! But I'd like to know the names of those Cranfordites."

He turned to Jubal and Wilson.

"Needn't come tew me," said Jubal; "Jack seems tew know a heap more abaout it than I dew. I hadn't heard all o' that he's been tellin' yeou."

Mack looked at his watch.

"Jumpin' grasshoppers, I've got to get a move on, if I get this in the Tidewater paper this afternoon. It's about time for them to go to press now. I'll see you later."

He sprinted away, clutching his pad of paper and running for the nearest street car line.

Jack laughed.

"I suppose it's too bad to put that in the paper. But it can't harm anyone and will give those rascals a scare. You fellows wouldn't want to go now to the police with your story?"

"No, by gum!" Jubal answered.

"What will the police think when they see that report?" asked Wilson.

"We needn't care for that. They'll laugh, probably, for they'll know it isn't so. What I hope for is that it will scare Nick Flint into returning the money, and it will also bring forward the owner of the hand organ and the monkey, it seems to me, unless he's crooked and has cleared out."

"It's the funniest thing, how he ran away just because I threatened him with the police!" remarked Wilson.

"It is."

They moved in the direction of the boarding house where Jack and some other members of the nine intended to get dinner, and where he had been sitting with his friends when Jubal and Wilson appeared and asked for that private talk.

CHAPTER VII.

MACK REMINGTON'S NEWS "STORY."

The ball grounds at Tidewater faced the bay, which was a beautiful sheet of water, containing the harbor, which held a good deal of shipping. The ground was level, sloping gently down toward the water; the land near the water's edge being sandy, with coarse grass

growing in the sand. At high tide the water came well up to this grass, and it was high tide that afternoon at about the time the ball game was to be played.

As Jack Lightfoot and his friends left the hotel, starting toward the ball ground—being rather early, though many people were already moving toward the baseball field—a newsboy came by, shouting.

With a smile, Jack pulled out a coin and bought a paper, and his friends crowded round him to see what was in it. That something was in it concerning the Cranford baseball nine had been learned from the words of the newsboy.

And there it was, with a "scare head," on the first page:

ASSAULTED AND ROBBED.

Two Masquerading Young Villains from Cranford Disguise Themselves in Uniforms of the Cranford Nine, Which They Stole, and Waylay and Rob a Helpless and Almost Blind Old Hand Organ Man, Getting Over a Thousand Dollars.

Then followed a sensational report, evidently written by Mack Remington, which stated that the hand organ man was blind and helpless and that he was playing his organ in the streets when the two young fellows wearing stolen clothing boldly assaulted him in broad day, stealing more than a thousand dollars from him, which he had been saving for years, and which was his sole means of support in his coming old age.

Mack Remington had embellished Jack's story in a most sensational way, and, besides giving the particulars furnished by Jack, he had dilated on the great indignation felt by the members of the Cranford nine when they learned that two such scamps had masqueraded in the Cranford uniforms.

Nor had he neglected to set forth the surprising information that the hand organ man was well known to the members of the nine; that he had gone to them at once with a report of what had befallen him, and that they and the police were now searching for the robbers, one of whom was positively known. The report predicted that he would be arrested before night, and promised even fuller details in its next issue, saying it had sent reporters out to get all the facts.

Mack Remington came up, smiling, while the boys were reading and commenting on his "news" story.

"Did I get it all in?" he asked.

Jack was laughing at a great rate. Jubal declared that even the monkey, which he was carrying, smiled.

"Well, you did very well for an amateur, I must say," Jack answered. "Is it the custom for you news

paper men to put into a report things that aren't told to you?"

Mack puffed out his apple-red cheeks.

"Well, that's a sensational sheet, you know—a yellow journal. So, as they like that kind of stuff, I thought I'd give it to 'em hot. Whatever isn't right in it, they'll correct in the next issue." A little thing like that doesn't trouble 'em. But I wish some of you, if you know, would tell me who those two Cranford fellows were."

He looked proudly at the "story" in the paper, which, with the big-letter headings, made almost a column.

"Do you think that will smoke 'em out?" he asked.

"We're hoping so," said Jack.

Then they all went on down toward the ball grounds, talking of the report in the paper and of the things which had brought it out, and of how radically it differed from the truth as Wilson and Jubal knew it.

Mack listened with red cheeks growing still redder.

"Say," he grumbled, "I think I'm the victim of overconfidence; you fooled me! So you think that fellow was Nick Flint? Why didn't you say so? Oh, say, I'll have to hustle back to the office of that paper and write another report right away."

"Wait till after the ball game," Jack urged. "We want to see if this smokes him out of his hole."

As they were about to pass through the gates into the grounds some of the Cranford rooters appeared, having arrived a little while before by train, and Nellie Conner and Kate Strawn drove up in a buggy which had brought them over.

With this crowd of rooters came Phil Kirtland, Brodie Strawn, Saul Messenger, Nat Kimball and several other members of the nine and substitutes.

None of them had yet heard the story of the hand organ and the monkey, but they saw the monkey in Jubal's arms.

"Oh, the cute thing!" cried Kate, leaning forward out of the buggy to look at it. "Where did you get it?"

"Faound it," said Jubal.

"You found it? Where? Well, of all the strange things! Will it bite?"

Jubal grinned.

"It'll bite peanuts all right. Lafe ain't got any left, 'cause he's been feeding his supply aout tew the monk. Fer that reason we're goin' tew call him the mascot—I mean the monk is to be called the mascot."

"Oh, you're just fibbing to us!" said Nellie, her blue eyes shining with pleasure.

Kate held out her arms to the monkey. Something in her face—her winning manner, perhaps—caused the

monkey to leap straight into her arms, a thing she had hardly expected. She screamed, and almost let it fall, while Nellie drew back with a cry of fright. Then they both laughed heartily, if a little nervously.

"I don't know but I'm afraid of him," said Kate, and she passed the monkey back to Jubal.

Jubal was concealing his own nervousness by this talk, and also was trying to keep the girls from learning just what had taken place and how the monkey had come into his possession.

At that moment a roar of surprise came from the lips of Kate's brother, Brodie Strawn. He had seen one of the papers with that astonishing report in it and was reading it, with Phil Kirtland looking over his shoulder.

Jack observed that many people, as they passed into the grounds, had copies of the paper, and he heard some comments on the subject of the report, and saw some curious glances cast toward the members of his nine, and particularly toward Jubal and the monkey.

Brodie moved toward the buggy where his sister sat, holding the paper out to her and pointing to the report.

But what was said Jack did not hear, for just then the Tidewater Tigers put in an appearance, with their captain at their head.

CHAPTER VIII.

A LIVELY OPENING.

The Tidewater Tigers were supremely confident of victory that day.

It cannot be denied that they had good cause to feel so, nor that the Cranford boys had good cause to feel somewhat nervous.

In the previous game played in Tidewater the Tigers had given the Cranford nine a good drubbing. Though Jack had not pitched in that game, it could not be offered as an excuse, for immediately afterward he had pitched in a game with the Mildale nine—a nine inferior to the Tigers—and there he had fairly been batted out of the box. This was a comfort to Phil Kirtland, and somewhat saved his pride, for Phil had pitched in the game with Tidewater when the Cranford boys went to defeat on this diamond.

Nevertheless, Jack had pulled his courage together and had been able to inspire a good degree of confidence in his team. The fact that after being defeated by Mildale they had gone into another game with that nine and had overwhelmingly defeated them was a

good omen; it seemed, and helped to make the Cranford boys feel better now.

Jack was to pitch, and Lafe was to be behind the bat, and this was of itself an encouraging feature, and, besides, as Jack knew, the members of his nine were all on hand and in good condition, even to Jubal and Wilson.

"Fellows, we can do 'em to-day, and I know it!" was what he said.

He felt sure of it, and that was of itself a great element of success in his case. When he could make himself feel that his nine had more than a fighting chance to win, he always played better.

Jubal led the way out on the diamond, carrying the monkey on his shoulders, and all the nine, following him as he circled round the rubber, sang with fire and spirit one of Cranford's fighting baseball songs:

"Glory, glory, halleluyah!
For this is Cranford's day!"

The monkey, without being directed to—perhaps he thought he was with his old master—lifted his little red and feathered cap, as he sat thus on Jube's shoulder, and nodded toward the people now crowded into the grand stand and the bleachers.

And the people howled and clapped their hands.

"By granny, this ought tew be the best mascot we ever had," said Jubal, feeling much better, now that so long a time had passed and neither he nor Wilson had been arrested nor had their names been published in the papers. "I reckon we'll adopt it reg'lar, if that Eyetalian don't show up. I'd like tew buy it of him, anyhaow, by hemlock!"

Having "mixed their war medicine," the Cranford nine began to slam the ball around the diamond, for warming up work.

The people were still coming upon the grounds and streaming toward the seats.

From the bay came a pleasant breeze, which tempered the heat.

It was, in truth, a delightful day, so far as the weather was concerned.

Jack's thoughts were a good deal on Nick Flint, and without really expecting to see him there he continued to watch the people who had come and were coming. He had not wired to Kennedy, the Cranford constable, to look for Flint. He meant to do that later, or report to the constable as soon as he got home. He was hoping, however, that Flint would appear with the money, or would send some one to speak with him about it. Perhaps in this he was overconfident. But he was

counting on certain well-known weaknesses in Nick's somewhat cowardly character.

Seeing that he was not likely to be needed as a substitute, as several were on the grounds, Nat Kimball, after taking into his possession the monkey, climbed with it into the bleachers and sat down with it there, with the rooters and the girls from Cranford.

Whenever the rooters cheered and the girls shook out their flags Nat would hoist the monkey to his shoulder, when it would doff its little red cap to the shouting people.

The Cranford nine were given first chance at the bat, and Kid Casey, believed by the Cranford boys to have been once a professional pitcher, and known generally as "The Wizard Pitcher of the Four-Town League," went into the pitcher's box.

The game opened sensationaly.

Tom Lightfoot was the first man at the bat.

Wizard Casey sent in one of his famous twists, but Tom Lightfoot connected with it at the first crack, lining the ball to right center.

The fielder there made a wild run to get it. Without slacking his speed, he dropped his gloved hand to the ground as if to stop the flying ball, and then raised his hand with the ball in it.

Tom Lightfoot had gone to first, taking it with a flying run.

"Safe on first!" said the umpire.

It was like a bombshell fired into the faces of the Tigers.

They apparently believed that the "catch" of the fielder was really a catch, and, besides, they had been given to believe that this umpire would somewhat favor them when he had a good chance. It bewildered them to see that he was doing nothing of the kind, but seemed inclined to sway toward Cranford. So it appeared to them, and it seemed to them further—or so they claimed—that the ball had been caught.

They were thrown at once into an ugly mood. The pitcher jumped toward the umpire, and the members of the nine all ran in to back him up, while the Tide-water fans roared their indignation, declaring that the batter was out.

"That was out!" yelled Casey, shaking his fist in the umpire's face.

"Safe on first, I said! I think you heard me! That ball was not caught."

"But see here," said another Tiger, "I saw Tom Lightfoot's hit, and it was fair—right on the line, and I saw the fielder's catch, and that was fair. Lightfoot was out, I tell you!"

The fielder who claimed to have caught the ball came up, making dents in his glove, as he hammered the spot where he said the ball struck.

"It landed right there!" he shouted. "Right there!"

The umpire was red in the face, as these vociferous players thus surrounded him, shouting at him.

Tom Lightfoot still stood on first, and Jack sat in the benches. Some of the other members of the Cranford nine went forward and mingled with the crowd gathered round the umpire. They added their testimony, declaring that Tom was safe, and they knew it.

"Go back to your places!" yelled the umpire.

The Tigers did not go, but continued to howl their protests.

The umpire stood his ground, with his head erect.

Once he turned to the bleachers, where the Tidewater fans were standing up and screaming at him, denouncing him as a thief and calling him names.

"Go on, you barking dogs!" he shouted to them. "But I'm here to render decisions as I see them!"

He turned back to the howling Tigers.

"You fellows play ball!" he commanded, angrily.

"But that decision was rotten!" said Casey. "We're not going to stand such decisions!"

"You'll stand my decisions or get off the field," was the answer. "If you fellows are going to play ball get back to your corners. I've had enough of this. My decision stands. The runner is safe on first."

He threw the ball to the pitcher. Tom was flying for second, which he took while the confusion still reigned.

"Safe on second!" said the umpire. "Play ball! Next batter up is Brodie Strawn."

Then the Cranford rooters yelled, and the little monkey on Nat Kimball's shoulder lifted his red cap and bowed.

CHAPTER IX.

JACK LIGHTFOOT IN THE BOX.

Kid Casey began to cut the corners of the rubber for Brodie Strawn, when the latter came to the bat. Brodie was a safe hitter and a batting slugger, and the Tidewater boys feared him. Tom Lightfoot was playing daringly off second, looking for a chance to steal,

and the outfielders had gone well back, expecting if Brodie got a hit he would line it out.

The batting lists were as follows:

CRANFORD.	TIDEWATER.
Tom Lightfoot, 2d b.	Ben Talbot, ss.
Brodie Strawn, 1st b.	Joe Bowers, 1st b.
Mack Remington, rf.	Kid Casey, p.
Jubal Marlin, lf.	Silas Cross, 2d b.
Wilson Crane, cf.	Jim Lane, c.
Lafe Lampton, c.	Paul Lockwood, lf.
Ned Skeen, ss.	Sidney Talbot, cf.
Phil Kirtland, 3d b.	George Steele, 3d b.
Jack Lightfoot, p.	Mason King, rf.

Brodie gathered in a two-bagger, and brought Tom Lightfoot home, but went out himself in trying to reach third on Mack Remington's hit to first base. Mack went out, too, for it was a double play.

The Tidewater fans cheered loudly.

"It's going to be another defeat for Cranford!" some of them yelled.

"But not a whitewash!" Tom flung at them, humorously.

Jubal Marlin, with his left-handed swing, landed a hit in right and took first, but Wilson Crane struck out and wound up affairs for Cranford at the bat in that inning.

Jack Lightfoot signalized his entrance into the pitcher's box by striking out the first batter up, Ben Talbot.

But Joe Bowers was not so easy a proposition. Bowers was a good all-around player, a good catcher and really a fine batter. He was a big, heavy fellow, who could not run as well as he could bat or pitch.

Jack tried the spit ball on Bowers, and Bowers caught its deceptive down-shoot at the plate and lifted it into outfield.

He did not have to run hard to make second on that hit, and the Tidewater fans were given a chance to do a lot of cheering.

Then Kid Casey came into position, wielding the bat, and smiled down at Jack from the rubber.

Jack permitted Lafe to do most of the watching of runners on bases. He and Lafe had a perfect system of signals, by which it was easy for Lafe to tell him what a runner was doing. Thus, though Jack was looking at the batter, he knew at the same time that Bowers was trying to steal.

The ball went in to the plate with a quick in-shoot, and Kid Casey fanned the air.

Again Jack sent in this ball, and then ended Casey by striking him out with the spit ball.

This was a humiliation to Casey, and was made

worse by the fact that the Cranford rooters began to sing "Casey at the Bat."

Silas Cross was struck out, and Joe Bowers had been held so close to second that he had not been able to get away from it.

Lafe Lampton, who was first up in the second inning, got to first bag on a grass cutter through short.

Ned Skeen and Phil Kirtland struck out.

Lafe stole second, and Jack tried to bring him home with a two-bagger, but had the atrocious luck to send it a little high, so that it was gathered in by a fielder, thus putting the side out.

Jack now struck out three men in succession.

When the Cranford boys came to the bat again, in the first half of the third, the hungry Cranford fans again had their appetites whetted in good style.

Tom Lightfoot started the ball to rolling with a clean hit to right center.

Brodie followed with a single.

Mack Remington sacrificed, and, with runners on second and third, Jubal Marlin, with his great left-handed swing, aroused the crowd to terrific enthusiasm with a tremendous swat far out over the right fielder's head.

Tom and Brodie came across the plate amid frantic cheering.

Jubal was stopped at third by a terrific throw from the field that went into the mitt of the catcher.

Wilson Crane tried to bring him in by a sacrifice into right field, but the ball was caught, and Jubal, who had run for the plate when Wilson lined out the ball, was thrown out in trying to get back to third.

Nevertheless, two runs had been brought in, making three runs altogether, against the row of goose eggs of the Tidewaters, and the Cranford fans continued to howl and to sing their songs, while their flags fluttered and the monkey, perched on Nat Kimball's shoulder, doffed his cap and bowed until it seemed that he was some kind of a machine set in motion by winding it with a key.

"Fellows, we've got 'em on the run now!" cried Jack, with great enthusiasm and confidence, as he went once more into the pitcher's box.

His arm was in fine shape and his confidence was great, and he again retired the Tigers in one, two, three order.

The Cranford fans had another fit of yelling and of fluttering flags when Jack thus struck out the side.

The nine came bounding from the field, Ned Skeen turning a somersault in his delight.

"Oh, we've got them on the run!" howled Wilson.

His big eyes were shining, and his long nose and birdlike head were thrust forward as if he were pecking at the boy he was talking to. In the heat and excitement of the game he had temporarily forgotten the hand organ and the missing money and the complications into which he and Jubal had run themselves.

Lafe Lampton started things to going again with a base hit to left, and went to second on Ned Skeen's sacrifice.

There was one thing that Jack's nine were learning, and that was to sacrifice, and this is a hard lesson for any young nine. Yet Skeen had sacrificed with fine spirit, and was glad of the chance.

Phil Kirtland now made a good bid to bring in the run, but the center fielder checkmated him by making a great stop, thus putting Kirt out.

Jack drove a liner that brought the run in, but Tom, following him at the bat, met with hard luck, knocking a fly that was caught.

Throughout the playing the Tigers had continued to howl at the umpire and to denounce his decisions as "rotten," but he continued to give them out, threatening now and then to lay off some loud-talking member of the Tidewater nine.

Then Jack, in the box, did the trick again—he struck out his three men straight!

And the score was four runs for Cranford, with four goose eggs showing up for Tidewater, and four innings had been played.

It showed what Jack Lightfoot could do in the box when he felt in tiptop condition and had good support.

Lafe Lampton, the other member of the battery, deserved quite as much praise.

Lafe's work behind the bat was brainy, clean and accurate, and his throwing to the bases to cut off runners was worth going a long distance to see.

CHAPTER X.

THE MISCHIEVOUS MASCOT.

A strong wind had risen during the progress of the game, and this made Jack Lightfoot's feat of striking out his string of three men straight all the more remarkable. Only the fierce speed that Jack was able to

give the spit ball had made it possible. The speed he put into the spit ball enabled it to bore into the wind.

This rising of the wind was disconcerting to the people in the grand stand and bleachers, and some of them began to show restlessness. A few hats were tumbled from the heads of men and boys and some parasols and umbrellas were turned inside out.

But the game went on, and nearly all the people clung to their seats, so interested were they in the play.

This movement of the people who rose and left their seats seemed to excite a spirit of mischief in the monkey. He took delight in grabbing at the dresses of the women and girls who passed by him and of clutching at the trousers of the boys and men.

He was out of Nat Kimball's arms half of the time, and Nat could do nothing with him while this fit of mischief lasted.

"You haven't got your mascot very well trained," said an elderly gentleman, stopping before Nat and looking down at the monkey.

Nat lifted his cap respectfully when thus addressed. Politeness was one of Nat's characteristics, as much as his love of jiu-jitsu and his dread of germs.

"No, sir," he answered; "we've had him only to-day, you know."

The man stooped to pat the mischievous monkey, and it gave a jump at him, while Nat pulled at its chain.

The man sprang back so suddenly that he came near losing his eyeglasses, and dropped a box of matches out of his pocket.

The monkey saw the box of matches fall down between the seats to the ground, and before Nat could do anything to stop him he had released himself and was climbing down to get that box of matches.

Nat bent over and whistled to the monkey, and was on the point of asking the people to move aside so that he could get down to catch the little joker, when the monkey scampered away under the seats and disappeared from his sight.

Nat was in sore trouble over this, and asked the girls what he should do.

"Let him go," said Kate, laughing. "Perhaps when he gets tired he'll come climbing back."

"But he's got matches—that box of matches the man dropped!"

Kate's eyes opened wider.

"Has he? I didn't see that! Do you suppose he can set anything afire?"

"I don't think so," said Nellie, though a bit anxiously. "He wouldn't know how to strike a match. But I don't see how you're going to get him again. He might bite the matches and set them on fire that way."

Nat was so worried that he missed the plays that were now being made on the diamond, while he tried again to look beneath the seats and get track of the monkey.

Not seeing him, Nat climbed out of the seats and made his way to the ground, with the intention of going round the bleachers and grand stand and seeing if, from the rear, he could not discover the monkey and capture it.

The fans were yelling and Nat observed now that Mack Remington had made a hit and was sprinting for first, and that Brodie Strawn was going like a whirlwind for third.

He stopped to see how this came out, for the ball was being fielded to cut Brodie off.

Nat could not resist a cheer when he saw Brodie gain third on a grand slide, and saw also that Mack was safe on first.

He heard Mack laugh hilariously from his perch on first bag and heard his characteristic exclamation:

"Pap says that the way to do a thing is to do it!"

Little Nat was a baseball enthusiast, and he could not tear himself away as he saw Jubal Marlin pick up the bat and move toward the batter's position.

So Nat stood close by the benches and saw Jubal go out on a fly and watched Wilson as he poked his bird-like nose over the rubber and swung up the bat, and Nat continued to watch when the ball came whistling in to Wilson from the fingers of the "Wizard Pitcher," Kid Casey.

"Crack!"

Wilson got the ball and went for first, while Mack ran for second and Brodie flew for home.

Nat swung his cap, quite forgetful for the moment

of the monkey, and cheered with the others when Brodie crossed the home plate.

"Oh, they can't beat us to-day!" was his enthusiastic conclusion. "That makes the fifth run for us, and two men are on bases, and the Tigers haven't had a run today. Whoop! Whee-ee!"

He yelled the last two words, still swinging his cap, though his squealing applause was drowned in the greater roar that was bellowing over the diamond.

It will be remembered that Nat Kimball was not in the game at all, that he was at best but a substitute who was sure he would not be called on for any work that day; but, just the same, it was "his" game that was being played and "his" nine that was doing the work.

In that he was like the enthusiastic rooters of both sexes from Cranford, in the bleachers and grand stand; it was *their* game that they were looking at, though, except to cheer, they took no part whatever. Yet it is this that makes the great American game of baseball. What would the game be without the spectators? It wouldn't last long.

Two bases were now filled—Mack Remington being on second and Wilson Crane on first.

Lafe Lampton was to be the next player at the bat, and much as Nat desired to recover the monkey he could not go on until he had seen what reliable old Lafe would do.

Many of the people who had descended from the seats because of the high wind had also stopped to watch the play and were grouping back of Nat.

Lafe hammered at the ball, which seemed to have as many deceptive kinks now as there were puffs of wind to veer it, and had two strikes called on him.

Nat Kimball shivered with sympathy, and then laughed with shaking sides as Lafe dug an apple from somewhere in his baseball clothing and solemnly bit into it while the ball was going back to the pitcher.

There was always method in Lafe's madness when he did that trick at the bat; he really thought that he felt better and stronger, and that his nerves were less shaky when he put a bite of apple thus into his stomach at a critical time, and he also knew that it invariably drew a laugh which often extended to the pitcher and made his pitching arm less reliable.

Having taken his bite of apple, Lafe slowly hitched up his belt and grabbed the bat—Old Wagon Tongue—lifting it, for he saw that the ball was due to come in.

It came, and Lafe lined it out, sending it in a great drive well down toward the ruffled water that was lapping up against the sand and reedy grass on the shore, where the high tide was being blown into spray by the wind.

Again a wild yell bellowed forth from the spectators, as the runners and the fielders got under way and the ball went bouncing and skipping toward the salt water.

In the midst of this yell a cry of another kind was heard.

It came from the grand stand, as a scream of alarm and fright.

Nat wheeled as if on a pivot and saw a tongue of flame shoot up between some of the seats in the grand stand, and beheld a mad stampede begin among the people, as they scrambled to get away from that fire.

Nat was not wrong now, when he guessed that a monkey and a box of matches were at the bottom of that fire.

The grand stand was old, and some repair work had been done on it but the day before, to get it in readiness for the game.

The carpenters who did this work had left a large pile of fine shavings and other inflammable material beneath the grand stand where they had been employed.

These had offered an inviting bed for the monkey, who was accustomed, with his old master, to cuddling down in out-of-the-way places; and into the midst of the shavings he dived, chattering with delight and mischief.

He knew what the matches were—that is, he knew that fire could be brought from them; he had seen his master light his pipe many times and many times kindle fires with these things; and he had even been instructed somewhat to strike matches himself, as a trick.

It had always been fun for him to scratch one of the things and hear it snap and crackle and watch the fire jump out of it.

Cuddling down in the kindlings the monkey began to scratch and ignite the matches for the pure fun of it, chattering as they sprang into flame.

When one was struck he threw it down and got out another.

One of the matches started a fire in the shavings; and this, caught by the high wind, communicated like a flash to the other materials beneath the grand stand; and in an inconceivably short time a flare of flame was flung up between the seats, starting that wild stampede.

Jack Lightfoot heard the cry that was raised, and, seeing the fire, was one of the first to recognize its possibilities of peril.

He sprang up from the bench where he was sitting watching the game and dashed toward the grand stand.

The members of his nine followed him, with the substitutes; even the boys on the base lines coming in now to fight the fire and be of assistance to the imperiled people.

The Tidewater Tigers were as quick to see the need, and came running in from the field.

For a time the game was forgotten.

Jack's voice rang out loudly as he reached the grand stand, where the flames were rising still higher, fanned by the furious wind.

"Steady!" he shouted to the people, calling out in his excitement as he would have called out to one of the nine at a critical time. "If you'll take just a little time no one will get hurt."

It was like bellowing at that fire or at the wind that fanned it.

The ball players hustled the frightened people out of the burning grand stand, and Jack led his nine in the good work.

They pulled some out of the way, assisted others, and did all they could to get the women and children down and prevent them from injuring themselves or each other.

Kid Casey and the Tigers were doing the same.

Even the umpire joined in this work; and it can be truly said if the spectators had shown half the coolness of the baseball boys and the umpire not a person would have been hurt there that day.

The grand stand was pretty well emptied, when Jack saw, behind the fire, a girl who seemed to have been abandoned.

The fire was roaring in a great volume of flame between her and the ground, and she was screaming with fear.

Then Jack saw a crutch at her side and knew that the girl was a cripple; and that, thus hampered by her crippled condition, fear had done the rest, and she was so paralyzed by fright that she could do nothing for herself.

Running to an end of the grand stand, Jack sprang up the seats with mighty jumps, and, circling the fire, hurried to the girl.

"Here, I will help you!" he cried.

He fairly lifted her, swinging her up, while she clutched her crutch and began to use it, stimulated by his words and determined manner.

"Don't be scared—don't be scared!" he urged. "You've got plenty of time; and I'll help you."

Her face was as white as wax.

Seeing how she trembled, Jack fairly lifted her across the benches, and, circling the fire with her, he began to help her on down to the ground.

As he did so, the monkey appeared between the seats. Seeing him it ran down, chattering, into the midst of the crowd, disappearing as it had done from the sight of Nat Kimball.

Jack wondered then if the monkey had done anything to start the fire; but he was not to learn how true his half guess was until later.

He again helped the girl on, while other fellows were assisting other people out of the burning grand stand.

Thus he brought her in safety to the ground, where some hysterical women were gathered to meet her, and to weep over her, even though, in their fright, they had abandoned her a few moments before.

The boys, under Jack's leadership, now turned their thoughts to saving the grand stand.

But the thing was impossible. It was fast becoming wrapped in flames, and there was no water supply available.

Within a comparatively short distance rolled the waters of the bay, whipped and torn by the wind; but so far as being of any service in putting out the fire it might as well have been miles distant. The bleachers were saved, by heroic efforts, and by half tearing them down.

Two hours and more went by before the fire was out sufficiently to permit of a thought of continuing the game.

A full five innings had not been played when the fire began; Cranford had been at the bat, with men on bases, in the first half of the fifth inning.

The Cranford nine disliked to stop the game, when they had so good a lead; and Tidewater was equally loath to quit, when so far they had not made a run.

More anxious even than the players were many of the spectators.

Half of the big crowd had gone home, a few of the injured in carriages, though it was known there would be no fatalities as a result of the fire.

The monkey had been found by Nat Kimball, out in the middle of the diamond, sitting "upright on his tail" as Nat said, and seeming to be wondering what all the hullabaloo had been about. There Nat had got hold of his short chain and had captured him.

The players now had a talk with the umpire; and after a little an agreement was reached, that the game should be played out, if it could be done so before darkness came.

As the sun was still far from setting, the boys believed this was easily possible.

The plucky decision was greeted by the spectators with cheers.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GAME GOES ON.

As the game thus started anew, the umpire decided, in accordance with an agreement made by the two nines, that Lafe was on first base, Wilson Crane on second, and Mack Remington on third; and that Jubal Marlin was out.

This brought Ned Skeen to the bat, for his name was next on the Cranford batting list.

"I think we're going to have a warm time," said Jack, humorously, as a shower of cinders from the still burning grand stand was blown across the benches by the wind.

But the wind was dying down, as the afternoon drew on; and though the heat from the embers of the fire was unpleasant it was not unbearable.

Many people had gone back into what remained of the bleachers, but most of the spectators stood on the ground, crowding as close up to the players as was allowable.

The Cranford girls were in one of the groups, where the Cranford rooters were gathered; and they were ready to do their part toward giving further encouragement to the Cranford boys.

"I think you'd better take that monkey away somewhere out of sight," said Nellie Conner, half laughingly and half seriously, as the game opened once more. "He's a hoodoo, instead of a mascot."

"By granny, I guess that's right," was the thought of Jubal, who heard her; "he's hoodooed me and Wilson abaout all day!"

Ned Skeen struck out now; and, the ball getting away from the catcher, Mack Remington risked too much on the swiftness of his legs in an effort to go home; and he retired the side, for he was put out as he thus tried to reach the rubber.

Yet Brodie Strawn had made a run before the fire; and that had put the Cranford runs at five; with nothing for the Tigers.

When Jack Lightfoot now went into the box he found that he was not in the condition which had enabled him to do such phenomenal pitching before.

He had overexerted himself at the fire, in his desire to help the people and prevent serious accidents, and he was beginning to feel the effects of it. He had been covered with sweat besides, and had cooled too quickly, and now he felt stiff and sore.

He tried the spit ball on Joe Bowers, who was first man up, after balls had been called against him; and Bowers hammered it out for a three-bagger.

Kid Casey followed this by slamming a two-base hit into center, thus bringing Bowers in with a run.

Jack got a better grip on himself, and struck out Silas Cross; but Casey stole third bag; and Lafe, in throwing to put him out at third, overthrew, sending the ball on into the field; and Casey came whooping home.

Reliable old Lafe was as stiff and sore from his exertions as Jack, for, like Jack, he had not spared himself at the time of the fire.

But there was ragged work, also, on the other side.

Jim Lane, who was captain and catcher for the Tigers, in trying to line one of Jack's balls into center, knocked a fly which Jack captured with the greatest ease; and Paul Lockwood, getting a bunt, was so slow in making for first that Lafe cut him off there, thus retiring the side.

Yet the Tigers had made two runs, and, as these were the first they had made in the game, they were wildly hilarious, in spite of the sobering fact that their grand stand had been burned to the ground.

That it was the work of the monkey several guessed, and that opinion was openly expressed; but none of them laid the blame on the Cranford nine, nor even on Nat Kimball, who had been given charge of the "mascot." Some of them, however, and not a few of the spectators, privately declared that the Cranford nine had made jackasses of themselves by bringing the monkey upon the grounds.

As to how the monkey came to be in the possession of the Cranford nine, people who had not been informed otherwise accepted the story which had appeared in the Tidewater paper without questioning its entire truthfulness. Jack had not felt it to be his duty to enlighten anyone on the subject.

Phil Kirtland came to the bat, in the first half of the sixth inning; and Kirtland, who was fully as much out of condition as Jack himself, very promptly went down before the pitching of the "Wizard." Yet the "Wizard" was far from being at his best now, though he had not so greatly overexerted himself at the fire.

It always humiliated Kirtland to be first man up and strike out; and he flung the bat down with an exclamation of anger.

"We were a lot of fools for wanting to go on with

this game!" he snarled. "My shoulders are so sore that I couldn't hit a house."

Jack Lightfoot caught up Old Wagon Tongue, facing the "Wizard" with some uneasiness.

Yet the feeling that he was the captain and that on him so much depended hardened him against the pain and stiffness, and he drove out the first ball, with a mighty swing that sent it through the hands of the shortstop and bobbing on toward the tumbling blue waters of the bay.

When Jack started to run the bases his legs and feet felt so heavy and sore he had at first difficulty in getting under way; but he disregarded this, just as before, and sprinted to first as fast as he could, and there turning, and getting more speed, he went on to second, and then on toward third.

The cry went up that the ball had gone into the bay; and the center fielder could be seen wading and poking with his hands amid the grass tufts close by the water.

Seeing this, Jack did not stop at third; and Skeen, who had run down there to coach him, yelled wildly to him to "Go home!"

And Jack went for home, running now with almost his old-time speed, and crossed the plate, just as the center fielder got the ball out of the grass and threw to the left fielder, who had run out to get it and send it on in.

The girls and the rooters of Cranford "made the welkin ring!" as Jubal observed, and things once again began to look more rosy.

But Tom Lightfoot, whose ability as a batter is well known, now struck out; and Brodie Strawn, the slugger, popped a fly, when he tried to drive the ball out; and that fly being smothered, the side was out.

But Jack had brought in a run, and the score stood —Cranford, six; Tidewater, two, at the end of the first half of the sixth inning.

The Tigers batted Jack badly when he again began to pitch.

He found that, though he could by sheer will power gather himself together and run, he could not get the stiffness out of his fingers and hands when he tried to regain his old skill as the pitching end of the battery.

He had largely lost control and could not get the curves; and, almost before he knew it, the bases were filled. Before the end of the second half of the inning the Tigers had brought two men across the rubber.

A run was gained by each nine in the seventh. In the eighth Cranford lost ground again, for the Tigers made two runs, while the Cranfords made only one.

Cranford had lost steadily since the new beginning of the game, and when the ninth inning opened they were but a run in the lead.

"Fellows, we've got to pull some men over the rubber in this inning," said Jack, as Ned Skeen went to the bat. "It may be our last chance."

The nine had grown nervous, he saw, and he was growing nervous himself. To help himself and them he began to talk with them, trying to fill his own heart with the courage he knew was so necessary.

"We're still one to the good, fellows," he urged. "We can at least hold that! Skeen, do your best!"

Skeen did his best. It was poor enough, for he struck out.

Jack said nothing when Phil Kirtland took up the bat. He had learned that it was always best to let Kirtland go his own way without urging or advice.

Yet, knowing that Kirtland was in poor condition, Jack felt a great uneasiness. He did not doubt that Phil would do all he could.

Phil did better than Skeen—he got a single.

Then Jack came to the bat.

He still felt so stiff and sore that he was at first inclined to try merely for a sacrifice.

But the ball happened to come just right, and Jack smashed it with all his might.

It was a great two-bagger in right field, though Jack had really tried to plant it in center well down toward the water.

Phil Kirtland started hot for second, ignoring his own poor condition for running, just as Jack had done, and gained third; while Jack followed him to second.

Tom came to the rubber with Old Wagon Tongue.

Tom had struck out before; but he managed to pull himself together now; and, getting a single, he brought Phil Kirtland home.

Then Brodie Strawn, again trying for a great drive, popped up a little fly, thus going out; and Mack Remington, following him at the bat, struck out, retiring the side.

Yet a run had been made, giving the Cranford nine a lead of two.

The Tigers came to the bat with a great roar of delight.

They had climbed up so steadily that they now felt confident of winning a victory.

And they started off right for it, the ball getting away from Jack, and men being put on bases and a run being brought in.

It began to look as if Cranford was again to be defeated on the Tidewater grounds.

The "mascot" had hoodooed the nine indeed, and with a vengeance.

Nat Kimball was so wrought up by it that he was tempted to fling the chattering monkey to the ground in a rage.

Lafe now threw out one of the runners.

A batter, not meeting Jack's incurve fairly, drove it into Brodie's hands on first, when he meant to put it into right field. Then Jack, pulling himself desperately together and gathering all of his remaining strength and skill into a supreme effort, struck the third man out.

And the game ended, with Cranford roaring with glee; for, though it was close—too close for comfort or for much pride in the result, still the score card showed Cranford leading at the close with these figures—Cranford, nine; Tidewater, eight.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Hardly had Jack struck out this third man when, with a squeal of delight, the monkey flung itself out of Nat Kimball's arms, and with great bounds ran to a dark-browed stranger who had just come upon the ground, and leaped into his arms.

Jubal and Wilson stared hard at this man.

They thought at first it was the hand organ man who had been frightened by Wilson, but only a sec-

ond close look was needed to show them that it was not.

The man came up to the excited baseball boys.

"Dis-a my monk!" he said.

Then they saw that he was in a badly battered condition.

There was a patch of bloody court plaster over one eye, his coat was torn and stained with blood, and there was a bruise on his face, and a raised lump, showing a gash, on his head.

He had come limping upon the ball grounds at the conclusion of the game, and had been almost as surprised as Nat Kimball himself when the monkey ran to him.

"Dis-a my monk!" he declared again, looking at the boys who had gathered round him. "Where you get-a da monk?"

"But yeou're not the feller that had him when we seen him daowntaown," said Jubal. "I don't think that is yeou're monkey at all. I reckon yeou'd better fork him over."

The man clung to the monkey and redeclared his ownership.

A police officer came up at this juncture, throwing Jubal and Wilson into a flutter of alarm.

"We saw that in the paper," he explained, "and, though there are a lot of lies and mistakes in it, I thought I'd bring this Dago up here and have him look at the monkey you've got. He came to the police station an hour or two ago, hammered to pieces, and said that he had been knocked down and robbed by another Italian, somewhere on the road west of here yesterday, and that the Italian who jumped him left him there in a field for dead.

"He came to the station to complain about it, and claimed that the feller who tackled him robbed him of his hand organ and monkey and took what money he had in his jeans. You can see the fix he's in. We fixed him up a little at the station, and then I thought I'd come up here and see if you could tell me anything."

Jubal and Wilson were about to tell the officer all they knew, hoping thereby to escape trouble, when Jack restrained them.

At the same time he glanced toward the Italian who held the monkey.

"I think we'd better have a private talk about this," he said, and requested the boys and the officer to go to one side for that purpose.

"My reason is this," said Jack. "This Italian claims that he is the real owner of the monkey and the hand organ. If that is so there is a way to make him prove it. Unless he is really the owner it is not likely he will know of that secret drawer in the organ. That's all. It struck me that we ought to be careful on that point."

Then Jubal and Wilson explained to the officer their connection with the organ and the monkey, excusing themselves all they could.

"And the money is gone?" the officer cried.

"That's the wu'st of it," said Jubal; "she's gone! But I know gol-darned well who tuck it!"

"Here, you!" called the officer, speaking to the Italian, at the same time beckoning to him. "Come over here and tell us something about your hand organ. What kind was it?"

The Italian began to explain volubly, shrugging his shoulders and using many gestures. He told who made it, and its number; where he had bought it, and how long he had owned it.

"But wasn't there something else peculiar about it?"

"Oh, yes-a—yes-a; it have a picture on-a da front."

"But not that! Was there anything else? What was inside of it?"

"Moosic—moosic inside-a da organ!"

"Nothing else?"

The man shook his head.

"Then it ain't yours, I guess. There was something else inside of this organ—something worth while."

The dark face of the Italian almost turned pale; he choked and stammered.

"My mona!" he gasped. "You find-a my mona in-a da organ!"

"What do you mean?"

"My mona!"

"Did you have money in the organ? That's no place to keep money! Get out—you're lyin'!"

"No—I not-a lie; I have-a da mona in-a my organ."

"Well, if you had money in it, you can tell how much, and how you got it into it and out of it."

Then the Italian told—a thing he would not have done if not thus forced—and made so clear a statement concerning the secret drawer, even naming the exact number of dollars in it—that all the Cranford boys were convinced of the truth of his story.

Jubal and Wilson looked scared.

"By granny," Jubal was thinking, "if we don't git that money back frum Nick Flint, Wilson and I air in a hole! How we'll ever pay it I don't know. But we'll git that money from Nick or I'll kill him."

When told by the officer that the money which had been in the organ was gone the excitable Italian threw the monkey on the ground and frantically proceeded to tear his own hair, while he yelled as if he were in physical distress.

"Oh, cut that out!" said the officer. "We're going to pull the fellows that are suspected of taking that money, and maybe we'll get it back. But howling won't bring it."

* * * * *

The hand organ had been brought up to Jubal's room at the boarding house where he was staying, before he went out to the ball grounds.

Returning now to this room with Wilson, and being much worried by all that had taken place, it was a natural thing for him to look again into the secret drawer of the hand organ.

When he did so a yell came from his lips.

"B'gosh, the money!" he said. "Looky there, Wilson—the money!"

And there it was, restored to the hidden receptacle in the hand organ.

They drew out the package and counted the bills.

"Ten dollars short!" said Wilson, after he had slipped them through his fingers.

Both he and Jubal were trembling with excitement.

"But maybe yeou didn't caount it right; you was in a paowerful hurry, yeou know!"

Wilson counted the money again, with Jubal looking on to see that he did it correctly.

The amount was ten dollars short.

Nick Flint, scared by what he had overheard Jack say down by the warehouses and by the report which appeared in the Tidewater paper, had crept to Jubal's room, where he had discovered that the hand organ was stored, and there he had put back all of the money but that ten dollars.

Intending to put it all back, he had at the last moment clung to a ten-dollar bill.

"They weren't looking when I took the money," was his thought, "and if they do arrest me they can't prove anything. Yet I wouldn't have taken it at all if I hadn't been drinking. But I'll put it back, and then I'll defy them to prove it."

They could not prove it; though Nick was arrested and examined by the police, together with some of his companions. And, inasmuch as the money, all but ten dollars, had been found again in the hand organ, the matter was dropped.

Jubal and Wilson had to pay that ten dollars, which they were willing to do, and considered that they got off cheaply enough.

Yet the loss of five dollars hurt Jubal Marlin. What money he had he secured by work or got in various trading schemes, and five dollars was not always easy to earn. Besides, he could not help thinking how much that five dollars would have amounted to in twenty or thirty years, at compound interest.

"Well, yeou bet I've learned my lesson!" he said to Wilson.

And Wilson was ready to say the same for himself.

The hand organ man who had been guilty of that dastardly assault on his fellow countryman was not seen again; Wilson Crane's bluff had frightened him out of the town. And the best of it was he had not known of the money hidden in the hand organ.

THE END.

Next week's issue, No. 31, will be "Jack Lightfoot's Lucky Find; or, The New Man Who Covered 'Short.'" This is another rattling baseball story—just the kind you like. You will find it alive and interesting from beginning to end. You will want to know about Jack's lucky "find"; who he was, and his work as shortstop. It will interest you.

A CHAT WITH YOU

Under this general head we purpose each week to sit around the camp fire, and have a heart-to-heart talk with those of our young readers who care to gather there, answering such letters as may reach us asking for information with regard to various healthy sports, both indoor and out. We should also be glad to hear what you think of the leading characters in your favorite publication. It is the editor's desire to make this department one that will be eagerly read from week to week by every admirer of the Jack Lightfoot stories, and prove to be of valuable assistance in building up manly, healthy Sons of America. All letters received will be answered immediately, but may not appear in print under five weeks, owing to the fact that the publication must go to press far in advance of the date of issue. Those who favor us with correspondence will please bear this in mind, and exercise a little patience.

THE EDITOR.

I have just read No. 16 of ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, and just think it is all right. The only fault is that they are too short. Jack Lightfoot and Lafe are peaches, and tell Mr. Stevens that he is the first one that has written a story that I liked very well.

Winnipeg, Manitoba.

JIM WILKES.

That's talking some, Jim. You strike the bull's-eye plumb center, and Mr. Stevens will, we expect, continue to hold your interest. We hope other boys besides yourself, away up yonder, read ALL-SPORTS and admire the stories. Shake, Young Canada.

I want to put in a few good words for the ALL-SPORTS. I know of a good many who take an interest in the weekly the same as I do. I wish to hear more good stories from the ALL-SPORTS, as I take them all. I wish to read about more ball games, and also more of the person who was kind enough to give a few instructions on bunting and curving. I have been trying some of the suggestions in the ALL-SPORTS, and as they have proved successful, I shall keep them going. I am sorry I have not an interesting story, like some who have sent their letters; but I may be able to put in some better ones, later on.

Yours truly,

CECIL COEN.

Gnadenhutten, Ohio.

Never mind about the good story, Cecil; you will find that all right in the preceding pages of this number. We are glad to hear from you, and to know how necessary our little weekly visitor has become to you. Write again.

Please believe me when I say that your young library, the ALL-SPORTS, is a winner, and ranks second in the "work for boys." Mr. Stevens is a genius. I think the *Tip Top* earns its name, but, you see, dear old Burt L. has had nine years of experience in these libraries more than Mr. Stevens. Mr. Stevens has a fine cast of characters, and that's a cinch.

I submit my questions and measurements: Age, 16 years 5 months; weight, 125 pounds; height, 5 feet 5½ inches, in stocking feet; reach, 66 inches; chest, normal, 32 inches; contracted, 30 inches; expanded, 35 inches; biceps, 12 inches; forearm, 10 inches; wrist, 6½ inches; waist, 29 inches; calves, 13 inches; ankle, 9½ inches; neck, 13½ inches. What are my weak points? I run on my heels in long runs and in dashes. Can you tell me a cure for this?

One more word. Phil Kirtland is fine, and if he can overcome his one fault, he will, in truth, be a star. I say, Hurrah for Kirt! Tom and Brodie are no slouches, either, and as for Jack, all I can say is he's the right man, in the right place, at the right time. Lafe?—well, he likes to eat—but—so do I.

Terre Haute, Ind.

FENTON HOLMES.

You are a trifle heavy for your height—only a matter of seven pounds or so, and even that may go when you train down some. Your "weak points" do not show up very much, and we rather guess you are in the front rank, Fenton. You can cure the fault by simply practicing such things the right way. Most

certainly you can never make much of a success at running until you have learned how to run on your toes and the front part of your foot. The heel is necessary in "heel-and-toe" walking, but a fleet-footed Mercury has no use for his heels when in action.

I have been reading ALL-SPORTS for some months, and it's about time I write and tell you what I think of it. I see you have a correspondents' page, where the readers can come together each week and compare ideas about the stories. That's a good scheme. Often one fellow thinks of something that is of interest to others, and he can share it with the rest. Now, on my part, I'm interested in building up my constitution, and, of course, I read everything in that line that you print. I have fitted up an excuse for a gymnasium in our barn, where I go through all sorts of stunts in the early morning, and sometimes in the evening, too. And, let me tell you, it's a bully good thing all around. Don't think I'm aiming to be an athlete, or training to knock some fellow out, because that isn't so; but I know it's been the means of giving me more muscle, and added an inch and more to my chest measure. That's good enough for me. There has been a trace of consumption running back in our family, and whenever I take cold, I get worried. That's why I'm in this game so full of vim. It may be the means of saving my life some day; and if that's the case, a fellow would be foolish to neglect it. But I won't take up any more of your space. Not seeing any letter from this place, I thought you might like to hear that your little sheet has many friends down this way, who look eagerly each week for ALL-SPORTS to reach the news stand, where it is quickly gobbled up.

THOMAS C. HORTON.

Wilmington, Del.

We are pleased to receive your communication, and agree with you that, under the circumstances, you are quite wise in being interested in the development of your chest. Many a man has been enabled to live to a good old age by taking the proper care of himself, and we do not doubt in the least that such will be your experience, since you begin so young. Keep up the good work. Thanks for your opinion of our publication.

Perhaps there are few fellows like me, but, somehow, I never cared to play baseball. If it had been cricket, now, you would have pleased me some—I suppose, because my father is English; and while I was born in this country, I naturally fancy those sports I've heard him talk most about. Of course I read and enjoyed the baseball stories. That was because Mr. Stevens, being such a clever writer, has the knack of introducing many other things besides the game in his baseball prize stories. He's just IT where interesting stories are concerned, and, according to my way of thinking, he has no equal. I should dearly like to meet the author and creator of the Cranford stories. They have been the means of building up my constitution, and, I think, are bound to do much good. How is my chest measurement for a boy of 16, 5 feet 6 inches in height—34 inches? I have gained nearly two inches just by following directions found in ALL-SPORTS.

LAWRENCE KENNEDY.
Bridgeport, Conn.

Your chest is above the average, and what you say simply proves what may be done when one goes about it the right way. We wish you had stated which method you used. It pleases us to know you find so much attraction in the stories aside from the baseball element. Some day, possibly, Jack may try cricket. Who knows?

I always read everything that you print in the "Chat" pages, and find some mighty interesting stuff there at times. Now, I don't know that I can say anything new, but I want to write and tell you just how much we enjoy your paper at our house. I have two brothers, both younger than myself, but even the

"kid" is interested in baseball, and reads all about the doings of those Cranford fellows with the keenest interest. For myself, I'm more concerned about Jack's getting along in the world, and more than curious to know what Mr. Stevens has up his sleeve for his boys this coming fall and winter. Of course Jack's crowd must play football when the proper time comes, and I just rather guess they'll raise something of a dust on the "grid" when they tackle the academy boys, or perhaps the fellows in some neighboring town. Tell Mr. Stevens we think he's the *best yet*, without any exception. To speak the truth, I have never enjoyed stories of boys' sport as I have the ones he gives us, and I can only hope he may be long spared to write such splendid matter, that is bound to raise the standard of living of any boy who reads it. This is not "talking through my hat," for I know from my own experience what he has done for me. Give him my best, and tell him three Buckeye boys are ready to swear by him as the champion writer in all this broad land.

Marietta, Ohio.
PAUL J. HARTWELL.

Quite a letter, after all, and you did have something to say, as any boy may who feels a sincere admiration for the paper that is so treasured. We thank you, Paul, for your kind words—we will surely get fat on such praise—but we earnestly hope it will inspire both author and publisher to redouble their efforts to give the lads of America a publication that no one need be ashamed to have upon the table, and which will be looked upon with favor by each and every member of the family.

I suppose if the author of the Jack Lightfoot stories lived out here in Dakota, he would have his boys indulge in a good many sports that are hardly known in the far East. Still, we do many of the things Jack and his friends enjoy. And, of course, the baseball stories are a feature that every fellow, North and South, East and West, is in a way to appreciate. It is the national game. They play it, I am told, in the Philippines, in Cuba, Porto Rico and Hawaii. I expect Mexico will take it up after a while, too. Well, you certainly are getting out the boss paper for live, wide-awake boys. It has the right ring about it, too—none of your dull counterfeits that pretend to be one thing when in reality they are another. I recommend it to all my friends, and I reckon I've sold quite a few for you at times.

Yankton, S. Dak.
S. M. GROENER.

No doubt you are right, S. M., for there must be sports that are peculiar to each section of this vast country. Perhaps, later on, Jack and Tom may get out into the wonderful West, where they can enjoy some of the life you speak of. Thank you for the bouquet you throw us. We are striving to make ALL-SPORTS such a universal favorite among the youth of America that it will become a family name everywhere, and our hope is that many lads of a retiring nature may be led, through reading of Jack and his victories over himself, to gain an equal mastery.

I want to write you and tell you how I like your stories. They are the best I have ever read. My father did not want me to read "nickel novels" at first, because he thought they were all blood and thunder; but when I showed him what good stories ALL-SPORTS were, he said I could read all of them I wanted to. Will you please tell me a few things to have in a gym, and whether my measurements are up to the standard. Age, 11 years; weight, 84 pounds; chest, 28 inches; waist, 23 inches; hips, 26 inches; thigh, 16½ inches; calf, 11½ inches. If my measurements are not correct, please tell me a way by which I might train myself. Wishing Mr. Stevens and the Winner Publishing Company every success,
A. S. K.
New York, N. Y.

We thank you for your good wishes, and feel sure your father will have no cause to regret granting you permission to read ALL-SPORTS, as we are sure there will never be anything objectionable in any of the series; on the contrary, they will all contain clean, healthy stories of boy life—helpful, instructive and interesting.

Your measurements are very good for a eleven-year-old boy, and you give promise of developing into a strong, well-built man.

For a home gymnasium, you should have a punching bag, dumb-bells, Indian clubs, pulley weights, and, if your father approves, a set of boxing gloves, for an occasional friendly bout with one of your chums.

What would we do without ALL-SPORTS? It's got a pretty strong hold on me, for one, and I guess I'd have the blues if you stopped getting it out. Why, one week it failed to come, from some reason or other. I guess I made business good for our cobbler here, I went over to the post office so many times to see if it was in our box with the last mail, for I subscribe to it by the year. That was a tough week, all right. I wrote about it, and on the following regular day, received two copies, the missing one and the regular. My, but wasn't there something doing that night! I just couldn't turn in till I had read the second number through, because, you see, Jack's crowd was up against it good and hard, playing Tidewater, and I wanted to know how they came out. It was a bully story all through. In fact, there hasn't been a poor one in the bunch, according to my way of thinking. Some like the baseball ones best, but I'm not a crank in that line, though I enjoy them. I have a weakness for the woods and water, like *Teddy* of the White House, and I read all stories that tell of camping and cruising with delight. Jack ought to try a canoe trip. Well, here's luck to ALL-SPORTS.

J. C. TORREY, JR.

Ashland, Me.

Although I've only been taking ALL-SPORTS for three months, I look on it as the best friend I have, and I don't see what I should do if I couldn't get my copy every week. I guess it fills a "long-felt want," as they say, an aching void. You see, I'm a cripple and have never been able to enjoy the sports that are common to boys. Of course, I go and see them play baseball, but that, in one sense, only makes me feel my own misfortune the more. Then, by chance, I borrowed No. 10 of your weekly from a young friend, and a new life seemed to open to me. I have no words to express the delight I feel on reading these stories. Jack Lightfoot is the right sort every time, a genuine, human boy, with faults that he sets out to correct. The stories keep on getting better and better all the time. I don't think I could ever tire of them. The change from one sport to another is also a good thing. It gives all readers a chance, for, you know, everyone can't be a baseball crank. In closing, let me repeat what I said before, that your really excellent publication has done much to brighten one life, at least, that was apt to seem too gloomy. Success to you. I have ordered the first ten numbers, to make my file complete.

THANK YOU.

Shreveport, La.

Your letter, as well as that of our young Ashland friend, gives us great satisfaction, and encourages us to work harder than ever along the lines we have mapped out.

Somehow I missed one copy of your paper, and I spent a bad week until the newsdealer secured it for me. Up to then I didn't really know what a hold it had on me. I've got just one objection to the publication—a fellow gets through with it too quick. I wish it was twice as long each week, but then I guess you're giving all you can afford to for the money. When I think how much pleasure a fellow gets out of a nickel in the way of reading such a bully good paper, I am surprised. I send Mr. Stevens my best, and only wish I could shake hands with him. He sure promises to be the very kingpin of writers for American boys. And while I'm at it, I want to thank the publishers of ALL-SPORTS for giving us such a treat.

WARREN WRIGHT.

Des Moines, Ia.

Of course you missed the one number; that is only natural when a lad has grown accustomed to enjoying a weekly treat, and finds himself suddenly cheated out of it. If it was the news agent's fault, we hope it will not occur again. And yet, in so large a place, it was strange you could not find that particular copy elsewhere. We did think to increase the length of the story and use smaller type, but the author feared that under such conditions his work would deteriorate, and as we wished to give quality rather than quantity, we concluded to add departments at the end of the story instead.

HOW TO DO THINGS

By AN OLD ATHLETE.

Timely essays and hints upon various athletic sports and pastimes, in which our boys are usually deeply interested, and told in a way that may be easily understood. Just at present baseball is the topic in hand, and instructive articles may be found in back numbers of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, as follows: No. 14, "How to Become a Batter." No. 15, "The Science of Place Hitting and Bunting." No. 16, "How to Cover First Base." No. 17, "Playing Shortstop." No. 18, "Pitching." No. 19, "Pitching Curves." No. 20, "The Pitcher's Team Work." No. 21, "Playing Second Base." No. 22, "Covering Third Base." No. 23, "Playing the Outfield." No. 24, "How to Catch." (I.) No. 25, "How to Catch." (II.) No. 26, "How to Run Bases." No. 27, "Coaching and the Coach." No. 28, "How to Umpire." No. 29, "How to Manage Players."

BASEBALL POINTS.

Facts that have more or less bearing upon the winning of games.

SELECTION OF A BAT.

The ambitious player cannot be too careful in deciding upon the style and weight of his particular bat. Probably in no other field are there so many "fads" indulged in by baseball enthusiasts as in the selection of their "wagon tongue." The most famous hitters will be found to favor a great variety of home-run getters, even as their style of batting differs radically.

As every man should bat after his own individual style, following the accepted rules just so far, in the same sense use a stick that especially pleases you. The result must always prove advantageous, since a man is able to do better work with tools that just suit his fancy.

To begin with, great care should be taken to select a properly-balanced bat, of only the very best material and workmanship, made by some responsible manufacturer, who selects second-growth ash of upland timber, and allows the wood to thoroughly season for two years or more—this in order that it may have the proper resiliency and driving power. It should be of a correct model, to properly balance, according to the needs of the particular batter using that bat.

Some people affect to sneer at all this fuss made over a mere bat, and insist that a born batter can whack the ball with any old thing in the way of a bat.

Perhaps he can, since the eye is what allows him to see what is coming; but the chances are he will be able to do considerably better with a bat that just suits his style, and fills a long-felt want.

THE CATCHER'S MITT.

Here, while the choice is not near so great as in choosing a stick, still it will undoubtedly be found, on investigating, that baseball catchers of importance about the country possess various ideas as to just what style of mitt they can do the best work with. Some of them are really objects of art in their line, the leather being of the finest quality of calfskin, the padding of the best hair felt obtainable, and every other detail of manufacture carefully considered, even to the patent lace back, with rawhide lacing—thumb is reinforced and laced, double row of stitches on heel pad, and strap and buckle at back. Such a mitt is easily worth the six dollars asked for it.

In the mask and body protector, one may consult his

own judgment, though, as a rule, it will be found cheaper in the end to select only the best of material, even if they do cost, for the former, two and a half to three dollars, and the latter from two to five dollars each.

FIELDER'S GLOVE AND MITT.

There seems to be a large assortment of these to select from, but, as in other matters, the best pay. For the first baseman, the mitt is, of course, shaped especially for the peculiar work that must fall to his share, and which differs in many respects from that of all others.

Then comes the other three infielders, who, if they so choose, may use a glove with the thumb and forefinger webbed. Some think this saves many a ball from getting away from the eager clutch of the infielder.

As to the outfielder, a mitt fills the bill with him, since it is used principally in sustaining the blow of long flies or fierce liners. He has an opportunity to cater to his particular fancy in this respect, and yet, after all, it is surprising how many instances the wretched mitt is responsible for what flagrant muffs are made. You yourself have seen the poor fielder savagely pound the offending mitt on such an occasion, and know where the blame assuredly lies—another case of misplaced confidence.

BASEBALL SHOES AND PLATES.

The best all-round shoe, one that is calculated to be pliable in all sorts of weather and give good satisfaction, is made of kangaroo hide. Perhaps these Spaldings imagine that in thus providing the baseball players with shoes made from the greatest jumper on earth, they may transfer some of the kangaroo sprinting qualities to the boys, and make winged Mercuries out of them. But it certainly gives good value for the money. There is not much of a choice in the way of toe and heel plates, since all are pretty much alike; but it is essential that these valuable requisites to a runner should always be firmly secured.

The pitcher's toe plate is an entirely different thing, being necessary to the protection of the shoe, as well as a most valuable assistant in pitching.

UNIFORMS.

It pays to invest as much money in well-made suits as the club's cash box can afford. In the first place, the material holds good through the entire season, while with a cheap grade, the boys look like a prize collection of scarecrows before August is well over.

Besides, show me the boy who does not feel better for being decently dressed when watched by hundreds, perhaps thousands, of eyes.

Of course, the wearing of a decent suit in itself does not win games, any more than the possession of a split bamboo rod, silk line and gaudy flies insures the capture of a creel of trout; but if the club is to appear in uniform at all, it is better that they present a decent showing, rather than that of a lot of misfits, to be guyed by the crowd. Perhaps the man with the split bamboo and the gilt-edge tackle may enjoy the capture of what trout he takes better than the farmer's boy with his hickory pole, his tied line, and worm on the hook. It is, after all, the sportsman spirit that counts, whether one has all the modern accessories so helpful to the game, or goes upon the field barefooted and with a patch upon the seat of his trousers.

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- 7—The Death's Head Rovers; or, How Thad Outwitted the Coast Freebooters.
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- 15—Capt. Kidd's Long Chase; or, Thad and His Chums in the Tropics.
- 16—Set Adrift by Pirates; or, Thad's Adventures in the Saragossa Sea.
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