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by Harold M. Sherman**

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**INTERFERENCE
AND OTHER FOOTBALL STORIES**

BY

HAROLD M. SHERMAN

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CONTENTS

Interference
A Case of Nerves
The Bright Token
"Butter Fingers"
For the Glory of the Coach

INTERFERENCE

"Can I see you a minute, Coach?"

"Yes, Mack. Come in."

Mack Carver, substitute back on Grinnell University's varsity squad, stepped across the threshold of Coach Edward's office. He carried his one hundred and eighty-seven pounds easily and with an athletic swagger. But he scowled as he entered, indicating that his call was about an unpleasant matter.

"Well, boy—what's on your mind?" smiled the Coach, straightening up from a mass of papers which contained diagrams of the plays Grinnell was to use in her season's big game against Pomeroy, now less than a week away.

"Plenty!" was Mack's bluntly grim answer. He stood now, facing his coach, across the desk.

Coach Edward's smile faded as he met Mack's challenging glance.

"I want to know why I've been kept so much of the time on the bench?" the substitute back fired, point blank.

"Because," answered Coach Edward, evenly, "there were eleven better men on the field. That's ordinarily the only reason any man's kept on the bench."

"I don't believe it," retorted Mack, feelingly. "You've had it in for me because my brother is coach at Pomeroy. That's the reason! And you'd like to be coach at Pomeroy yourself!"

Coach Edward drew in his breath, sharply. "Perhaps I would!" he said. "But that's a strict matter of business—nothing personal!"

"No?" flashed Mack. "You and brother Carl have been rivals for the last two years. You've been out to beat each other on the gridiron and now that you've turned out some cracking good teams with the smallest college in the State, you think you've got my brother on the run!"

"I'm tickled, naturally," admitted the coach. "Wouldn't *you* be? Don't you suppose your brother enjoys his triumphs over *me*? ... It's all in a spirit of good sportsmanship!"

"That part of it may be all right," conceded Mack, "but you feel strong enough against my brother, just the same, to not want to give *me* a break!"

"That's bunk!" branded Coach Edward. "But there's one thing I've always wanted to know ... why is it you quit Pomeroy after two years and came to Grinnell?"

"That's an easy one to answer. I discovered I could never hope to make the team that my brother was coaching. He was bending over backward to keep from showing me any favors. When I found that out, I figured I'd better save him from any further embarrassment and give myself a fair chance by changing schools. That's why I came to Grinnell!"

"But why Grinnell—Pomeroy's bitterest rival? Of all the schools you might have picked...!"

Mack grinned, sardonically. "My brother didn't think I'd ever make a good football player. I'd hoped to be able to show him."

"That's just your greatest fault," spoke the coach, frankly. "You want the limelight every move you make. You're wondering all the time if everyone's looking at you ... and it's hurting your game. No good player can be thinking of starring and playing at the same time."

Mack stared hard for a moment.

"You've got me wrong," he said, slowly. "I naturally want to do the best I know how. And maybe I've looked to you like I wanted to attract attention. If I have, it's only because I hoped *you'd* take a shine to what I was doing. The spectators didn't matter."

"You didn't need to worry about me," the coach replied. "It's my business to keep tab on each man on the squad. I'm sorry if you feel I've legislated against you but you force me to say that, up to the present, I'm inclined to agree with your brother."

"You will excuse me a minute?" requested the Coach, on observing that Mack had no comment to make for the moment, "I've an air mail letter I must post at once."

"Okay," Mack assented,, and sank disconsolately in a chair beside the desk as Coach Edward strode from the room, envelope in hand.

"This is a swell fix I'm in," Mack bemoaned, with the Coach having gone. "Talk about being hoodooed! How should I know that Coach Edward would ever be out after my brother's coaching job? I'll bet you every time Coach sees me he thinks of my brother and that kills my chances. But I was good enough so he had to make me a sub anyhow." Mack's gaze suddenly fell upon Coach Edward's pile of papers. Diagrams of football plays caught his eye. He leaned forward that he might see them better, then gave a glance toward the door and arose from his chair. "Hello! Pretty nice!... Maybe my brother wouldn't give a lot to have a copy of all these plays!... He's probably had his scouts covering Grinnell games ... but here's some plays we haven't used all season. Boy—that lateral pass opening out into a forward is a pip!... Coach Edward's been saving the fireworks to shoot on Pomeroy all right!... Guess he'd give his left ear to beat my brother's team this year. Huh! I'd give my right ear to get in the game!"

Impelled by curiosity, Mack lifted some of the papers and studied other diagrammed plays. He became more engrossed than he had intended when he was seized with the uncomfortable feeling that someone else was in the room.

"Well?" spoke Coach Edward, standing quietly just inside the door.

"Oh! I ... er ... a ...!" stammered Mack, badly fussed. "Pardon me!... I saw these plays here and I...!"

"... and you thought you'd get them *memorized*," said the Coach, bitingly.

"No, sir!" flashed Mack, stung at the insinuation. "I was just interested. I...!"

There was nothing further that he could say. It dawned on him in that moment that his relationship to the coach of Pomeroy's eleven was apt to cause many actions of his to be misconstrued. He would have to be more careful. Coach Edward was even now regarding him suspiciously.

"I hope, Mack, that I can trust you," he was saying.

"You sure can," Grinnell's disgruntled substitute answered, inwardly resenting the suggestion that he might use such information as he had gleaned against his school.

"I am surprised," Coach Edward finished, "that you would have permitted yourself to examine anything on my desk."

"I'm sorry, sir," Mack apologized, realizing that the Coach had reason for complaining. "But I wouldn't think of passing anything on to anyone else."

"It wouldn't be exactly wise," said Coach Edward as the two stood face to face.

Mack, who had toiled so long in the hopes of becoming a varsity regular and whose disappointment had finally assumed proportions of a grudge against his Coach, now made one final appeal.

"Coach, everything I do seems to be wrong. I can't get over the feeling that you don't like me. I swear I didn't mean anything by looking at those plays ... but you've an idea that I did. As for my being on the team and not getting a real chance to play—there must be some reason ... some big reason, if it's not prejudice. Whatever that reason is—I want to know it."

"That's what you *say*," rejoined Coach Edward. "But you're the sort, Mack, who won't be told. You're proving that fact right now even though you claim you want to know what's wrong. I've done the best I could for you on what you've shown me... I'm not in the habit of arguing or discussing a player's merits or demerits with him off the field so I'll have to ask you to consider this interview at an end."

"Okay!" rasped Mack, his pride deeply wounded and his feelings running away with him. Turning on his heel, he strode to the door, but whirled impulsively to throw back an angry taunt: "And here's hoping you get trimmed by Pomeroy!"

"Thank you," replied Coach Edward, icily. "I might have expected just such a remark from you."

And a very unhappy youth, leaving the Coach's presence with a wave of remorse sweeping over him, knew that now he most certainly had sealed his doom. He could hardly expect to be given an opportunity of playing in the Pomeroy game after this.

Grinnell's football schedule was so arranged that the Pomeroy game was always the last of the year. This permitted the small college eleven to throw its complete strength against an ordinarily more powerful team in the annual hope of creating an upset. For Pomeroy, the Grinnell contest had customarily been booked as a "breather" between big games. There had been little disposition in previous years, as a consequence, to take Grinnell's opposition too seriously. Thus, most of the excitement and enthusiasm had been provided by wide-eyed Grinnell supporters who had hypnotized themselves almost to the point of believing that the impossible was about to happen—a Grinnell victory! That these loyal rooters had been disappointed as regularly as the annual conflicts arrived, did not seem to dampen the ardor of the next season's support. "Hope springs eternal" was the trite but simple explanation offered by certain zealous followers who steadfastly refused to concede Pomeroy's vaunted superiority. Coach Edward's advent at Grinnell had served to heighten the interest when the small college had held Pomeroy to a 20 to 7 count the first year of his mentorship. Things commenced looking decidedly up as Grinnell, under the new coaching regime, came back the following fall with even more stubborn opposition, losing to Pomeroy in the last quarter, 13 to 7. No longer could Pomeroy consider the smaller college a set-up and this alone was sufficient for Grinnell supporters to claim a "moral victory." But even bigger things were expected this season—Grinnell's first undefeated eleven going into its major contest against a Pomeroy team which was fighting hard to sustain its prestige of former years.

Secret practice sessions were announced by Coach Edward the final week before the Pomeroy game, adding an air of mystery and high tension to an already pulsating feeling of suspense.

"Coach has a genius for inventing new plays," Frank Meade, left half, remarked to Mack Carver as the two dressed for practice on Tuesday afternoon. "Don't you think?"

"He figures out some good ones all right," Mack admitted.

"I'll say he does!" echoed Frank, with enthusiasm. "That one he taught us last night—a forward pass breaking out of that lateral!"

Mack's face colored. He was too familiar with this play from having seen it in diagram form on the Coach's desk.

"Yes," he mumbled. "That's a peach."

"If it's properly executed," Frank went on, "it should be good for a touchdown."

"Absolutely," Mack agreed, bending down and fingering with his shoe laces.

"Of course the right half has to block off any tacklers who may be trying to get through at the man with the ball," Frank continued. "The ball carrier's got to be given plenty of chance after taking the lateral to spot a receiver for the forward. If he can do this—the play ought to be a wow."

"I'd like to be in there on that play," Mack said, impulsively.

Frank laughed. "You may get the call yet. Anything can happen in this game!"

"Yeah?" retorted Mack, sarcastically. "All I've gotten so far is slivers in the seat of my pants from sitting on the bench. I'm getting tired of being shoved in for a couple minutes before the end of the half to give you birds a chance to get under the showers and take a rub-down before the second half opens. And then rushing in after the game's in the bag to hold 'em for dear old Grinnell. There's no kick in that."

"But somebody has to do it," returned Frank, regarding Mack, curiously. "I did that the last two years before they put me to work as a regular."

"Yes, but this is my *third* year," rejoined Mack. "At that rate, if I'm any good, I ought to be out there with you, too."

"You're playing in hard luck," Frank replied, pulling on his sweater. "Grinnell has the best material she's ever had and the regulars are so good that even good substitutes don't have the chance they might have." He made a little bow, winking mischievously. "Of course, I'm excluding myself. I'm rotten!"

Mack forced a grin. This whole situation was too serious to him to be taken lightly. "Yes," he retorted. "I'd probably be a regular if I was as rotten as you are!"

"Cheer up!" chuckled Frank, slapping Mack on the back. "Maybe some day—you *will* be!"

"I won't unless Coach gives me a better break," said Mack, a bit bitterly. "I've played in enough games to get my letter but it hasn't meant anything ... an average of five minutes a game. Even at that—don't you think I'm as good a back as Dave Morgan?"

Mack bit his lips as he asked the question. It was perhaps unfair to so embarrass Frank but

Grinnell's substitute back was tempted to "fish" for compliments as a defensive gesture against Coach Edward's analysis of his ability. Should Frank agree that there was very little difference, in his opinion, between Dave and himself, Mack felt that this alone might prove the Coach to be biased.

"You—as good a back as Dave?" repeated Frank, cagily. "Well, I'd be a hard one to answer that. Dave happens to team together with me just about perfectly. He's cleared the way for most of my long runs, as you know."

"Probably I could have done that, too," Mack argued. "But I've never been put in the game when you were in. I've gone in with the second string backfield. We don't have an open field runner in that crowd who can get away like you can."

"Thank heaven for that!" grinned Frank. "Say—you've asked *me* a question. Now let me ask *you* one. Since your brother is coach of Pomeroy you ought to know something about our chances for beating them this year. What do you think? Are we going to break the jinx?"

Mack hesitated. Frank, who had raised his voice to command the attention of fellow teammates, was enjoying Mack's discomfiture.

"That's what I call putting a fellow on the spot," sympathized Dave Morgan, sauntering up. "If you can't think of a good answer, Mack—I suggest the old reliable 'yes and no'."

Fellow team members laughed.

"Hey, Mack!" called fullback Steve Hilliard. "Isn't your brother handicapped with poor material this year? His team's not done so well ... sort of an in and out eleven ... one Saturday looking like a world beater ... the next Saturday looking like a bunch of dubs. What's the low-down?"

"You fellows know as much about it as I do," replied Mack, reluctant to venture a comment. "For one thing, I think my brother's team has played the stiffest schedule in their history ... and he's had trouble keeping them at their peak every game. But Pomeroy's liable to make plenty of trouble for us—as usual."

"Meaning you think we still can't take them over?" pressed Frank, jovially.

"We'll have to go some!" was Mack's well guarded opinion.

"Which leaves us just where we were before," summarized Frank. "Too bad, guys! Here we've got a man—the actual brother of Pomeroy's coach—and he can't give us a better inside on what to expect. Was for two years on the squad, too!... I was hoping he could tell us all of Pomeroy's weaknesses and what his brother might be having up his sleeve. But now it begins to look like 'no soap'!"

"Don't you even know his standard plays?" joshed Steve. "If you know the formations, you might tip us off so we could shift to meet them."

"I'd have to be in the line-up to do that," said Mack. "Each play would have to be diagnosed. Even then I wouldn't want to do it."

"Why not?"

"Wouldn't seem hardly fair—taking advantage of what I know about my brother's plays ... or system."

"All's fair in love and football," kidded Steve. "Shouldn't think that would make any diff. Your brother has scouts out, trying to discover what he can about us. Our coach has scouts giving your brother's team the once-over. So there you have it! Fellows have changed colleges before. You're entitled to bring what you know about football at Pomeroy to Grinnell. Why be close-mouthed about it?"

Mack shook his head decisively.

"As far as my football in Pomeroy is concerned," he gave answer, "it's a closed book. I'm here at Grinnell just as though I'd come here at the start. Of course I can't forget, with the Pomeroy game coming up, that my brother's coach of the team and that I'm really opposing him..."

"How do you feel about that?" Frank asked.

Mack drew in a deep breath as team members looked at him with intent interest.

"All right, boys!" broke in Coach Edward, entering the locker room. "Snap out of it! We're going to have our last scrimmage of the year tonight. Going to try out those new plays I ran you through yesterday. Let's go!"

The players, springing to their feet, jostled each other through the doorway onto the field, Mack joining with them, secretly glad of the coach's interruption. Inwardly he was in such a

turbulent state that he didn't really know how he felt about the Pomeroy-Grinnell clash. He should be intensely loyal to Grinnell, without question ... but there were other factors crowding in. If to lose the Grinnell game actually meant the loss of his brother's coaching job ... it also meant the loss of his mother's support. Carl had been assuming this responsibility until he, Mack, could finish his schooling and help out. Under these circumstances, with Carl's position probably wavering in the balance due to an unsteady season and the demand of Pomeroy alumni for winning football, the outcome of the Grinnell game took on added if not painful significance. The situation was even beginning to take the edge off Mack's original desire to compete against his brother's team and show it up. There was always drama in the idea of brother against brother. Newspapers were already hinting at the possible conflict and would make much capital of the matter if it did come to a head. But Mack did not now relish the thought of being in any way instrumental in the loss of his brother's coaching job.

"I'm getting in more and more of a jam, it seems to me," he muttered, as he trotted out on the field. "Maybe I'd be better off if I quit this game entirely."

Opportunities often come when least expected. Coach Edward suddenly decided that he wished the regulars to face the strongest lineup he could possibly throw against them as a severe test of the new plays. As a result, Mack Carver found himself at right half on the Second Eleven which had been trained in Pomeroy plays.

"You've run through many of these Pomeroy plays yourself," Coach Edward said to him, "so we're depending on you to carry the brunt of the Second Team offensive and give us a good idea of what to expect next Saturday."

There was nothing in the coach's attitude to indicate a remembrance of the unpleasant interview between them. Mack's heart bounded at the thought that Coach Edward was recognizing him to this extent. Here was, at least, a chance to demonstrate what he could do in practice—much more of a chance than he had been given hitherto.

"I'll try to impersonate Dizzy Fox, Pomeroy's star right half," Mack told Alf Rigsbee, Second Team quarterback. "He's the man our fellows will have to look out for!"

"Okay, *Dizzy!*" grinned Alf. "You're going to be in for a busy afternoon!"

"And listen!" cried Mack, with more spirit than he had felt all season. "Let's give this Varsity bunch more than just a work-out!... If we all hang together, I think we can outscore 'em!"

"We can try!" volunteered Bob Hayes, fullback. "Seeing as how we've got some of you first team subs in here to help us!"

Coach Edward, assuming the role of referee, blew his whistle, signalling the two teams to take the field. It was to be the Varsity's kick-off.

Frank Meade, carefully toeing the ball, looked over the boys opposing him.

"Don't be too hard on us, you guys!" he joshed. "We're just learning the game!"

"Then we'll teach you a lesson this afternoon!" quarterback Alf Rigsbee called back to him. "We're out to *get* you babies and we don't mind saying so!"

The threat brought howls of good-natured derision from the Varsity team members but the chiding ceased when, with Franks kicking off over the goal line and the ball being brought out to the Seconds' twenty yard line, Mack Carver made fifteen yards on the first play with one of his brother's clever wing back formations.

"I'll show Coach Edward whether I'm a ball carrier or not!" Mack told himself, highly flushed with his early success. "Call my number again!" he begged.

Quarterback Rigsbee shot him the ball a second time and Mack skated through tackle on a delayed wing back for seven yards.

"This Varsity isn't much!" kidded the Seconds' linesmen, elated at Mack's gains.

"Wait till we've solved these new plays and we'll stop you cold!" promised Bert Henley, Varsity quarterback.

But the Seconds were well drilled and Mack Carver, in particular, functioned remarkably well, skirting the ends and knifing through the line on plays with which he had long been familiar.

"Wonder what Coach thinks now?" he said to himself as the Seconds landed on the Varsity's ten yard line for a first down.

Mack found himself regretting that there were no student spectators and no newspaper reporters on the sidelines watching his performance. All such had been banned for this week of

secret practice.

"Come on, gang! Let's stop this advance right here and now!" appealed Varsity quarterback Donner. "We've played with these little boys long enough!"

The Varsity had taken a time-out to get reorganized. The so-called Scrubs hadn't made things this interesting throughout the entire season.

"They'll be expecting another wing back," counselled Mack. "My brother had another good play you fellows haven't been taught. What do you say we try it?"

"No—we'd better stick to the plays that have been given us," replied quarterback Alf Rigsbee.

"It's simple," insisted Mack, "and we want this touchdown. Listen—you feint a pass behind the line to me and I shoot to my left like I've got the ball but the left half really gets it—only, after he does, he fades back into the backfield and then throws a forward pass out to me. It's a grand scoring play. We ought to be able to work it without rehearsal and it should catch the Varsity flat-footed!"

Quarterback Rigsbee looked to his fellow team members questioningly.

"Sounds like a peach to me," endorsed left half Bill Grady. "What do you say we try it?"

"Well, if you guys think it's okay," agreed Alf. "Now this'll be the signal...!"

With play resumed, the Seconds sprung their surprise play. A quick crisis-crossing behind the lines, Mack lunging to the left, Bill Grady taking the ball and dropping into his backfield...!

"Look out for a pass!"

The Varsity shouted its warning as Bill suddenly wheeled and hurled the pigskin to his left where a crouching figure straightened up, raced toward the goal, jumped into the air to catch the ball and was tackled almost immediately, only to fall over the line for a touchdown.

"Atta boy, Mack!" shouted delirious Seconds, dragging the tickled Varsity substitute to his feet.

"How about it, you Varsity?" Mack taunted. "A march of eighty yards!"

"Yea, Pomeroy!" razzed Second team members. "You can't stop Pomeroy!"

"Just a minute!" broke in Coach Edward, abruptly. "What play was that you fellows just pulled?"

Alf Rigsbee, Seconds' quarterback, looked a bit uneasy.

"Why, er ... it was a play Mack suggested to us ... one his brother used. Not so bad, hey?"

"Since when is anyone giving you men plays without my authority?" the Coach demanded, picking up the pigskin. "Ball's on the ten yard line. Use the plays in which you've been instructed!"

Mack stared, open-mouthed. "But, Coach, I...!" he started, biting off the protest.

"I was afraid of that," quarterback Rigsbee mumbled. "But we scored on the Varsity anyhow. They can't take that away from us! Never mind that, guys—we'll do it all over again!"

Cut here Alf's optimism encountered its first snag. The Varsity, now desperate, crashed through the Seconds' line to throw Mack for a four yard loss. In four downs the Seconds had advanced the ball only to the nine yard line where it went over. The Varsity tried a running play which failed to gain and then kicked out of danger. On an exchange of punts, the Varsity gained twenty yards and put the ball in play on their twenty-nine yard line.

"Here we go!" they announced.

"Yes—*backward!*" shouted quarterback Rigsbee as the Seconds' line charged fast and forced a two yard loss.

"Get in there!" ordered the Coach. "You've got to work for your yardage tonight. I haven't picked out any bed of roses for you Varsity men. If you're going to stand a chance against Pomeroy you've got to do better than this!"

"Don't let them shake Frank Meade loose!" pleaded Alf of his determined Seconds. "Frank depends on Dave's clearing the way for him. Stop Dave and you stop Frank most of the time!"

"I'll take care of Dave!" volunteered Mack, eyeing his rival for right halfback. "The coach thinks he's better than I am. All right—this is a swell time for him to prove it!"

On the first play with Dave running as interference, Grinnell's star blocking halfback collided

with the fellow who thought he was just as good and Mack's ambitious effort to break up the formation ended in a nose dive as Frank, carrying the ball, raced down the field for thirty-seven yards and a first down on the Seconds' thirty-four yard line.

"I thought you said you'd take care of Dave," chided quarterback Rigsbee as a dejected Mack picked himself up.

"He won't block me out again!" was all Mack would say as he took his place behind the line.

"Dave's a tough man to stop," rejoined Alf. "You pick him off right along and you *are* good!"

The Varsity was laughing now. Frank's long run had pepped Grinnell's first stringers up. Quarterback Bert Henley said something in Frank Meade's car. Frank nodded. It was to be one of Coach Edward's new plays ... two laterals behind the line with Frank on the ball carrying end.

"Watch this one!" warned Alf Rigsbee as he saw the shift. His Seconds were all eyes and they needed to be for the passes which followed left them momentarily dazed. The pigskin changed hands with bewildering speed behind the line and Frank finally emerged with Dave running interference, dashing around right end. Most of the Seconds had been pulled in on the play but Mack, studying the shift closely, hazily recalled that this was another of the plays he had seen diagrammed.

"Frank around right end!" he exclaimed, "that play looked like a nifty when they ran through it last night. But I'll nail Frank this time!"

Racing to his left, Mack rapidly loomed in front of the fast traveling Frank who was shielded by his interferer, Dave, running a step ahead and in front of him. Dave, seeing Mack coming, prepared for the impact. Mack, eyes only for Frank, charged savagely, intending to brush Dave aside and keep on going until he had brought Frank to the ground with a diving tackle. What actually happened was extremely jolting to Mack. He hit Dave but did not tumble him. Instead it was he who rebounded and Dave continued on. Mack, rolling over, painfully, saw Dave go on down the field to bowl quarterback Alf Rigsbee, playing safety, out of the way and leave Frank with a clear path to the goal line.

"Great work!" Mack heard Coach Edward complimenting Dave. "That's what I call 'interference'!"

The Varsity lined up in front of the Seconds' goal line with Dave holding the ball while Frank place-kicked the point after touchdown. A chagrined Mack Carver could only turn to Alf and declare: "The score should have been a tie if that touchdown of ours hadn't been disallowed."

Alf shrugged his shoulders, expressively. "What do we care?" was his answer. "It's only practice!"

To Mack, however, his entire efforts seemed to have been punctured like a toy balloon. He had tried to put more fight in his play. He had tried, moreover, to show the coach that Dave was not so hot as a blocking back. But he had actually only served to further demonstrate Dave's great ability to dump would-be tacklers. This scrimmage had been more than practice to him—it had been a final testing of abilities he had claimed to have which he apparently did not possess. The coach would probably discount the runs he had made while impersonating Pomeroy's star back, Dizzy Fox. He had already discredited the touchdown scored on a trumped up play, despite its perfect execution. In fact, every way you looked at it, this fellow Mack Carver appeared as a complete wash-out. He even marvelled now that he had had the audacity to visit Coach Edward and ask why he wasn't a regular on the Varsity. How foolish of him to have imagined that the Coach was holding his relationship to Carl Carver against him! He really owed the coach an apology!

"Hey, Mack!" said a voice, and Grinnell's substitute back, momentarily lost in a solemn reverie, realized that Dave Morgan was at his elbow. "Listen, old man," Dave was saying. "I didn't hurt you, did I?"

"No," Mack replied. "But you sure took me out of those plays. It was swell interfering."

Dave nodded. "You came at me like the charge of the Light Brigade," he grinned, "only you hit me too high ... gave me a chance to get under you and I hoisted you out of the way. Next time try the shoulder and the half roll—like this ...!" And Dave put his words into action, sending Mack spinning as he did so.

"Much obliged!" was Mack's comment, when he had recovered his balance.

"Don't mention it!" said Dave, and was off to join his Varsity mates as the two elevens lined up again for kick-off.

Mack, standing staring after the fellow who had beaten him out for the team, could scarcely control his feelings. He had carried a chip on his shoulder all season; hadn't mixed with the fellows the way he might have; had taken the game and its incidents too seriously, and here was a guy—his rival—who was sport enough to take him aside and tip him off as to how he might be

stopped!

"I'll try it next chance I get," Mack decided, "and if it works...!"

Varsity kicked off to the Seconds who lost the ball on downs after putting on another advance—this one for forty yards. Mack was responsible for half of the yardage gained but the Varsity was now getting on to the Pomeroy plays and developing an effective defense to cope with them. Taking the ball on its twenty-three yard stripe, the Varsity started a slashing drive, mixing straight line plays and end runs. Finally, with the Seconds' defense stiffening, quarterback Bert Henley called upon Coach Edward's new play—the lateral opening out into the forward pass.

"Now!" thought Mack, as he analyzed what was coming.

Dave Morgan, intended as Frank's screen on the pass, lateralled to Frank and stationed himself in front as interferer. Frank, who had started to run wide, faded back for the throw. Coming in fast, Mack, following instructions, tore into Dave, hitting him low. Frank's interference disappeared suddenly and completely in a jolting somersault and Mack, with a half roll, was upon his feet and diving back after the man with the ball. Frank tried to elude him and to forward pass at the last instant but Mack had covered him too fast. He was tackled before he could get the ball away for a loss of twelve yards.

"Great stuff!" congratulated a winded Dave who had staggered to his feet. "That's getting past interference!"

"Now aren't you sorry you wised me up?" smiled Mack, appreciatively. "You could have had things all your own way."

"But it wouldn't have been any fun," was Dave's reply. "Now I've got to *work!*"

And Dave's prediction proved correct. A friendly feud developed between Mack and himself. It was no longer possible for Dave to block Mack out of the play and keep going himself. Invariably the two went down and out together. Occasionally Mack would so batter his interference as to reach the man with the ball himself. If he did not, he so thoroughly removed the interference that he forced the ball carrier in the open and made him comparatively easy prey for fellow Seconds to bring down.

"Dave, you've done wonders for me," Mack said, gratefully, at the end of a gruelling practice. "I don't know how to thank you."

"Don't try," Dave answered. "I've been watching you for some time. I knew you were just missing out. You ought to make it tough for anybody from now on!"

That any fellow player would have been so unselfish as to help a rival overcome a fault in charging interference and thus jeopardize his own position on the team was almost beyond Mack's comprehension. Long after the practice session was over he puzzled Dave's great kindness and wondered, too, whether Coach Edward had finally been impressed with the way he had played.

"After I got the hang of it, I made even Dave look bad," Mack told himself. "I certainly didn't intend to do this ... but every time I broke up the interference and nabbed Frank it counted in my favor and against Dave. Coach doesn't know, of course, who's responsible for my improvement. I only wish it was earlier in the season. I might be able to get somewhere." But this thought brought a feeling of remorse since Mack's advancement would ordinarily have to be at Dave's expense.

"I see now what Coach meant about a fellow's playing wholeheartedly for the team," Mack reflected. "Dave wasn't thinking of himself when he helped me out. If I should develop into the better player, I know he'd take his hat off to me. And here I've been playing for myself right along. Swell guy—this Mack Carver!... So swell he ought to be ducked in Grinnell Lake!"

News travels fast across a college campus. The following morning students were thrown in a turmoil of excitement by word that Coach Edward's office had been rifled during the night and nothing disturbed but the team plays. It was rumored that two detectives had been employed by the college to determine, if possible, the guilty party or parties. Despite an attempt to keep the matter quiet, newspapers got hold the story and, later in the day, papers appeared with streaming headlines:

GRINNELL PLAYS STOLEN FROM COACH'S OFFICE

**POMEROY AUTHORITIES INDIGNANTLY
DENY ACCUSATIONS OF PART IN ATTEMPT
TO SECURE GRINNELL PLAYS AND SIGNALS**

The Grinnell *Leader-Tribune* went so far as to declare, in its news story, that relations between Pomeroy and Grinnell had been strained for the past two years since Grinnell had developed into a school to be feared by the larger college. It seemed that Pomeroy had scheduled Grinnell merely for the purpose of giving her a drubbing and taking it easy between big games and that Grinnell's increased opposition had been embarrassing to Pomeroy students and alumni who rated their eleven far better than the intended victim. Now matters had become so acute, a report was going the rounds that Coach Carl Carver's job at Pomeroy hung upon his winning the Grinnell game, about which there was some doubt owing to Pomeroy's uncertain season. A victory for Grinnell, on the other hand, would be the greatest triumph ever scored by that school since Pomeroy was a nationally known eleven, accustomed to playing the best in the country. "It's a step up or a step down for either coach," the news article concluded, and Mack Carver, Grinnell substitute back, who read the stories with a strange lump in his throat, breathed his thanksgiving that no mention was made of him.

"This is one time when my not being well known as a football player has helped out," he said to himself. "If I'd been prominent on the Grinnell team, I'd have been played up along with my brother. As it is, they'll probably let me alone."

But in this surmise, Mack was wrong. On reporting for football practice that afternoon, he found fellow team members regarding him with traces of suspicion.

"Coach wants to see you in the Field House," Frank informed. "He says not to dress."

Mack stiffened with surprise.

"Okay," he replied, face sobering. "Any idea what it's about?"

"How should I know?" rejoined Grinnell's star back, but Mack fancied he noted an attempt on Frank's part to conceal his real feelings. "Maybe," Frank added, rather lamely, "he's moving you up as a regular!"

"No chance of that," said Mack, grimly. "See you guys later!"

He turned on his heel and strode out of the locker room. On the way to the Field House his thoughts ran together crazily. There could only be one answer to the Coach's request to see him. It must be in connection with the stolen plays!... Mack's mind raced back to the moment in Coach Edward's office when he had been detected examining the plays. He winced. This was probably the meagre clue upon which he was being drawn into the case ... this and the fact that he was a brother of Carl Carver's!

Coach Edward was apparently awaiting Mack's arrival. He was in the company of two strange men when Grinnell's substitute back located him in one of the conference rooms.

"Meet Mr. Pierce and Mr. Greene," the Coach introduced. "Take a chair over here."

Mack sat down, feeling the two men looking him over, shrewdly.

"You've been called," explained Coach Edward at once, "in the hopes that you may help us throw some light on what happened in my office last night."

"I thought so," answered Mack, eyeing his coach squarely.

"Why did you think so?" demanded the man referred to as Pierce. He was solidly built, black moustache and heavy eyebrows. Mack took an instant dislike to his bullying manner.

"The reasons should be obvious," he replied.

"As we understand it," spoke up the man introduced as Greene, "you paid Coach Edward a visit some days ago—at his office."

"I did," acknowledged Mack.

"At that time," continued Mr. Greene, "you took quite an interest in some diagrams of plays which your coach had on his desk."

Mack's face flushed. "I did," he admitted.

"What was the big idea?" boomed Pierce. "You knew your coach would tell you all he wanted you to know about any plays he had. Why take the first chance you got to look them over?"

Mack turned to Coach Edward who sat back, having left the questioning to the two strange gentlemen.

"Listen here, Coach! Who are these men? Am I being cross-examined? You don't think that I...?"

"These men are detectives as you've probably supposed," said Coach Edward. "I haven't accused you of anything. The case has been turned over to them. They have been acquainted with all known facts ... and you simply are being asked to contribute what you know."

Mack stirred uneasily. "I don't know anything!" he replied, frowning his defiance.

"Didn't you even know that a key to Coach Edward's office was found to be missing from his desk shortly after you left?" pressed Detective Pierce.

"No," said Mack, his temper slowly rising.

"But you're willing to admit that a knowledge of Grinnell plays and signals would be highly valuable to your brother, aren't you?"

Mack glared. "I suppose they would ... but if you think my brother would take any underhanded advantage...!"

"We're not thinking," interrupted Detective Greene, smoothly. "We're just talking out loud. I believe you've been peeved at your Coach for some time ... even accused him of not giving you the breaks you deserved!"

"That's right," said Mack, after a moment's hesitation. "And I want to apologize for that."

"You do, eh?... What for?"

"Because I discovered last night I was wrong."

"Last *night*?"

"I mean—yesterday afternoon ... in scrimmage. I thought I was better than I really was. I'm sorry I ever said anything, Coach."

Coach Edward nodded, exchanging glances with the two detectives.

"Trying to make things right now, aren't you?" taunted Detective Greene. "But you can't explain away that crack you took at Coach Edward just as you were leaving."

"What crack was that?"

"Here's hoping you get trimmed by Pomeroy!" Mack flinched. He had been sincerely trying to straighten matters up but the detectives did not appear to be giving him credit.

"I was sore when I left," said Grinnell's substitute back. "I shouldn't have said that. I didn't really mean it."

"You didn't mean it, eh?... Isn't it a fact, when you left Coach Edward's office you were practically positive you wouldn't get a chance to play against Pomeroy?"

He hesitated. "Yes, sir," he finally granted.

"And," persisted Detective Pierce, "isn't it a fact, if you couldn't get a chance to play, you would rather have seen your brother's team win?"

"No!" cried Mack, rising from his chair.

"Just a minute, son!" snapped Detective Pierce, pushing Mack down. "Wasn't that remark you made, leaving Coach Edward's office, actually a threat?"

Mack stared at the burly figure in front of him in amazement. This interview was taking on the proportions of a third degree.

"A threat?" Mack repeated, somewhat bewildered.

"A threat that, if the coach didn't put you in the game against Pomeroy—you'd do all you could to help Pomeroy win!"

"That's a lie!" branded Mack. "I didn't have any such idea in mind. You can't prove a thing. I never saw the key. I haven't been near Coach Edward's office since. I haven't been in touch with my brother. You can't make me out a thief. I went straight to the Coach with my grievance and got it out of my system. I've apologized—whether he wants to accept it or not. I'd intended going to him and apologizing today ... until this came up. It's unfortunate ... but I didn't have anything to do with it!"

Mack's outburst sounded incoherent as it poured from his lips but he was greatly up-wrought. To think of such suspicions having centered upon him! He could understand how he had been responsible for part of his dilemma but the rest seemed far-fetched, absurd.

"I think, officer, the boy's been questioned enough," said Coach Edward.

"Not quite!" rejoined Detective Pierce. "This young man also mentioned in your presence the rumor that you were out after his brother's job. Isn't that so, Mr. Carver?"

"Yes," glowered Mack, now strictly on the defensive.

"He had that very much on his mind. It's human then to believe that he would be interested in his brother's holding his job. Am I right?... Isn't that the way you feel about it, Mr. Carver?"

"Naturally," conceded Mack, with a feeling of being cornered. "But I wouldn't let even that stand in the way of playing my hardest for Grinnell if I got the chance in the Pomeroy game!"

"On the other hand, if you should sympathize too much with your brother, you might fumble at the right time or make a poor play which would help Pomeroy out?"

"No, no!" Mack fairly shouted. "I'm not that sort. I won't answer another question!"

"You're quite right, Mack," sided Coach Edward, evidently disturbed by the turn the cross-examination had taken. "Gentlemen, I don't think anything is to be gained by detaining Mr. Carver longer."

Detectives Pierce and Greene looked consultingly at one another.

"I'm not satisfied that the boy's telling all he knows," declared Pierce. "Since I'm in charge of this case, I must ask that he be suspended from the team until this matter is solved."

"Please," begged Coach Edward, as Mack looked his concern. "Not that. It will mean unfavorable publicity—ill feeling between the two schools."

"We can't help that," said Detective Pierce, bluntly. "You've reported that your office has been entered. We've been assigned to the case. You've told us everything you knew about events leading up to last night and it's our job to run the clues down. Greene and I feel that this young man should be held as a material witness. Naturally it won't look right for you to keep a man on the team who's under suspicion."

"I quite agree with you there."

"Then suspend him at once."

"I dislike doing this very much."

"You haven't any choice, Mr. Edward."

"But I don't feel you've lined up sufficient evidence to warrant such action. I'll confess thinking first of Mack when I discovered what had been done ... but it was only because of certain incidents. Listening to this cross-examination today, I'm not convinced that he is any way connected. Rather, I believe that the circumstances surrounding him have been unfortunate. I'd much prefer to drop the whole matter than..."

"You can't drop it!" bellowed Detective Pierce. "It's in the papers. We're not going to have it said that we were hushed up. Whoever broke into your office must have been working for Pomeroy because the plays and signals wouldn't have done anyone else any good. When this young man decides to talk we'll find out something. You wait and see."

Mack Carver laughed, grimly. The situation, serious as it was, now struck him funny. Two small town detectives with an inflated sense of their own importance. Coach Edward, because of his desire to win the Pomeroy game had magnified the happening until it had developed beyond his control. There was going to be some fireworks now despite anything that he could do.

"It's all right, Coach," said Mack, sympathetically. "Go ahead and suspend me. You probably wouldn't have played me anyway—so it's no loss to the team. Besides—these men can't prove anything on me if they spend the rest of their lives."

"Mack," addressed Coach Edward, with obvious sincerity. "I hope you'll believe me when I say that I'm deeply sorry this thing has occurred. You've made your mistakes in judgment ... and I've made mine. I've a feeling now that you're being done an injustice but there's little I can do about it for the time being...!"

"What are you trying to hand the boy?" cut off Detective Pierce. "Is he suspended or isn't he?"

"He's suspended," said the Coach, simply.

"Very well!" snapped Detective Pierce. "Come on, Greene. I've got another angle for us to follow up. As for you, son—you stay put where we can call you!"

"I will," Mack promised, and stepped into the hall.

Outside the cool November air felt bracing to his feverish temples. He inhaled it to the depth of his lungs as he strode from the Field House, across the gridiron where Darby, assistant coach,

was putting the squad through its paces.

"Hi, Mack!" yelled Frank as the substitute back was discovered. "Where you going?... Wait a minute!"

The team members looked Mack's way, apparently much interested.

"They're probably curious to know what's happened," thought Mack, a peculiar sort of numbness taking possession of him ... a numbness which was making him insensible to bitterness and disappointment. But Mack had no desire to mix with his fellows and hurried his footsteps toward the exit gate.

"Hold on, Carver!" Assistant Coach Darby shouted after him.

Mack came to a stop and looked back, wonderingly. Darby hurried, over, followed by Varsity team members.

"What's the matter?" asked Mack, almost defiantly. "What do you want?"

"Better get into your duds," said Darby. "We may need you."

"Not me," Mack rejoined, incredulously.

"Yes, you!" replied Frank, coming up and tapping him on the shoulder. "Dave's just been carried off the field with a dislocated knee. It's doubtful if he'll be able to play Saturday."

Mack stood for a moment, shocked at the news. The field seemed to spin around in a circle ... then the peculiar numbness returned.

"Too late," he heard himself saying. "You'll have to use someone else. I'm no longer on the team. I've been suspended."

And, with that, he continued on out through the exit gate, not so much as glancing back over his shoulder.

Grinnell College never knew a sensation to compare with that which arose over the suspension of one Mack Carver. Not widely acquainted because of his having entered Grinnell as a Junior with his residence on the campus not quite three months in duration, Mack now became the most discussed young man in school. His brother, Coach Carl Carver of Pomeroy, had been too well known for the past few years, due to the steam roller effect of his team upon the woeful best that Grinnell could put on the field. Newspapers, in their merciless survey of the present situation, left nothing to be imagined, emphasizing that the coming Saturday's contest was more a "battle of coaches" than it was a "battle of elevens." Injury of Dave Morgan, Grinnell's great blocking back, had complicated matters still more since Mack Carver, the suspended back, would logically have taken his place on the team. News had leaked out of Mack's satisfactory performance in the last secret scrimmage and rumor had it that Mack and his brother were not supposed to be on speaking terms. This rumor hardly jibed with the suspicion Mack was declared to be under—of having stolen Grinnell signals and plays for the purpose of tipping said brother off that Pomeroy might be assured of winning the game. But, since one good rumor deserved another, all those interested might read and take their choice. Meanwhile all sorts of wild reports were circulated, sides were frenziedly taken, and the Grinnell stadium was sold out with thousands of demands for tickets being of necessity refused.

"There'll be plenty of excitement here Saturday," a Grinnell storekeeper remarked. "I'm going to re-enforce my store windows so the crowds can't push 'em in."

Friday afternoon, Pomeroy's football squad, thirty-three strong, arrived at Grinnell, having made the hundred and forty mile trip by bus. They immediately took rooms in the Grinnell Inn—a whole floor to be exact—and then the squad stretched their legs with a walk up and down the Main Street while Coach Carl Carver got on the telephone and called his brother.

"Mack—this is Carl! What's all this I hear about stolen plays and your suspension?"

"It's all a lot of noise!"

"Yeah? Doesn't sound like it by the papers. Looks pretty serious to me. I've invited Coach Edward up here to see me in fifteen minutes and I want you to be here."

"Aw, nix, Carl!... I've said my say. I'm not begging for anything. I've embarrassed you enough as it is! You know what they're saying ... that we're in cahoots!"

"What do I care what they're saying?... I want you to be here, understand?... I'm not taking 'no' for an answer!"

"Okay," said Mack, reluctantly, "but I'm telling you beforehand, it won't do you any good."

Mack arrived five minutes before Coach Edward appeared.

"Well!" greeted Carl, "this is a nice kettle of fish!"

"Mostly my fault, too," said Mack, and related the events leading up to the present moment.

"So Coach Edward is after my job?" mused Carl. "That's what happens after you've had a winning team for a couple years. A few reverses and the proud alumni commence hollering 'get the axe!' Everybody loves a winner and they don't stop to figure there's got to be a loser to every winner. Now that Grinnell's piled up a great record this year, we're supposed to bump you off. If we do, despite the fact we've had no season to shout about ourselves, the alumni will consider our year crowned with success."

"You think you're going to beat us?" grinned Mack.

"Yes—with you suspended!" kidded Carl.

"Cut it!" Mack winced. "I'll prove to you yet that I can play football!"

"Go to it!" invited Carl. "I admire your stick-to-it-iveness! Three years and just a substitute indicates a bear for punishment."

"Being related to you is my biggest handicap," was Mack's rejoinder. "It cost me better consideration before and it's costing me my chances now."

"Tough luck!" sympathized Carl. "But if your coach gets my job next year, you'll have a clear field!"

"I hope he doesn't!"

"Meaning you hope we win?"

Mack's face colored. "No—but I hope you keep your job win or lose."

"Listen, kid!" and Carl looked cautiously toward the door, "we've been slowed up due to injuries and illness this year in addition to poor material. But right now my eleven's at its peak for the first time and we're set to give Grinnell a whale of a battle tomorrow. So—if your team wins, your coach will be deserving of something!"

A rap sounded on the door.

"There he is now!"

Carl strode over and flung the door open.

"Edward, how are you?"

"Fine, Carver. And you?"

"Okay!... I've asked my kid brother to sit in."

"Oh! ... Hello, Mack!"

"Hello, Coach."

"Sit down, Edward."

"Thanks."

"I haven't said anything to Mack about this but maybe I can throw a little light on this stolen play business."

"Yes?"

"On Wednesday night, this week, I received a mysterious note, signed by a Mister "X" who proposed to sell me your signals and plays. I was advised to leave one hundred dollars under a log in a vacant field..."

Coach Edward leaned forward, highly interested. Mack whistled, impulsively.

"What did you do?"

"I left the hundred," related Coach Carver, "but I marked the bills. The next morning I found the bills gone and, in their place, this sealed envelope which, I imagine, contains the stolen plays and signals."

"You haven't opened it?"

You'll have to take my word for it. The seal is unbroken. Of course—this could be a second

envelope."

"Hardly likely," said Coach Edward, greatly fussed. "May I open it?"

"I should expect you to," said Carl. "Maybe we've both been fooled. It may be nothing but a wad of paper."

"No—it's the plays all right ... and—the signals!" gasped Coach Edward. "This is almost incredible ... and certainly brazen! I don't suppose the guilty person has been traced?"

"No—although the police in Pomeroy as well as the merchants have been quietly tipped off as to the marked bills—a tiny "X" in the right hand upper corner. You see, the idea is to out-X Mister X." Carl was smiling.

"But he's probably left the town," surmised Coach Edward.

"Yes—and he's more probably returned to Grinnell," predicted Carl. "You may find some of the marked five dollar bills in your town."

"Then you figure the thief a resident of Grinnell?"

"Well, I most certainly don't wish to claim him for Pomeroy! We've already been given the name of being behind this ... and my own brother is under the shadow of suspicion."

"This I regret very much," declared Coach Edward. "I said so at the time. Mack and I have had our differences; I jumped a bit too hastily at conclusions myself and the result is this unfortunate notoriety. I'm profoundly sorry. I would like to be able to make amends."

"Then may I suggest that you begin by reinstating my brother at once. You have the evidence now to prove he was not implicated and I demand that you do it!"

"You won't have to demand," promised Coach Edward, "I was opposed to this action in the first place and it will please me to present these facts to the dumb detectives on the case who would have half the college indicted for the theft if I'd listen to them!"

"Whether you use my brother in the game or not is no affair of mine," continued Coach Carver. "But it *is* my affair when his name and mine is attacked. As for tomorrow—good luck but not too much of it!"

"I might say the same to you!" said Coach Edward, extending his hand.

The two coaches shook hands. Carl's hand was cool and firm; but his rival's palm was hot and trembly.

Morning papers, the day of the game, carried the news of Mack Carver's reinstatement and a letter of public apology from Coach Edward. No explanation was offered, as to the reasons behind Mack's return to the Varsity.

"I'll bet this action was taken simply to reduce the feeling between the two colleges," ventured a Grinnell supporter. "There have been enough ugly reports surrounding this game and the authorities probably got together, figuring they'd quiet a lot of wild rumors and unfounded stories. But you can't tell me—where there was so much smoke—that there isn't plenty of fire!"

And this opinion seemed to be shared by most of the thousands who jammed the stadium for the game. It was a clear, cold day with a dry, hard field destined to provide a fair test of the strength of both elevens.

In the locker room, as Grinnell players dressed for the game, Mack Carver was approached by team members who expressed their confidence in him. Mack, while he tried not to show it, was highly nervous and ill at ease. There was now every reason to believe that he would see service in the game since Dave's knee had not responded to treatment and since Coach Edward would probably feel that his playing at least part of the contest would prove to Pomeroy that no grudge or suspicion remained.

"If I'm put in I've got to play a bang-up game," Mack told himself, "or I'll be open to criticism again. I can't afford to make any slips."

Dave Morgan, hobbling in on crutches, had encouraging words to say.

"You're in a tough spot, I know," he sympathized. "But just forget you're related to Coach Carver and go out there to play a game of football. If you tear in there the way you did when you got started against me—you won't have to worry."

"Thanks," said Mack, gratefully. "You're a peach!"

"Don't kid yourself," grinned Dave. "I didn't throw this knee out to give you your chance!"

Mack's eyes clouded. "No, Dave—you've done more than that. You've shown me what real

spirit was. I've been so wound up in myself that I couldn't feel it before. I feel it now, though ... and I only hope I can play good enough so your loss won't be felt too badly."

Dave patted him on the back. "I'll be pulling for you, boy!"

A buzz of excitement went through the crowded stands as the Pomeroy and Grinnell elevens lined up for kick-off and the player numbered "26" in Grinnell's backfield was pointed out to be Mack Carver. Pomeroy was kicking to Grinnell.

"The highly exploited brother act is about to be put on!" cried a fan. "We'll soon see what a brother player can do against a brother coach. If there's not plenty of fireworks in this game, I'll miss a good guess!"

Mack, as he awaited the referee's whistle starting the game, felt his heart throbbing in his throat. This was his big moment—a terrible moment. For him—the world rested on his shoulders. Thanks to unwelcome newspaper publicity his every move would be watched. He would be playing as though followed by a spotlight. Keenly conscious of the business rivalry between his brother and Coach Edward, Mack thoroughly appreciated the gesture of his being placed in the opening line-up. He even wondered what his own feelings would have been had he been in Coach Edward's shoes. Could he have trusted the brother of a rival coach in the big game—knowing how deeply rooted is family loyalty? Not that he would have suspected said brother of deliberate leanings toward the other side ... but he might have feared an unconscious favoring and a partial let-down on the part of the brother at critical times. Were a game the only thing at stake, such brotherly consideration might be entirely discounted. But when the loss of such a game might affect the family pocketbook, the situation took on different proportions. And this was the tough spot in which the Grinnell Coach and player found themselves. Coach Carl Carver had never intimated any personal concern nor confessed to any embarrassment at the possibility of Mack's playing. His attitude had been impersonal ... but he, of the three, was least in position to feel the strain.

The kick-off!

Mack's eyes followed the ball as it arched in the air and spun his way. Out of the corners of his eyes he saw team-mates forming a phalanx in front. Then he heard Frank Meade's voice off to his left.

"Take it, Mack—and follow me!"

The stands were rocketing sound as Mack, his throat suddenly dry as paper, realized the pigskin was coming to him on his own seven yard line ... that the Pomeroy eleven was rushing down ... trying to penetrate Grinnell's quickly forming interference. He made the catch, clutching the ball to him fearsomely, terrorized at the thought of dropping it, and felt himself in motion as he slid in behind Frank who crossed in front of him. Ten—fifteen—twenty yards he traveled ... conscious that frenzied Pomeroy forms were being dumped heavily to earth by fellow team-mates ... and that Frank, directly ahead, was doing herculean work at clearing the way for him. On the thirty yard stripe, Frank suddenly went down, blocking off another tackler as he fell ... and Mack was forced to veer toward the sidelines as he was left upon his own. He saw now that Dizzy Fox, Pomeroy's star backfield man, was bearing rapidly down on him. There was no escape ... he must try to straight-arm ... or else be forced out of bounds....

Smack!

Dizzy's body-jarring tackle could be heard over the entire field. Mack felt his breath violently punched from him and the mad clamor of the field fade out in almost total darkness. A referee's whistle screeched. Mack came to himself with the trainer bending over him, lifting him up and down at the waist. He was gasping for breath.

"Pomeroy's ball!" he heard the referee saying.

"Pomeroy's ball?" Mack repeated, dazedly.

"Yeah—you fumbled when you was hit!" said the trainer. "Tough break, old boy!"

Pomeroy's ball on Grinnell's forty yard line and Mack Carver's brilliant runback of the initial kick-off reduced to naught!

"What will Coach Edward think?" an agonized Mack wondered as he stumbled to his feet and was shoved back into position.

"Never mind that, Mack!" Frank was saying in his ear. "That might have happened to any of us!"

But this was small consolation and it was even less consolation when Pomeroy, overjoyed at the early turn of fortune, put on an inspired drive which carried them the remaining distance to the Grinnell goal in three first downs. The point after touchdown was kicked and Pomeroy, five minutes after the game's opening, was out in front with a seven to nothing lead.

"That's what you call brotherly cooperation!" remarked a disgruntled rooter, but he was instantly howled down by those inclined to be charitable.

"Mack was over-anxious!" explained one. "He made a great get-away but he was trying too hard. He was too tense when he was hit and the ball was snapped out of his arms. If he'd have relaxed, he'd have held onto it. Shouldn't I know? I played for three years!"

Again Pomeroy kicked off. This time the ball went to Frank Meade who was downed on the twenty-five yard mark. Then followed a terrific struggle between two powerful lines—both elevens settling down to work with the first hysteria of battle over. The contest became a punting duel between the twenty yard lines with the offense of the two teams effectively checked.

"Looks like that lone touchdown might prove to be the measure of difference between Pomeroy and Grinnell!" observed a spectator as the half ended. "If it is, it's going to be hard on Mack Carver! He hasn't shown much so far ... but no one has—except Dizzy Fox who made the only score. That fellow sums up as the best back on the field!"

In the locker room a dejected Mack Carver rightfully expected a reprimand from his coach. Instead, Coach Edward announced to his squad: "Boys, you'll be glad to know that the man who stole our signals and plays has been caught. He's a small time gambler who'd placed bets on Pomeroy to win. We owe his capture to Mack's brother, Coach Carl Carver. And I want to again apologize to Mack for the embarrassment I've caused him and his brother."

"That's all right, Coach," replied Grinnell's substitute back who had played in the starting line-up for the first time. "I'm darn sorry about that fumble."

"Go out after 'em this half!" was Coach Edward's retort. "You can get that touchdown back!"

Mack could have no quarrel now about not being given the proper chance to show what he could do. Coach was keeping him in, was giving him the benefit of every doubt, was finding no fault even when his fumble might be costing Coach Edward an opportunity to take over the coaching reins at Pomeroy ... and at the same time help Coach Carver to hold his position.

"This touchdown mustn't be what decides the game!" Mack told himself, fervently. "If Pomeroy wins, I mustn't be held accountable for it!"

The third quarter began as though to continue the close defensive struggle but, along toward the end of the quarter, Grinnell suddenly came to life as left half Frank Meade, behind the frenzied interference of Mack Carver, broke away for a thirty-nine yard run which placed the ball on Pomeroy's twenty-one yard mark.

"Great work, Mack!" shouted a delighted Dave Morgan from the Grinnell bench. Then, turning to the Grinnell subs, Dave grinningly declared: "Say—he looked just like *me* out there on that one! Did you see him block those tacklers out of the way?... Now he's got going ... look out, Pomeroy—here we come!"

Pomeroy's defense tightened. An end run failed to gain. A lateral pass was good for four yards. Third down and seven to go.

Quarterback Bert Henley, calling signals in the huddle, nominated one of Coach Edward's new plays—the lateral pass opening into a forward. On this play, Mack was to take the pass from Bert and lateral to Frank who was to fade back while Mack screened the pass from in front, blocking off would-be tacklers.

The ball was snapped. Mack took the toss from Bert and started running, then tossed the pigskin on to Frank who was running on his left.

The toss was poor and Frank fumbled, then recovered. Mack continued left, covering Frank as he dropped back ... but the Pomeroy line was through fast and Mack found himself confronted with three frenzied linesmen who sought to break up the pass. He threw himself in front of them all and actually succeeded in bringing two down but the third dodged to the side and leaped up, just as Frank, hurried by the poor toss, released the pass.

"It's intercepted!" screamed Pomeroy stands as the Pomeroy right end deflected the ball and gathered it into his arms, starting off for the Grinnell goal, some eighty yards distance. He angled his run to avoid a desperate Frank Meade who immediately gave chase. Mack, disentangling himself from the two Pomeroy linesmen, also attempted to follow after but was bumped joltingly to the ground again by another Pomeroy player who came up from nowhere to offer interference in his team-mate's wake.

"Touchdown!" yelled a delirious Pomeroy as the right end crossed Grinnell's goal just as Frank hit him in a diving tackle. "There goes your old ball game!"

Amid a riotous ovation by Pomeroy rooters, the point after touchdown was added as the third quarter ended with the scoreboard reading: Pomeroy, 14; Grinnell, 0.

"I'm responsible for that score, too!" moaned Mack, inconsolably. "That rotten pass I made to

you, Frank. By the time you recovered and got set they were on you!..."

Frank, bitterly disappointed, had nothing to say. But Quarterback Bert Henley, greatly perturbed by the breaks of the game, turned savagely upon Grinnell's substitute back.

"You're right, Mack. You've played a swell game today for Pomeroy! If you'd stolen the signals and handed 'em to your brother's team, you couldn't have done any better! Coach Edward's treated you pretty white ... but you're about as low as a guy could get!"

"Shut up, Bert!" demanded Frank, grabbing the outraged quarterback by the arm as Mack accepted the blazing denunciation with clenched fists, controlling himself with difficulty.

"He ought to be taken out!" cried fullback Steve Hilliard, equally upset.

Grinnell team members looked to the sidelines, half-expectant that Coach Edward would take action but he sat immobile as Pomeroy prepared to kick-off once more. Whether by design or not, the pigskin was driven directly at Grinnell's offending player.

"I'll take it!" cried Frank, racing over from the side.

"No!" shouted Mack, "It's *mine*!"

Something in Mack's brain went hot at the realization that his team-mates were trusting him no longer. Here was Frank, trying to take a ball away from him which was rightfully his to accept. Frank made the catch, snatching the ball practically out of Mack's arms.

"Get in front of me!" he yelled.

Mack had no other choice. Pomeroy players were sifting through Grinnell's interference as Mack shot up the field, with the fleet-footed Frank constantly urging him on to greater speed, until both got behind a wedge of their own team members who were doing an excellent job of crashing Pomeroy tacklers. At mid-field the wedge was broken up and Mack and Frank emerged from the heap on their own.

"To the right!" directed Frank, seeing that two tacklers were bearing down from the left. Mack changed directions obediently.

Grinnell supporters, wild with hope, screamed the two runners on.

"Look out from behind!" they shrieked, as a Pomeroy player, giving mad chase, was rapidly closing up the gap.

Frank looked back over his shoulder, then called to the fellow who had put his own team in the hole.

"Mack—drop back and take that guy out!"

"Okay!" answered Mack, dropping at once to the rear as Frank raced past him.

The Pomeroy tackler loomed up almost at once and Mack, whose charge down the field as Frank's interferer had been fraught with one spectacular piece of frenzied blocking after another, now completed his task by hurling himself in front of the last threat to Frank's sensational touch down dash from kick-off. Tackler and interferer went down in a thudding pile as Grinnell's star halfback crossed Pomeroy's goal line and triumphantly touched the ball down. Then the field rocked with sound.

"What a run!" gasped Dave Morgan, waving his crutch. "And what a piece of interfering! Mack sure produced that time! Didn't look like he was handing the game to Pomeroy then, did it?... Come on, gang—this old game isn't lost yet!"

But a great groan went the rounds as the pass from center was bad and Frank missed the kick for extra point. Score: Pomeroy, 14, Grinnell, 6!

"If we make another touchdown and kick the goal, we'll still be a point behind!" grieved a Grinnell supporter. "There goes our outside chances of at least tying the score!"

"Now you're playing *football*!" were Frank's words to Mack as he shook his fist at him and then turned on other scowling team members with the demand that they show a little fight.

"This is not enough!" Mack kept repeating. "I've got to do more!... This is not enough!"

Grinnell kicked off and it was a frenzied Mack Carver who raced down the field to bowl over interferers and down the Pomeroy man with the ball on his eighteen yard line.

"Yea, Carver!... Yea, yea, yea!"

"Hold 'em!" ordered Quarterback Bert Henley. "Make 'em kick!"

The Grinnell linesmen, battered from the pounding they had received, dug their cleats into

the turf and held for three downs with Pomeroy being able to gain but two yards. Dizzy Fox then dropped back to his five yard line to punt.

"Block that kick!" was the cry.

And, with the snapping of the ball, Grinnell opened up a hole. It existed but for a moment as the lines strained against one another ... but, in that moment, Grinnell's right guard was through. He hurried the kick, all but blocking it so that the ball went out of bounds on Pomeroy's thirty yard mark.

"All right, gang!" shouted Quarterback Bert Henley. "What are we going to do about this?"

"We're going through!" answered the team to a man.

Coach Edward sent in three fresh linesmen with the aim of aiding the offensive drive. The scoreboard read: eight minutes to play.

To Mack's astonishment, he was given the ball on the first play, a drive through tackle. He plunged for four yards and, heard the Grinnell stands yell his name. Frank was good for two yards ... Steve was good for four more and a first down on Pomeroy's twenty yard mark!

"That's hitting 'em!" commended Bert. "Keep it up, you guys! How about you, Mack? Do you want to see us win or don't you?"

Mack glared. "Just gimme that ball!"

Fighting and squirming his way through, Mack made another four yards.

"Four yards, Carver!" the stands commenced shouting.

But Pomeroy rose up to turn fullback Steve Hilliard back at the line of scrimmage.

Third down and six to go. Frank Meade—on a triple pass behind the line—with Mack as interference, breaking out around left end! The play was beautifully executed but Mack, as he turned the end, stumbled so that Frank bumped him and was thrown off his stride. Before he could recover, Pomeroy tacklers were in on him so that he gained but a yard.

"There you go!" razzed Bert, shaking a blackened fist in Mack's face, "Spilling the bucket again!"

"Shut up, Bert!" snapped Frank. "Signals!"

"Signals!" Bert repeated.

Mack stiffened. Bert was calling the trick play once more on which he had made the poor toss to Frank. This time the play must be good. Here they were on Pomeroy's fifteen yard line and fourth down with five yards to go.

"If I bungle *this* one...!" Mack thought, and bit his lips.

Berth's toss to him was wide but Mack reached out one hand and pulled the ball to him as he ran. He shot the ball on a quick lateral toss to Frank and fairly sobbed his relief when he saw that the toss couldn't have been better. Frank faded, holding the pigskin ready to pass, as Mack now turned his attention to helping block Pomeroy men who were trying to get through at him. In this he was successful, going down under two Pomeroy linesmen as Frank shot a pass low and to the right—over the end zone. There—racing into the end zone, was right end Eddie Miller. He touched the ball with his finger tips, juggled and caught it, being almost immediately buried beneath an avalanche of tacklers.

"Yea!" roared the Grinnell stands. "A touchdown!"

Pomeroy, a greatly sobered team, lined up in front of its own goal posts. The team charged viciously and Frank, with Bert upending the ball, again missed the place-kick for extra point.

Score: Pomeroy, 14; Grinnell, 12.

"Well, we might as well lose by two points as one," philosophized a Grinnell supporter. "Nice comeback we staged ... but too late to do us much good. Only four minutes left to play."

Grim-faced Grinnell warriors eyed each other. Could they possibly regain possession of the ball and drive down the field for a third touchdown and snatch a victory from almost certain defeat? The odds were overwhelmingly against them. It had been a most spectacular and pulsating game from the standpoint of spectator and player alike. Both teams were now near exhaustion from their offensive and defensive efforts.

"Brother Carl will certainly know his team's been in a ball game," thought Mack, feeling somewhat relieved that he had at last performed creditably after several wretched blunders. Inwardly, however, there lurked a condemning conscience which impressed upon him that no

performance save one which might lead to a Grinnell victory could ever suffice. This feeling took precedence over a flash of satisfaction that his brother was apparently to retain his coaching position, if it actually had hung upon the outcome of this game. "But I mustn't think of this at all!" Mack told himself at once. "My attitude has got to be like Dave suggested. I've simply got to forget any family tics. I'm playing to beat Pomeroy ... not my brother!"

Grinnell kicked off to Pomeroy and the visitors indicated at once that they intended to retain possession of the ball until the end of the game if they possibly could. Several first downs in succession ate up valuable seconds and took the ball to Grinnell's forty-five yard line.

"Hold 'em!" begged and ranted quarterback Bert Henley. "What's the matter with you guys? Gone to pieces?... Get in there and *hold that line!*"

More reserves came dashing out from the side lines to help bolster a Grinnell forward wall which had taken plenty of punishment. These fresh men drove into the Pomeroy line on the first play and opened a hole through which Mack Carver darted. He hit an interfeerer, sent him spinning and broke up a pass behind the line. The ball went wild with Mack following into Pomeroy's backfield after it. Three wide-eyed Pomeroy men were on his heels as he dived for the pigskin and rolled over with it clutched against his stomach. The three Pomeroy men landed on him almost together.

"Grinnell's ball on Pomeroy's forty yard line!" announced the referee, and Grinnell supporters went crazy.

"Great stuff, Mack!" shouted Coach Edward from the sidelines, and Mack, hearing, could only gulp his joy. The game might be lost but if Coach Edward only could believe he'd done his best despite the two glaring misplays ... errors, at least, which he, himself, could never excuse...!

"Your kid brother's playing quite a game out there!" observed a faculty member to Pomeroy's coach who fidgeted nervously.

"*Quite* a game?" was the response. "A whale of a game!... I never saw a kid play in worse luck the first three quarters ... but now he's making his own breaks ... and am I glad there's only a minute left to play...?!!"

Mack was thumped joyously on the back by fellow players as he staggered back in position, holding his side. He had held onto the ball at all costs and despite a scrambled attempt on the ground to wrest it away from him.

With only time for about two plays, Quarterback Henley called for a pass. Frank Meade faded back and shot a long one. Mack, breaking through with other possible receivers, had not expected to be singled out, but wheeled just in time—after getting free—to hear the crowd yell and see the pigskin coming straight at him. He reached up and picked it out of the air on Pomeroy's twenty-five yard line, being hit before he could move by Dizzy Fox.

"Yea, Carver!" yelled the stands.

Mack, all but bewildered by the way plays had revolved about him, was pushed into the huddle as time-keepers consulted their watches.

"What'll it be?" demanded Bert. "Shall we chance another pass?"

"A field goal would do it?" cried Steve, with a glance at the scoreboard. "But Frank's toe hasn't been so hot today!"

"We've only time for one more play," reminded Bert. "Can you fellows hold that line? Seems to me a kick's a little better than another pass. We're almost dead in front of the goal posts!"

"I'll try it if you say so!" volunteered Frank. "Mack—you've got to block 'em off until I toe that ball! They mustn't get through at me this time!"

"Okay!" said Mack, jaws tightening. Here was the test. A successful kick meant defeat for his brother ... no, defeat for *Pomeroy!* It meant that all scores against him would be wiped out ... his misplays forgotten...! ... But how about his brother's coaching position?... He mustn't think about that!... His mother—her support!... No, no!... Whatever happened would be all right.... He must do his part ... he must be loyal to Grinnell. He'd picked this school with the hope of someday helping to beat Pomeroy ... and here was his chance!... He must do his part to the uttermost limit ... and then—if the kick failed ... well—nobody could say he hadn't tried...!

"Kick formation!" Bert was calling.

A murmur of surprise swept through the stands and a pall of silence fell. Grinnell—attempting a field goal as a last resort ... attempting to pull a lost cause out of the fire!

"Hold 'em, gang!" begged Bert. "You've got to hold 'em!"

Grinnell's quarterback was kneeling, ready to upend the ball. Steve and Mack were stationed at the side and in front. They exchange determined glances.

"No one gets past us!" said Steve.

Mack, too full for words, nodded, fingers twitching, eyeing the enemy line.

Coach Carl Carver, pulling nervously at the rim of his hat, sized up the distance between the teams and the goal posts.

"It's one chance in a...!" he started.

The ball flashed back and the two lines came together in a desperate upheaval. Grinnell's line wavered and snapped. As it did so, Bert caught the pigskin and placed its nose on the ground, sighting the distant goal posts. Frank started running forward.

"You get those two—I'll stop these babies!" fullback Steve shouted to Mack as he blocked off frenzied Pomeroy linesmen, rushing through in a mad attempt to spoil the kick.

"Right with you!" echoed Mack, obliterating from his mind all thoughts of possible consequences ... intent only upon doing the job assigned him. His body halted the plunge of the Pomeroy left end and guard ... and resulted in a third Pomeroy player piling atop. As he went down he caught a fleeting glimpse of the pigskin passing over his head. A moment of breathless, very terrible suspense, broken only by the sharp crack of the timer's gun, signalling that the game was technically over. Then a tremendous roar! Mack freed himself from the mass of arms and legs just in time to see the ball settling over the bar and to see the scoreboard change its figures to read:

GRINNELL—15
POMEROY—14

Unaccountable things happened after that. More pandemonium than a fellow, playing his first full game for Grinnell had thought existed in the world. Joy-crazed students surrounding him as he suddenly gave vent to his feelings and, to the amazement of fellow team-mates, broke into uncontrolled sobs.

"What the heck are you crying about?" Frank Meade was demanding.

"Because," he choked, "Pomeroy lost!"

A great shout of laughter went up at this from all except those who realized the predicament Grinnell's substitute back had been in.

"Cheer up, kid!" called a familiar voice, and Mack beheld Coach Carver fighting his way through to him in company with Coach Edward.

"But you lost your job?" Mack wanted to know, still somewhat dazed by it all.

"I sure did!" grinned Brother Carl, gripping him by the shoulder. "You knocked me out of that!... I always said you couldn't play football!"

"And now he knows it!" smiled Coach Edward. "I'm taking your brother's place at Pomeroy next year—so he tells me!... In fact, he recommended me!"

"What?" gasped Mack.

"Why not?" rejoined Carl, his eyes twinkling. "I've signed up to coach Great Western next year at ... guess what salary...?" Carl looked about him, cautiously. "I don't want any newspaper guys to hear this—it's ... er ... just something to be kept in the family." Whereupon Carl cupped his hand between his mouth and Mack's ear and whispered a figure.

"No?" cried Mack, overjoyed, and—forthwith leaped atop his brother's back, bearing him to earth for a down which was not recorded in the game!

A CASE OF NERVES

"Look at that guy—he hasn't been eating enough to keep a canary alive for the last three days!"

"You know what's the trouble, don't you?"

"Indigestion?"

"Yeah—nervous indigestion? Speed's on edge over the big game next Saturday against Hamilton!"

"No kidding?"

Kinky Doyle, who sat at the Second Team's training table, stared at his informant unbelievably.

"Straight dope!" replied Sober Watkins, quarterback of the Scrubs, with a glance toward the Varsity training table nearby and star half-back Speed Bartlett, toying with his meal. "Speed had the same kind of stagefright last season ... lost so much appetite and sleep and got so high strung that he fumbled in the Hamilton game and handed them the victory on a platter!"

"That's funny," said Kinky, after a pause. "He hasn't been this way up to the last few days. He's played through the whole year...!"

"Sure—the big game's the only one that bothers him this way," grinned Sober. "You know, some fellows can stand every kind of flower but goldenrod ... and that knocks them for a flock of sneezes. Well, for some reason, Speed has the feeling that Hamilton's not to be sniffed at. All the other games are just dress rehearsals but this contest is the real thing!"

"That's bad," declared Kinky, seriously. "Bad for Speed and bad for the team. The other fellows can't help but be depressed by the way he's taking it. And after what happened last year it'll be a wonder if Speed don't have the whole eleven on edge."

"You said it," agreed Sober. "But what can we do about it? That's a neat little problem for Coach Brock to solve!"

Could the two squad members have known it, the Coach was even at that moment turning a rather drastic plan over in his mind. Something certainly had to be done. Practically every fellow at the Varsity and Second Team training tables had observed the sudden funereal atmosphere being radiated by one Speed Bartlett. His sad and solemn conduct had begun to descend like a pall upon a heretofore gay and carefree dining hall. Just why this climax to a Medford season should have such a nervous effect upon her star halfback was as difficult to determine as why some folks got short of breath in the proximity of a cat. "Cat asthma", this was called. There weren't any words exactly descriptive of Speed's disorder for he was courageous to a fault. In the heat of battle he played with an abandon and a drive that usually carried him through to his objectives. It wasn't, then, a matter of his actually being "afraid" of anything. But, still, the seeming mere anticipation of the big game with Hamilton produced a nerve-shattering reaction.

"I can't let this go on," Coach Brock decided, "or I won't have any morale left. Hamilton has a strong eleven this year and we'll need all the fighting spirit we've got. Now if I can just figure out some way to suspend Speed from the team—tell him he's out of the big game—relieve him of his nerve tension and then shove him in the contest at the last minute ... that might turn the trick!"

Phil Doran and Milt Gleeson were as rabid Medford supporters as could be found in college. More than this—they were close chums of Speed Bartlett. Between them they owned a little runabout in which they travelled to the various college towns where Medford's eleven might be playing. The coming Hamilton game, however, was to be played at Medford and, since it was to be the last contest of the season, the boys' football trips were over.

"What do you suppose Coach Brock's sent for us about?" Phil asked Milt as the two were on the way to the athletic director's office.

"Haven't the slightest idea," grinned Milt. "But maybe he wants us to help him work out some new plays to spring against Hamilton!"

"Only play I could suggest would be for him to put in the first and second teams at the same time," declared Phil. "Then we might have a chance to win by sheer weight of numbers!"

"Oh, it's not as bad as that," replied Milt, defensively. "If Speed just holds to his regular form this year, he'll give Hamilton plenty of trouble. He's crazy to make up for his fumble in last season's game. Have you seen him lately?"

"Not in three days. Have you?"

"No. I called around at his dorm yesterday but he wasn't in. About time we got together again. Speed's a great guy."

"And a mighty sweet football player," complimented Phil. "Well, here we are—outside the sanctum of the man who controls the destinies of Medford pigskin chasers. Shall I rap?"

"Sure—don't you see it says 'private'?"

A voice bade the callers to "come in!" and Phil and Milt presently found themselves standing before the genial-faced coach.

"Sit down!" Coach Brock invited, motioning to chairs. And when the two wondering visitors

were seated, he came straight to the point with: "I understand you fellows know Speed Bartlett very well?"

Phil and Milt exchanged glances.

"Well ... er ... yes, sir ... we ...!"

"We're *pretty* good friends," temporized Milt. "Why—what's ... er ... happened?... Is Speed in trouble?"

Coach Brock smiled, amusedly. "Yes, as a matter of fact, he is. Not necessarily serious trouble," he hastened to assure as Phil and Milt looked their concern, "but I want to guard against it getting any worse."

"Good grief!" exclaimed Milt, anxiously. "What's Speed done?"

"We haven't been out with him for some time," volunteered Phil, "so we wouldn't know anything."

"It's nothing like that," declared the Coach. "Speed's simply going to pieces over thoughts of the Hamilton game. I've got to break him of this or he's going to have himself in such a mental stew by game-time that he'll be next to useless."

"Oh—then you want us to brighten him up?" divined Phil.

Coach Brock shook his head. "No, there's only one thing that can have any effect upon Speed," he said, decisively. "He's got to be told that he can't play on Saturday. This will bitterly disappoint him, of course, but it will relieve him at the same time. But the fly in the ointment is how to make Speed believe that he's really not going to play. He knows very well that I wouldn't remove the star of the team without definite reason. Obviously, then, the only way we can put one over on Speed is to catch him breaking one of the strict rules I've laid down for members of the squad."

"Now I 'get' you," cried Phil, eagerly. "You want us to help get Speed in bad!"

"That's precisely it," agreed the coach. "And here's how you can do it. Take him over to Ashby in your car to catch the early evening show. There's a Knute Rockne two-reeler showing at the picture house that I'll recommend be seen. As you fellows know, my orders are for every man on the squad to be in his room and in bed by ten o'clock. Ashby is a good twenty miles from here and, after stalling for time you start back to Medford with just time enough left to get Speed to his dorm within the ten o'clock law. Unfortunately, however, your car breaks down and you are delayed getting back until after midnight."

"Quite a thrilling plot," agreed Milt.

"It calls for some real acting," opined Phil. "And if Speed ever caught on he'd darn near kill us!"

"Aren't you willing to die for your college?"

smiled Coach Brock. "I'll be within sight of the dorm so that I can manage to be passing when you drive up, several hours late, with Speed. What happens after that will be regrettable but hardly any fault of yours. Automobiles do break down ... even in the best of families!"

Phil and Milt grinned.

"But what if Speed doesn't care to see this picture?" queried Milt.

"I think he'll jump at the chance after the send-off I give to it this afternoon at practice," said the coach. "But I'll insist that all fellows who do make arrangements to take in the show, make a point of getting back by their accustomed hour."

"Okay!" accepted Phil. "We'll tackle Speed on the proposition after practice ... tell him we've just learned of the football program ... and that we're leaving in time to catch the seven o'clock show. Wouldn't he like to go along?"

"That's right," Coach Brock approved. "You can explain to Speed that the seven o'clock show will be over around nine o'clock which gives you a whole hour to drive the twenty miles back. Let me know, for sure, if you can make arrangements, and I'll be ready to do my part."

"We'll try our darndest," promised Phil.

"And, of course," the coach added, warningly, "it goes without saying that you are to keep this little matter strictly confidential. You are doing this, remember, for the team!"

Phil and Milt stiffened with a sense of their responsibility.

"You can trust us," they assured.

Speed Bartlett was quite innocent of any plot against him and quite glad to accept the invitation of his two friends to attend the show. In fact, he welcomed the opportunity as a means of possible relaxation. Coach Brock had spoken highly of the Knute Rockne short subject—declaring it to be extremely educational, particularly as pertained to open field running. Since this was supposed to be Speed's specialty, his curiosity was aroused.

"Strange you fellows should be interested in seeing this same show," mused Speed, on the way over. "It's a good break for me since I'm supposed to see it, anyway."

"Listen, Speed," declared Phil. "We're nuts over football. We'd go almost anywhere within reason to see a game or something interesting about it. And when we read in the paper that one of Knute Rockne's pictures was there ... well, that was enough for us!"

"Clever bird, this fellow, Knute," kidded Milt. "I'd place him next to Coach Brock."

Arriving at Ashby, Phil and Milt parked their car on a side street and were surprised to find a crowd waiting to get seats.

"Hello—they're doing some real business. Must be a great show!" exclaimed Milt, with a wink at Phil.

"Ten minutes after seven," said Speed, a bit disturbed.

"Oh, there's plenty of time," said Phil, "but I've got so in the habit of sitting that I hate to stand."

It was seven-thirty before the three patrons from Medford were escorted to seats and then it was to discover that the Knute Rockne feature had just finished.

"Tough luck," Milt whispered. "But it'll start the next show. We're all right."

The three then settled down to enjoy the feature picture and time sped quickly. It was ten after nine that the Knute Rockne short subject next flashed on the screen and its interest was compelling from the start. The two-reeler was over at nine-forty, much to Speed's concern when he discovered the time.

"Holy smoke!" he cried. "We've got twenty minutes to drive twenty miles. You fellows'll never make it!"

"We'll try!" declared Phil, optimistically, as they rushed for the car. "Gosh, where did that time go to?"

"Won't make much diff if we are a few minutes late," said Milt, reassuringly. "Coach won't hold you to account on this."

"But he made a point of saying we had to be back on time if we went," Speed recalled.

"Sure—he's got to keep his discipline up," rejoined Phil, sliding behind the wheel and working the starter. "What's the matter with this thing? Have I flooded the carburetor?"

The engine had refused to respond.

"That's probably what's the trouble," diagnosed Milt. "Turn off your gas entirely."

"Good grief!" groaned Speed, "Get going, you guys! I don't want to be any later than I have to!"

"Keep your shirt on!" soothed Milt. "There she spits! She'll catch hold in a minute. This little old bus hasn't failed us yet."

Another valuable minute shot past ... and another.

"Say—there goes the interurban!" said Medford's star halfback, nervously. "It makes Medford by ten-thirty. I'd better catch it!"

"Don't be foolish!" cried Milt, grabbing Speed and holding him in the car. "We'll be back in Medford before that traction! It's a concrete road most all the way!"

"Here we go!" announced Phil as the engine finally took hold. "Now—just as soon as we get beyond the city limits...!"

At ten o'clock, when all good little football players were supposed to be tucked in their beds or, at least, safe in their rooms, a runabout containing the outstanding star of Medford's eleven was whizzing along the highway with the indicator wavering between fifty and fifty five miles an hour.

"Nine miles in fifteen minutes!" figured Phil, eyes intent on the road ahead. "At that rate we'll be in Medford around ten-sixteen. You don't see that interurban do you?"

"It's just about leaving Ashby now!" grinned Milt. "How's this for traveling, Speed? This is just a little faster than you go down the field. Say—what did you think of that Rockne picture anyhow? Pick up any pointers?"

"Very interesting," admitted Speed. "But what's that I hear—is it a knock in the motor?"

"Careful, Phil!" warned Milt. "The old engine's getting too hot again. Better slow up!"

"What's the matter?" asked Speed, anxiously.

"Nothing much," answered Milt, "Only we can't hit it up too fast for too long a time. Might burn out a bearing or something!"

Phil reduced the speed from fifty to twenty miles an hour and still the knocking persisted.

"Sounds like it's almost out of gas," said Speed. "It's commencing to cough now!"

"Maybe it caught cold standing out there to-night," suggested Milt. "It *is* acting strangely. Wouldn't you say so, Phil?"

"Something's gone wrong," was Phil's grave comment. "I think there's some foreign substance clogging the carburetor!"

Pulling to the side of the road, Phil stopped the car.

"Now what?" gasped Speed, glancing at his watch.

"Have to take a look," said Phil, getting out and raising the hood. "Pass out the flashlight, Milt!"

"Which seat is it under?" asked the confederate in the dire conspiracy.

"How do I know?" was Phil's rejoinder.

A half hour of tinkering with the engine followed, during which an agitated Speed Bartlett paced up and down the highway, returning every few minutes to inquire the progress made.

"We can't even get the engine started now," was Milt's cheerful report. "It's a good thing we stopped when he did!"

"That's where you made your mistake," said Speed, irritably. "You never should have stopped!"

"No!" retorted Phil, caustically. "You should burn out a bearing on *your* car!"

"I haven't any car!" replied Speed, sharply.

"That's just the point!" returned Milt, smothering a chuckle. "But, don't worry, Speed, we'll explain to the Coach! Have a chocolate bar—there's one in my coat in the car."

"I can't eat anything," was Speed's glum rejoinder. "My stomach's on the blink."

A flashing headlight suddenly appeared from around a curve in the road.

"Heigho!" exclaimed Phil. "Here comes the interurban!"

"Quick—your flashlight!" cried Speed, with sudden resolution. "I'll flag it!"

Medford's football star dashed forward but Milt fumbled the flashlight in handing it over and by the time Speed got hold of it the interurban was whizzing past.

"I knew I ought to have gone home by traction!" he lamented, loudly. "Something told me not to go back with you guys! This is terrible!"

"Listen, Speed—you're getting all worked up over this," consoled Milt. "You crawl in the car there and curl up on the seat and get your sleep. That's why the Coach wants you to turn in at ten—so you'll get the right amount of sleep. If he should find out about this, we'll tell him you got your sleep just the same!"

"Sleep?" bellowed a greatly aggravated! Speed. "I haven't slept for four nights as it is! How can I sleep now?"

"Hey, Phil!" cried Milt, insinuatingly. "I'll fix this bird. Where's the monkey wrench?"

It was a quarter to one o'clock before a familiar looking runabout appeared in front of the MacDaniel Dormitory and the door popped open to let a highly exasperated and greatly worried athletic figure out. There was not a sign of another soul upon the campus, nor was there a light visible save the flickering street lamps.

"Coast is clear!" whispered Milt. "Awfully sorry, old boy, but nobody will be any the wiser. You sneak in to your room and...!"

"Hello, there!" sounded a voice. "Is that you, Speed?"

"Blue murder!" exclaimed an agonized fellow, under his breath, as he cringed against the side of the car. "That's Coach now!"

"It can't be!" said Phil, punching Milt knowingly with his elbow. "What would Coach be doing out this time of night?"

There were the sounds of footsteps approaching.

"Make a break for it!" advised Milt, hoarsely.

"I can't," moaned Speed. "I—I'm caught—cold!"

"Well!" addressed Coach Brock, as he got within real hailing distance. "Is this the time for you to be turning in? Who are these chaps with you?... Oh, yes—I see. Doran and Gleeson. Where have you been?"

"It's all our fault, Coach," Phil spoke up. "Milt and I took Speed over to see the Rockne picture at Ashby and ... and our car broke down on the way back."

"I've heard that story before," was Coach Brock's unfeeling reply. "What did I tell you, Speed, about being in by ten o'clock?"

"But, sir ... I ... er ... it was unavoidable," stammered Medford's star half-back. "I fully intended ..."

"Sorry, Speed!" cut short the Coach, severely. "Orders are orders. I'd like to make an exception but this wouldn't be fair to the other members of the squad. From now on you're under suspension and this act removes you from the game on Saturday!"

"No, Coach, no!" pleaded Speed. "You can't keep me out ... not for this! It's the first time I ever broke regulations and it wasn't intentional...!"

"Then why were you trying to sneak in the house?" demanded Coach Brock. "You didn't intend to report this infraction to me did you?"

"Well, er ... don't suppose I did," Speed was forced to confess. "I was afraid maybe you wouldn't understand."

"Hmm! It's a good thing I worked late at the office tonight," was the Coach's comment. "As it is, I understand only too perfectly. You'll turn in your suit tomorrow!"

Medford campus was thrown in a turmoil the next day, which was Tuesday, with the news of Speed Bartlett's suspension. The report was first treated as a rumor but when a crestfallen Speed himself would not deny it and when he did not appear on the field for practice, the awful truth finally dawned.

"It's good-bye game now!" mourned Medford fans. "Did you hear what Coach kicked Speed off the team for? Being out late! Can you fathom that? And Speed had a good reason, too ... he was in a car that broke down."

A wave of indignation swept the college that the star player should be ruled out of the big game of the year on a technicality, but Coach Brock, in issuing a brief statement, stood by his guns, declaring that discipline was necessary and the owners of the car, on further cross-examination, could not prove that anything was or had been wrong with the car. It was natural that such an excuse would be offered when the fellows were caught flat-footed. But none of the three, under questioning, would tell where they had been after leaving the theatre at Ashby.

The affect of Speed's removal on his fellow team members was to eliminate any possible tendencies toward over-confidence. In its stead a grim determination was born. Medford would have to make up for the loss of its star by a greater fighting spirit.

Speed himself, as disappointed as he was, suddenly discovered that his appetite had returned. Stomach muscles which had contracted under the nervous anticipation of the coming conflict, now relaxed and set up a cry for food to work upon. And, while Speed no longer reported to the training table, it was observed by a spying Phil and Milt that he ate abundantly but wisely.

"Coach sure knows his psychology," Milt said to Phil as they were crossing the campus the day before the game. "All that was the matter with Speed was a bad case of nerves..."

At the moment of this remark, the fellow in question was hurrying in an attempt to overtake his two friends, and had just gotten within earshot. Discovering that he was being talked about,

Speed lagged curiously behind.

"Speed's got sand all right," he overheard Phil say. "But he worries too much before hand. You can imagine how bad it must have been for the training table with Speed sitting there like a guy with a load of lead in his stomach. The whole eleven's better off. It's a blow to have Speed suspended but Medford'll take the field tomorrow with a world of fight.

"And when Coach sends Speed into the game—maybe Medford spirit won't rise sky high!" chuckled Milt. "Boy, I guess maybe we didn't play our parts to perfection! We ought to get letters for this!"

Medford's star halfback stopped in his tracks and let his two friends continue on their way, not realizing that he was anywhere near them. He was burning with humiliation and resentment. So—this had all been a put-up job! Coach Brock had enlisted the services of his two chums to frame him ... to save his nerve for the big battle!

"I'll go to the Coach and tell him what I think of him!" was Speed's first reaction.

But more sober thought decided Speed against this step. There was truth in what Phil and Milt had said about him. He had been painfully conscious of his feelings toward the coming game. Even now, since he knew that Coach Brock intended reinstating him at the last moment, all the old nervous symptoms had returned, worse than ever. There was that heavy feeling in his stomach, the quickening of his pulse, the strained sensation in his head....

"I guess I wasn't such a good influence around the fellows in this condition," Speed reflected glumly. "But Coach put me off the team and I'm going to stay off the team. I'll fix him—I'll leave town tonight so he *can't* get hold of me!"

Saturday morning found the campus of Medford alive with old grads and loud-mouthed Hamilton rooters who told everyone who would listen, in no uncertain terms, what their eleven was going to do to the home team.

"Too bad your star is out of the game!" Hamilton lamented. "You'll be using that for an alibi—but we'd have beaten you either way!"

At noon, Coach Brock sent word by second team member, Kinky Doyle, that Speed Bartlett was to report to him at once. The Varsity had just left training table, having had an early lunch. In two hours they would be dressing for the game.

"Hey, Coach!" cried an excited Kinky fifteen minutes later. "I've just come from Speed's room. He's not there ... but I found this note—addressed to you!"

Coach Brock took the note, wonderingly, opened it, and read:

To Coach Brock,
Medford College,
Medford.

Dear Sir:

Since I have been removed from the team, I couldn't bear to stay and see the game, so I have left town.

Yours,
Speed.

"Great jumping Jehoshaphat!" swore Coach Brock, crumpling the paper. "The boy's gone crazy! Get hold of Doran and Gleeson at once!"

"Yes, sir!" blinked a wondering Kinky Doyle, hurrying off.

With Phil and Milt delivered to him, post haste, Coach Brock took them privately aside and showed them the note. Phil gasped and Milt whistled.

"Where would Speed have gone?" demanded the coach.

"I haven't the slightest idea," replied Milt. "Have you, Phil?"

"There's four different directions," Phil answered. "And one's as good as another!"

"Well, you've got to find him!" the Coach ordered. "You got him in this mess!"

"*Us?*" mumbled Phil and Milt, all but overcome.

"Don't argue!" snapped the Coach. "Get out and hunt him up! If Speed Bartlett doesn't play today, the game's as good as lost!"

"End of first half!" cried the radio announcer. "And what a game this has been!... But Hamilton's great team is proving too much for Medford today. They're out in front, two touchdowns, thirteen to nothing, which just about indicates the difference in playing strength. Medford's offensive hasn't been able to get going ... no doubt due to the loss of their backfield star, Speed Bartlett... Stand by, folks, we're to have a word now from Coach Brock of Medford...!"

There was a moment of prickling silence, then the sound of someone clearing a husky throat.

"I hope you will pardon me, radio football fans, for this brief intrusion," spoke Coach Brock. "But I am addressing this appeal to Speed Bartlett with the hope that he may be within the reach of my voice. I herewith apologize to him. Further ... er ... facts have just come to light in regard to his violation of the rules and were he here in Medford today he would be offered his place in the line-up. It is self-evident that Medford needs him...!"

A certain young man, standing in front of a radio store in Ashby, waited to hear no more. He rushed over to a taxi stand at the curb and hailed a driver who had been listening in on the game.

"What'll you charge to take me to Medford?"

The taxi driver almost fell from his seat.

"That's a fifteen dollar ride, son!"

"Okay!" accepted Speed, "And there's an extra five in it for you if you break all records getting there!"

"Have you got that much money?" asked the driver, incredulously.

"No," answered Speed, truthfully. "But Coach Brock has...!"

"Oh—be you Speed Bartlett?" exclaimed the driver, starting his car. "Suffering cats, boy! Then I'm gonna turn this old bus into a flyin' machine!"

"Good!" cried Speed, jumping in. "Oh—wait a second! I want to run in this telegraph office!"

A messenger boy, twenty minutes later, with the third quarter about four minutes under way, reached Coach Brock's side. The coach was intent upon the game inasmuch as his team was being pushed once more into the shadow of its own goal posts. Hardly realizing what he was doing, he took the yellow envelope and thrust it in a side pocket.

"Hey, Coach!" cried a substitute, grabbing his mentor by the arm. "That was a telegram!"

"Read it to me!" snapped Coach Brock, handing the wire over and not taking his eyes off the field.

The sub slit the envelope open and gazed at the message in bewilderment.

"Why—why—this is funny!" he exclaimed. "There's no name signed or anything—just one word...!"

"What is it?" asked the Coach. "Hold 'em out there! What's the matter with you fellows? Gordon, go in for Ochs at left tackle!... What did you say that one word was...?"

"The word is '*coming*'!" announced the substitute.

Coach Brock whirled, interest quickening, and seized the yellow piece of paper.

"*Coming*?" he repeated. "Coming?... By George—this is from that goofy Speed Bartlett!... Jerry, you go in for Maltby at right guard. Get Pete to take a time-out and tell the team that Speed's on the way here. Tell those guys to buck up! Speed'll be in the game now ... he's due any minute!"

A second substitute raced out on the field and Coach Brock now excitedly examined the telegraph blank.

"Ashby!" he groaned, as he saw the office from which the wire was sent. "Twenty miles... He had ten minutes of the intermission minutes for time-outs ... plus two minutes' for the third quarter plus another ten to fifteen minutes for time-outs ... plus two minutes' intermission between quarters ... how much does that make? Can he get here before the game's over?... Why did that galoot have to go so far away?... Come on, team—the old fight!"

News that their backfield star was due to appear any second proved a tremendous bracer to a beaten team. Medford braced on her ten yard line and held the mighty Hamilton for downs, then punted out of danger. Medford did even more than this. As the third quarter drew to a close, she drove deep into Hamilton territory on her first sustained offensive of the day.

"Save the game for Speed!" became the slogan. "Put the old ball in scoring position!"

But the fourth quarter got under way with no sign of Speed Bartlett and Coach Brock was forced to wave a yellow slip of paper as proof that he hadn't been pulling a ruse on his team.

"He's coming!" the coach megaphoned. "This wire says so!"

"He must be coming from Florida!" growled quarterback Pete Slade. "Let's go, guys!... Maybe we can score without him!"

A taxi suddenly wheezed into the stadium, steam and water frothing from the radiator, the cap of which had been blown off. A figure leaped from the taxi before it had come to a stop and went racing toward the Medford bench. A section of the Medford crowd recognized the figure and set up a great hue and cry. The Medford team, hearing the outburst, immediately called for "Time out!"

"Pay this man twenty bucks!" Speed panted, pointing to the taxi driver, as Coach Brock embraced him, wildly. "How about my togs?"

"They're right here!" said the Coach. "Gather around him, you fellows. He'll have to change on the field ... no time to chase to the locker room!"

Clothes were fairly thrown at Medford's star halfback and willing hands helped strip him while other willing hands, almost too willing, fairly jerked on his moleskins. Meanwhile Coach Brock had shoved two ten dollar bills in the taxi driver's hand, wrapped a blanket around him and pushed him down on the bench alongside the substitutes.

"What's he doing this for?" asked the bewildered driver.

"Don't know," grinned the sub next him. "If he finds he needs you, he'll probably send you into the game!"

The time-out period exhausted, Medford resumed play with third down and eight to go on Hamilton's fifteen yard mark. But, so stimulating was the knowledge that Speed Bartlett was actually on the field, Medford opened up a hole which sent quarterback Pete Slade galloping through for a first down!

And then the top of the stadium all but lifted as Speed dashed out on the gridiron, buckling his belt. Team-mates greeted him like a long lost brother and Medford went into a huddle. The stands were in an uproar. Fullback Ned Turner went through for two yards to Hamilton's five yard mark.

There was nothing nervous about Speed Bartlett as he crouched in his position, waiting to hear his signal called. He had been given so much to think about on his wild ride from Ashby to Medford that the nerve strain had left him. He was coldly calm and grimly determined, obsessed with a desire to make up for lost time. An enthused Medford, having taken a severe battering from Hamilton earlier in the game, now tore into the enemy and made a slicing opening for her backfield star who flashed through and over the line for a touchdown on his first play.

Phil and Milt, just entering the stadium after a fruitless search for Speed, could not believe their eyes as they looked out on the gridiron.

"What's Coach been doing—kidding us?" they gasped. "Speed's been in the game all the time!"

Greater cheers as Speed kicked goal for extra point and the scoreboard changed to read: Hamilton, 13, Medford, 7.

"Six more minutes to play!" someone announced, hysterically. "Do it again, Speed, old boy!"

Team members exchanged words with Speed as they lined up to kick off to Hamilton.

"Boy, we thought you'd never get here!"

"So did I!" Speed grinned. "Been softening Hamilton up for me all this time, eh? Well, let's get another touchdown!"

A worried Hamilton, receiving the kick-off, was downed on her twenty-two yard mark. But three yards were gained on two tries and Hamilton punted, desperately resolved to hold the touchdown lead to the finish. It was Medford's ball on her own thirty-three yard line. But Medford now was playing with a frenzy and yet with a precision which it had not shown all season. Mixing line plays, end runs and lateral passes, with Speed Bartlett being given the ball three-fourths of the time, quarterback Pete Slade drove his warriors down to Hamilton's twenty yard mark with two minutes remaining.

"Listen, fellows!" said Speed, in a huddle, "I saw a play in a movie the other day ... one of Knute Rockne's ... and there's a weakness in Hamilton's line ... right where this play's supposed to go. It's an off-tackle smash ... and if the man with the ball gets through into the open field it's almost impossible to stop him...!"

"Give us the dope!" ordered quarterback Slade. "We're entitled to one more time-out!"

"Now what's Speed up to?" wondered Coach Brock, who, for the past five minutes had been biting off fingernails at a rapid rate. "Looks to me like he's been knocked goofy and is delivering the boys an oration!"

With the calling of time the team snapped back into position and a new formation took shape before an astounded Coach's eyes. The ball was passed and a hole was suddenly cracked open off left tackle. Through this hole a dashing Speed disappeared and then, as suddenly, reappeared in the face of Hamilton's surprised secondary defense. Two would-be tacklers were shunted out of the way by vicious Medford interference and Speed side-stepped another. The rest of the way to the goal line was unmolested and he romped across for his second touchdown of the quarter to tie the score at thirteen all!

"I never gave the boys that play," said Coach Brock. "But it's vaguely familiar. I've seen it some place before!"

"That play was shown in the Rockne picture!" informed a substitute.

Coach Brock blinked a moment, then put a hand to his head, staggered dizzily, and sat down. But he did not remain seated long for Speed Bartlett coolly toed the ball between the uprights for the point that sent Medford into the lead, fourteen to thirteen, just as the gun banged for the game's end, in one of the greatest last quarter finishes ever witnessed in the home stadium.

Phil and Milt were the first wild-eyed rooters to reach Medford's star halfback as other supporters swarmed on the field with one idea in mind—to tear down the goal posts. They hoisted a protesting Speed on their shoulders and hurried him across the field toward the Medford bench.

"Why carry me this way?" Speed shouted, looking down at them. "How about your car—is it broken down again?"

Something in the way Speed said this caused Phil and Milt to glance up suspiciously.

"How did you get wise?" Phil wanted to know.

"Never mind!" rejoined Speed. "Keep moving! Don't let this crowd catch me ... and keep me away from Coach Brock!..."

"Why?" gasped Milt. "What's the matter?"

"Nothing!" said Speed, "except I haven't had anything but a malted milk all day—and I'm darned hungry!"

"Can you beat that!" groaned Phil. "Hold up your side of him, Milt! He's getting darned heavy!... Here we've sacrificed ourselves to save this guy's nerves ... and then, in this last five minutes, we get all upset ourselves! My stomach's tied up in such a knot that I couldn't even digest a soda wafer."

"Don't mention stomach to me," said Milt. "I'm a nervous wreck!"

"Hey!" shouted a jubilant Coach Brock, who saw that a gathering crowd was carrying the star of the game in triumph to the locker room. "Wait for me, Speed!" Then, grinningly, he held up a yellow slip of paper and signalled with it. "Don't you see—you boob—I—I'm *coming!*"...

THE BRIGHT TOKEN

"Here, take this—it's your token of good luck," she had said. That was twenty years ago, when she was a wistful, dark-eyed slip of a girl and he a wiry, sandy-haired bundle of nerves that football authorities insisted on dubbing the best quarterback in Harvard history, a man who would certainly be accorded All-American honors at the conclusion of the season.

It was a bare hour before the game that he had met her in a secluded spot in the shadow of the stands. A cold rain was falling which, most every one admitted, made a Yale victory look overwhelmingly certain. He could remember how the delicately traced fingers had clung to the lapel of his sweater, and how, when he had started to take leave of her for the locker room, she had restrained him.

The fingers had gone to her throat, had fumbled there an instant, and had undone the slip of a crimson bow which had been caught at the collar of her waist. Tinglingly he could recall how she had commanded him to hold out his right wrist, how sheepish he had felt when she had tied the bow about it—and yet how proud! He had kissed it then and she had laughed, a laugh of

nervous admiration, and patted him on the arm. And he had gathered her into one last, impulsive embrace and whispered, "My darling wife!"

Ah, that was twenty years ago! Twenty years! And yet memory made it yesterday; for to-day Carrington R. Davies was going back—back to the scene of it all—back to witness the annual clash with the Yale Bulldogs, and to sit in the stands where he would be pointed out as one of Harvard's greatest old-time football heroes.

Every year since his graduation, C. R. D. had gone back on the occasion of the Yale game—gone either to Cambridge or New Haven—and he intended to keep on doing it as many years as he was permitted to draw breath.

As Davies took the train at the Grand Central Station, New York, he glanced apprehensively at the gray sky overhead and hoped that the weather man who had prophesied rain was wrong. Harvard would need a dry field this year to stand an even chance at winning. Her back field was light, fast, and shifty. It depended on a quick get-away and a sure under-footing. Yale's eleven was solid, heavy from end to end, with a stubborn defense that had allowed but two touchdowns so far that season, and a pile-driving back field that moved slowly but surely behind a battering forward wall. If it rained, Davies reflected, Harvard's last vestige of hope was due to be trampled in the mud.

And yet twenty years before, almost to the day, with a driving rain falling and Yale dangerously near Harvard's goal in the last quarter, the game locked in a grim nothing-nothing tie, a bespattered, sandy-haired youth with a crimson bow encircling his right wrist, had scooped up a fumble at his very goal line and dodged and slipped through the whole Eli team for a frenzied touchdown.

The final score of that heart-blasting contest had been five to nothing, and the sensational length-of-the-field run had clinched for the Harvard quarterback his right to All-American honors. The feat was talked about yet, wherever Harvard men gathered who had witnessed the spectacle of victory jerked from the grinning jaws of defeat. At the Harvard Club on Forty-fourth Street, New York, Carrington frequently ran into brother alumni who said, "I remember you when—" and then he was forced to listen to their versions of his crowning football achievement.

Davies found solace in going over old times. The Harvard Club was his haven of refuge. He was one of the best known men there. To enter the dining room was to nod to men at practically every table. There was a joy in feeling that he was among friends; in having his praises sung to younger grads by those who had chummed with him in college; to have his football prowess perpetuated by retelling.

It was nothing to C. R. D. that he was recognized also as one of the leading architects in New York City. He had worked hard the past twenty years, but perhaps it was not so much because he had yearned to go forward as it was to keep him from thinking too much on certain closed incidents of his life.

At times, like this morning, he found himself trying to piece together what his father, Martin S. Davies, would have told him had he not died with the words on his lips. It was only four years back. The elder Davies had been stricken suddenly while Carrington was in the West, and a wire had brought the son on the first train. He was told, on arrival, that the father was desperately ill; that he had held to the weakening thread of life and consciousness because of a strong-willed desire to impart some vital information to his son.

However, when Carrington Davies had been led into the sick room, the father, overcome with emotion, died from the shock, his fingers clutching the arms of his son, his eyes set upon his son's face, and the words: "Your wife—I—she's at—" trailing off into the darkness with him.

For days after, when all his father's effects had been painfully gone over, Davies had sat in frenzied study. It had been years since he had given serious thought to the brief, tragic romance of his college days. He had suffered keenly for a time, but his father's counsel had held weight with him, held weight even though he could never forget the girl, nor that day of days when she had plighted her faith in him with the dainty crimson bow and he had gone out on the field of battle feeling like a gladiator. A silly, lovesick fool he had been, perhaps, on that glorious day; but no incident in his entire life thereafter quite came up to this.

When he had become older and more mature, when he had reached an age at which he could better judge the sort of woman he should marry, Davies, as his father said he would, had come upon the discovery that all feminine creatures were hopeless bores. Thus his unattached state grew to be recognized as perennial, and whatever romance he enjoyed came to him through the cultivated channels of his memory.

How angry his father had been when he had found that Davies had secretly married! The boy had written home for the family blessing and had received, by return mail, the family curse. Carrington Davies came of too good and wealthy a stock to have been inveigled into marrying a nobody, his proud parents told him. Why, the girl was an orphan, her parents had been dead some years, and she was employed at serving in a quaint little tea room under the brow of the university.

It was quite natural that a girl of her circumstances should have roped Davies in. Any girl who had really cared would have insisted that he wait until after graduation. Should this marriage become known to college authorities, Davies would be expelled. And then where would he be? Disgraced! His career ruined! And ruined by a girl who had cleaved to him only for the money that he represented!

Martin S. Davies made a special, hurried trip to Cambridge to make his son see all these points. And the elder man brought plenty of money to make any others concerned see as he wanted them to see. The affair was successfully hushed up. Carrington Davies, threatened with being disowned if he did not do exactly as his father dictated, had stood by powerless.

He reflected now that this had been the biggest mistake of his life. But years of strict obedience to his parent had awed him, awed him into letting his father approach Hazel Nubbins, the girl who had so shortly before become his wife. What the elder Davies said to her or what proposition he made, the son never knew. But he recalled the satisfied expression his father wore on returning from the interview, when he said:

"It's all right, son. I've fixed everything. Now, for God's sake don't ever get into a jam like this again!"

And the next day Carrington Davies heard that the girl had left the place of her employ, pleading ill health. Weeks later, when he had come out of the daze occasioned by these happenings, Davies had been unable to obtain any information as to Hazel's whereabouts. And gradually, as the weeks stretched out into months, the whole affair shaped itself into the memory of a vaguely pleasant dream which had turned out a blundering nightmare.

Now, as he sped over the rails on the football special bound for Cambridge, his thoughts came racing back to the present at the dash of something against his window, a something that left a running streak.

"Rain!" exclaimed Davies disappointedly. "Drizzling, cold rain! The devil hang the weather man, anyhow!"

As the trip progressed the rain did likewise, true to forecast. At twelve fifteen, when the special arrived at Brighton, a stop one mile from the stadium, Davies stepped into a sullen, sweeping downpour. There was little hilarity among the detraining football followers, and crimson colors gave way to the somber black of umbrellas. Davies raised his coat collar and pulled down his hat brim, making a dash for a store front that carried a light-lunch sign.

It seemed that almost every one else made a dash for the same place at the same time, and the race proved a dead heat with the first fifty. These just managed to squeeze inside, Davies being about the forty-seventh by half an elbow and several sore toes. It made him feel as if he was bucking the line again; only there was little relish to it this time, with the general pell-mell and every one calling out his order in place of the familiar, "Rah, rahs!"

Just how Davies at last came by a Swiss-cheese sandwich and a cup of pleasantly hot and fragrant coffee he never quite knew. He just found himself jostled along, automatically holding out his hands when he came up against the counter, taking what was thrust into them, putting it out of sight as quickly as possible, while some one behind him was fighting for his place, and then following the path of least resistance, which led to the cashier's perch where the extent of his hasty appetite was checked up in so many cents.

After that Davies discovered himself once more in the rain, feeling strangely alone and just a little bit dazed. It was early yet. He had half a notion to go up to the locker room and see the boys. He had done this in other years, had even sat in the dugout with them and had thrilled at the imagining that his presence had inspired them; but somehow, this day, Davies felt his inadequacy. It was a sort of left-out feeling; more than that, a sensing that his sun had set, that perhaps he had worn the halo of gridiron hero too long, and that his friends might have been humoring him.

It was such dampening, disconsolate thoughts as these that prompted Davies to hail a taxicab and go directly to the stadium. He would refrain from his usual haunts this year and, through this refraining, see if he was missed. It was quite possible, did he not remind Harvard, year by year, as to just who he was, that the old college would forget him. He must remember that the world lived largely in the present while he had been living largely in the past.

The rain had abated somewhat when Carrington emerged from the taxi and joined the wet line of Harvard and Yale enthusiasts crowding through the main entrance. There was life here; the atmosphere of expectancy that was bred by the very outline of the stadium, the concrete sides of which had rocked with throat-tearing sounds, time on time. How could one's blood help but warm, even under the pelting of rain, at the memories intrusted to the historic amphitheater of sport in which so many athletic classics had been staged? Davies' heart leaped as he came inside the stadium and got his first glimpse of the green-sodded gridiron, now spotted with pools of water, the goal posts looking sleek.

Already the stands were alive with huddled humanity and bobbing umbrellas. Yellow slickers, dotted through the field of black, made Davies think of a checkered taxicab. He cursed himself

for not having brought his own raincoat along. In years gone by he could have been wet to the skin and not minded it, but now he was conscious of a desire for dry comfort. Certainly he couldn't be getting old!

By game time the stadium was a howling, wet mass. The rain had subsided to a spraylike drizzle, and Carrington, after a minute study of the sky line, decided that this improvement was the best which could be hoped for.

The conditions underfoot were bad. The sod was soggy and slippery. Punters, in practice, stationed themselves with great care before getting off their kicks. Even then the punting experts were observed to retain their footing, at times, with difficulty. Davies shook his head forebodingly. There was nothing encouraging to the Crimson in the outlook.

The sons of Old Eli were cheering their steam-roller eleven to the echo. As Davies compared the heavy Yale line with the noticeably thinner Harvard wall, he shuddered instinctively as he thought of these men taking the impact of what was due to come. He was seized with a sense of futility at the very outset, and a ready sympathy for the Harvard back field. He had been in just such a position years before when it seemed as though he was battering his head against the side of a brick building, and all for naught, it seemed, too—only that he knew he should keep on battering, battering, just for the Crimson, the dear old Crimson.

Plunk! The hollow, wet sound of toe meeting pigskin and a mud-spattered object turning end over end, with beneath it—jerseyed figures charging! Harvard had kicked off!

Davies rose spontaneously from his seat and added his puny voice to the maelstrom of noise. On the Yale ten-yard line a blue-clad man pulled down the mud-spattered object and, clutching it firmly against his chest, took a few slipping side-steps to dodge an eager tackler. The Eli succeeded in this, only to crash directly into the arms of a second Harvard tackler, who bore him to the sodden earth on the Blue's fifteen-yard stripe. Davies sank back into his seat with a sigh of relief. The first prickling moment of the game was over.

There were, though, further prickling moments to come. On the first play Yale launched a line-smashing offensive, aiming her backfield men at different points on the Harvard forward wall. It was slip-slosh-bang, slip-slosh-bang! There were slow, heavy shiftings, then a mud-smeared man with the ball diving through a hole for one, two, three, or five yards—sometimes ten. Yielding, always stubbornly, but always yielding, the slender Harvard line bent back and back under the savage, relentless onslaught of unmuzzled Yale Bulldogs thirsting for the blood of victory. Davies wore his voice to shreds trying to stop Yale's advance.

It was no use. This was one of those days when all the cheering that could be martialled, and all the resistance that could be offered against the foe, availed but little. Thwarted from a touchdown by the Crimson's grim stand on their very goal line, Nixon, Yale's star kicker, dropped back and booted the dripping-wet ball between the uprights for a spectacular field goal which shot the Elis into a three-point lead.

In the second quarter, facing the same bitter opposition and impeded by the slow, heavy conditions underfoot, Yale satisfied herself with battering the Crimson eleven back until, clawing at one another on the Harvard twenty-yard mark, Nixon mechanically duplicated his first field goal to bring his team's score for the half up to six points. Yale supporters shrieked their joy. The Harvard stands roared loyal encouragement, then lapsed into mournful silence.

During the intermission, Davies confessed to himself that he had never seen a "fighter" team except, perhaps, the eleven that had fought that memorable battle back in 1905. Here were Crimson gridiron gladiators who made the heart burst with pride; who, though being slowly ground into defeat, were displaying Spartanlike valor; who, by the inspired nature of their resistance, were putting gnawing lumps in the throats of their ardent followers. Ah, this was a contest worth watching, a combat which would go down in history, a story of how a slight Harvard eleven, struggling against tremendous odds, had all but wrested victory from one of the most powerful Yale machines of all time!

When the teams reappeared on the field for the second half, Davies felt the years fall away as in a strange dream. He began to wax exultant about the weather, remembering with what grim satisfaction he had rubbed his nose in the wet dirt behind Yale's goal line after his sensational dash the length of the gridiron twenty years ago—yesterday? No, twenty years—

A frenzied cheer brought Davies back to the present. Yale had kicked off, and Harvard, receiving, had run the ball back fifteen yards. First down on their twenty-one yard line! Broadhurst, slim-figured Harvard quarterback, seemed a dynamo of pep from the way he was barking out signals and urging the utmost from his men. Another cheer, more frenzied than the first, burst out as a Crimson back slid around right end for a four-yard gain. The next play netted seven yards around the same end and a first down. Harvard rooters went crazy and Davies went with them.

Given cause for hope in the first worth-while ground gained against the powerful Yale eleven, the Harvard team threw its whole remaining force into the drive. For seven pulsating minutes it seemed as though the Crimson could not be denied a touchdown. Yard after yard was torn off on

slipping end runs and slashing plunges through the line. Davies forgot some of the sympathy he had felt for the team of his Alma Mater. It was now risen to the heights of David against Goliath.

Alas, though, with the ball on Yale's five-yard mark and the Harvard, stands wildly entreating a touchdown, Broadhurst, trying to carry the ball himself, fumbled! The pigskin was seen to strike the ground and then to be swallowed up by a cloud of flying forms. When the referee had dug through the confused mass of arms and legs, he found the ball in Yale's possession, and Harvard's big glimmer of hope immediately vanished. Broadhurst, who but a second before had been credited with putting the driving force into Harvard's great attack, was now roundly censured as the blunderer who had blown the golden opportunity. The quarterback was a sophomore, Davies learned from the talk of some of the more recent Harvard graduates near by.

Overjoyed at having brought a stop to the one serious threat of the enemy, the Yale team lined up on their four-yard mark and held like a stonewall while the great Nixon got off a forty-yard punt from behind his own goal line.

With the punch gone from Harvard's attack, the Crimson made but a scant yard in two downs; then the little Broadhurst threw a long forward pass. The play was well screened; but an alert son of Yale, keenly on the job, managed to intercept the ball. He was thrown in his tracks.

It was growing dark, with the lowering clouds threatening a genuine deluge. A chilling gust of wind whistled through the stadium. Some of the less hardened "rooters" got up and began forcing their way toward the exits. A gloomy silence hung over the field.

Once more in swing, the Yale steam roller got under way. It took up its old battering tactics—slip-slosh-bang, slip-slosh-bang. There was nothing sensational in its movement, just methodical. And back—ever back—though courageously resisting, went the Crimson line. A flock of substitutes came running out now. The ball was on Harvard's twenty-three yard line, four minutes more to play. The substitutes brought a new, if hopeless touch of spirit to the Harvard eleven. They were ambitious, almost pathetically so in the circumstances, to make a good showing in their fleeting chance for glory.

"Touchdown, touchdown, touchdown!" the Yale supporters began to chant in monotonous fashion. It was not a question now of who would win, but could Yale go over the goal line in the time that was left? Harvard had put up a surprising battle against an eleven which had been favored to defeat her by at least twenty points. And Yale was a bit miffed at this, sternly desirous of adding to the score by hammering through for a touch down. A victory won solely through the talented toe of the great Nixon was hardly sufficient tribute to the supposed offensive power of the team itself.

There were two minutes left to play when Yale brought up on Harvard's three-yard line for a first down. Behind the battered and tottering Crimson wall a figure raved and ranted and roared, entreating his teammates to stave off the Bulldog's advance. He stamped from end to end in the churned up sod, prodding each player in a vicious manner. But there was no visible stiffening of the Harvard defense at the savage barking of its quarterback. The team was crushed after having done its best to no avail.

"Look at that bird begging his line to hold and he the one who made that costly fumble!" cried a Yale supporter, who somehow had obtained a seat in the Harvard sections. It was next to that of Davies'. "Wonder if he thinks they'll pay any attention to him now?"

Davies felt like making some hot retort to this, but he didn't. He decided to salve his feelings in a cigar and to escape the agony of watching Old Eli crush the Crimson under the added weight of a touchdown. As Davies lighted up, the lowering clouds spread wide apart, letting down sheets of driving rain.

"A good thing it's almost over," he told himself. "About time for one more play. Well, I don't suppose we could have expected anything different, with the odds against us, and the weather, but if Broadhurst had only——"

Settling back in his seat, Davies was gloomily conscious of the hosts of Yale rising to their feet with a stupendous din. His view was blotted from the gridiron by flashing arms and wildly lurching forms. But Davies was no longer interested. There was no use, he thought, in getting excited over a Yale touchdown.

While all was confusion about him, Davies sat still, puffing on his cigar.

But the cheering kept up! There was a different note in it now, a great, heart-rending groan that was drowned out by an ear-bursting, joyous roar.

Davies looked up wonderingly. "Say, what's happening?"

Just how Davies got to a standing position on his seat he never knew. But he was suddenly and overwhelmingly conscious of a most unusual sight. Crossing the Harvard thirty-yard line, running toward the distant Yale goal with head down, straight into the driving rain, was the slim-lined figure of the Harvard quarterback—the ball tucked under his right arm.

Behind the speeding man with the ball, trailed three desperate Yale players, while another was cutting across the gridiron in the hope of intercepting the Crimson runner from in front. Back near the Harvard goal line, teammates on both sides, now completely out of play, yelled encouragement to pursuers and the one pursued.

Davies, eyes glued on Broadhurst, jabbed out an arm and grabbed the Yale supporter by the shoulder. "Yea! How'd we get the ball?" the hero of twenty years before demanded.

"Let go my collar bone!" The Yale fan winced, trying to jerk away.

"All right; but how'd we get the ball?" persisted Davies.

"Nixon fumbled on your goal line. What's the matter, you poor fish! Why don't you watch the game?"

Davies *was* watching it now for dear life. The slender Harvard quarterback was being pressed from front and back. He had been forced close to the side line in an effort to evade the tackler who was lumbering at him across water-soaked sod. But, it was now evident that Broadhurst must face this peril. The soggy condition underfoot had made it impossible for him to evade the Eli even by keeping close to the side line. There was no turning outward. To do so would carry the ball out of bounds. And any hesitancy or slowing up would close the distance between the Crimson runner and the three Yale men who kept doggedly pounding along after him.

Instinctively Davies stiffened his right arm and pushed it out violently. For one heart-quaking second it seemed to him that the years had rolled back and that he was carrying the ball. He sensed acutely the sensation that must be Broadhurst's, and he suddenly found himself shrieking: "Give him the straight arm! Give him the straight arm! Give him the——!"

And as if, from out that mad pandemonium of sound, Broadhurst had heard and heeded, the Harvard quarterback ran directly at the oncoming tackler; then, when it appeared as though Broadhurst must go down with arms reaching out to encircle him, he jabbed a mud-stained hand straight from the shoulder, catching the Yale man in the face.

The impact almost threw Broadhurst from his feet, but he saved himself by a quick jump to the side and, a slipping lurch which shook a foot loose from the last frantic grab of the tackler as he dived head foremost into a muddy sheet of water.

"Atta boy! Atta boy!" cried Davies, no longer accountable for what he might say or do.

The man with the ball now had a clear field and was crossing the fifty-yard line. The going was difficult, each step uncertain. Several times he all but fell, the ground was so heavy and sodden that it seemed almost as if Broadhurst were running in one spot, his feet slipping under him. And with the tread-mill effect it looked as though the three frenzied pursuers were gaining.

In Yale territory now, the bleak goal posts looming up in front of him, Broadhurst chanced a glance back over his shoulder. What he saw was none too reassuring. The Yale stands broke into a roar of insane entreaty. A Yale man was at Broadhurst's very heels, and Broadhurst was crossing Old Eli's ten-yard line with a touchdown in sight! It was but a matter of seconds. If the Crimson runner could be overtaken, Harvard's last bubble of hope would be punctured.

"Yea! He's got him!" yelled the Yale supporter, crashing Davies over the head.

"He hasn't, either!" the Harvard grad shouted, with a shove which all but upset the rival rooster. "Look at that, will you?"

At the four-yard line the Yale tackler left his feet in a frantic dive. He struck the man with the ball just below the knees, and Broadhurst crumpled forward, giving a tugging leap. It may have been due to the fact that he was soaked to the skin and that the tackler's hands were wet and chilled; at any rate, the Eli's grip slipped to one leg, and, instead of going down, Broadhurst strained along, dragging his tackler after him. As he reached the goal line the two other Yale men sailed through the air and hit him. All four went down in a splashing fall. Then every one in the stands went wild.

With the strength of a team gone delirious with joy, the Crimson players took their positions in front of the Yale goal and prepared for the play which would give them a try at the extra point after touchdown. The stands rocked with tributes of noise, bestowing upon Broadhurst one of the most deafening ovations ever accorded a gridiron hero. He had fittingly redeemed himself. His blood-tingling length-of-the-field run in the last minute of play had tied the score at six to six.

Davies waited only long enough to see the water-soaked ball sail between the uprights for the winning point. Then he clambered over the seats and cut across the outraged gridiron in the direction of the clubhouse, unmindful of the fact that the mud had sucked off both his rubbers.

At the clubhouse, Carrington Davies encountered unexpected opposition in gaining admittance. It seemed that no one had known who he was and, what was more, no one seemed to care after being informed. Such crass ignorance irritated Davies greatly, but he held his patience. The disregard shown him was only due to the prevailing excitement. If any one of them

had only stopped to think!

At last Davies rushed to the door and slid past, picking a hole between the burly door-tender and a rather uppish young substitute who C. R. D. ardently hoped would never become a regular.

Once inside, the going was easier. Players in different stages of dressing, and others still under the showers, glanced at him curiously as his eyes sought out but one individual—the Harvard quarterback.

"Where's Broadhurst?" Davies asked of the Crimson man nearest him.

"Other side of the lockers," the individual addressed answered gruffly. Then, as Davies followed the direction, he mumbled: "Who let that bird in?"

The latest Harvard hero was lacing a shoe when the former All-American quarterback came upon him. Davies paused a moment, looking down at the slim-lined figure sitting on the bench. He watched the slender fingers as they plucked feverishly at the shoe strings.

Evidently the boy was in a great hurry, Davies thought. He probably wanted to get out—to meet his sweetheart and to hear her tell him how wonderful she thought he was. Davies felt a gripping pang. He knew all about it. He had been there—exactly in Broadhurst's shoes—twenty years before.

After what seemed a dragging century, the young fellow finished lacing the shoe, looked up, and started. "Oh! I—I beg your pardon. Did you want to see me?"

Now that his opportunity for congratulation had come, Davies for some unknown reason, felt suddenly small and insignificant. He felt the clear blue eyes of the new Harvard star boring into his with kindly inquiry, and for once in his life old C. R. D. found himself stammering.

He did manage to extend his hand.

"I—I just wanted to tell you how much I—that is—it did me lots of good to see— Oh, hang it! Signals over! What I mean to say is that I've followed Harvard football for over twenty years. You see, my name's Carrington R. Davies."

The Harvard quarterback continued shaking the stranger's hand politely; but there was no sign of recognition at mention of the name, only a slight frowning of the eyebrows.

C. R. D. noted this and his stammering became several degrees worse. "I—I—used to play quarterback on the Crimson, too."

The other's eyebrows lifted at this.

"And I—and I— Well, of course you wouldn't remember; but it was just such a day as this—twenty years ago—that I— Perhaps you've heard tell of it?" C. R. D. brought up lamely, loath to relate the entire incident and hoping that Broadhurst would recall hearing of it.

The Harvard quarterback shook his head, but there was an interested gleam in his eyes. "Why, no. I'm sorry, sir; but I—"

"Well," the former All-American quarterback broke in desperately, "I made a ninety-five-yard run for a touchdown in the last minute of play and won the game against Yale, much as you did—to-day."

There was a deep-throated chuckle from young Broadhurst. "Then it's you, sir, who deserve congratulations!"

"No, no. That's not the point," insisted Davies, with a sense of giddy bungling. "That's really not the point. I just mentioned it because I—because I couldn't help thinking of it, that's all. I couldn't help thinking of myself from the moment I saw you out there, free, with the game at stake, making for the Yale goal. It was just like looking at a moving picture of myself—twenty years ago. You'll pardon me, Broadhurst, I know. Nothing's ever gripped me like that run of yours this afternoon. Nothing!"

Davies was in the swing of things now. He had recovered from his embarrassment and was pouring out his feelings in a flow of words which tumbled over themselves to get expressed. Broadhurst was the one who was embarrassed this time. He looked down at the floor and shifted his feet awkwardly and tried to draw away his hand, but the stranger only gripped it the tighter.

The Harvard quarterback shot a glance about the locker room, relieved to see that no one appeared to be noticing them. Every one was interested in his own business, anxious to get outside and join the victory-crazed celebrators.

"I was with you every step of the way," Davies went on. "When you slipped, I slipped. When you straight-armed the Yale man, I straight-armed him, too. Everything you did all the way to the goal line, I did. It was almost uncanny. Even when they tackled you as you went over for a touchdown and pounded you into the mud—that's just what happened to me. So I have you to

thank more than to congratulate, Broadhurst, for we both know what it means to have done our best for the good old Crimson. And you have helped me to live over one of the happiest, most thrilling moments of my life!"

The Harvard quarterback withdrew his hand. The stranger turned away to hide eyes which brimmed with tears.

"I—I'm glad, sir," was all that Broadhurst could think of to say.

Davies stiffened, chagrined at himself for his show of feeling. He was a silly, sentimental old fool, inflicting his childishness upon a gentlemanly young fellow who was too kind and sportsmanlike to show distaste or offense. But why should any one else be interested in his, Carrington R. Davies' feelings, or the fact that, twenty years before, he had scored a touchdown?

"Well, I'm keeping you from going out. I'll be taking leave," remarked the All-American quarterback, backing off apologetically.

"Don't be in a hurry," Broadhurst said, reaching out for his dress shirt, but obviously glad to be about his business. "I'll be through in a minute and then——"

Whatever else the Harvard quarterback may have said was lost upon Davies. He was quite instantly, unexpectedly, and acutely made conscious of something extremely coincidental. The arm that reached out to take the shirt from the locker had the slip of a crimson bow tied about the wrist.

Davies rubbed a hand across his eyes and looked again. How he had missed seeing that bow before he could not understand. But it was certainly there. Infernally peculiar! It was certainly there.

Broadhurst, noting the stranger's stunned expression, stopped, his shirt half on, to inquire what was the matter.

"Why—why nothing—only that bow. You—you'll probably think me odd—but, do you mind my—my taking a good look at it?"

The Harvard quarterback held out his arm with a slight gesture of impatience. Davies took the hand and studied the bit of ribbon. Of course, it wasn't—but didn't it beat the devil how everything had worked out this day? Either that or he was suddenly losing his mind. Perhaps that was it. He had brooded so long over the affair of his youth that at last it had affected his brain.

The ribbon was wet—and soiled—and—this, he thought, could easily be his imagination—it was actually a trifle faded. But it did look strangely familiar, strangely like the one that a dear, trusting girl had tied about his wrist, and that he had sealed there with a kiss twenty years before. It was infernally peculiar. That was all there was to it. Infernally peculiar!

Davies straightened up, to find the Harvard quarterback at the point of exasperation.

"I don't blame you for thinking me out of my mind," sympathized C. R. D. "And I may be, for all I know. So many ungodly things have happened to me to-day. But—if it's not being too personal—where did you get that bow? From your sweetheart?"

There was almost a contemptuous note in Broadhurst's voice as he started to button his shirt. "No! My mother."

Davies felt his knees give way beneath him and he dropped down heavily upon the bench, staring up at the Harvard quarterback, unbelievably. "Your—your mother?"

"Yes. What's wrong with that?" demanded Broadhurst, picking up collar and tie. "It's a good-luck charm," he explained curtly; then he added with a smile: "And it sure worked to-day!"

"A—a good-luck charm?" echoed Davies weakly. "A good-luck—— Say! Your mother—I mean, is your father—living?"

The Harvard quarterback paused in his tying of a four-in-hand to shoot a puzzled glance at the evidently insane stranger. "No, sir. He died before I was born."

"Oh, I see," Davies mumbled, conscious of his heart thumping in his ears. "But your name—Broadhurst? Was that your father's?"

This question was almost too much for the latest Harvard hero. He spun his locker door shut with a bang. "Why certainly!" Then, wheeling upon his questioner, he asked: "Why wouldn't it be?"

"I—I thought perhaps your mother might have married again and that you—you took the name of your—your stepfather," hazarded Davies.

"See here. I don't know what you're driving at, but I don't like your insinuations. My mother was married only once, and she——"

"Listen!" broke in Davies excitedly. "If I'm not badly mistaken, your real name's Carrington R. Davies. I mean—perhaps not Carrington R.—but Davies anyway!"

"You don't know what you're talking about. My name's Carrington Nubbins Broadhurst!"

"Carrington Nubbins. It is! Well, why didn't you say so? But you're all wrong on the last name. Where's your mother? I've got to see her. Why, confound it, old boy, I'm your father!"

Five palpitating seconds of electrifying silence followed Davies' fervent outburst. Then C. R. D. spoke again, in a voice that was husky with pent-up emotion and the shock of it all.

"Where's your mother? I've been twenty years trying to find her. Oh, God, this is wonderful! You—my son!"

Still the young man who went by the name of Broadhurst stood, unspeaking, undecided as to what to make of this rabidly serious personage who, not alone satisfied with claiming prestige for performing a gridiron feat similar to his, was now trying to claim a part in his parentage.

"It was twenty years ago," explained Davies appealingly, "almost to the day, when, just before the game with Yale, I met your mother—met her in a secluded spot under the stands. There was a cold rain falling, and I can remember how we pressed up close against the stands to keep from getting soaked. And she took that little crimson bow from about her neck and tied it around my wrist. I can even recall exactly what she said. It was, 'Here, take this—it's your token of good luck.'" Davies' voice broke at this and tears glazed the eyes of even the Harvard quarterback.

"I—I guess there must be something to it, all right," confessed the youth who had been surnamed Broadhurst, the name his mother had taken. "That's just what mother did this afternoon—insisted on meeting me under the stands, and—and tied on this bow—and said those same words!"

It was a peculiar sight—had any one been there to see it—a grown-up man and a growing man clasping hands, their faces wet and streaked.

"I'm taking mother to dinner tonight," said the younger man softly, after what seemed like an hour of understanding silence.

"No—you mean that I'm taking mother and you," corrected the old-time player firmly. Then, leaning over, he touched the crimson bow reverently and asked: "I—I wonder if you'd let me wear that to-night? I want her to see me with it on. I want her to know that Davies played the game!"

"BUTTER FINGERS"

How did "Rus" Lindley get his nickname, "Butter Fingers"? Now *I'll* ask *you* one! "Why did the guys call six foot Harry Tibbits, 'Shorty'?" Answer that and you've answered your own question about "Rus."

I guess, if you'd go into the science of nicknames far enough you'd find that the name you can pick which comes the furthest from fitting who you're picking it for is the one that suits the best! There—how's that for getting rid of an involved sentence?

At any rate, if "Rus" really deserved to be dubbed "Butter Fingers" then the moon is really made of green cheese and the cow really did jump over it and all that stuff. Because if there was one thing that "Rus" *wasn't*, it was *butter fingers*.

"Rus" was a lean, lanky, long-armed, awkward, thin-nosed cuss that you'd think, to look at, didn't have an ounce of ambition or a pint of sense. The next minute you'd wake up to find the ounce a hundred pounds of condensed lightning and the pint a couple of gallons of trigger thinking. That's the kind of a surprise package "Rus" was. And, brother, look out!! If "Rus" ever had occasion to lay hands on you he didn't let go until he got good and ready. Try your *durndest* and you couldn't shake loose the grip he carried in those long, slender fish hooks of his. "Butter Fingers"?

What a laugh! "Rus" was never known to have muffed anything in his life!

It was "Butter Fingers" who climbed the greased pole and took down the Senior colors his Freshman year. It was "Butter Fingers" who untied the wet knots in the fellows' clothes the time we Sophies got caught swimming in the Old Bend, thus saving us from a most embarrassing situation. It was "Butter Fingers" who hung by his digits from a window sill on the fourth story of our dorm when she was burning down ... hung there ten minutes till the firemen got a ladder under him after he'd been cut off from the stairs. He saved seven roommates by that sure-grip of his, swinging them from a window where they were trapped and sending them down the stairs

ahead of him before the fire put the stairs out of commission.

And who but "Butter Fingers" could have "human-fly-ed" it up the front of the old stone chapel, clear up into the belfry? Of course he did it on a dare but those wonder fingers of his just pulled him up, catching hold of places that the ordinary person would tear their finger nails on and cry thirteen bloody murders from the strain of hanging to crevices by the finger tips.

That was "Butter Fingers"!

But, using the words of Al Jolson, "You ain't heard nothin' yet!" What I've just got through telling you was just practice exercises for the bird with the muscular mitts, the uncanny grip, the steam shovel hands and the never-break-clutch.

Say, I hope you're not getting this "Butter Fingers" wrong. He was long, lean, lanky, awkward, thin-nosed and all that ... but he wasn't built like a foundry. His hands weren't extra large, either ... excepting that the fingers were extra long. He only weighed a hundred and fifty-one pounds which isn't much when you're thinking in terms of football and so much for so tall. That's where "Butter Fingers" had you fooled. You had to see him in action before you'd believe what "Rus" Lindley could do.

Was he modest? He was so quiet and unassuming that you could hear his watch ticking in his vest pocket! Was he athletic? Don't be ridiculous! If he wasn't athletic anywhere but in his fingers he'd have been athletic enough. As it was, he was the best end that ever played on a football eleven representing Burden High!

What makes you think "Butter Fingers" was a freak? He wasn't born strong-fingered. Naw. He had to develop it. What made him do it? Well, I don't know as I could answer that exactly. I remember "Butter Fingers" saying once he'd gotten a kick out of chinning himself ever since he was a baby. Sure! You don't chin yourself with your chin ... you chin yourself with your ... anyhow it's mostly done with your grip! You get a hold of a bar or something and pull your body up rigid! All right, then! Why didn't you say you'd tried it? Ain't so easy, is it? Especially after the tenth time!

Can you imagine what sort of an end a guy with a powerful grip could make? Can you figure what would happen to a football if "Butter Fingers" ever laid his grapplers on it? And can you picture a runner trying to get away from a tackle by a bird like "Rus"? A fly might as well try to pull its feet off a sheet of sticky fly paper as a runner to jerk loose from "Butter Fingers" once he's got him.

Would you like to hear how "Butter Fingers" won his undying fame? Have I got the time? No, but I'll take time. This story's worth it!

Just make yourself as comfortable as possible. You'd better sit on the edge of your chair, though, because that's where you'll be before very long anyway. And I'll start right in at the beginning so you won't miss any of the picture.

First, you got to get a close-up of this fellow, "Rus" Lindley. He's the kind they describe in the movies as "Oliver, who takes everything seriously—including football." Before any of the guys nicknamed him "Butter Fingers," "Rus" was just an ordinary, awkward candidate for the team ... but while he was picking up bumps in practice he was likewise putting on bumps of knowledge. "Rus" had one of them scientific slants of mind and he always had to figure why he was supposed to do a certain thing a certain way. Once he'd found out the reason he was satisfied. Professor Tweedy, our "math" teacher, used to say that "Rus" was a "natural born thinker." But geometry and trigonometry weren't the only subjects that "Rus" approached from all angles. He used his bean at all times and places.

That's why, when "Rus" went out for football, he felt called upon to exercise his gray matter. It was perfectly obvious to him, for instance, after a careful study of the rudiments of the game, that the weather might seriously alter one's style of play.

"Take the difference between a dry field and a wet field," he says to me, one afternoon, "I'm surprised the coach doesn't make us practice with a wet ball and the field soaked down. The almanac indicates rain three Saturdays this fall and the signs couldn't be any worse for torrential precipitation on the Saturday we play Edgewood. What's that going to mean? Simply that the luckiest team wins! But if the coach used the little mechanism inside his bean it might mean that the *smartest team* would win. What made Napoleon great was his dry land operations. But, oh boy, didn't he get *soaked* at *Waterloo*! Of course that's a rather far-fetched illustration. Just the same, you've got to know how to handle yourself under all conditions or you're practically sunk before you start!"

I agreed with "Rus" not feeling equal to stacking my brain up against his, and besides he has a way of making things sound darn logical. Seeing as how the coach seemed to be overlooking a good bet, "Rus" decides that he's going to get the training he should have anyway. So we meet one night after football practice in his backyard.

"This is what I'd call a laboratory experiment," explains "Rus" as he soaks down the back lawn with the garden hose, "The other boys would probably give us the merry ha ha if they saw

what we're going to do but if my theory's right we'll see the day when we can laugh up our own sleeves!"

When the lawn's nice and oozy and slippery from super-saturation, "Rus" turns the water on the football and gets it just as wet as though it had fallen in a lake.

"All right, Mark," he says to me, "I'll hit the dirt first. This kind of practice isn't exactly going to be pleasant but it has a good chance of proving profitable. Now you stand over there and roll that football across the grass. I'm going to try to fall on it!"

It's easy enough for me to do what "Rus" directs. But it's not so easy for "Rus" to do what he intends. We're dressed in our football togs, of course, right down to the cleated shoes. But even at that the grass is so sleek that the footing's as treacherous as a polished ball room floor. On his first try, "Rus" slips and falls flat before he gets to the ball and the pigskin rolls to the fence.

"There went the chance to save the game!" he points out as he gets to his feet. "Let's try her again!"

Honest, you never saw anybody that's such a glutton for punishment! "Rus" gets sopping wet and all grass-stained and dog-tired but he keeps me throwing that football in all sorts of zig-zag bounces across the lawn till it's so dark that the street lights come on. And then he apologizes for not having traded off with me so's I could have got some of the same experience. "I'm just as well satisfied," I answers. "You don't need to feel bad about that!"

"We'll do it again, every chance we get," says "Rus," not seeming to notice my lack of enthusiasm, "I'm rotten! I missed at least half my dives. And as for scooping the ball up on the run, wasn't I pitiful? But that's what an end's got to be able to do and yours truly isn't going to make a bad muff in a game if he can help it!"

Being a friend of "Rus's" and practically a next door neighbor as well as a team-mate, I can't really turn the serious-minded bird down. Besides, I have to admit to myself that it's darn interesting watching the vim that "Rus" puts into this secret practice. Some nights it's mighty chilly and with the grass wet down it's enough to make your spinal column wriggle, but "Rus" never seems to mind.

"The most annoying part of this thing for me," says "Rus," "is 'Mom's' objection to my draping these wet togs over her radiators. She claims the house smells like a Chinese laundry every night. I tell her she must be a good sport and put up with it for the good of the team!"

Say, you'd be surprised, after a couple of weeks, to see how "Rus" improves! It gets to be marvelous the way he can tear across the lawn, reach down with those long fingers, scoop that slippery pigskin up and keep right on going toward what he imagines is the enemy's goal!

"Preparedness!" he'd smile at me. "That's one of the greatest words in the English language! I want to be ready when the fumble comes!"

Sometimes "Rus" would hit the lawn like an India rubber ball and almost seem to wrap his lean, lanky frame around the pigskin, bouncing up on his feet on the roll and untangling his legs from the knot to be streaking away almost before you could tell what was happening. Once he put so much steam behind it that he couldn't stop in time and plowed into the back fence, busting two boards loose and bruising his shoulder.

"Zowie! I ran into some real opposition that time!" he grinned.

It isn't long before all this extra practicing that "Rus" is doing begins to show up on the football field. In scrimmage he gets the reputation of being "sure-fingered" because he drags down passes, recovers fumbles and handles the ball so smoothly that it seems like he can't miss getting hold of it no matter how wild it goes. In comparison the rest of us look pretty sick, all excepting me ... and I'm a little better than average because of my experience with "Rus." Several times, while I'm playing my position at left half, there's a poor pass back from center and I have to drop on the ball. Believe me, I'm mighty thankful then for the special training I've picked up!

"This game of football is just a matter of following the ball," "Rus" airs to me one night, "I don't care what these wise birds say. There's breaks in every game that, if we could take advantage of 'em, would do more than all the fancy plays ever invented. Look at last week when we played Madison. We have 'em down on their own ten yard line and we break through and block the punt and two of our fellows dives for it. Do they get the ball? Yes, they do not! A Madison back, who knows his onions, shoots in—picks the ball up off his shoe tops after it's bounced out of our fellows' arms—and runs forty yards before he's stopped. That's what I call converting good fortune out of disaster! Either one of our boys ought to have downed the ball on Madison's eight yard line but both of 'em muffed it. On a dry field, too...! Inexcusable!"

"But you must realize, Rus," I argues, "that *your* attitude on this matter is very exceptional. You can't expect all football players to pay the attention you've been paying to developing themselves to a fine point on picking up loose balls!"

"Razzberries!" retorts "Rus," "Then they're not worthy of the name of football players!"

And there the arbitration rests. But the season doesn't get much older than "Rus's" mania begins to break out in a new channel. He's so anxious to see all the boys proficient in the gentle art of falling on the ball that he takes to ragging them every time they miss out.

"Butter fingers!" he yells, and gets a glare in return for his trouble.

"Butter fingers, yourself!" cries the guy who's just looked foolish.

And the first thing you know, the name that "Rus" has branded his team-mates with, comes back on him like a boomerang. So, the only fellow who doesn't deserve the title of "Butter Fingers" is the one who gets it!

"That's all right," "Rus" says to me. "Let 'em call me 'Butter Fingers.' I'll make 'em eat that word twenty times a day. And they'll be trying extra hard to keep from being 'Butter Fingers.' You see!"

Which makes it sound like "Rus" has decided to act the martyr to some adopted cause! Now right here's where a complication enters my story in the shape of Mr. Maxwell Tincup, dignified member of the school board and a political power in the town. Among other things Mr. Tincup is bitterly opposed to football as a sport that's "absolutely barbarious." Football, in Mr. Tincup's exalted opinion, is a machine which manufactures a lot of good-for-nothing rowdies. He's made the air blue at many board meetings, voicing his protest against continuance of the sport as an athletic activity at Burden High but he's never quite been able to get a majority vote against it. Just the same his attitude has stirred up considerable feeling and hasn't exactly made him popular with the boys.

"What Tincup needs is a dose of second childhood," "Butter Fingers" prescribes one day. "He evidently didn't have any the first time!"

Mr. Tincup's home is right on our way to school, a big old-fashioned house that stands on a corner of the street, surrounded by a high picket fence. We often see the anti-footballist's three year old son hanging to the fence and peeking out as though he'd like to investigate the outer world.

"Look at the poor kid," points out Butter Fingers as we're passing one afternoon. "They keep him as spic and span as a children's advertisement. Maxwell Tincup, Junior's sure going to be a chip off the old block if the old block has anything to say about it! I'll bet some day he takes the tiddly-winks championship of South America!"

"Are you sure Mr. Tincup won't consider that too strenuous?" I asks, innocent like.

"Butter Fingers" grins and shrugs his shoulders.

It's not until the Monday before the big game of the year with Edgewood that the something happens which changes the complexion of the whole situation and brings Mr. Tincup's objection to football to a boil's head.

"Butter Fingers" and me are coming back from the athletic field after an extra hard workout. I have a football and we're tossing it back and forth as we're trotting down the sidewalk, me about fifty feet ahead of "Butter Fingers" so we can have plenty of distance to pass. As we cut across the corner toward Tincup's house I spot him out in the yard, washing his front porch off with the stream from the garden hose. "Hello!" says I to myself, "Mr. Tincup's getting industrious in his old age!"

Just then "Butter Fingers" lets loose an extra long throw. I can see at a glance that the ball's going to be over my head unless I can take it on the jump. Nope! I miss it by three feet, banging up against Mr. Tincup's front fence trying to pull it down.

"Look out!" I yells when I see what's going to happen.

If "Butter Fingers" had took aim he couldn't have made a squarer hit. The pigskin spirals over the fence and plunks Mr. Maxwell Tincup smack on the side of the head. The blow's so unexpected it knocks the nozzle of the hose out of his hands and before anybody can say "Ask me another!" the hose squirms around like a snake and soaks him from head to foot. Mr. Tincup begins yelling like he's in the middle of the ocean, going down for the last time. It takes him a couple of seconds to get on to what's hit him, but the minute he sees the football lying on the lawn he lets out a bellow of rage and turns to us, shaking his fist.

"All right, young gentlemen!" he snorts. "That's the end of your ball ... and it's the end of *you*, for that matter!"

It may be the end of us but it's not the end of our ball so far as "Butter Fingers" is concerned. He's over the fence in a jiffy and streaking for the pigskin as though he's on a football field. Mr. Tincup doesn't suspect any opposition on picking up what "Butter Fingers" regards as a free ball. He's too dripping wet and ripping mad to suspect anything. As he stoops down to pick up the ball which is also wet, it slips out of his fingers. To make matters worse he kicks it accidentally with his foot and it rolls along in front of him. It's right then that "Butter Fingers" arrives. He takes a

running dive across the wet lawn, skids right under Mr. Tincup's nose, curls himself around the pigskin, bounces up on his feet and keeps on going till he comes to the fence which he hurdles.

Mr. Tincup stares at the human cyclone, his mouth so wide open that you can see all the gold in his teeth.

"Come here!" he shouts, waving his arms.

"I'm sorry!" calls "Butter Fingers," "We didn't mean to do what we did but this is our ball and we got a right to it!"

"You've got no right to be playing football!" raves Mr. Tincup, beginning to shiver now as the air's kind of cold. "And I'm going to see that you don't play football hereafter!"

"Gee!" I says to "Butter Fingers," when we've beat it. "I don't know as that was such a bright stunt—your rescuing that pigskin. We might better have let old Tincup have it. Now he's going to raise a rumpus for sure! He'll probably go to the board."

"Butter Fingers" gives me the laugh.

"Make your pulse behave!" he says. "Everybody knows Mr. Tincup's a great guy to holler. He won't get any further than his echo. Say—I don't hear you mentioning anything about that pickup I made. Speak up, brother! Can't you recognize a masterpiece?"

"Your masterpiece," I answers, "Wasn't the pickup. It was hitting Mr. Tincup on the bean!"

"Just the same," argues "Butter Fingers," "if the old boy'd only had some football experience I'd never have gotten away with the ball. That only goes to show the value of...!"

"Oh, dry up!" I orders. "You're getting unbalanced on that subject...!"

It isn't until the next morning that we get the glad tidings of bad news. Ain't it the truth that everyone's glad to be the first to tell you something sad? And what do you suppose has happened?

That peeved Mr. Tincup has stirred up a special called meeting of the school board and has gone and gotten us suspended from the team! He's raised a terrific rumpus about football in general and has tried to get the big game of the year with Edgewood canceled but he can't get away with that. He's influential enough to put a crimp in the team, though, and to put a crimp in us in particular, by getting the board to have us kicked off the eleven just when we're needed most. I hope you won't think I'm handing myself bouquets on purpose but I'm the best backfield man the team's got and I've already told you how hot "Butter Fingers" is as an end. Are we sore? Are we sick? So is most everyone else but what good does that do 'em? The students get out a petition asking for the school board to meet again and reconsider the matter but the school board pays about as much attention as a deaf ear.

"We're sunk all right," I says to "Butter Fingers" in the middle of the week. "Leave it to Tincup to see that we don't play Saturday! He's got it in for us for fair! And we're going to be treated to the *exquisite pleasure* of sitting on the sidelines and seeing our team take a nice trimming from Edgewood!"

"Edgewood's going to be plenty tough!" admits "Butter Fingers," soberly. "We wouldn't have been any too strong with our best line-up against 'em. Wouldn't this give you a pain? Especially after all the extra work we've put in so's we'd be in tip top shape for that game!"

"Don't cry on *my* shoulder," I replies, "I got tears enough of my own!"

Saturday comes. It's the one day in the fall that the almanac gets absolutely right. There's a precipitous rain falling. The weather sort of reflects our gloom.

"It's just the kind of a day I've been dreaming about," moans "Butter Fingers," "There's bound to be plenty of fumbles. I ought to be in there to get 'em!"

"Tell that to Tincup!" I answers.

By noon a wind springs up and the clouds lift a little. The downpour begins to let up. But the football field is already a young lake and water is backed up in the streets. It's going to be a grand afternoon for ducks and a splashing time for a gridiron battle.

At one o'clock, an hour before game time, "Butter Fingers" says to me, "Mark, there's one thing old Tincup can't keep us from doing. He can't prohibit our going to the locker room and hanging around with the fellows till they're due on the field. Maybe we can cheer the gang up a bit!"

"Not much chance of that," I replies. "But, I'm with you, nevertheless...!"

So we sets out. And of course our direction takes us right past the house that's owned by the object of our affections! I suggests to "Butter Fingers" that we make a detour but he growls that

he'll be darned if the high and mighty Mr. Maxwell Tincup is going to make him take so much as an extra step.

The rain has entirely stopped now and by the breeze that's blowing it looks like the sky is through for the day. As we get near the picket fence we discover something unusual. Mr. Tincup's three-year-old kid is out by the curb trying to sail a toy boat in the water. And standing on the front porch, staring at us with a satisfied grin on his face, is the anti-football member of the school board himself! Mr. Tincup looks at us as much as to say, "Well, how do you young rascals feel now?"

There's nothing we can do but swallow our medicine and parade past with eyes front as though we haven't even seen him. This we start to do when—all of a sudden—a strong gust of wind comes along and takes the kid's hat off, rolling it into the street. "Butter Fingers" sees this, and grins.

"Dadda, look!" says the kid, pointing a finger at his hat which is lying in a puddle of water in the middle of the street. We watch the kid, laughing inside to think of anything happening which might affect old Tincup's dignity. The kid runs along the curb, finds a place where he can step over the stream of water and starts out on the street after the hat.

"Junior, come here!" yells Mr. Tincup, hurrying down off the porch. "Papa'll get it for you!"

But Papa doesn't have a chance. Things commence to take place after that so fast that it leaves me dizzy.

Just as the kid starts off the curb a big, heavy duty truck comes thundering down the side street and turns sharp around the corner. The driver catches sight of the kid, lets loose the klaxon and reaches for the brakes. Seeing the danger, the kid tries to beat it back, slips on the wet pavement and falls! I stop dead, looking on, petrified. I'm so frozen that I don't even see "Butter Fingers" leave my side. My eyes are glued on the kid and the truck, with the brakes set, skidding right down on him! I hear Mr. Tincup scream. Then there's a swishing sound and a body goes sliding along the pavement. It strikes the kid, arms reach out, fingers grab a hold, the body does a roll ... and then you can't tell which is which. Honest, I don't dare look for a second, it's so close! But when I opens my eyes again I see the truck driver crawling down off his seat, wiping perspiration from his forehead. Over on the opposite curb there's a long, lean, lanky bird getting to his feet and helping up a badly scared youngster that's all wet and dirty.

"Who says football doesn't fit you for something useful?" I hear "Butter Fingers" mumble to himself. Then he stoops down. "How are you, kid, all right? We took a nice, wet roll, didn't we?"

The next instant an insane man races across the street and grabs the kid in his arms and sits down on the damp curb and breaks into sobs.

"Boy," said the truck driver, extending his hand to "Butter Fingers," "that was the nerviest stunt I ever seen! Look how far that old wagon skidded past where you were!"

"Butter Fingers" looks.

"Been a bad place for a fumble, wouldn't it?" he says, then glances quick at me. "Say, Mark—we'll have to be legging it or we'll miss out seeing the team!"

"Just a minute!" says a choky voice from the curb. "Where you boys going?"

"To see the game!" I answers, rather short.

"No, you're not!" raves Mr. Tincup, jumping to his feet. "You're going to *play*!"

He fumbles in his pocket, pulls out a calling card and scribbles on the back.

"Give that to Coach Spilman," he says, handing it to "Butter Fingers." "I'll have to get in touch with the other members of the board before I can get your suspension lifted but I'll do it, boys, if it's humanly possible! Meanwhile, you get to the locker room and get all dressed ready to go in at a minute's notice!"

We're not reinstated till the beginning of the last quarter but it's time enough for "Butter Fingers," with the score 13 to 7 against us, to scoop up an Edgewood fumble on our seventeen yard line and run practically the length of the field for a touchdown! Then I kicks the extra point to make the score 14 to 13 which is the way it stands when the game ends.

As we're going off the field an overjoyed member of the school board comes pushing through the crowd and compliments "Butter Fingers" for his star performance, ending up with, "And young man, I can't ever tell you how grateful I am for that other wonderful thing you...!"

"Don't mention it!" says "Butter Fingers," breaking in modestly. "The thanks are on *my* side. I didn't have much practice this week and picking up the kid just put me back in trim!"

FOR THE GLORY OF THE COACH

"There's no use talking, Mooney. You've broken training rules and you're through. That's final."

For a pulsating moment Elliott University's star fullback stood facing the great John Brown, acknowledged dean of all football coaches,—facing him as though he had not heard aright. There was stunned surprise evident in the attitudes of his team-mates, too. No one had imagined that John Brown would have the nerve to cross Mooney beyond the giving of a reprimand. Not and hold the reputation which he had slaved so hard to preserve in turning out a winning eleven for decadent Elliott his first year there. The great John Brown might better have remained in permanent retirement, resting on his richly deserved laurels, than risk his halo of "wizard" and "miracle man of the gridiron" by failure to restore Elliott's former football supremacy. The press had been free to predict, when Coach Brown had finally consented to do what he could for Elliott, that this task would prove his Waterloo. "Coach Severely Handicapped by Material and Facilities," one headline read, while another had it, "Sun Now Hardly Destined to Set on Triumph for John Brown," the articles going on to decry the lamentable conditions surrounding Elliott's effort to attain a higher athletic grade. The task was regarded as beyond that of even a miracle man and John Brown was credited with having accepted the crudest of tests.

And now, after Elliott had risen toward glory by defeating Hale, first of the Big Three, thus repudiating in part the commonly accepted opinion that the University could not hope to win any of her big contests that year—now, when all eyes were upon John Brown as never before; when it seemed as though this wily old fox, in some uncanny manner, had juggled another victorious eleven out of athletic chaos,—the coach was cutting off his nose to spite his face by dismissing Tim Mooney from the team!

Why it had been Mooney who, almost single-handed, had accounted for Hate's defeat. The backfield had been built around him; his experience had been relied upon as a stabilizer for the entire eleven which was comprised mostly of green, untried material. Removing Mooney from the team was like jerking the center pole out from under a tent and expecting the tent to remain standing upright. At least that is the way members of the eleven felt about it.

And the reason Coach Brown was kicking Mooney off the team was because he had stayed out past midnight on several occasions with his co-ed sweetheart, Ruth Chesterton. One of John Brown's rules was that every football man must be in bed by ten and those acquainted with his usually strict disciplinary measures had become accustomed to obeying. But Mooney's case had somehow been regarded as different. Folks had come to consider him, because of his outstanding athletic prowess, a law unto himself. In fact, Tim had become obsessed with the same impression.

"You—you're not joking?" he asked, still unable to believe John Brown's stern edict.

"Joking!" blazed the coach, "What would I be joking about? I warned you what would happen ... and the same thing's going to happen to anyone else who wilfully violates rules. You're through, Mooney, and you're through for good. Turn in your togs at the clubhouse!"

A hurt expression crept into the eyes of Elliott's star fullback. He took a step forward, intreatingly.

"Aw, say, Coach ... honest, I'm sorry. I didn't think you'd ... that is, I ... I ... it won't happen again, sir."

"No, you can bet it won't," said John Brown in a voice of quiet coldness. Then, deliberately turning his back, "All right—first and seconds out for fifteen minutes' scrimmage!"

At Naylor College where Coach Brown had Inaugurated and made famous his football system, he had been loved and respected by players as well as student body. Resigning his seat of honor at Naylor had been one of the hardest things John Brown had ever done. But, even though the announcement of his resignation had been met at once by staggering offers from big schools East and West, the noted coach had refused them all. He had retired to gain what he felt to be a much needed rest from years of strenuous yet highly enjoyed activity. And newspapers throughout the land, devoting columns to his eulogy, extolled the unbroken string of victories which his teams at Naylor had scored over the most powerful elevens in the country. Quitting the game at the zenith of his career, it was a widely known fact that Coach Brown could have fixed his own price for services with at least six of the biggest institutions of learning in America. Here was a man who had coached football for the sheer love of it, immune to the earning possibilities of his tutoring.

But two years in retirement had done much to lessen Coach Brown's resolve. It had remained for a small group of loyal Elliott alumni to approach the coach on a new tack. These men believed that John Brown might be landed if the proper appeal were made. They had studied out that the other schools had failed in striving to outbid one another, a point which seemed to prove that money to John Brown was no object. All right then—the way to reach him must be through

sentiment—if he could be reached at all.

For years Elliott had been embarrassed through its position as a leading university and its inability to put winning athletic teams on the field. This condition was particularly true of the football elevens. The touch of a master hand was needed; the application of such a system as John Brown had put into effect at Naylor; the guidance of a coach who could command not only the respect of his players but the enthusiastic support of the student body.

Carefully planning their verbal assault, the committee of Elliott alumni swooped upon Brown. They found the great coach apparently as determined as ever not to re-enter the football limelight, but they presented him with a picture, so graphically and despairingly setting forth the sorrowful condition of athletics at Elliott, and so feelingly playing upon his love for the game that John Brown, wavering, finally consented to take charge of Elliott for *one year!*

Immediately the press, so glowing in its accounts before, had leaped to the conviction that John Brown, despite all he had said to the contrary, had actually been a hold-out until some college had reached the figure he demanded. This conviction had been given wings with the rumor that Elliott University was to pay him the unheard of amount of \$50,000 for a year's services although, it was grudgingly admitted, if John Brown could bring Elliott out of the slough of athletic degeneracy, he would probably be worth every cent of that sum.

Thoroughly appreciating the huge job cut out for him, John Brown, in taking over the reins of football government at Elliott, had signed up Red Murdock, one of the stars he had developed in other years at Naylor, to act as assistant coach. And one of his first official acts had been to put into force a rigid rule of discipline. He knew that he must demand the utmost in every way from whatever or whoever there was at hand in order to even approach what he hoped to accomplish. But the mere fact that Brown had come to the head of things at Elliott was cause for the schools on Elliott's schedule to regard their proverbially weak opponent with new respect and wonderment.

The game with Hale had been a genuine eye-opener. Elliott's 20 to 6 victory had hardly been looked for and neither had the startling performance of one Tim Mooney whose open field running had made two touchdowns possible and whose talented toe had kicked two field goals. A new star had arisen to add to Coach Brown's constellation of developed gridiron heroes.

On the strength of Mooney's work alone, football authorities were now willing to concede Elliott a chance against Larwood, second of the Big Three, which was to be met the following Saturday. But Delmar, last and bitterest enemy of Elliott—a college noted for the consistent power of its football elevens and this season rated as possessing the greatest team in the country—was considered a good thirty to forty points better than Coach Brown's aggregation at its strongest.

"What! Mooney banned off the team!"

When the news of Coach Brown's drastic action flashed through the Elliott student body it was greeted by a storm of indignant and growing protest. A petition was immediately drawn up and sent the rounds asking John Brown to reconsider his expelling of Mooney. The petition was as nearly one hundred per cent as a petition could be. But the petition failed to move the coach. Those who reflected on his past history reported gloomily that once the coach took a stand on anything he was like several rocks of Gibraltar.

Ruth Chesterton, the girl indirectly responsible for Tim Mooney's dismissal, felt greatly upset over the whole affair. She had thought Coach Brown's bed time regulation a silly old rule until it had operated against her hero. Now she was one of the most rebellious in her attitude toward the man whom many people referred to familiarly as J. B. So, the petition had failed to do any good? Well, she knew what she would do! She would go to him and tell him what she thought about the matter and then what could he do but rescind his action?

But when the irate Miss Chesterton came into the presence of the great John Brown she suddenly quailed. She couldn't tell exactly why she quailed but she found it exceedingly difficult to look into the crystal-pointed blue of J. B.'s eyes and say the things she was going to say. Instead, she felt somehow like a foolish little girl who had been used to having her own way at all costs and who had now met up with a man who knew her better than her own father.

She was conscious almost at once of the smooth tufts of silvery hair about this man's temples and the great furrowed line across his forehead, the firmly set mouth, the broad shoulders—the trace of a smile as he leaned toward her and said, in a kindly inquiring manner, "Well?"

And that one word, peculiar as it may seem, had unnerved her or disarmed her, she didn't know which. There crept over Ruth Chesterton a sense of guilt. She found herself stammering and stumbling.

"Please, sir ... I'm the girl that Mr. Mooney went out with when he broke the rules."

"Oh—you are?"

"Yes, sir."

An embarrassed pause.

"Well—what of it?"

"Why, I ... I thought perhaps you'd like to see me."

That wasn't the right thing to say. Ruth knew it the moment she had uttered it but she had never felt more uncomfortable in her life.

"Me—like to see you? Why should you have thought that?" There was a trace of ironic amusement in the coach's voice.

"Why—why because I was sort of responsible for Mr. Mooney's breaking the rules."

"Did he send you here?"

This question did much to bring Ruth back on her feet.

"No, sir! I came of my own free will. He doesn't know anything about it. He isn't that kind, Mr. Brown. He's taken all the blame—and it's really more my fault than his—lots more. I—I encouraged him to—to go out with me those nights ... I didn't think it would do any harm ... and you'll have to admit yourself that ten o'clock is pretty early," Ruth added, as she gained courage.

"Sorry, young lady, but the question of time is not debatable. Mr. Mooney broke the rules and that ends it..."

"But, Mr. Brown ... won't you ... I mean ... the team ... or rather, the game with Larwood. Won't he be needed?"

The coach nodded, frankly.

"I shouldn't be surprised."

"Then perhaps—well, maybe if folks understood just how he came to break the rules... I'd be glad to..."

John Brown raised his hand in a waving gesture.

"It's done now—and what's done cannot be helped. The time for you to have thought of the consequences was before you tempted your friend to ignore the restrictions."

Ruth, sensing that she was getting nowhere, decided to throw herself entirely upon John Brown's sympathy.

"Mr. Brown ... if I tell you that I'm awfully, awfully sorry and that I'll never, never interfere with anyone keeping rules again, would you...?"

The coach shook his head, giving a sharp, deep-throated laugh. Then the lines in his face hardened, the furrowed crease stiffened—ridge-like—and he leaned forward compellingly.

"You are not sorry because Tim Mooney's loss to the team may mean the loss of the game—or games. You are sorry only for Mr. Mooney and the limelight his playing might reflect upon you. Pardon my frankness but I know your type well. You are a disciple of this individual freedom cult which has swept the world. You have regarded rules as being made only for the thrill and pleasure of breaking. It has pleased your vanity that Mr. Mooney should have chosen your company rather than the observance of football regulations, A loyal Elliott girl, having a friend on the team, would have insisted on keeping training rules with him. But, not you! You've been a thoughtless traitor to your college. And now perhaps your joy will be complete when I tell you that your act may come close to costing me the ambition of my life. Good day!"

Shocked by the sudden, burning reprimand and the blunt abruptness of her dismissal, Ruth sat for a few prickly seconds staring at the coach. Then she arose and, in place of being indignant, walked sobbingly from the room!

The following Saturday, minus the services of Tim Mooney, Elliott went down to a bitter, heart-rending defeat at the hands of Larwood, losing by the hard-fought score of 7 to 0. Five times during this blood-tingling conflict, Elliott drove the ball down inside the enemy's ten yard line but somehow, every one of these times, just missed the punch which would have taken it over. Throughout the game, and especially at the moments when Elliott was in possession of her golden scoring opportunities, the stands had madly implored for Mooney.

"Mooney! Mooney! Give us Mooney!" they had chanted.

And after the game Elliott fans took occasion to warmly denounce Coach Brown for the discipline he had employed which had deprived Elliott University of what would have been one of her most notable victories in years. The press of the nation was full to overflowing of newsprint that day either attacking or defending the great John Brown. Most sport writers were of the opinion that the famous coach had only himself to blame for the defeat, poking much fun at his

ten o'clock law. A few of the more orthodox ones, however, credited John Brown with having put law and order above victory, and lauded the personal sacrifice he had made in so doing. But Elliott, crazed at having been given a taste of athletic fruits after so long a time of starving, could not reconcile herself at not having been able to eat the whole apple. As time ticked on, Larwood's defeat of Elliott seemed more and more uncalled for ... and the abuse of John Brown grew and grew.

What Coach Brown's thoughts were on the situation no one knew. He had scarcely been seen since the game and he had stayed so close to his room—it had been reported—that he had even had his meals sent up to him, refusing all interviews as well as callers. This in itself was unusual—but that was John Brown. Eccentricity was expected of a man who had been in the habit of accomplishing such astounding results with raw human material and a football. To those who flattered themselves that they reasoned, it was decided that John Brown, incurring popular disfavor, had taken the simplest and most effective course of curbing drastic comment by giving his antagonists no object to shoot at. After all, right or wrong, Coach Brown was in charge of the team and it had been through his efforts solely that Elliott had been able to even give Larwood a fight.

Every Monday, following a game, it was a custom among coaches to review the previous Saturday's struggle, calling attention to the errors of omission and commission as well as stressing the strong points of play. Coach Brown's analyses of games had been regarded by many as classics—some even called them scholarly treatises—but, at any rate, the Monday hour in the Elliott clubhouse was recognized as the education period par excellence of the entire week in football circles and everyone who could possibly command a right to attend was there to hear the contests cussed and discussed play by play.

"Wonder what thunderbolt J. B. will have up his sleeve for us this time?" every Elliott football man was asking himself as he headed for the clubhouse the Monday after the Larwood battle.

It was certain that John Brown would say something distinctly significant. His stone silence over the week-end would indicate that. Whatever his reactions to the boiling pot of criticism which had been stewed over him, the team could expect to get most of these reactions in the form of sharply defined lightning thrusts at weaknesses which—to Coach Brown—had been responsible for Elliott's failure to win. Team members instinctively knew that, so far as Tim Mooney was concerned, John Brown would regard him as though he had never lived. The coach would chalk up the defeat—not against Mooney's absence from the line-up—but against the team individually or collectively failing to come through in some particular. They knew this because John Brown had emphasized, in some outstanding past instances, that "Games are never won by the men on the sidelines but by the eleven on the field."

At the clubhouse the hands of the old wooden-faced clock pointed to five minutes after four. This was fifteen minutes past the time that the Monday talk usually began. Players, lounging in the locker room, looked at one another in silent wonderment and then strolled toward the windows and gazed out down the walk which led through a lane of trees to the campus. As the clock droned the quarter hour, Red Murdock—assistant coach—got up, with an air of uneasiness, and sauntered to the door and stood, peering. An unnatural quiet fell upon those present. Coach Brown had never been late before. Punctuality had been one of his iron-clad rules. And now he had kept them sitting there, in growing impatience and suspense, some twenty-five minutes!

Suddenly the assistant coach straightened up and stepped from the door. Automatically the players changed from lounging positions to attitudes of expectant attention. And every face cried to heaven of the exclamation, "Ah,—he's coming!"

There followed the sound of feet on the sidewalk—a firm, measured tread which grew methodically nearer until it stopped abruptly at the threshold. A moment more and a figure filled the doorway. But such a figure! John Brown to be sure—yet a different John Brown, an older John Brown; a sadder John Brown. His face looked white—not so white as the chalk lines on the gridiron—but unusually white. And there was a drawn quality about it with a certain weariness under the eyes. All this no one could help but notice as he stood in the doorway, facing them. Yet, when the face relaxed into the smile that everyone had grown to love, its white, drawn weariness was forgotten. The coach was himself again.

"Well, boys, you've got one on me this time. Sorry to have kept you waiting."

John Brown advanced into the room, nodding a greeting to Red Murdock. He lifted a foot and placed it upon the empty end of a bench on which some players were seated, leaning over to rest his elbow on his upraised knee and his chin upon the palm of his hand. He stood thus, the thumb of his other hand run in under his belt strap, his cap pulled well down so that the band of the rim seemed almost to press against the furrowed line of his forehead. Just a simple, unaffected pose perhaps—but somehow, this tardy Monday afternoon, it held a touch of the dramatic.

"Team—I have a little surprise for you to-day," said the great John Brown. "We're not going to discuss Saturday's game with Larwood, The game itself has been discussed enough by everyone who saw it. But I would like to say to you and let it be heralded as coming from me, that I never hope to see a more perfect game of football than you men of Elliott played against Larwood!"

Could the roof have crashed in unexpectedly at that instant it could have caused no more profound astonishment than this most surprising of tributes from the lips of John Brown. Was he suddenly gone crazy—or was he about to perpetrate some biting joke?

A substitute, anticipating a sarcastic follow-up, let out a mirthful cackle.

"All right, you're through for the day." The coach gave the order without raising his voice nor even looking at the culprit. He waited until the chagrined disturber had slunk out before resuming.

"I mean it, men. My idea of perfect play is when a team performs strictly as it has been coached to perform ... following a system through to the very last regardless of the breaks of the game or the preconceived notions of the individual players. That is team-work in the fullest—that is genuine football. That you failed to win does not alter the fact that you gave a faultless exhibition insofar as your experience and training permitted. Saturday you were by no means the greatest team I have ever coached, but you were by all odds the fightingest, willingest bunch of grid warriors that, in my estimation, ever wore moleskins!"

The coach paused and shifted his position to the other knee while the Elliott men sat like a group of badly fussed and dumbfounded school boys. Even Red Murdock could not conceal a look of frank bewilderment. What on earth was the great John Brown driving at? He had never heard the coach extol an eleven before. This was a most radical departure....

"A comparatively green line and a green backfield and yet you held Larwood to one touchdown and threatened her goal five different times! There is victory enough for me in that achievement...."

Forgetting their embarrassment at the praise which was being heaped upon them, a change began to creep over the team members—a sort of magical change which stiffened spines and raised heads with a growing pride. Gone was the inward despondency which had gripped them since their gruelling loss to Larwood. And in its place...?

Quick to note this rousing transformation, Red Murdock—assistant coach—fought back a smile and the simultaneous inclination to kick himself.

"Strike me for a dumb-bell! J. B. sure knows his stuff. He realizes he's dealing with practically new and little seasoned men ... and he's trying to save their morale and bolster it up for the biggest game of the year—against Delmar. Criticism at this stage of development would eat their hearts out. He's feeding them... but oh, aren't they eating it? They've turned to putty in his hands right now!"

This much Red Murdock told himself while Coach Brown was pacing impulsively across the room and back. The wily old fox still! And the Elliott men leaning forward breathlessly, hanging upon his every word.

"But what you *have* done is nothing as compared to what you *can* do! This week you are going to learn how to beat Delmar ... and next Saturday you are going to do it!"

An involuntary gasp escaped the lips of John Brown's listeners.

"You are going to do it because I have faith in you and I am going to see you through. I..."

The face of John Brown returned suddenly back to its chalk-like white; the flash sunk out of his eyes, leaving weary rings; the drawn quality took hold of his cheek muscles—and his foot slipped off the bench to the floor as he clutched impulsively at his shirt front.

"I..."

A dozen hands caught the great John Brown as he slumped forward and fell.

There was the mad moment of bringing water, of applying restoratives, of sending out a rush call for Doctor Landon. Then the quieter, more chilling moment when the doctor had come ... and had looked up ... and shaken his head.

Newspapers were kindly enough now. They told how the great John Brown had been stricken down at the height of his brilliant career. They intimated that the strain of developing a winning team at Elliott had taken its toll, together with the loss of the Larwood game and its attendant *unjust* criticism. Colleges throughout the country went into mourning. Football practices were curtailed as a mark of respect and memorial services were held. At Naylor there was talk of a monument to place in their Hall of Fame. The sporting populace at large sincerely grieved over the passing of this nationally revered figure who had contributed much to football in particular and all athletics in general.

But it was natural that Elliott should take Coach Brown's passing hardest of all. A difference of opinion sprung up at once as to whether the last game of the season should be played. Some argued that the game should be cancelled as a tribute to John Brown's memory, while others—who claimed to know J. B. the best—wondered if this were the sort of tribute that the famous

coach would have appreciated. Had he not left his body with the message to "carry on" on his lips? Had not his dying words been a fervent exhortation to the team to buckle down to the strenuous task of preparing to meet and, if humanly possible, to defeat Delmar? In the light of Delmar's imposing season's record, the coach's last talk may have seemed preposterous for the colossal faith he was seemingly placing in his system and his ill-experienced but fighting team. Yet John Brown had died with his face to the front—ready to meet his biggest test head-on, and—under these circumstances it would be a good thing for Elliott and the entire football world if the game were gone through with on schedule.

There were two individuals at Elliott who mourned as one—a big-framed, well proportioned fellow and a slender-lined, sweet-faced girl. Their sorrow over J. B.'s loss had been made all the more inconsolable because of certain previous events now stamped indelibly upon their minds and magnified to the point of causing them much remorse. Perhaps they should not have taken the happening quite so much to heart but Tim Mooney and Ruth Chesterton somehow felt as though they had been condemned in the eyes of the coach and his demise now offered them no opportunity to redeem themselves.

When the Elliott board of control, after a special called session of great solemnity, announced its decision to permit the looming contest with Delmar to be played there was much sober rejoicing. The athletic world figuratively wore a mourning band on its arm but there had been born a sense of thrill in its heart such as the prospects of no other gridiron battle had aroused. The demand for seats at the Elliott stadium became unprecedented. Authorities, harassed from all sides by the frenzied petition for pasteboards, ordered the construction of temporary stands but the clamor soon outgrew all bounds of accommodation.

It was estimated that some fifty thousand fans must be denied the spectacle of Coach John Brown's last team meeting the tartar of all football elevens in Delmar. There was little doubt as to what would be the outcome of the game but the conditions under which the game was to be played were such as to raise interest to the highest human pitch.

It had been decreed that there should be no vying of rival cheering sections with one another—a rather foolish decree, some thought—finding it hard to imagine a football contest devoid of the familiar and on-spurring "Rah, rahs." But this was an idea that the faculty had devised as a mark of respect and no one could criticize the spirit which had prompted the formulation of the decree. No, if the game were to be played the proper tribute to John Brown must, at the same time, not be lost sight of. And what could be more significantly impressive than a crowd numbering upwards of seventy thousand, watching a football contest in profound silence?

Wednesday night, after Red Murdock had got back to his room from the services held for his beloved leader, he was surprised by a tap on the door.

"Don't wish to be disturbed," he said.

"But I—it's very important, sir," intreated a voice from the other side.

"Can't help it!" he snapped, his irritation being due to the enormous responsibility which had fallen upon him. "See me tomorrow."

For answer the doorknob turned and the door swung inward. The assistant coach raised his head, about to make angry protest, but the protest melted on his lips at what he saw. Standing in the hallway was the grim and resolute figure of Tim Mooney.

"I beg your pardon, sir—but I've just got to see you tonight!"

"Well,—all right. Come in."

The former Elliott fullback stepped through the doorway and pushed the door shut after him, nervously. He came over toward the man who had been forced into the unenviable role of trying to fill Coach Brown's great shoes, and stood—fumbling with his cap. There was an awkward moment, broken finally by Red Murdock.

"You said you had something important. Let's get it over quickly. I don't feel like...."

Tim Mooney crumpled the cap in his large right hand and raised the fist in an appealing gesture.

"It's just this, sir... I didn't have to—being off the squad—but I've kept every regulation since. And I want to go in. I'd give my right arm to go in. I—I—somehow I feel like I'd been partly responsible for J. B.'s death!"

"You shouldn't feel that way, Mooney."

"Perhaps not ... but I can't help it.... If we'd only won from Larwood. But we can't lose to Delmar, Mr. Murdock. We can't! No matter how strong Delmar is we've got to beat 'em ... for J. B.'s sake. Please, sir ... won't you reinstate me just for this game? After that I'm through. I'll never play again so long as I live..." Mooney choked. "I guess there's no flowers our coach would like better than a victory over Delmar. Won't you let me help try to give 'em to him?"

There was something in Tim Mooney's appeal that was heart-rending. Tears glistened in the former Elliott fullback's eyes and found their reflection in the eyes of John Brown's assistant coach.

"Mooney," spoke Red Murdock, with difficulty, "I know just how you feel. I played for J. B. once and I'd have given as much for him in life as you're now willing to give to him in death. I can't refuse you, boy. You play. Report for practice tomorrow night!"

Outside the brown-stoned house and across the street from the place in which Red Murdock had his room, a girl paced up and down, taking care to keep within the gathering shadows. Every once in a while she would stop, just opposite the house, and gaze anxiously at the entrance. The time of her waiting seemed a young eternity to her though in all it could not have been more than ten minutes. And then the figure she had been looking for emerged. He glanced about, saw her, and both started toward each other.

"What did he say?" she cried, breathlessly.

The former Elliott fullback did not attempt a verbal reply. He simply reached out and gripped the hands of the girl, as they met, and nodded his head.

"Pm so glad," she murmured, tears splashing down upon his rough knuckles. "I really think J. B. misjudged me ... and I haven't any way of making up to him ... except through you.... It's our chance, Tim ... to make good!"

He smiled and patted her arm and the two of them went off, hand in hand, through the dusk.

No one saw the sun rise the morning of the momentous day as Saturday dawned behind a bank of dark, somber-looking clouds. Highways early became choked with lines of automobiles and railway schedules slowed under the running of football specials. The vicinity about Elliott University soon resembled a vast ant hill, swarming with sport-crazed humans. By noon the little college town was transformed into a huge outdoor garage with every available space, even front lawns, taken up by autos, many of which bore licenses from distant states. The throng milled up and down the streets, impelled by a restless curiosity. Delmar students, on hand six thousand strong, felt almost lost without the tuneful services of their famous band. An uncanny absence of boisterous sound prevailed as though everyone was impressed with the peculiar nature of the occasion. And because of this strained sort of reverent silence the atmosphere was gradually being made so tense as to be almost unbearable.

Members of the Elliott team, confined to their rooms until noon by order of Red Murdock, reflected—to a much more trying degree—the feelings of the multitude. Outside they could hear the tramp and shuffle of feet and occasionally an outcry, but their ears recorded no blare of music or outburst of jostling gaiety. And, as minute crawled after minute, their irritation grew so that they took to pacing up and down—up and down—figuratively frothing at the mouths to be out and clawing into Delmar ... anything to get the torture of waiting over!

By fifteen minutes before game time every possible nook and cranny of Elliott field was jammed with heart-palpitating humanity. The great stadium was packed, aisles and all, with the greatest crowd its historic confines had ever held. And thousands more stormed the gates outside, beseeching entrance.

In the clubhouse, eleven Elliott men—the choice of Red Murdock to start against Delmar—sat in a rigid circle while their assistant coach delivered his last admonitions.

"And one word more," said Red, as the shrill whistle of the referee called impatiently for Elliott's appearance on the field. "It was just last Monday that John Brown stood in this room, precisely as I am standing now, and voiced his confidence in you. He declared that Saturday you were going to beat Delmar. He said you were going to do it because he was going to see you through. Outside there, to-day," with a wave of the hand toward the stadium, "There are eighty thousand people, one of the greatest football gatherings that ever attended a game in America, hushed and waiting to see what account John Brown's team gives of itself. Throughout the country telegraph keys will click your every play and radios will tell the story to countless thousands. To-day you hold within your palms the opportunity for achieving Elliott's greatest athletic triumph and at the same time immortalizing the name of Coach John Brown. Does John Brown live ... or does John Brown die...?"

Another urgent blast came from the referee's whistle. A motion from Red Murdock and eleven grim-jawed men shot from the club-house. A great murmuring hum arose as the team burst upon the field—then an involuntary cheer as the game got under way with Delmar kicking off.

Highly strung and nervously eager, Elliott took the kick-off on her seven yard line and advanced the ball, under splendid interference, for nineteen yards before being downed. The man with the ball had been Tim Mooney and the stands echoed his name though the cheering sections were dumb. On the first play, as a price for her over-anxiety, Elliott was penalized five yards for being off-side. The next play netted but two yards, an attempt through Delmar's sturdy line. Then the ball was snapped to Elliott's star fullback and Mooney—every nerve pulsating with the desire to give his all—fumbled. A mad commotion of flying legs and arms ... a moment of breathless

suspense as the arms and legs were untangled ... a mighty groan of disappointment from the crowd—scarcely three minutes of play over and Delmar in possession of the ball but twenty-three yards from Elliott's goal!

The recovered fumble was too good an advantage for Delmar to pass up. Employing a crushing style of attack, directed furiously and unmercifully at the lighter Elliott line—Delmar commenced her first march toward a touchdown. It took just five plays to put the ball across despite the most heroic efforts of Elliott to resist Delmar's steam roller offensive. Delmar added the point after touch down by a kick from placement, giving her an early lead of 7 to 0.

Convinced now that they were in for the witnessing of a massacre, the stands sat dejectedly considering how foolish it had been to hope that the late John Brown's eleven could possibly prove a match for Delmar—cream of the country's football teams. There were some who even callously began to remark, as Delmar launched her second ground-gaining onslaught against Elliott, that Providence had been kind to John Brown in calling him home, thus saving the great coach from the ignominy of seeing his last efforts crowned by a crushing and devastating defeat.

But passing such quick judgment upon Elliott was hardly fair in the light of the terrific strain under which the eleven was playing. Temporarily shot to pieces by the disheartening fumble, it was not until Delmar had swept into Elliott territory again that John Brown's team found itself enough to brace and rock the stadium with the thrill of stopping Delmar's smashing advance by taking the ball on downs! Even this sudden flare-up of spirited defense was lightly regarded by the stands who saw in Elliott's improved play but the last spent effort of a dying ember whose light is always brightest before it fades into oblivion. And Tim Mooney's fifty yard punt, putting Elliott out of danger for the time being, was the ember at full glow. Delmar would soon get going once more and Elliott would be beaten back until the team, burning itself out against a mightier foe, became as so many ashes underfoot.

But oh, how that ember clung to the light ... and life! All through the first half it persisted, shining brightest when fanned most by the tempest, and standing out as a bulwark which Delmar, with all her relentless battering, could not surmount. Time upon time Delmar pounded dangerously near Elliott's goal yet each time the Elliott spark of resistance was somehow equal to the occasion with Tim Mooney's toe doing Herculean work toward driving the invaders well back into their own territory from whence they were forced to begin all over again.

Gradually there stole upon the eighty thousand humans the throbbing realization that they were witnessing a sample of raw-handed courage such as men display only when under some great, compelling influence—an influence inspired by a necessity equalling a Marne or an Argonne to them—an influence which cried out above the bruising tide of battle, "They shall not pass! They shall not pass!"

Between halves the stands arose and stood two minutes, with heads uncovered and bowed, as a tribute to Coach John Brown's memory. The tribute was of involuntary nature, started by students in the Elliott section and quickly copied by the crowd.

"You're a great team today, boys," was Red Murdock's greeting as the Elliott warriors lurched drunkenly into the clubhouse for their precious ten minutes of rest. The players eyed him soberly, chests heaving, shirts mud-grimed and torn, bodies sore and weary from blocking the path of the Delmar tornado. And Red Murdock, looking them over, felt how hollow would be the saying of another word. He devoted attention instead to treating their various minor hurts and giving an encouraging slap here and there to the back of a man whose shoulders inclined to droop.

Furious at having been held to one lone and practically fluke touchdown, Delmar opened the second half with a drive of even greater power, calculated to put Elliott speedily to rout. The cream of the country's football teams had hammered steadily enough at Elliott's line to have worn it to shreds by now. No other eleven had stood up so long under Delmar's terrific charging and John Brown's team must crack wide open soon. But all through the third quarter, calling upon an almost uncanny reserve force, Elliott managed to stave the enemy off. True, whenever Elliott came into possession of the ball she found herself unable to launch an offensive of her own. This was due to a Delmar line of equal stone-wall quality—a line which had not permitted a touchdown to be scored against it that season. And Elliott was not going to be the first team to do it either. There was humiliation enough for Delmar in the fact that victory was being won by so small a margin.

Going into the last quarter, the stands could notice a perceptible wilting of the Elliott team. There were no expressions of surprise at the sight, only wonderment that John Brown's eleven had withstood the gruelling attack that long. A wave of sympathetic feeling passed over the stadium. The crowd did not care to see the pathetic spectacle of a team which had acquitted itself so nobly in the face of odds, crumbling in the final fifteen minutes of play and falling a helpless, exhausted victim to the ravages of a foe already maddened at having been so bitterly repulsed.

Now, as the vast throng looked through half-closed eyes, it saw the mighty Delmar slowly coming into her own. Taking the ball on her forty-two yard mark, Delmar sent her backfield men galloping through holes which began to yawn open in the Elliott defense. Five, ten, fifteen yards were reeled off on every play. Time was called while the Elliott line was patched up by three substitutes. But with play resumed, the Delmar steam roller continued unaffected on its way,

rumbling and pounding over the ground which separated it from the Elliott goal. Six minutes of play remained as the country's leading football eleven drew up for a first down on their stubborn opponent's ten yard line.

"Touchdown, Delmar!" called its six thousand rooters, uttering the first real blast of sound which had come from the stands all day.

Up in the Elliott section a white-lipped girl strained forward, silently intreating. Her face was tear-streaked. There was something desperately compelling about her attitude. The spectre of defeat to her was as grim as the spectre of death. Almost unconsciously her lips parted and she started to sing in a low, wavering voice:

"John Brown's body lies a mould'ring in the grave ..."

Spectators on either side of her looked at the girl queerly as if they thought she had suddenly gone out of her head.

"John Brown's body lies a mould'ring in the grave,"

Now some of the people near her became conscious of a strange, tingling sensation that seemed to cut to their very marrow as the voice, gaining in strength so that it carried out over the stand, repeated once more:

"John Brown's body lies a mouldering in the grave,"

And, in a magnetic sort of way there arose a spontaneous response of voices from all parts of the stand, joining in on the next line:

"His soul goes marching on!"

Down on the gridiron, their bodies weary from battle, crouched the battered Elliott eleven. The players glanced up curiously as the first swells of the song reached them. Then they were seen to stiffen as the chorus, gaining volume, chanted out to them:

"Glory, glory hallelujah!
Glory, glory, glory hallelujah!
Glory, glory hallelujah!
His soul is marching on."

The Delmar line crashed forward and the man with the ball dashed around the end. But he got little more than started when it seemed as though the entire Elliott team had torn through and nabbed him. There was a roar in the stands and the great crowd was on its feet, men with their heads uncovered, while the song leaped to the lips of all and welled into a mighty dirge as the girl—lifted to the shoulders of those nearby—led by a waving of her arms.

"The stars of heaven are looking kindly down,
The stars of heaven are looking kindly down,
The stars of heaven are looking kindly down,
On the grave of old John Brown."

A great cheer went up as Elliott, suddenly transformed into men of steel, took the ball on downs and snapped into its first play. Another cheer as Tim Mooney tore through the hitherto invincible Delmar line for fourteen yards. On the next play Mooney charged through for five more.

"Glory, glory hallelujah...!"

As though there had come into each Elliott player a superhuman force, the Delmar team was pushed back and back, resisting stubbornly but ineffectively. It was a driving offensive against time. If Elliott could go over for a touchdown in the three minutes left and kick goal, it could at least earn a tie with the mighty Delmar. On its seventeen yard line Delmar braced desperately. Thirty valuable seconds were taken in two setbacks for a four yard loss. Then Mooney broke through for a run that carried the ball over the goal line. Feverishly the teams lined up for the kick after touchdown.

"He's gone to be a soldier in the army of the Lord,
He's gone to be a soldier in the army of the Lord,
He's gone to be a soldier in the army of the Lord,
His soul....."

And Mooney missed the attempt at goal after touchdown! The song broke into a great heart-broken moan. Score—Delmar 7; Elliott 6. The one stupendously inspired chance gone.

The teams lined up again for the kick-off with Mooney sobbing like a baby at his failure. Delmar kicked ... and the ball settled into Mooney's arms. He started down the field with a grimness born of despair. Past chalk mark after chalk mark he ran while the words of the song, now sung in frenzied fashion, roared in his ears:

"Glory, glory hallelujah!
His soul is marching on ..."

At Delmar's forty yard line Mooney was stopped. He was thrown heavily after having completed the longest run of the game—fifty yards. The time-keepers consulted their watches. Mooney shouted hysterically at the quarterback ... the quarterback barked a signal ... Mooney lunged back and planted his feet in the rough sod, holding out his hands...

"John Brown's knapsack is strapped upon his back,
John Brown's knapsack is strapped upon his back,
John Brown's knapsack is strapped upon his back,
His soul is marching on!"

Standing on Delmar's forty yard line, as charging Delmar linesmen broke through and plunged at him, Mooney's toe swung up and booted the ball. As the ball took the air there came the shrill shriek of the time-keeper's whistle.

Then the throbbing notes of the song, swelling on in a burst of fervent hope as the ball turned end over end, straight for the goal posts....

"Glory, glory hallelujah!
Glory, glory, glory hallelujah!"

A moment more and the Elliott players fell upon Mooney, hugging and kissing him with mad joy, while the song roared into a mighty harmony of heart-bursting sound:

"GLORY, GLORY HALLELUJAH!"

And then, as if with a sudden thought of overwhelming reverence, the voices died into a soft refrain:

"His soul is marching on!"

The eighty thousand spectators poured from the stands with a solemnity which bespoke their attendance at a memorial service. They had just looked upon and been party to a miracle. The last second field goal from the forty yard line had given Elliott a 9 to 7 victory over the great Delmar eleven.

At the corner of the field a girl cried happily, her head unashamedly against Mooney's shoulder.

"Whatever made you think of that?" Mooney asked her, tenderly.

"I—I don't really know," she answered, looking up at him with just a trace of embarrassment, "but somehow ... you'll think I'm foolish for saying this ... I had the feeling it was John Brown!"

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