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Title: At Start and Finish

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Release date: May 11, 2012 [EBook #39668]

Language: English

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AT START AND FINISH ***

AT START AND FINISH

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

APPLES OF ISTAKHAR

AT

START AND FINISH

William Lindsey



Boston

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1899

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COPELAND AND DAY

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**TO THE
ATHLETIC TEAMS OF OLD ENGLAND
AND NEW ENGLAND, OXFORD, CAMBRIDGE,
HARVARD, AND YALE, WHO
MET IN LONDON JULY 22, 1899, GOOD
WINNERS AND PLUCKY LOSERS,
I DEDICATE THIS BOOK**

NOTE.

In the present volume I have drawn freely on my previous collection (now out of print), "Cinderpath Tales," omitting some material, but adding much more that is new.

I have also added headpieces, in which my suggestions have been very cleverly carried out by the artist, W. B. Gilbert.

W. L.

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[Pg 1]

It is something of an experience for an Englishman, after thirty years' absence, to stand on the steps of "Morley's" and face the sunlight of Trafalgar Square. He may not own a foot of English soil, he may have no friend left to meet him, he may even have become a citizen of the Great Republic, but he cannot look at the tall shaft on which the "little sailor" stands without a breath of pride, a mist in his eye, and a lump in his throat.

It was early afternoon of a warm July day. There was barely enough wind to blow the spray of the fountains, and the water itself rose straight in the soft air. I stood contentedly watching the endless procession of busses, hansoms, and four-wheelers, with the occasional coster's cart, and asked for nothing more. Long-eared "Neddy" dragging "Arry," "Arriet," and a load of gooseberries was a combination on which my eye rested with peculiar fascination. No amateur "whip" in a red coat on a bottle-green coach could handle the "ribbons" over four "choice uns" with a finer air than "Arry" as he swung through the line and came clicking up the street. I would rather see him pass than the Lord Mayor in his chariot. I must have stood on the top step of "Morley's" for a

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good half-hour, not caring even to smoke, so sweet was the smell of a London street to me.

I was thinking, as a man must at such a time, of old days and old friends,—not dismally, but with a certain sense of loss,—when a tall gentleman came slowly up the steps and stopped immediately in front of me. I moved aside, although there was plenty of room for him to pass; but still he looked at me gravely, and at last held out a big brown hand and said, as if we had parted only yesterday, "Well, Walter, old man, how are you?" I was a bit in doubt at first. He was so tall that his eyes were nearly on a level with my own, his figure erect and soldierly, his face bronzed as if from long exposure to a tropic sun. Only when he smiled did I know him, and then we gripped hands hard, our fingers clinging until we saw we were attracting the notice of those around us. Then our hands unclasped, and feeling a bit foolish over our emotion, we sat down together.

At first we talked of commonplaces, though all the time I was thinking of an evening more than thirty years ago when we stood together on the river path, under the shadows of old Oxford towers, and said, "Good-bye." He then offered to stand by me when the friendship would have cost him something, and I declined the sacrifice. Would it have been better? Who can tell?

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Our first thoughts were a bit serious, perhaps, but our second became decidedly cheerful at meeting again after so long a time. I learned that he was "Colonel" Patterson, having gained his regiment a good ten years ago; that he had spent nearly all his time in India; that he had been invalidated home; that he was, like myself, unmarried, and that he found himself rather "out of it" after all these years away from the "old country."

I told how I had gone to America, where, finding all other talents unmarketable, I had become first a professional runner, and later a college trainer. To this occupation, in which I had been something of a success, I had given many years until a small invention had made me independent, and a man of leisure in a modest way. I saw he was a bit disappointed when I told him I had been forced to "turn pro." in order to obtain my bread and butter. I knew exactly how he felt, and well did I remember my sorrow when I dropped the "Mr." from my name. It is not a particularly high-sounding title, but to appreciate it at its true value a man need only to lose it and become plain "Smith," "Jones," or "Robinson." That nothing could raise the "pale spectre of the salt" between Frank Patterson and myself, not even going outside the pale of the "gentleman amateur," I was very certain.

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But when I told him a little later that I had become a full-fledged citizen of the United States, he could not conceal his surprise, although he said but little at first.

We talked of other things for a while, and then my friend came back to what I knew he had been thinking about all the time, and he asked me bluntly how it was I had come to give up the nation of my birth.

"It seemed only fair," I answered, "that I should become a citizen of the country in which I obtained my living, whose laws protected me, in which most of my friends were resident, and where I expected sometime to be buried."

At this the Colonel was silent for a little while, and then he remarked rather doubtfully: "I cannot make up my mind just what the Americans are like. Are they what Kipling declared them in the 'Pioneer Mail' some ten years ago, when he cursed them root and branch, or what the same man said of them a few years later, when he affirmed just as strongly, 'I love them' and 'They'll be the biggest, finest, and best people on the surface of the globe'? Such contradictory statements are confusing to a plain soldier with nothing more than the average amount of intelligence. What is the use, too, of calling them Anglo-Saxon? They are, in fact, a mixture of Celt, Teuton, Gaul, Slav, with a modicum of Saxon blood, and I know not what else."

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I could not help smiling a little at the Colonel's earnestness. I tried to tell him that the American was essentially Anglo-Saxon in spite of all the mixture; that his traditions, aims, and sentiments were very much like his own; that he had the same language, law, and literature; that the boys read "Tom Brown at Rugby," and the old men Shakespeare, Browning, and Kipling. I told him that the boys played English games with but slight changes, and that they boxed like English boys, and their fathers fought like English men.

"Yes," said the Colonel, at last interrupting my flow of eloquence, "I heard the statement made at the Army and Navy Club only last night, that the American soldier was close to our 'Tommy,' and that the Yankee sailor was second to none. Yet all the time I cannot adjust myself to the fact that he is 'one of us.' Perhaps if I saw some typical Americans I should be a little less at sea."

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"Well," I answered, "if that is what you want, I can give you plenty of opportunity. This afternoon occur the athletic games between Oxford and Cambridge on the one hand, and Harvard and Yale on the other. I am going with a party of Americans; we have seats in the American section, and I have a spare ticket which you can use as well as not. You can study the 'genus Americana' at your leisure, and see some mighty good sport meanwhile."

"That would suit my book exactly," declared the Colonel; and he had scarcely spoken before I saw Tom Furness standing in the entrance of the hotel evidently looking for me. He was clad, despite the heat, in a long Prince Albert coat which fitted him like a glove, and wore a tall silk hat as well. He saw me almost immediately, and a moment later was shaking hands with the Colonel. The latter was dressed in a loose-fitting suit of gray flannel and sported a very American-looking straw hat, so that Tom really appeared the more English of the two. Which was the finer specimen of a man it would be hard to say, and one might not match them in a day's journey. They were almost exactly of a height, the Colonel not more erect than Tom, and not quite as

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broad of chest. The latter certainly had not the Colonel's clean-cut face, but there was something about his rather irregular features that would attract attention anywhere. I was pleased to see, too, that he gave to the Colonel a touch of the deference due his age and rank, which I admit some of Tom's countrymen might have forgotten.

Furness was very cordial, too. "We are in great luck," he declared, "to have the Colonel with us, for a little later we should have been gone. It is about time to start now, after, of course, a little something to fortify us against the drive." So he took us into the smoking-room, where he introduced the Colonel to Harry Gardiner and Jim Harding. He also made him acquainted with a Manhattan cocktail, which the Colonel imbibed with some hesitation, but found very decidedly to his liking. Tom explained that he had taught them how to make it himself that very morning, and that it could not be bettered in all London.

Furness always constitutes himself host if he has the least excuse for so doing. It is a way he has. Nothing but a man's own hearthstone in his own particular castle stops him. He takes possession of all neutral ground like that of a hotel, and considers it his duty to make matters pleasant for all around him. [Pg 8]

Harding and Gardiner were a half-dozen years younger than Furness, and it was not many years since I had trained them for very much the same kind of games as those of the afternoon. Harding was a big fellow, with broad shoulders, and a mop of yellow hair. He had been a mighty good man in his day with both "shot" and "hammer." Harry Gardiner had been a sprinter,—one of the best starters I ever knew,—and a finisher, too, which does not always follow. The Colonel got along very well with them all,—a little reserved at first, and studying all three of them in a very quiet way. He could sometimes not quite make out what Harding, who had a very choice vocabulary of Americanisms, was driving at, and one or two of Tom's jokes he failed utterly to comprehend; but he seemed to understand the men themselves fairly well, nevertheless. We chatted together a few minutes, and then Furness declared it was time to start, producing cigars which would have tempted a modern Adam more than any apple in the Garden of Eden. So the Colonel and myself left the others, and were soon comfortably ensconced in a clean hansom, behind a good piece of horseflesh, and bowling along toward the Queen's Club Grounds at a very respectable rate of speed. [Pg 9]

We enjoyed our ride very thoroughly, and arrived at the Comeragh Road entrance almost too soon, for the crowd was only beginning to gather. We obtained programmes, and entering the gateway found ourselves in full view of the grounds at once.

A mighty fine sight they were, too, the stretch of level greensward, hard and velvety, with the dark brown cinder-path encircling it. The seats rose on all sides but one, and there, outside the fence, was the fringe of waving trees, and the red brick houses, trim and neat. Over all was the soft blue sky, with here and there a drifting cloud. I could see the Colonel's eyes glisten. He had spent the best part of his life in a country which alternated between the baked brown clay of the dry season and the wild luxuriance that followed the rains. He went to the very outside edge of the track, and took a careful step or two on it, examining it with the eye of a connoisseur, for he knew something of a track, although he had not seen one for many years. "'Tis fast," said he, knowingly. "With the heat and calm the conditions are right enough, and the men will have nobody to blame but themselves if they do not come close to the records." [Pg 10]

We walked slowly by the telegraph office, and back of the tennis courts. As we passed the Tea-room we could see a few people at the tables, and quite a little group was gathered around the Members' Pavilion. We went by the Royal Box, with its crimson draperies, and found our seats close to the finish of the hundred-yard, half, mile, and three-mile runs. The Colonel gave himself at once to the careful examination of the programme, as did I myself. The "Oxford and Cambridge" was printed in dark blue ink, and "Harvard and Yale" in crimson. For stewards there were C. N. Jackson and Lees Knowles, the former once the finest hurdler in England. For the Americans, E. J. Wendell and C. H. Sherrill officiated; many a bit of red worsted had I seen the latter break across the sea. Judges, referee, and timekeeper were alike well known on both continents, and had all heard the crunch of a running shoe as it bit into the cinders. Wilkinson of Sheffield was to act as "starter."

"He has the reputation of never having allowed a fraction to be stolen on his pistol," remarked the Colonel. [Pg 11]

"Let him watch Blount to-day then," I said.

The Colonel ran his finger down the list. "Nine contests in all. One of strength, three of endurance, two of speed, two of activity, and the 'quarter' only is left where speed and bottom are both needed. How will they come out?" he asked.

"About five to four," I answered, "but I cannot name the winner. On form Old England should pull off the 'broad jump,' the 'mile' and 'three miles,' and New England is quite sure of the 'hammer' and 'high jump.' This leaves the 'hundred' and 'hurdles,' the 'quarter' and 'half' to be fought out, although of course nothing is sure but death and taxes."

"I suppose it will be easy to distinguish the men by their style and manner," said the Colonel.

"You will not see much difference," I replied. "The Americans wear the colors more conspicuously, Harvard showing crimson, and Yale dark blue. 'Tis the same shade as Oxford's. The Americans have also the letters 'H' and 'Y' marked plainly on the breasts of their jerseys. There are some of the contestants arriving now," I remarked, pointing across the track; "would you like to see them before they strip?" [Pg 12]

"I certainly would," he answered; and we slipped out of our seats and around the track to the Members' Pavilion, in front of which they stood. Just before we reached them, however, we met Furness, Harding, and Gardiner, the former holding a little chap about ten years old by the hand, who was evidently his "sire's son," for his eyes were big with excitement and pleasure.

"Which are they?" inquired the Colonel, a little doubtfully. "That chap in front is an English lad or I miss my guess," looking admiringly at a young giant apparently not more than twenty years old, and perhaps the finest-looking one of the lot. His hat was in his hand, his eyes were bright, and skin clear, with a color that only perfect condition brings.

"No," I answered, rather pleased at his mistake; "that is a Harvard Freshman, though he bears a good old English name. Since Tom of Rugby, the Browns have had a name or two in about every good sporting event on earth. Would you like to know him?" I asked, for just then the young fellow spied me out and came forward to meet me with a smile of recognition. I was quite willing to introduce H. J. Brown to the Colonel, although it was hardly fair to present him as a sample of an American boy. As Tom would have said, it was showing the top of a "deaconed" barrel of apples.

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The young fellow shook the Colonel's hand with an easy self-possession, coloring a little under his brown skin at the older man's close scrutiny, who said a quiet word concerning the games, and asked him if he felt "fit."

"I'm as fit as they can make a duffer," he answered. "Boal, over there," pointing to an older man with a strong face full of color and who was a bit shorter and even more strongly built,— "Boal is the man who throws the hammer. He's better than I by a dozen feet."

"Yes," remarked Tom, coming forward and shaking Brown's hand with a hearty grip, "this young man is not an athlete at all; he worked so hard at his studies that they sent him over here to recruit his health, impaired by too close application. He is strong only in his knowledge of Greek verbs and logarithms."

At this there was quite a laugh, in which Brown joined heartily and the Colonel came in with a quiet chuckle, for he had come to quite enjoy Tom's "little jokes;" and under cover of our amusement the young fellow left us and disappeared in the dressing-room.

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The Colonel watched the little string of well-groomed fellows file along, taking particular notice of the smallest chap of all, who came laughing by, swinging his dress-suit case as if it weighed a scant pound. "What does he do?" the Colonel asked.

"That's Rice, the high jumper," spoke up Tom. "He is good for six feet before or after breakfast. Indeed I think he could do the distance between every course of a long dinner, with perhaps an extra inch or two before the roast."

"He has the best style of any man we have," volunteered Gardiner, "and goes over the bar as if he had wings."

I tried to get the Colonel to look over the English lads. "Oh, they 're all right, I know. I want to see how near the American boys can come to them," said he, for the Colonel was loyal to his own, and after his long absence thought all the more of everything the Old Country produced. We did get a look at one or two, among them Vassall, an Oriel man, whom Tom pointed out, although how he knew him I could not guess. He was a grand-looking fellow, very strongly put together, and he walked as if on eggs.

"He looks like a winner, sure enough," said I.

"Yes," continued the Colonel, "old Oriel always has a good thing or two on field and river both."

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By this time the seats were filling rapidly, the stands were becoming crowded, and around the track were rows of people seated on the grass. We elbowed our way to our own places, and were settled at last, the Colonel on my left, little Billy Furness next, and Tom last of the row. In front of us were Gardiner and Harding, and behind, four or five American girls, two of them pretty, and all of them well dressed, with plenty of crimson and blue in their costumes.

We had scarcely taken our seats when one of the girls discovered the royal carriage, jumping to her feet so hurriedly that she rather disturbed the Colonel's hat, for which she apologized so prettily that he must have felt indebted to her, despite the trouble. We all rose as the royal party alighted from their carriage, and the London Victoria Military Band played as only they can on such an occasion.

We could see the Prince plainly, and with his light clothes and hat he set a good example of comfort to others. He looked to me much as he did when I saw him last on a Derby day many years ago. A good patron of sport has he always been, and his presence now gave color and zest to the whole affair. When he appeared in the box, he stood for a few moments, his eyes wandering over the grounds, and a smile of pleasure on his face. A royal sight it was, too, for the sun was shining brightly on the many-colored bank of spectators that circled the track. The hurdles stood in straight rows on the farther side, and right in front were the twin flag-staffs, at the feet of which hung the Union Jack and Stars and Stripes ready to hoist as one or the other country won. In the middle of the field were the blackboard and a megaphone, suspended from a tripod for indicating to eye and ear the results of the contest and records made.

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The first contestants to show were the "hammer throwers," and the big fellows were greeted with a rattling round of applause as they crossed the track, Greenshields of Oxford, Baines of Cambridge, Boal and Brown of Harvard, chatting cordially together as they walked over the field to their places in the farther corner.

The little girl behind us offered the Colonel her field-glasses, which he was glad to get, and for which he thanked her heartily.

"Take them whenever you want," she said with a smile; "you'll find them right here in my lap."

Now this certainly was a freedom to which the Colonel was not accustomed, but I noticed that he seemed to adjust himself to it very easily. It was not, perhaps, the manner of the "Vere de Veres," but was very cordial, which was something better still.

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"Who is expected to win?" inquired the Colonel, as Greenshields began to swing the hammer around his head.

"This is supposed to be a sure thing for Boal of Harvard," I answered.

"Yes," spoke up little Billy, "and I know him too. Case Boal is a daisy."

"A daisy is he?" asked the Colonel, looking down at the little fellow's flushed face. "He looks to me more like a big red rose. Do you throw the hammer too?"

"No," answered Billy, gravely, "though I've got a cousin, most fifteen, who throws the twelve-pound hammer, and is a 'cracker jack.'"

"A cracker jack, is he?" inquired the Colonel; "and are you a cracker jack too?"

"Oh no," answered Billy, "I'm not much. I sprint a little, and won second place in the 'hundred' at my school games this spring. I want to run the 'quarter,' but dad won't let me till I'm older. That was his distance, and when I go to college I shall try for the quarter too."

"Bless his heart," said the Colonel to me. "Are there many American boys like him?"

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"The woods are full of them," I answered. "There goes Brown; I want you to see him throw. He will not do Boal's distance, but is improving every day, and has a very pretty style. He is probably a few yards better than Greenshields, and Baines can hardly get the hammer away at all. The Englishmen have really no show in this event, for it is not cultivated as it should be in the Universities."

"Why, then," asked the Colonel, "did our men include it with no hope of winning?"

"It was a very sportsmanlike thing to do," declared Furness, "and arranged in much the same spirit as the three-mile run, which is a distance unknown in America, and in which we have not the least chance."

"Yes," said I, "I cannot remember a contest in which there was so little jockeying in the preliminaries. They were conducted in the most liberal manner on both sides, and many concessions were made. One of the best illustrations is the 'hurdle race,' which will be run over turf, as is the custom here, while the hurdles will be movable, as is usual in America."

"That is the true spirit of amateur sport," said the Colonel, "and is a mighty fine thing, whichever wins."

Now I must confess that at this moment I found myself in a very peculiar state of mind. I was not sure which team I preferred to carry off the odd event. This was very unusual for me, as I am always something of a partisan, and cannot see two little chaps running a barefooted race along the street without picking a favorite, being a bit pleased if he wins and disappointed if he loses. But to-day there was on one side the country of my birth and on the other that of my adoption, and between them I was utterly unable to choose. So evenly did they draw upon my sentiment that I made up my mind I should be satisfied either way, and meanwhile I could enjoy myself without prejudice.

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"There's the jumpers," suddenly cried out little Billy, whose quick eye had first discovered them emerging from the crowd that fringed the track in front of the dressing-rooms. Sure enough, there were Daly and Roche in their crimson sweaters looking over the ground. The former carefully paced off his distance from the joist and marked his start, and as he did so, Vassall and Beven appeared, sporting respectively the dark and light blue, and shook hands with their opponents.

"Who is the favorite here?" inquired the Colonel.

"Oh, Vassall will win in a walk," answered Tom.

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At this the Colonel was entirely at sea.

"But," said he, "I did not think there was to be a walk at all," examining his programme carefully. Then catching Tom's meaning, he continued, "You mean he wins easily? Well, I'm glad of that. I should like to see one first at least pulled off by the old college."

"Nothing will stop him but an attack of apoplexy before his first jump," declared Tom, positively. "He will not need to take another. I saw him in the spring games, and a more natural jumper I never saw. He is at least a foot better than Daly, who I believe never made a broad jump in public until it was known he might be needed by his college."

"You ought to see him play football," said Billy here, looking up at the Colonel with admiring eyes. "He's a 'dandy,' and just as cool as that 'measurer' over there," pointing to a gentleman who had bent over the many throws of the hammer until he was in a most profuse perspiration. At this there was a laugh from all round, which was followed by another as Billy's example of coolness wiped his beaded brow.

The "hammer" and "long jump" are not very rapid events at best, but they answered very well

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while the late-comers were finding their seats. I was particularly pleased to note that Tom had eyes only for Vassall, whose easy style took his fancy amazingly, while the Colonel saw nothing to admire but the Americans' exhibition with the weight.

He borrowed the glasses from the little girl behind him, with whom he had become very friendly for so reserved a man, and watched Brown carefully as he planted his feet firmly in the seven-foot circle, swung the heavy hammer around his head again and again without moving from his ground, until with a last fierce effort he sent the missile whirling through the air in a long arc to strike with a dull thud.

Just as the Colonel started to comment on it admiringly, however, he was interrupted by a cheer as on one of the flag-poles that rose side by side in front of the royal box the Union Jack was hoisted to indicate that England had won the first event. A little later on the other pole the Stars and Stripes were run up, and we knew that the "hammer throw" had gone to the Americans, and honors were easy.

The blackboard showed that Vassall had jumped his twenty-three feet, and Boal had thrown one hundred and thirty-six feet eight and one-half inches, both very excellent performances. [Pg 22]

The Colonel was enjoying himself immensely, and I was gratified to see how much at home he had made himself. He found in Furness a very congenial spirit, Billy was a boy after his own heart, and the young ladies behind him were interesting enough to take quite a little of his attention. He was telling them something about a polo match in India when I interrupted him to point out the men going to their marks for the "hundred-yard dash."

We could look along the splendid track with the narrow laneways made by the white cords. Hind of Oxford inside, then Quinlan with an "H" on his crimson jersey, then Thomas with the narrow stripes of dark blue, and outside Blount with a jersey of the same color and the "Y" on his breast.

"Who wins here?" asked the Colonel.

"I give it up," answered Tom; "this is a race."

We could hear the starter's "Marks," "Set;" the wreath of smoke rose from his pistol, and before the sound reached us, they were off, Blount a bit the first, Hind and Quinlan close together, and Thomas a shade behind. Did Blount beat the pistol? I am not sure. He was certainly in the lead; then Quinlan came up, to be in turn collared by Thomas, who had a shade the best of it until the last few strides, when the big fellow in the crimson jersey made a supreme effort and shot by us, a winner by a foot. [Pg 23]

"Close work that," remarked Harding.

"Yes," said Tom, "it was a close fit, and not much cloth left."

When the American flag went up again, and the blackboard showed the ten seconds with no fraction to mar its symmetry, there was very hearty applause from the whole field. Even time in the "hundred"! Only the aristocracy belong here. This is where fractions tell, this race "that is run in a breath." There are thousands good for ten-two, tens are equal to the ten-one, but the men who can do the straight ten can be counted on the fingers of the hand, and even then the conditions must suit them.

"Do you know," remarked the Colonel, with a far-away look in his eyes, "I can remember the day when I would have given a year of my life to have seen those figures after my name? I had a friend once who held the watch over me on a still June afternoon who showed the figure, but I never saw it again, and I fear that friendship made the watch stop a bit too soon."

The "mile" was not a race at all. When Hunter of Cambridge romped in a winner by a good twenty yards, with Dawson of Oxford beating out Spitzer of Yale by a very determined finish, Tom declared that it was "a very pretty procession, with a big gap after the band wagon." Freemantle gave a beautiful example of pacemaking, and what Hunter might have done had he been forced is only guesswork. [Pg 24]

It now stood even again with a two to two, to which Oxford and Cambridge had each contributed a win, and Harvard two. Yale had not distinguished herself as yet; 1899 is certainly not Yale's year.

As the men went to their marks for the hurdles, starting in the farther corner of the field and finishing far to our right, they were watched with particular interest, for this was considered by many to be the pivotal race. Paget-Tomlinson was known to be good for his sixteen seconds, and might knock a fraction off this. Just what Fox could do was more of a question, although the story of a very pretty trial had leaked out in some way.

Tom told the Colonel it was a case of "horse and horse," which expression he was forced to explain, as it was a shade too doubtful.

A hurdle-race is a pretty sight over cinders, but on turf as green and level as a billiard-table it was doubly beautiful. [Pg 25]

We could see Fox and Hollowell crouch for the start, and Tomlinson and Parkes bend forward. I did not hear the pistol, so fascinated was I, as the men came away, skimming over the ground like four swallows, and rising over the first row of hurdles as if they had wings.

It is easy to judge a hurdle-race from any angle. All that is necessary is to watch the men rise, for the one that lifts first is certainly ahead. Sometimes a race is won in the "run in," but not often. At the first hurdle the men rose almost together, at the second Parks and Hollowell were a bit

late, at the third they were plainly behind, and Paget-Tomlinson was also a bit tardy. From this out, Fox drew ahead all the time, finishing with a burst of speed that put the result entirely out of doubt.

I had just remarked, after the applause had somewhat subsided, that Tomlinson must have been "off form" when the board showed a fifteen and three-fifths, and I revised my conclusion. The "Cantab" had done better time than ever, but Fox had demolished the record.

It was right here that the Colonel received something of a shock, for a little behind us and on our right a young fellow suddenly sprang to his feet, and called out at the top of his voice: "All together now. Three long Harvards, and three times three for Harvard." And then from a hundred throats came "Harvard, Harvard, Harvard, rah rah rah rah rah rah rah rah, Harvard." [Pg 26]

The Colonel confessed to me afterward that his first thought was that some one had gone crazy. "By Jove," said he, "I have heard 'Fuzzy Wuzzy' make some queer noises in my time, but that beats them all."

I explained to him that it was a custom among the American colleges to have a particular cheer to encourage or applaud, but I saw that it took all the Colonel's accumulated enthusiasm to carry him through. It did sound a bit queer on the Queen's Grounds, however it might go on the Soldiers' Field in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The events now stood three to two in favor of New England, and their chances did look very good to me. They needed but two more wins out of the four remaining, and one of these was the "high jump," which on form was a certainty for them. To be sure, it was whispered that Burke had "gone stale," but I had seen him win so many times when he was plainly not in condition, that I did not count him out. Then, again, there was Boardman in the "quarter," and Yale was "about due," according to Tom. [Pg 27]

At the very start of the "half" Struben started out to make pace in a very business-like manner, which the Americans might have copied to advantage. Indeed from first to last they showed little knowledge of this useful accomplishment. That Burke tailed on was a surprise to no one who had seen him run, for with his turn of speed his game is to keep close up and run his man down in the last fifty yards. Yet I did not like the way he took his first step. He seemed dead and in difficulties after the first lap. I heard the little girl behind us declare confidently, "Just wait till Tom Burke reaches the straight."

We did wait, sure enough, but he never came. Graham passed Struben, and finished comfortably in one fifty-seven and one-fifth, with Adams a poor third. The score was now even again, with three to three, and, as Furness declared, he was "beginning to have a touch of 'heart disease.'"

"It is certainly 'up to Boardman' now," said Tom, as the men went to their marks for the "quarter." "Unless he can pull this off we are counted out, and no mistake."

The young Yale Freshman had before this run half round the track, to limber up a bit, and appeared right on edge.

There was hardly a sound as the men waited for the signal. Nobody cared to talk as they took their places for that most punishing of all distances, the "quarter mile," and every one watched the little bunch of men in the far corner of the field. [Pg 28]

Hollins, the stocky little Oxford man, was away first, as if for one hundred yards. He drew Boardman and Fisher after him at a killing pace, Davison running easily behind. Round the first turn they came, Boardman inside and on practically even terms with Hollins, the tall Yale man looking a bit anxious even then. Down the stretch they sprinted, still at top speed. At the last turn Boardman shot ahead, and for a brief second looked all over a winner. It was only for a second, however, for Hollins swung wide, and Davison came through like a locomotive, as strong and speedy. Boardman made a plucky effort, but the big "Cantab" would not be denied; he came to the front thirty yards from the finish, and the best the Yale man could do was to stagger over, five yards to the bad, and dead run out. Whether or no he would have done any better if he had stayed back instead of following Hollins I cannot tell.

"Poor old Yale," said Furness, contemplatively, when the applause had died out, the Americans joining gamely, although they knew their last hope went with this event. "Poor old Yale, it was not always thus. I can remember a time when Yale men had a very pretty knack of breaking the worsted and letting the other fellows run between the posts, but this is not Yale's day nor year." [Pg 29]

We now had time to watch the "high jumping," which was going on in front of us and a little to the right. The bar had reached five feet ten inches, and Paget-Tomlinson had gone out at five-five. Rotch comes first and is over, although he touches the bar, and it trembles a moment uncertain. Adair is over too. The English lad takes his run a bit across and goes over with a grand lift from his long legs. Here comes Rice, who has not yet pulled off his sweater, although the bar is already several inches over his head. The little chap bends forward, gets on his toes, gives a short run straight at it, lifts in the air like a bird, shoots over, turning in the air meanwhile, lands lightly with his face to the bar he has just cleared, and runs back under it to his place. It is the prettiest performance for a high jump that the Colonel has ever seen, and he applauds vigorously, as do many others. At the next lift of the bar Rotch goes out, for he has not been himself quite, and is not equal to the six feet which he has so often negotiated. We expected also to see Adair drop out here, for five eight and one-fourth had been his best record; but he showed daylight between himself and the bar, and for the first time I began to be anxious. I truly did not care which team won, but I did not want to see anything worse than a five-four, and it looked now as if it might be a six-three. [Pg 30]

Up goes the bar to five-eleven, and again both Adair and Rice are equal to the task before them. With Adair it is the performance of a grand natural jumper, but with Rice it is all this, and a style that must be worth inches to him.

At six feet the Oxford man did not go at the bar with quite the determination he had previously shown, and down it came. Rice now pulls off his sweater for the first time, showing how well put together he is from head to foot. Straight for the bar he goes, just the same as when it was at five-six, and he clears it with apparently the same ease as at the lower distance. Adair struggles gamely, but his last try is unsuccessful, and the score stands four to four, with only the "three-mile" left.

I could see very plainly now that the Colonel was getting a bit nervous. "Do you consider this a certain thing for Workman?" he asked me, after Tom had declared that the Americans had no chance at all, and that the contest was all over "but the shouting."

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"Yes," I answered. "None of the Americans have ever done the distance, and this is where condition tells. I doubt if they could pull it off on neutral ground; after a sea voyage and a few days in a different climate they are simply out of it."

"Well," said the Colonel, "I shall feel better when it is over. I have seen enough of the Yankee boys to have considerable respect for them, even in a race they have no right to win."

The six contestants took their places in that leisurely manner which is always shown in a distance run. This race is not won at the start,—not much. All the same the Britishers were quite willing to make pace, for they swung ahead at the beginning, and for several laps Workman of Cambridge, Smith and Wilberforce of Oxford, showed the way around at a fair pace. Tom had his watch out and caught four fifty-eight for the first mile. At the end of the fifth lap Smith retired, after having made pace for a considerable part of the journey, leaving his man, Workman, in the lead and running strongly. Only a little later Clarke, who had given no clue to his difficulties and had been running well, suddenly collapsed, dropping on the track without a word, almost without a stagger, and was carried to the grass completely "run out." It was a "run out" too, and not one of the grand-stand performances which we sometimes see.

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At the close of the two miles Wilberforce suddenly retired, having suffered badly with a stitch in his side which he could not overcome, and Workman, Palmer, and Foote only were left, the last dropping a bit behind all the time, but sticking doggedly to it nevertheless.

"By Jove!" exclaimed the Colonel, in the middle of the seventh lap, "that man Palmer looks dangerous; he is clinging to Workman's heels and is running fully as easily."

"He is doing well," I answered, "but I do not like his color. Look at Workman's face and you will see the difference."

"Difference or not," spoke up the Colonel, excitedly, "there he goes;" and true enough, Palmer suddenly quickened his stride and took the lead.

"He'll do it," cried the Colonel; but the "Cantab" immediately regained his premier place again, while a great cheer went up from the crowd. Twice after in the eighth lap did Palmer repeat the performance, but each time Workman came up again. Every one was now on his feet, as the bell rang for the last lap. There was a hoarse murmur of excitement; the Colonel muttered something under his breath. Tom was pressing his leg against mine as if he thought he could push his man along. Billy was jumping up and down, and the little girl behind us was laughing rather hysterically. Which would win, Old England or New England?

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It was settled in a most conclusive way by Workman himself, for the bell seemed to act like an elixir of life to him. Suddenly he began to lengthen and quicken his stride, and he left Palmer as if he were anchored. Round the track he swung as if it was the first lap of the "half," and when he broke the worsted he was raised by willing hands to the shoulder and carried to the dressing-room in triumph. The crowd surged onto the track, as they ought not, and interfered with Palmer's finish; but it did not harm him, for he was really "run out," and Foote was yards behind, though running pluckily.

We were all mixed up together for a few minutes, shaking hands all round, all of us with flushed faces. Billy had a suspiciously red nose, and the little girl behind us one big tear on her cheek.

Suddenly the Colonel caught my arm and pointed to the two flags, the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes waving side by side.

"Look at that," he cried; "that's a sight worth coming far to see."

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"Yes," said Tom, uncovering, "and with lads like those who have fought it out to-day to defend them, it would be a bad job to try to pull them down."

We lingered for a little while, and when we separated it was agreed that Tom and I should join the Colonel and a friend at the Army and Navy Club for dinner.

There we talked of many things, but mostly of the two great nations which we represented. "'Tis the same breed, after all," declared the Colonel, oracularly. "Of course the cross strain is there, but it has not hurt at all as far as I can see. Do you know what did the most to convert me? Well, it was that handshake with young Brown. A Frenchman can't shake hands, and neither can a German, though good fellows both may be. But Brown had the good firm grip close to the crotch of the thumb, and looked me straight in the eye meanwhile. 'Tis only the Anglo-Saxon can do this properly."

When the evening was well on, we drank a toast or two; for the Colonel's friend, who was a

retired naval officer, declared that it was an occasion where a dry dinner would be a disgrace, and he was strongly seconded by Tom.

So first came "The Queen, God bless her."

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Then "The President, God help him," as Tom piously ejaculated.

We drank to the two teams, good winners and plucky losers both, and then to the flags.

"I have nothing against the other bits of bunting," declared Tom, generously; "but what is the use of having more than two? Let us arrange it now. The Union Jack shall fly over the eastern, and the Stars and Stripes over the western hemisphere. The Frenchman, German, and Russian shall take what is left."

"That leaves them the sea," I interposed.

"The sea!" cried Tom; "why, that is ours already beyond dispute."

It was just at midnight that we drank our last toast with all the honors. It was the "Anglo-Saxon Race." May its two great nations never meet in sterner conflict than that fought out in friendliness, on green field and brown cinder-path, under a smiling sky!



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It was late in the winter of 186- that I arrived in Boston, having bade farewell to Old England for good and all.

It was not an easy thing to do, and it was with a wrench of the heart that I made the break-away.

I confess the separation was not entirely of my own choosing, that I left under a cloud I do not care to lift, that I had sinned the sins of youth and repented of them. Nothing more shall I say; but one thing I can never quite forget,—back in old Lancashire was I gentleman born and bred.

When I landed, less than fifty dollars had I in my pocket; but that did not fret me, for I had been assured an Englishman of good birth and breeding had but to pick and choose in the "States." All my money and most of my conceit were gone when I met Arthur Hacking a month later.

I had first stopped at a good hotel, and offered my services at genteel occupations, such as banking and school-teaching. But business men, very naturally, declined to trust a man without references who admitted that his past was not clear; and from school-teaching I was prohibited by a lamentable weakness in both mathematics and the languages. Indeed, I then realized for the first time that there were more important schools than that of the "cinder-path," and something more was needed to get on in the world than a highly cultivated pair of legs.

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As my money disappeared my ideas moderated. I moved to less and less pretentious quarters, until an attic-room and a sickly fire became luxuries I was likely soon to miss.

As if it were yesterday do I remember the raw March morning, when, having spent a few cents out of my only remaining dollar, I set out to make a last desperate effort for employment other than that of the horny-handed son of toil. At noon I stood on the corner of Washington street and Cornhill, utterly at a loss what to do. My overcoat was in pawn, and an east wind, such as Boston only knows, was freezing my very marrow. The streets were full of half-melted snow and ice, and my feet were wet and cold.

As I stood there with much of the feeling and something of the attitude of a lost dog, I suddenly recognized a man to whom I had applied a few days before for a position as bookkeeper. I stopped him and asked bluntly for work of any kind. He offered me a job as day laborer, cutting ice on some pond several miles away; for he was the manager of an ice company. I should have accepted at once had he not, with true Yankee shrewdness, argued from my evident necessity and unskilfulness that I should work for less than a regular day's pay. At this I demurred, but should certainly have yielded had not Hacking, by some freak of fortune, passing by, caught in my speech the accents of the "old Shire."

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He introduced himself without ceremony, and taking me by the arm, led me away, telling the ice-cutter to go to a place where the climate would give him no occupation, unless he changed his business.

Hacking was a big, bluff chap with a red face, and not a bit of the Yankee about him, though he was then some ten years over. When he offered me his friendship, and suggested that we could talk better in a warm place, and after a lunch, you may be sure I did not refuse him. My heart and stomach were alike empty.

All through my disappointments a stiff upper lip had I kept, but this first bit of kindness was almost too much for me, and I nearly played the woman for all my twenty years.

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We adjourned to the "Bell-in-hand," where I told as little as possible of my story to him, between alternate mouthfuls of cold beef and swallows of old ale.

I confessed to him I was "dead broke," and could find no employment; that is, no employment for which I was fitted. He asked me for what I was fitted, and I told him I was blessed if I knew; that as near as I could discover day labor was about all I was good for. He clapped me on the back with a "Never say die, my lad!" but could think of no suggestion which promised me any relief, and finally invited me to drive home with him. He owned a little inn at Brighton, and promised me food and shelter for a few days until I could "gather myself together."

That this very necessary feat could be performed in a "few days" I very much doubted; but the invitation I accepted gratefully, and five o'clock found me sitting beside him on the narrow seat of a light carriage, my portmanteau tied on behind.

The road to Brighton was a very decent one, and the big roan mare he drove reeled off the miles in a way that opened my eyes to the possibilities of the trotting horse. I doubt if there was her equal in all England.

A clock was striking six when we stopped before the door of the "Traveller's Rest," and I slid off the seat on to the frozen ground, my legs so stiff that I could scarcely walk.

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It was a large white house, with green blinds, and a piazza with tall white pillars in front. Cosy enough it seemed, too, with its lighted windows and its smell of hot meats; while from the bar in the corner came the sounds of a jingling piano and a good voice singing an Old Country ballad of "Jack and his Susan."

I found the inside of the house as comfortable as the outside looked inviting, and it was after a better dinner than I had eaten for many days that I sat with Hacking in a little parlor off the bar, my feet toasting at a coal fire, taking a comforting pipe and an occasional sip of the "necessary."

It did not take me long to find that Hacking was most interested in sporting matters, and our conversation gradually harked back to the cracks of the cinder-path who were in their glory when he left Lancashire, ten years before. A little information I gave him about old friends, and then we talked of those who had taken their places, Hacking bewailing the fact that there were none like the "good uns" of the past.

"How many men are there to-day," he asked, "who can do the hundred in even time?"

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"There are very few good sound even-timers in all England," I answered, "and only two among the amateurs,—one a Cockney, the other a Yorkshireman. The only Lancashireman who can do the hundred in ten seconds is sitting with you to-night, and little likely to see the Old Country again for many a long year, if ever."

At this, Hacking gave me a very comprehensive look, puffed a few times vigorously at his pipe, and said, "Young fellow, boasting is a very bad habit, particularly on sporting matters. I will bet you your board bill for a month against the pipe you smoke, that you cannot show me better than eleven seconds to-morrow morning."

"Eleven seconds!" said I, "a school-boy should do that."

"Yes, eleven seconds," spoke up Hacking again. "You are not in condition and the track is slow, which will even matters up, and I'll give you the advantage of the odd fraction."

I accepted his proposition very promptly, though the pipe was the only friend I had, and a relic of old college days which I should have hated to lose. While I was certainly not in training, poverty and worry had left me no superfluous flesh, and it must be a bad track indeed which could pull me back to eleven.

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We talked and smoked until a little after ten, when I pleaded fatigue and went upstairs to bed, Hacking agreeing to call me at six o'clock the following morning, as he said he had reasons for wishing the trial private. He showed me to a very comfortable room on the second floor, which seemed luxurious after my experiences of the last two weeks.

Although I had left home without the formalities of farewell calls, and under the cover of the night, I had put in my luggage, small as it was, a pair of running shoes, trunks, and jersey. Why I did this I could not have told; certainly not in expectation of using them again, for I thought there was no sport in America, and that I had run my last race.

I think now it must have been the unconscious wish to keep one link with the good old days when I had carried the "dark blue" to the front, or thereabout, over brown cinder path and soft green sod.

I did not sleep very well for all my comfortable quarters, and when Hacking knocked at my door on the following morning I had been up an hour or more, and was clad in full running togs, having ripped from trunks and jersey all trace of the well-loved color.

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When he looked me over his eyes glistened, for he had not seen an English athlete in a proper rig for many a long day.

We went down the back stairs and through the barn yard to a little track behind the house. It was a foggy morning and one could barely see the length of the hundred yards. I jogged once or twice over the course to warm up, and discover some of the bad spots, and then announced that I was ready for the trial.

Just then the sun came out, and as I waited at the start while Hacking went to the finish, he walked through a golden haze. It seemed a good omen. I felt more at home in my running-shoes than I had since I left the Old Country, and was once again happy, with my foot on the mark, drinking in full draughts of fresh air and waiting for the signal to be off.

This was the drop of a handkerchief, for Hacking did not care to use a pistol. There was the quick spring, the crunch of the cinders, the rush of the soft wind, the ever-quickenning stride, until with one last effort I passed the post with a rush.

It was a rough trial, sure enough, but Hacking's watch showed ten and four-fifths. He announced himself satisfied, confirmed his promise, and my worry about food and shelter was over for a full long month. [Pg 44]

I now spent a number of days trying still to find something to do which I could fairly handle, going into the city each day, but entirely without result.

I was at no expense, however, for I walked to and from town, and took a cold lunch with me. This last was attended to by Hacking's niece, a tall, fair-haired girl, a trifle awkward yet, for she was only sixteen, but pretty, and promising to be a real beauty later.

She was very kind and gracious, as a good girl is sure to be toward one in trouble. Indeed, Jennie's sympathy soon became liking, and might perhaps have grown to something more had it received any encouragement. I do not mean by this that I was irresistible or that she was at all unmaidenly, for a more modest girl I never saw. But she was very lonely, her uncle allowing her not the least word with any of his customers. I was the first young fellow she had ever known, and sixteen is a romantic age.

Never was I beast enough to have gone further than a mild flirtation with a girl like Jennie, and now I was bound in honor not to abuse the confidence of a friend, the only one I had. There were some old Lancashire memories, also, which would not down.

I had not been long at the "Traveller's Rest" before, at Hacking's request, I went into mild training, and soon after he broached to me a plan by which I might make enough to keep me for some months, and incidentally a comfortable penny for his own purse. [Pg 45]

This was the plan:

There was in Boston a man by the name of Simmons, who was yards better than any one in the country. Hacking plainly told me that while I ought to win, even I had no sure thing, but that he would risk a hundred dollars or more on my success; that he could get odds of at least two to one, and that he would give me one-third of the winnings.

It may be a matter of surprise that I should decline this offer,—almost an object of charity, with everything to win and nothing to lose; but there was something very disagreeable to me in the thought of turning professional. The line between amateur and professional was then, and is now, much more closely drawn on the other side than here,—and rightly so, to my mind.

While I do not propose to preach a sermon on this text, "I could, an' if I would." The jockeying in our American colleges, though very skilfully done, is bad in every way and hurts legitimate sport not a little.

I felt, I say, that in running for a wager with a professional I was forfeiting my standing as a gentleman amateur, and my claim to be considered a gentleman at all. [Pg 46]

Jennie thought the same thing, and came mighty near a quarrel with her uncle over the matter. But he, led more by the ambition to pull off a good thing than by mercenary motives, would not give up his plan, though Jennie begged with tears in her eyes,—an argument which had never before been ineffectual.

It was only when I had lived on his bounty a full week over the month that he hinted, delicately enough (for a right good fellow was he), that my time was up. There was nothing else to do but consent, and a week later the "Boston Herald" announced that there was "a match on between Chipper Simmons and Hacking's Unknown, \$200 to \$100, distance one hundred yards, to be run May 1, at Hacking's Brighton track, at four o'clock in the afternoon."

I had three weeks of careful training on the wretched little track, and when the morning of May 1 dawned I was fit as possible, and able to run for my life. It was not an English May day, but more like what I was used to seeing in the Old Country a month earlier. The sky was blue, and across it drifted soft white clouds, for there had been showers in the night. There was the smell of the moist earth, and what little wind there was blew from the south, and carried the fragrance of the pear-blossoms from a young orchard to my window as I threw it open. [Pg 47]

I took my tub and Hacking gave me a right good rub down after; not a very artistic performance, but given with good will and with a strong hand. When it was done he looked me over with a critical eye, pronouncing me very fit, "barring a heavy pound or two;" but as I had done my work faithfully he could find no fault. He thought me a bit over-confident, and told me so; but I had never for a moment doubted my ability to defeat anything against me, and I paid little attention to his words. I was not conceited, but I knew there were not a half-dozen amateurs in all England in my class, and was sure an Old-Country crack must outclass anything the States could produce.

As early as two o'clock the spectators began to arrive, and I, following my own inclination as well as Hacking's suggestion to "get under cover," went upstairs and knocked at the door of Jennie's little sitting-room.

She greeted me most cordially with a handshake and a "good day to a good winner." She was [Pg 48]

dressed in her best gown, and had been sitting at the window to watch the arrivals. I took a seat by her side on the little chintz-cushioned window-seat, and watched with her.

To those who to-day see the throngs of well-dressed and refined people, many of them ladies, who attend college, amateur, and even professional sports, it may not be amiss to describe the spectators of my first match at Hacking's Brighton track, back in the sixties, for a typical sporting crowd it was.

They drove to the door in all sorts and descriptions of vehicles, drawn by animals as various. They soon filled the long sheds back of the house, and then a dilapidated fence was utilized for hitching-posts, and even a few trees of the young orchard.

The drivers were many of them Englishmen, for the average American was too keen after the dollars in those days to leave them for sport of any kind. The adjournment to the bar was almost unanimous, where enough money was taken for fancy drinks to make good Hacking's stake had he lost.

We could see them come swaggering up the steps, many of them carrying whip in hand, and there was much loud talk of passing Tom, Dick, or Harry on the road, with the "little bay" or the "brown colt."

We could hear them plainly, for the window was up a bit, and they did not talk in whispers.

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Every now and again some one would chaff Hacking on his Unknown, telling him to "trot out the wonder," or "give us a sight of the man who runs Simmons even."

It was three o'clock when a long moving wagon labelled "Boston Belle" drove up to the door, containing Simmons, his backers and immediate attendants; and the crowd at the bar sauntered out on the piazza to meet them, and hurried back in augmented numbers to patronize still further the tall bottles behind the mahogany.

I had a glimpse of Simmons as he stepped out; but he was enveloped in a long ulster, and all I could discover was that he was extremely tall and dark.

His supporters had plenty of money, and soon ran the odds up to three to one, at which figures Hacking accommodated them to a considerable extent. I had not another supporter, however, for they all seemed to consider that Hacking had quite lost his head, and took the match as a huge joke. It was very evident that, if I broke the tape, it would be a most unpopular, as well as unexpected, win. Hacking stuck to them well, but at last got all he wanted, and declined to risk any more. So confident was Simmons' principal backer that he proposed another match, though this was not yet pulled off, agreeing to concede three yards when we ran again.

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It is wonderful what effect such talk has on a contestant, no matter how confident he may be. I had not for a moment doubted the ability of a crack man like myself to beat anything in the States at my distance, but I now began to admit the possibility of defeat, and to consider that it meant almost starvation to me. You must remember I was barely twenty years old, in a strange country, and a man trained close to the limit is particularly liable to fancies.

Jennie had been talking to me all the time in her quiet way, for she had the good old English habit of subdued speech; but little did I hear then, and now I remember almost nothing at all.

I first noticed that she had become vastly indignant at a reflection on the courage of the "Unknown who dares not show himself."

"Don't fret: you'll see him soon enough, my man," she said, with a toss of her head. She was giving me some absurd instructions about letting Simmons get the best of the start, and then sailing by him in the last few yards, so that the disappointment might be more intense, when some one in the crowd yelled out with a Yorkshire accent, "Fifteen dollars to five on the long-legged Chipper. Fifteen to five against the 'veiled lady.'"

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There was a loud laugh at this, which was too much for Jennie. She jumped up, went to her little desk in the corner, and took from one of those secret drawers, which are so evident, her purse, and emptying it in her lap counted out five dollars and a few cents over. She then called the chamber-maid, gave her the five dollars, and told her to give it to Jerry, the hostler, to bet on Mr. Brown.

"'Tis an easy way to make money," she said, with an immense amount of disdain at my remonstrance.

I sat with her a while longer, she doing all the talking, for my mind was occupied, to put it mildly. When the little clock on the shelf pointed to three-thirty, I left to get into my running-togs, she giving me a good grip with her soft warm hand, and saying, "I shall see you win from the attic window."

When I reached my room, which Hacking told me to keep locked, I had a difficulty in finding the key-hole that I had never experienced, except "after dinner" or at late hours of the evening, my fingers being quite unsteady. As I stripped, my courage seemed to leave me with every garment. I remember I wondered if it would come back again when I put on my running-clothes. A little better I did feel, but at the last moment I broke the lace of my left shoe as I was pulling it tight.

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Now, there is an old superstition that this means a lost race, and though I had never thought of such a foolish thing before, it seemed now a sure omen of defeat.

Indeed, I may as well confess first as last, that when Hacking knocked at my door, for the first time in all my life (and the last as well) I was in a blue funk.

Yes, a rank quitter was I on that afternoon of May 1, 186-, and I am not sure I should not have cut and run, had there been the least chance to get away.

Hacking discovered my condition at once, and grew mighty serious when his efforts to hearten me were unsuccessful. And truly the man had good reason to be serious,—a good three hundred dollars at risk, and here was his man with knees kissing and lips white.

There was nothing to do but to go on with the game, though, to make it worse, as I walked down the back stairs, I caught my spikes in a crack and nearly put myself out of the race by a bad fall before the start. It is almost an absurd thing to say, but when I picked myself up and discovered I was entirely uninjured, I cursed the ill-luck which had not allowed me to be disabled.

I did have pride enough to make a brace when I reached the open air, and flattered myself I did not show how badly I felt. [Pg 53]

I was enveloped in a long top-coat, which hid me completely, but as we forced our way to the track through the spectators, who crowded around to get a look at me, my teeth were set to keep them from chattering. There were several offers of three to one, and one of four to one, as we passed; but Hacking said he had enough, and I think he told the truth and could have said "more." He hurried on with me to the start, where Simmons stood with a little cluster of his most ardent admirers.

As we approached, Simmons threw off his ulster, and came forward to meet me. His eye caught mine, and he smiled in a very peculiar way, discovering immediately my condition, and held out a long brown hand, without a word.

I extended mine mechanically, expecting an ordinary handshake, but greatly to my surprise he gripped it in a most vicious squeeze which brought almost a cry of agony to my lips. I learned afterwards that this was a common trick to intimidate and dishearten, but was entirely unprepared for anything of the kind, having always run against gentlemen, where all proper courtesies were observed.

The effect upon me was, however, directly opposite that expected. My trouble was not so much lack of courage as simple nervousness. With the shock of the pain this disappeared as if by magic, and in its place came at first a blind rage at the injury, which I could scarcely restrain, and then the determination to win, if I never ran again. [Pg 54]

I was a different man. I threw off my top-coat, and facing my opponent, looked him over critically and carefully. I am free to say I could not deny him a long breath of admiration. He was over six feet tall, dark and slender, showing signs of the infusion of Indian blood which was in his veins. He was clad in a common undershirt, far from clean. Instead of trunks he wore overalls cut off just above the knees, and on his feet were a pair of well-seasoned moccasins.

Yet despite his unsportsmanlike and ludicrous costume, a better-built man for a sprinter I never saw, and I have seen some of the best.

His legs were long and lithe, well-rounded, but not too heavily muscled, and every cord and sinew showed through the brown skin as fine and firm as a bowstring. He carried not an ounce of extra weight above the belt, although his chest was full and his arms sinewy. With the strong jaw and piercing black eyes, there could be no question of their possessor's determination. I knew my work was cut out for me with a big pair of shears; that I had met a man as good if not better than myself, and I must do all I knew to win. That I was to win I had now determined,—a grand, good condition of mind for a contestant to possess. [Pg 55]

Simmons observed me as critically as I did him, and I think that the more he saw of me the less he liked me. The contrast between us was as great as possible. I was as fair as he was dark, several inches shorter, and although without any superfluous flesh, much larger boned and muscled. Indeed I was built more like a "quarter-miler" than a sprinter. I must have bettered his weight by several pounds, and had not the top-coat covered me, and my nervousness shown itself, I question if he would have tried his little bit of brutality upon me.

While the survey of my opponent was most comprehensive, it was the work of seconds. He suddenly produced a roll of dirty bank-bills, and shook them in my face with a "See here, young fellow, I go you one hundred to fifty you're a loser." I opened my mouth to decline the bet, but my words were drowned by a torrent of mingled abuse, invective, and I know not what of "billingsgate." It ended in an endless repetition of the very conclusive sentence, "Put up, or shut up," "Put up, or shut up," which evidently gave him an extreme amount of satisfaction. I was not then the possessor of fifty cents, and was pleased when the starter silenced him with the peremptory order to "Get on your marks." [Pg 56]

I went to the line at once, followed by Simmons, and as the crowd was being pressed back slowly behind the ropes, Hacking drew me a little aside and gave me his last instructions. "Now, my lad, listen to what I say. You've got your heart back all right, and can win if you use your head. The starter will hurry the pistol a bit, for he would like to see you win, and you need not be afraid of going away too soon. Get a yard to the good, and hold it, for if you cannot show clear at the tape, you will stand no show with the referee."

I learned afterwards that while both were supposed to be fair and unprejudiced men, Hacking had practically named the starter, and Simmons' backer the referee. The former would give me all possible advantage, and the latter would see none but my opponent at the finish without opera-glasses unless I had him plainly beaten.

To those who do not know, I will say that, in a sprint, very much depends on the start; that a [Pg 57]

contestant must be off with the pistol, or steal on it if he can. But if he gets away before the shot, he is brought back and penalized a yard for each offence. Knowing that the pistol would be a bit quick was a decided advantage to me, as I could start without fear of being set back.

As I got in position, I had made up my mind to the following facts: First, that I had the best side of the track. It was the west or farthest from the house, and well I knew every inch of the brown cinder-path that stretched before me. For the first fifty yards there was nothing to choose; but on the east side, which Simmons had taken, just before the finish was a soft spot which would trouble him. Second, the rain of the previous night had made the track quite heavy, which should also help me, as my greater strength must push me through. Third, my appearance had not been without its effect on the crowd, and I had heard a word or two of approval of my "get-up," also of the quiet and business-like way in which I had met Simmons' tirade.

We were on our marks and waiting for the word when suddenly my opponent discovered my running-shoes, and insisted that I must run in smooth soles like himself.

He kept up a wordy warfare with Hacking on this subject for at least five minutes, Hacking arguing that there were no restrictions, and that I could wear top-boots or golden slippers if I chose. [Pg 58]

Simmons was silenced at last by the crowd, who plainly saw I would not run without spikes, and were bound to see a race.

All this controversy, together with the continued brutality of my opponent, had put me fairly on edge. I was as cool as possible, ready to do all I knew, eager to start, and growing more determined if not more confident every minute.

I had given an occasional glance at the attic window of the hotel where I could see Jennie, and every time I looked came the wave of a little handkerchief that did me a heap of good.

As I "set myself," and looked down the track, fringed on either side by the crowds of spectators pressed close against the ropes, not one of whom was friendly to me, every nerve of my body tingled, and the "fighting blood" passed down to me through many generations of good old English stock was at a fever heat.

Now I saw nothing and thought of nothing but the red worsted at the finish; I strained at the mark with every muscle tense, my weight well forward, and a buzz in my ears like the song of a huge top. [Pg 59]

From the starter's lips came the "On your marks,"—"Ready,"—"Set," and then a bit ahead of time came the "crack" of the pistol, and we were off.

Can any one describe the mad ten seconds of a sprint? 'Tis over in a breath, and words are slow.

I doubt I had a foot the best of the start, but Simmons was a trifle "phased" by the quick shot, and did not get his speed so quickly. But when he did get it, how he came!

At fifty yards we were even, and at seventy-five (do all I could) Simmons had drawn a yard to the good.

A yell went up from the crowd. It made him think he had me beat. But had he? His easy wins had taught a fatal fault of slowing at the finish. The soft ground helped it, and the yell that gave him a false confidence drove me mad with glory. I let out the last link in me, and passing like a shot, broke the tape, a clear winner by a yard.

There was no mistake: Hacking's "Unknown" had won.

I ran much farther over the finish than did Simmons, and when I worked my way to the referee through the crowd, the decision was announced, and my opponent was like a fiend. He threatened the referee, and swore he would break the neck of the d—"ringer" with the spiked shoes. [Pg 60]

Although I was not looking for trouble, I should not have hesitated to show him I knew another game beside running if he had laid a hand on me. Thanks to his friends' persuasion, with some physical force added, he was pulled away and through the crowd.

This last had now become quite friendly to me, having gone from curiosity to admiration for the man who could beat the "Chipper" even. Some shook my hand, others patted me on the back, and many suggested an adjournment to the bar with unlimited liquid refreshment as the "proper medicine for a good winner."

They took my declining in good part, and soon Hacking forced his way to me, and tearing me from my admirers, gave me a chance to retire to my room.

I found Jennie at the top of the stairs, with tears of joy in her eyes, and a bit hysterical from excitement. Greatly to my surprise (and her own as well, when she realized what she had done), she threw both arms round my neck, and kissed me twice before she came to herself. Then there was a bright blush, a quick turn, the rustle of skirts, and the slam of the door. [Pg 61]

I was glad enough to reach the solitude of my room, where from the window I saw Simmons bundled into the "Boston Belle" by a half-dozen dejected supporters, and with none to do him honor among the many.

"*Le roi est mort, vive le roi,*" is as true on the cinder-path as in the great world outside.

But as I sat in my room, a winner, with the cheers still echoing in my ears, and good money awaiting me, it was a sad heart that beat under my jersey.



It was on a June day back in the late "sixties" that I first saw Angus MacLeod, the hero of my story of "The Hollow Hammer."

I had given a boxing-lesson to a little jeweller in South Boston who was burdened with a pugilistic ambition, and was walking leisurely homeward, enjoying the fine weather and the exercise in the open air. As I sauntered along at an easy pace, with my eyes wandering here and there, something in the day or the neighborhood reminded me of the "Old Country," and particularly the ancient town of Bury. I think it must have been the sight of the iron-foundry down the street, with the flames streaming from its chimneys.

I know I was harking back to almost forgotten scenes, and old acquaintances who had doubtless long ago forgotten me (excepting one, perhaps), when a chorus of rough voices brought me to myself with a start. The noise came from behind the high fence which shut in the iron-works yard, and I could not make out what it meant until I reached the open gate and looked in.

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It was the noon hour, and there were a lot of men lounging about, eating from their tin pails, smoking short black pipes, and doing whatever else they fancied. The yard was as level and smooth as a tennis-court, but without the least sign of turf except along the fence and fringing the foundation-stones of the foundry building.

The noise came from a crowd of workmen, clustered together not far from the huge door. A row of them sat on the ground with their backs against the wall, and there were a dozen or more standing together in a bunch. These were mostly the younger men, who, not content with five hours' work since sunrise, were having a friendly test of strength in putting the shot.

They were using for the purpose an old cannon-ball, which must have weighed a bit over the sixteen pounds by the size of it.

Cannon-balls were plenty in those days, for the war was not many years over.

Now, there is always something interesting to me in the sport of a lot of workingmen. They take a bit of a lark with all the more heartiness because they do not have too many of them. Then, again, this shot-putting contest was for the pure love of the game, and without the selfish incentives of money, prize, or glory.

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There was a running fire of good-natured chaff all the time, and at each "put," good, bad, or indifferent, the contestant was guyed unmercifully for his style or distance. Failing this, some old personality was raked up, the allusion to which brought out no end of laughter and applause.

It was an interesting scene, with plenty of variety and color. The men were mostly big, brawny fellows, with sleeveless flannel shirts of red, blue, or gray, open at the breast; and grime or rust could not hide the splendid development of arms, chests, and shoulders.

The sun was warm and bright, and here and there a tin pail would catch the light, and shine as clear, I warrant, as ever the shield of a good knight, back in the old days when there were sterner sports than tossing an iron shot. Many a good man could I see, but at the game they were trying they had much to learn. 'Twas a case of "bull beef," and little more.

I watched them a few minutes, but was about to move on when there appeared at the door of the foundry a young fellow who caught my eye at once.

He was stripped to the waist, fresh from a struggle with the stubborn iron, and his body was drenched and shining with sweat. His arms and shoulders were round and firm; but there was no abnormal development, or sign of a bound muscle, and he stood with an ease that proved good legs under him, though hidden by the thick corduroys. His hair was light and curly, and his face was smooth and clean cut.

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Many bigger and some stronger men have I seen, but none whose proportions were so perfect.

Among the few remembrances of my books is that dialogue of Plato which describes the sensations of Socrates at first seeing the beautiful youth, Charmides. Well (may Socrates forgive me the comparison), I had the same feeling when I first looked at Angus MacLeod on that June day, back in the "sixties." Barring the difference in costume, and the grime which a little water would remove, I believe they were alike as two peas.

The lad (he looked scarcely twenty years of age for all his development) stood a moment or two in the doorway, watching with an amused smile a big fellow put the shot a scant twenty feet, after an enormous amount of effort. Then he was noticed by some one who called out, "Come here, Mac, you porridge-eater, and show them how to do it."

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At this he laughed, shook his head, and would not budge. But the call was taken up by others, with a lot of chaff, like, "The lad's bashful," "A Scotch puddler's always shy except on pay-day," and a plenty more like it.

At last a young fellow in a blue jersey, and an old chap, the color and material of whose shirt were alike doubtful, took each an arm, and led him, holding back a bit and laughing, to the circle within which the shot lay.

He picked it up, dropped it while he drew his narrow belt a hole or two tighter, and then picked it up again. He rolled it a bit in his hand, raised it two or three times from his shoulder high above his head, balanced a moment on his right leg, with the left lifted, and then, with that easy wrist and hand motion, and that little "flick" at the end, he sent the old cannon-ball a good two yards farther than any who had tried.

It was a right good "put," though not a phenomenal one, and hardly a fault could I find with the style, barring a little failure to get the full turn of the body.

Almost as soon as the shot landed, and before the mingled applause and good-natured chaffing were over, he left them with a parting joke, and disappeared through the door, going back to his waiting furnace. This was my first sight of Angus MacLeod. [Pg 67]

I looked him up a few days later, got acquainted easily, and in fact hit it off right well with him from the beginning. I was just enough older for him to look up to me a bit in other matters beside athletics, and on this last subject he gave me credit for possessing all the knowledge in the market. I learned that he had been in this country some four years, that he lived with an uncle, one of the pillars of a Scotch Presbyterian church, and that Angus was himself a churchman, devout and regular in his habits.

He had taken to athletics, with no other preparation than the school-boy sports of old Aberdeen, making a specialty of the "shot-put" and "hammer-throw."

This last was his favorite sport, and by dint of regular practice in an open lot back of his house he was able to show about ninety feet as a best performance. He improved this at once under my instruction, working up to a regular hundred feet in a couple of weeks. This pleased him very much, and he took kindly to my suggestion that he enter some open competition, and see what he could do in a contest.

Indeed, he was quite confident that he could give a good showing, making much of the fact that the MacLeods had been noted for their strength for centuries. Many stories he told me of old John M'Dhoil-vic-Huishdon, from whom he claimed to have descended. This John was the head of the MacLeods of Lewis. He lived in the days of James VI., and, though a man of small stature, was of matchless strength. Some of the tales, I confess, I should have doubted, had not Angus been both a Scotchman and a church member of good standing. [Pg 68]

It was quite easy for us to choose an opportunity for Mac's début, as there were some very convenient sports only a few weeks ahead.

These games, Scotch and otherwise, were the principal attraction at an annual excursion of Caledonian societies, comprising all those within a radius of one hundred miles of Boston.

Purses were small, but the enthusiasm great; and many a canny Scot, under the influence of a "wee drappie," would back an impossible winner for all his pockets might hold.

These were the good old days of Duncan Ross and Captain Daily, and at one of these Caledonian excursions there afterward occurred that never-to-be-forgotten wrestling bout on the deck of a boat moored in the lake. So fierce was the struggle that the men worked overboard, and neither being willing to break hold, they were well filled with water, and in fact half-drowned before they separated. [Pg 69]

Angus belonged to one of the Boston clans, and naturally chose these Caledonian games for his first appearance, working hard, training faithfully, and saying nothing, for a very quiet chap was Mac. If all the men I have trained had been as easy to handle as MacLeod, I should have one or two less gray hairs than I now possess. Unfortunately, church members are not in as large a percentage as I would wish on the cinder-path.

Now, I had at first no intention of pulling a dollar out of the affair, except my regular fee for training. Even this I at first declined, wishing to help my friend purely out of friendship. Mac would not have it, however, and as his pay was high, I allowed him to have his way.

I had now been making a business of training athletes for nearly a year, getting a good living out of it, and had at the beginning a nice little nest-egg in the bank, ready for a rainy day.

Exactly how this was accumulated I do not care to say. These tales are in no sense confessions, and I shall avoid the "strutting I" as much as possible. [Pg 70]

After my defeat of "Chipper" Simmons, at Hacking's Brighton track, there were a couple of years passed not at all to my liking, though profitably enough for one of small ideas. I took on matches wherever they promised a dollar. I ran everybody, and every distance, from a fifty-yard dash to a mile run, and almost invariably won, largely because of the pains I took with myself, and my careful training. I learned all the tricks of the trade, gave close finishes always, did an artistic "fainting act," and made myself a subject of regretful, not to say painful, remembrance to a large part of the sporting fraternity.

They stood it all right for a couple of years, but the summer before I met MacLeod I suddenly discovered I had about squeezed the orange dry. They had, very naturally, grown more and more

shy of me, until it had become impossible to obtain a match, except under prohibitive conditions. I tried giving good men eight yards in the "hundred" and one hundred yards in the mile for a while, but discovered it was a hard business, with nothing in it. My only profit, as far as I could see, was to run crooked, and fake a race or two, but at this, though not over-nice, I drew the line.

I was willing to underrate my powers, and fool the fancy on my condition; to win by a scant yard with pretended effort, in order to pull on my opponent to another race; but to back him on the sly and lie down, to pull money from my friends, I could not. A gentleman I might not be, but honest I would be still. Indeed, despite the "winning way" I had, my reputation was of the best as a rare, good runner, as a square man who gave his backers a straight run for their money, and as the most knowing man in the States concerning work and training for the cinder-path.

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On this last I made up my mind to trade. I announced my absolute retirement as a contestant, and my intention to make a business of training and handling others.

My prices startled them a bit at the beginning, but after I had made a few winners out of almost impossible timber, I was kept fairly well occupied. When the winter put a stop to my out-of-doors work, I became instructor in a gymnasium, and gave lessons in boxing and fencing. I even prepared one man for a ring contest, which he won, thanks to his perfect condition, after acting as a chopping-block to a better boxer for a couple of hours, this affair satisfying me at once and forever with the prize ring.

At the coming of the spring I found my book very well filled, and would by June have been quite content to have trained Mac with no recompense whatever.

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Yet I had no objections to make money from others, and discovered a very fair opportunity, as I thought, about two weeks before the games. I then received a bit of information that there was a dark horse grooming for the hammer throw, in the person of an Irishman by the name of Duffy. He was an enormous fellow, as strong as an ox, could do nearly one hundred feet, and the tip made him a sure winner.

Now, I was very confident I knew better, though ninety feet, in those days, was phenomenal for an amateur, and a throw of one hundred had not been made in any previous contest. The best of the news was kept for the last, and that was that Duffy had plenty of friends with good money to back him.

I figured at once that MacLeod could just about call the trick, that being a smaller man would help the odds, and that, properly managed, there was a pretty penny in it.

Mac was now doing from one hundred to one hundred and five in the most consistent manner, and I made up my mind to plunge on him a bit, keeping quiet so that Duffy's friends might show their hands first. This was easy enough, for Mac did all his work after supper in the vacant lot back of his house, where no one could pull a tape over his throws. It was prudent, also, for MacLeod had very rigid ideas about betting (gambling he called it), and would undoubtedly have protested, if he had not declined to show at all.

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Duffy's friends began very cautiously with small figures, and I took all that showed through a third party. When one hundred dollars was promptly covered, however, they made up their minds there was something else good, and became a bit shy.

I let them alone until the evening before the excursion, when I sallied into the Duffy neighborhood, and at one to two offered to produce a man weighing under one hundred and seventy pounds who would win against all. Now, a hammer-thrower of this weight is rare, and I found all the money I cared to cover. Indeed, I exceeded my limit a trifle. Then I wandered over to Mac's field, pulled the tape over his throw of one hundred and eight, and went home and to sleep, for not a grain of anxiety had I over the result. I doubt if I should have given five per cent. to be insured a winner.

The day dawned, fine and hot. We went down from Boston a good three hundred strong, men, women, and children, the last turning out a whole clan by themselves. There were bagpipes squealing, babies crying, and a Babel of rough Scotch tongues. Tartans were displayed in all the colors of the rainbow. Some were content to show only a tie, ribbon, or shawl, but a fair percentage were in full Highland costume, and far from comfortable many of them looked.

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The dress is wonderfully picturesque, and nothing is more becoming to an athletic man with straight legs and strong brown knees. But for a petty tradesman with legs like pipe-stems, knock-kneed, and ghastly white it is particularly trying, and many of the gallant Scots looked as if they would like to don the protecting "breeks" to which they had become accustomed.

We all piled into the hot and dusty cars, and after an hour and a half were glad to get a breath of fresh air as we steamed down the bay.

Indeed, when we reached the "Point," a little before noon, I was loath to go ashore, for the trees on a ridge of land cut off the wind, and the place was like a furnace.

Nothing looked comfortable but a pair of bronze lions who flanked the roadway to the hotel, and had they been alive I am sure they would have found the day altogether too tropical.

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I could see the crowds flocking around the swings, merry-go-rounds, and the monkey cage, and there was a motley crowd in hired bathing-suits enjoying a dip in the salt water. Of these last only was I in the least envious.

The clans, immediately upon landing, formed in procession, and marched off in the broiling sun, a half-dozen pipers playing "The Campbells are coming" as loudly as possible, skirling like so many

pigs under a gate.

The most conspicuous figure was an old fellow who blew as if his life depended on the effort, and until I feared he would burst his bagpipe if he did not rupture a blood-vessel first.

He seemed to feel that the world was looking at him, and he was well conscious of its admiration. He was big-boned, loose-jointed, and so sandy that it was a riddle to guess his age. His shoulders were badly rounded, but he straightened up every few seconds in an abortive effort to appear erect on this occasion, if never again. He was clad in full Highland costume, even to dirk and claymore,—a rather unusual accompaniment, and dangerous as well, for a Scot on a merry-making where Scotch whiskey and Scotch ale mingle freely. He wore the MacNab tartan, and the kilt looked as if it had been slept in, all twisted and wrinkled.

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As the clans marched up the hill and between the lions, I could see the bright red tartans of the Frasers, the black and green of the Gordons, and the beautiful parti-colors of the Stewarts. There were many others, all showing bright in the sun; and there was a lift to the heels of the marchers which nothing could have caused but the shrill notes of the bagpipes. Indeed, they were enough to start the sluggish blood in my veins, though I suppose my ancestors had long years ago heard the same sounds with resentment, as the Scots swarmed over the border. As a parlor instrument I should admit it had its superiors, but for strong men going to battle I doubt if it has its equal.

There were all kinds of men in the crowd, from the gray-haired veteran to the little fellow, born on American soil, who had never seen the tartan kilts except on a holiday. There were a number of contestants in the line, with strong, athletic figures, but not one could compare with Angus, in the yellow and black of the MacLeods, as he marched, almost the last. I saw the girls had their eyes on him, though Mac neither noticed nor cared, for he thought them "kittle cattle," and was much fonder of handling hammer and shot.

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I had seen little of Angus since the start, for he was a clan officer and had many duties, but found him, to my surprise, not in the least nervous, and quite confident of winning. Did not old John M'Dhoil-vic-Huishdon outclass all competitors in the old days, and was not Angus MacLeod a lineal descendant, to whom had come the family strength?

He said he had heard that there had been considerable money bet on him to win, which he deplored, and that he would not have gone into the thing at all had he foreseen it. I told him he was very foolish, for a man might bet how long a Sunday sermon would last, and that if he did not risk anything himself, not to trouble himself about others. Though unable to argue, he shook his head, and was, I saw, uneasy, but I had no fear of his drawing out at this late day.

When the crowd disappeared, I went to the hotel, and engaged a quiet room, on the cool side of the house, where Angus joined me as soon as the procession broke ranks.

I made him lie down a little while, gave him a sponge and rub-down, and after a good lunch, such as a man should eat who expects soon to call upon the best powers of his body, he pronounced himself feeling strong enough to throw the hammer into the bay. We could see the crowd, contestants and all, file into the long dining-rooms, where "clam-bakes" were served. A very nice lunch for an excursionist, but about the most awful diet possible for an athlete, particularly if he gorge himself in a laudable ambition to get the full value of his fifty cents.

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We waited until it was after two o'clock, and found the games already started when we arrived at the place called in compliment the "athletic grounds." It was simply an enclosure roped off from an open field; track there was none, except as the feet of contestants had worn off the turf and the sun had baked the surface hard. There were no seats, and we found our way with some difficulty through the spectators, who crowded a dozen deep all the way round, and tested the strength of the rope and the firmness of the wooden posts through which it was drawn. An eager, hot, and perspiring crowd it was, jostling, pushing, and elbowing, and the last half-dozen rows might as well have been in the Orkneys, as far as seeing the sports was concerned. As usual the tall and strong were in front, and the short and weak were behind.

We found the enclosure full of contestants and their friends, the latter an insupportable nuisance, in everybody's way, not excepting their own. We saw Duffy standing with a little knot of henchmen, and they gave Mac a critical glance as he walked by my side. It had leaked out in some way who my man was, and the interest in him was great. They knew I was not in the habit of taking up anything unless it was good, and some of Mac's friends from the foundry had got a day off, with their last pay envelopes with them.

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All the officials and two-thirds of the crowd were Caledonians, but the contests were nearly all open, and there was a large number of other nationalities represented, particularly the Irish.

Of system there was next to none, changes were frequent, and orders given and countermanded in the same breath. The noise was deafening and the heat insupportable. The dust was like a good Scotch snuff as far as sneezing properties were concerned, and of about the same color.

We were just in time to see the "fat men's race," in which the contestants ran themselves almost into apoplexies. I am sure some of these mountains of flesh must have permanently injured themselves, and endangered their lives by their exertions.

I do not pretend to remember all the contests that followed, but there were opportunities for every one, man, woman, and child, old or young, to distinguish himself. Beside the regular sprints, runs, jumps, and weight contests, there were "sack," "wheelbarrow," "potato," and "three-legged" races, all opportunities for great laughter and applause.

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I ordered Mac back to the hotel when we learned that the "hammer-throw" was the very last

event, and only sent for him when the afternoon had nearly dragged itself out.

The last casts were then being made at "tossing the caber," which, being the most characteristic Caledonian game of all, had a most formidable list. Indeed, Angus was much disappointed that he had not entered, in which feeling I did not at all join, for I wanted him to save all his strength.

I remember now a little bandy-legged fellow in a crazy-looking kilt who struggled with the heavy log, which he could scarcely lift, let alone toss. He turned to me after a superhuman effort, his face aglow with pride and exertion, and remarked breathlessly, "Rinnin's weel enough for laddies; thot's the sport of a mon."

The "hammer-throw" had been left for the last, as I was informed, because none would leave until it was over, thus ensuring a full attendance until the end. The reason the "hammer-throw" was so popular was because there was more money on it than all the other events combined, also because of the race feeling excited by the nationalities of the two most-favored contestants.

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Perhaps a third of the spectators were Irish, and being more aggressive and outspoken, were almost as much in evidence as the Scotch themselves. Indeed, the applause when an Irishman won (and they had more than their proportion of firsts that day) was as loud as at the victory of a Scot.

In the "hammer-throw" there were a scant half-dozen entries, the reputed prowess of Duffy and MacLeod disheartening the less ambitious. I was surprised to see among them old Sandy MacNab, the piper, but learned that he had been a famous man with the weights, and had pulled off the event here only last year. Indeed, for all his age (and more than twenty was he) he was a good man yet despite his cadaverous appearance. He had for years pulled money out of these Caledonian games, although the amount of his winnings had diminished with his increasing years.

To-day he had backed himself to win the "Old Men's Race," and won easily, but unfortunately stood to lose all he had made, and more too, in the "hammer-throw."

In making his book to get second or better, he thought he had been remarkably conservative, but receiving startling information concerning Duffy and Mac when it was too late, had found it impossible to hedge. He went into the contest expecting to lose, but resolved to make a try for his money all the same. His contortions were wonderful, and convulsed the crowd every time he threw, although he was serious enough, and succeeded in getting into the finals with nearly ninety feet.

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I shall never forget how the old fellow threw down his bonnet in the dust, spit on his hands, and braced himself for his first trial. There was a little crowd around the measurer, who stood a good one hundred and twenty feet away. These MacNab noticed just before he threw, and insisted that they "gang awa oot o' dainger" before he would make his try, although there was just as great chance of his hitting the flag-staff of the hotel.

After he had finished his dialogue with the crowd, in which he held his own, and more, he grasped the handle again with his long, bony fingers. At first swinging very slowly, then faster and faster, until with a double twist that made his kilt stand out like a ballet-dancer's skirt about his long, knee-kissing legs, he gave a grunt and a gasp, and let go. He watched the hammer through the air with bulging eyes, and when it landed, ran after, and argued with the measurer over an extra half-inch in a maddening fashion. Sandy was a privileged character, however, and had a roar of applause every time he tried.

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When MacLeod came up for his first throw, he caught the crowd immediately, so handsome and modest was he. He found particular favor with the "ladies," and not alone did I hear "Eh, but he's a braw laddie," but one little Irish girl, close to the ropes, with blue eyes and the proverbial smudge under them, set an example of cosmopolitan freedom by clapping violently.

Yes, a right well-looking man was MacLeod that day, as he twisted his fingers round the hammer-handle and prepared to throw. He had a fair, open face, well colored by the sun; indeed, darker was it than the hair that curled round his forehead. His arms and shoulders were splendidly developed, and his legs brown, and corded like a distance runner's. So well-proportioned was he that he did not look the twelve stone which he really weighed, and there were murmurs of applause when he threw the hammer ninety-eight feet in his first trial, Duffy having shown but ninety-six just before him. Neither bettered in their second attempts, but when Duffy sent the hammer over ninety-nine feet in his third, putting into the effort all the enormous strength of which he was master, a yell went up from his well-wishers which did his heart good, and he came as near smiling as was possible for so surly a fellow. There are no supporters on earth like an Irish crowd; they are hopeful to the last, and many an event has an Irishman won, under the inspiration of the cheers of his adherents.

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Less loud, though not less hearty, was the applause when Mac sent the hammer one hundred and one and a fraction, in the faultless style I had taught him. Not the equal of Duffy in strength (for the Irishman was almost a giant in height and girth), he knew how to use all he had to the best advantage, and he was working himself slowly up to his best effort to follow.

As I have already said, MacLeod, Duffy, and MacNab were left in the finals. Duffy was grave and quiet when he made the first of his last three throws, and grew graver yet when the measurer gave him less than before, and while Sandy was doing his contortion act, twisting, jumping, and breathing hard, like a man possessed, he had a conference with two of his principal backers who stood by themselves apart.

I was feeling very comfortable, for Duffy, I was sure, had done all he was capable of; and when

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Mac did one hundred and four I decided I was on "Easy Street," and began to count my earnings. All the time I kept my eyes about me, and was surprised to see the look of confidence with which the Irishman came up for his next to last turn. He planted his feet firmly, swung his huge arms round his head until he grew black in the face, and then a last effort, and the hammer flew through the air.

I knew the moment it left his hand that it would best any throw made, but I was astounded when the measurer announced over one hundred and eleven. Where was my money? I could not believe it possible, for I had sure information that Duffy had never quite covered one hundred feet, and while Mac should do his one hundred and eight or a trifle better, I did not believe he could make the one hundred and eleven to save his life.

It was while Angus was making his next to last throw that a sudden suspicion came to me. I was probably wrong, but my money was in danger, and no chance would I throw away to save it. This time Mac was dead in earnest, and getting his strength in just right threw only an inch short of one hundred and ten. I waited until Duffy was about to make his last, and then walked down just in time to be by the side of the measurer when the hammer landed. I saw the tape, it was over one hundred and twelve; and the yell that followed the announcement was enough to madden one who stood to lose a half-year's earnings.

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I picked the hammer up, and tested it carefully, balancing it in my hand, and as I held it there came to me a grain of hope. Was it light, or was I led astray by my wish? I had seen it weighed by the judge; the head looked full size, and the handle all right. In those days the handles were of wood weighing about a pound, and made the total seventeen pounds or close to it. I had carried the hammer half-way back, when Mac came to me and said, his eyes black with determination, "'Tis my last chance, but I'll beat him yet." I gave him no answer, but walked on until Duffy saw me. I was testing his hammer in my hand, doubtful whether or not to ask for a reweighing, when I caught his eye, and decided.

MacNab saw me too, discovering something queer about my face, and he and Duffy were at my side together, the latter holding out his hand to take the hammer, his face flushed and his voice husky, as he asked "What in h——" I was trying to do. MacNab said something, just what it was I do not know, but it showed his disposition to support me, for he was on the anxious seat as well as myself.

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To Duffy's demand I answered as calmly as possible, "I believe this hammer under weight, and ask for a reweighing," holding it behind me meanwhile. At this there was a "hurly-burly" at once, Duffy's friends surrounding me, and had it not been for MacNab's support I should have been in difficulties. The old man did not know what fear was; no one dared lay a hand on him, because of his popularity with the crowd, and he drowned all other voices with his shrill pipings.

He demanded a reweighing much more forcibly than I. "I winna gie it 'tell the weght iss weghted. I winna, na, I winna," he yelled again and again, like a broken-winded bagpipe for all the world.

Mr. Fraser, the judge, and a very fair man, saw that he must do something, and silenced the uproar, although old Sandy kept up a muttering all the time. "You saw me weigh the hammer," said he, looking at me. "I called it seventeen pounds one ounce, and you made no protest."—"I do not cast any reflections on you," I answered, "but this hammer which has just been thrown is certainly not a sixteen-pound hammer. I can prove my statement, and ask that all throws with it be disallowed." Then MacNab, who stood between me and Duffy, with one hand on the handle, set up such an infernal din that Fraser immediately consented, and I handed him the hammer. At this Duffy changed his tune, and proposed to withdraw, saying he would not have any dirty Englishman nor sneaking Scotchman doubt his word. He shook his huge fist in Fraser's face and demanded the immediate return of his property. In this he made a mistake, for the judge was as full of fire as a little Scotch terrier, and he promptly walked to the scales and laid the hammer on them.

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Then there was a dead silence. MacLeod came to my side, for the lad had not spoken a word since the row began; not that he lacked pluck, but he had a mortal antipathy to a windy dispute, and knew I was fully competent to protect his interests. The weight was on the seventeen-pound mark, but the hammer did not lift it, and I saw by the eager faces that the crowd was becoming suspicious. The little judge pushed the weight to sixteen pounds, and still the beam hung; and only at fifteen-eight did it rise. Everybody looked at Duffy's flushed face, and Fraser demanded an explanation, though there did not seem to be much that could be said.

The tall Irishman hemmed and hawed a bit, and then said huskily, "Faith, I think it must have struck a stone and knocked off a piece." Despite our seriousness, this ingenious explanation was too much for us, and the whole crowd laughed until it could laugh no more, Duffy sneaking off in the confusion.

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Old man MacNab became almost delirious in his joy at saving his money in this miraculous way, for Duffy's disqualification put the lank Scott second; and after he had loaded me with acknowledgments, he left, with the laudable ambition of getting outside all the whiskey on the premises. The last I saw of him, his long legs were swinging gayly to the notes of the Highland fling, with a fair prospect of winning the prize.

As the crowd flocked back to the hotel, Fraser thanked me for my firmness which had led to the discovery of the fraud, and I declined to accept any, as I had only watched my money. I did agree to take the light hammer, and he gave it to me together with another which had been picked up from underneath the feet of the crowd.

On the way home MacLeod and myself compared them carefully, and were greatly puzzled. They were almost identical; the size and form of the heads, the turn of the handles, and the initials "P. D." burned into the ends were alike in both. We could not understand where the difference in the weights came in, until we arrived at my rooms. Here I knocked out the handle of the light hammer, and found the centre of the head hollowed out in a most artistic manner, and the mystery was solved. I have no doubt but that Duffy did not use this until he was forced to do so, and that he threw the full-weight hammer which Fraser tested for the first four trials. Only when he was sure that MacLeod, "the little Scottie," was a better man, and his (Duffy's) money was as good as gone, did he fall back on the artistic reproduction, which could have been easily handed to him by a friend in the crowd.

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I confess I made a very pretty penny out of this transaction, and it was all the more welcome because of the fright I had been in over it. Poor Mac was not so fortunate, for although he positively declined to take a penny from me, he was given credit at the church for having gambled disgracefully, and was near being expelled for it.

If this should seem at all an improbable tale, I will assure you that much the same incident occurred among our gentlemanly friends, the college athletes, at a comparatively recent date, although it was kept quiet in deference to somebody's feelings, and not exploited as was the "hollow hammer" back in the late "sixties."



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There is always a "post mortem" atmosphere about Fall track athletics.

Baseball shows a bit more life, for now the ambitious Freshman receives his "trying out" and struggles valiantly to catch the critical eye of the Captain, in search of new material for the "Nine."

The only "real thing" is football, which reigns supreme until Thanksgiving Day dethrones him.

This period is the most trying one of all the year to a trainer. One after another of his men on whom he depends for points on field and track are drafted for the "gridiron," until there is scarcely one left except the second-raters, whom he would gladly spare. Try to imagine my feelings as I watch a football game from the side lines, when Hopkins, my only ten one-fifth man is picked out of the bottom of a "scrimmage" with one of his precious legs twisted, or Baily retires with a dislocated shoulder,—Baily, who alone can be depended upon for any distance with the "shot." Shaw pulls his sweater over his head and takes Hopkins' place at "half back," Marlowe drops his blanket and fills the gap at "tackle" caused by Baily's retirement, and the game goes on just as before. No one seems to care much, but I think of the coming Spring and wonder what kind of a showing we are destined to make.

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I had seen a short practice game between the second and third elevens, and had watched a few men listlessly circling the track, until the gathering dusk warned me that it was time for dinner. I stopped a moment at "Conner's" to arrange for some shoes for the team, and was half-way across the square when I saw ahead of me, and in the middle of the street, quite a little crowd, from the centre of which came a confused jumble of barks, growls, yelps, and howls, the sure sign of a canine disagreement. Now, of course, I did not countenance any such low sport as a battle between two street curs, but I elbowed my way through, as I am afraid most men would have done, and I am not quite sure that my motive was wholly the separation of the combatants.

I found them to be a very large and very good-natured St. Bernard, not quite full grown, and a very small and intensely angry terrier, weighing about as much as his opponent's left leg. Indeed it was not, strictly speaking, a fight at all, if it takes more than one to make a fight, which is I believe an accepted axiom. The terrier, a mixture of hair, mud, and impotent rage, would scramble over the wet pavement and make a desperate spring at the big St. Bernard's throat, either to be avoided by a lift of the head or a turn of the body, and the little fellow would roll over and over, then gather himself up and attack his good-natured foe again with renewed virulence.

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It was really very funny, for neither of them was getting hurt, and when at last the big fellow, in sheer desperation, placed his paw on his assailant and held him down struggling vainly, it caused a hearty laugh from all the crowd. The St. Bernard looked doubtfully at us, very much as if to say, "Is not this a very awkward position for a gentleman to find himself in?" and at last, seeing a gap in the crowd, he suddenly lifted his paw and tried to make good his escape. In this he nearly succeeded, but was not quite quick enough, for his crazy little assailant caught him by the first joint of his hind leg, and buried his sharp little teeth deep in the cartilages. This was really too much for the big fellow's temper, already sadly tried, and turning with a howl of pain, he seized

his vicious little enemy in his big jaws, shook him a second or two fiercely, and then dropped him on the pavement. It was all over before we could interfere, and the big fellow's anger passed as quickly as it came.

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He saw at once that something was wrong, for the ragged little body lay on its side entirely motionless, with the exception of a spasmodic twitching of the legs. He sniffed at him carefully, then gave us a look of reproach, at which I confess I felt ashamed, and trotted sadly away.

It was just at this moment that a number of the football men appeared, led by big Shack Sawyer, who quickly elbowed his way to the inner circle by my side, demanding "What's the row, Professor?"

"Only a little dog fight," I answered, a bit shocked at the sudden transformation from comedy to tragedy.

"It looks more like a dog funeral than a dog fight," spoke up Seever, who was as usual at Shack's elbow.

"I wonder what his name is?" inquired an hysterical woman with a falsetto voice, who had appeared from I know not where, to ask this particularly interesting question.

"The dog's name!" exclaimed Shack; "his name is 'Mud,' I guess, and no mistake." At which there was a half-hearted laugh, for the silent little chap on the pavement was a pathetic sight indeed. Somebody said, "Throw some water on him," and a bareheaded boy with a dinner-pail in his hand filled it at a horse-trough close by, and Shack took it and threw half its contents on the terrier.

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No sooner had the water struck him than he gave a sneeze, like the hunchback in the "Arabian Nights" who had the unfortunate experience with the fish-bone, struggled to his feet, and after a somewhat unsteady circuit of the crowd in a vain effort to find his late antagonist, decided he had put him to flight, and began to bark triumphantly. Indeed, the "dying gladiator" showed every sign of being as good as new, with the exception of a little patch of red at his throat and a very muddy and bedraggled coat.

He went from one to another, wagging his stump of a tail frantically; and when the crowd broke up he dropped in at Sawyer's heels as if he had always belonged there. Shack allowed him to follow him home, and after a somewhat perfunctory effort to find an owner, he became Shack's dog from this time on, and a very lucky dog he was.

When "Mud," for Shack's random christening proved permanent, was treated to the twin luxuries of a bath and a comb, he showed quite an attractive personality. That his coat of arms bore the "bar sinister," there was not the least doubt. His master declared there was no "blot on his scutcheon," and that he was a pure-blooded, wire-haired fox terrier; but his legs were too short, and his hair both too long and too silky for any such claim. Seever made out an imaginary pedigree for him, in which many canine aristocrats of different breeds appeared; but Marlowe declared he certainly must have numbered somewhere among his ancestors a very plebeian New England woodchuck.

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Shack took a deal of chaffing over his "high-bred dog," but clung to him nevertheless, and Mud sprang into instantaneous popularity with the whole college. He had indeed a number of very valuable qualities, the most important of which was an undaunted courage. He was afraid of nothing that walked on four legs, or two either, for that matter. A dog of his own size or smaller he treated with an easy condescension. He looked upon anything larger as an enemy, and a very big dog he considered a personal insult, no matter how he behaved. I am inclined to think that the root of his anger was simply jealousy of superior inches. Whatever the motive was, however, Shack was kept busy pulling him out of the jaws of bigger dogs whenever he took him for an airing.

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Mud could certainly not claim to be "no respecter of persons," for he had a very different manner with which to treat the gentleman from that he gave the laboring man. He was suspicious of the latter, even in his Sunday broadcloth, and when he met him clad in overalls and jumper he greeted him with a canine fusillade that was irrepressible. For rags and dirt, despite his very questionable past and decidedly suggestive name, Mud had a great antipathy. The sign "No admittance to beggars and peddlers," which decorated the lower hall, was quite unnecessary after Mud became a tenant, for he could pick these gentry out, no matter how skilfully disguised, and indeed showed qualities which would have made him invaluable in Scotland Yard.

He was forever on the move, and could tire out the most persistent visitor in any sort of a game. Mud's favorite was a sort of "rough and tumble" in which his opponent tried to bury him in the sofa pillows, and out of which he always emerged with every hair on end, his eyes like live coals, and his voice cracked from his efforts to make himself heard under a pyramid of cushions.

Shack tried to keep his hand in for the "hammer throw," and practised rather intermittently when football gave him a few spare moments. Then was Mud in his particular glory. He would trot to the gymnasium at his master's heels, watch gravely from one of the long benches while Shack stripped and dressed, and then follow him into the middle of the field with an unmistakable air of pride.

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When Shack took the hammer in hand Mud would begin to whimper, and as it whirled faster and faster round Shack's head, the howl grew more and more crescendo until the missile took to flight, with Mud after it so fast that it seemed as if he must sometime get the good sixteen pounds on the middle of his back.

So great was the danger that Shack hit upon the expedient of having Mud guard his sweater,

which turned out to be the only way to keep the energetic little fellow still. It was surprising too what a changed dog he became when this responsibility was put upon him. He watched suspiciously every one who approached, and there was no friend near enough to be allowed to encroach on the forbidden ground occupied by Shack's old sweater. Marlowe tried to pull it away suddenly one day, and left a piece of his sleeve between Mud's sharp teeth as a memento of the encounter.

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It was after two or three weeks' residence in Shack's hospitable quarters that Mud attained the zenith of his popularity and became mascot of the class of 188-. In fact, he bade fair to attain the very pinnacle of a dog's ambition, and to occupy the position of "luck bringer" to the whole college.

His predecessor had been a brindled bulldog of such extraordinary ugliness that it approached the beautiful, but he had fallen into disgrace after allowing the Freshmen to win the deciding game of baseball in the Spring, and the class had not filled the vacant place until Mud came to ornament it.

Shack failed this year to make the big team and played on his class eleven, where he was a bright particular star. In the first game with the Freshmen which they won, Shack at "centre," and Mud as mascot on the side lines, divided the honors, and the game went eighteen to nothing in their favor. After this Mud was solemnly installed in his position by Seever, who gave him a charge much like that to a newly installed minister, and to which Mud listened very seriously, with his head on one side, as he sat on a big chair with Shack's cap over his left eye.

It was hoped that Mud would furnish sufficient magic to make his class winner in the game with the Seniors, which would decide the college championship. When the day arrived he appeared at the gymnasium with an enormous ribbon at his throat and much pride in his breast. He was so distinctly elated that when Marlowe threw Shack's moleskin trousers at him and told him to "Shake 'em," he declined to descend to so undignified a sport.

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No, his game was to be football that day.

It was late in October, and there was a thin mist threatening rain, through which they travelled to reach the gridiron on which the struggle was to be fought out. It was rather a rough field, with the trees all around it, and the ground was quite covered in places by the dead maple leaves. There was a mixed mob composed of the two classes; much enthusiasm and more noise.

Mud was installed in a place of honor on the side lines close to the centre, and for a throne was given Shack's old sweater and told to "Watch it."

Immediately across could be seen the Senior mascot, a very disreputable Billy goat, "bearded like the pard" and with only one horn left. When Mud got a glimpse at his rival, nothing but a distinct sense of duty restrained him from an immediate attack. When "William" was led, struggling violently, around the field just before the game started, Mud ran out on the long sleeve in a vain effort to reach his very disreputable-looking enemy, but even then could not be tempted to leave his precious charge.

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He became very much excited when the men took their places for the "kick-off," and barked furiously at every "down" during the first "half." It was a hard old game, too, and one remembered long after. Class games are often more severe than contests with outside teams, for class rivalry is very strong, and there are not the same pains taken to restrain roughness. The Seniors kept bucking the line fiercely, and Shack at "centre" had all the fun he wanted holding his ground against repeated assaults. He was well backed up, however, by Marlowe on one side and Terry on the other, and the "half" ended with the score six to nothing in favor of the Sophs.

It was a proud moment indeed for little Mud when he was led around the field with the big ribbon on his neck, and so important did he feel that he did not even notice old "Billy," although he trotted close by him.

The Seniors started in with the same tactics when the whistle blew again, although they had not been at all successful. Not a "round the end" play did they make, and they were at last rewarded for their perseverance by knocking the wind out of Marlowe so completely that he was obliged to retire.

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The man that took his place was sandy enough, and well up in the game; but he was too light to keep his feet on the soft ground, and it did not take the Seniors long to discover that a plunge at "right guard" was good for from two to five yards every time. Old Shack gave all the assistance he could, but he was fairly well employed in attending to his opposite, and the result was that the ball was worked slowly but steadily up the field with every prospect of being carried over the Sophs' line.

Nothing but the call of time could save them, and they lined up more and more slowly, struggling desperately and praying for the sound of the whistle. Down the lines the spectators followed, cheering hoarsely, and cutting up the soft turf like a huge drove of cattle. There were but two more minutes of play and a scant five yards to make. Old Shack had a cut over his right eye, and a little stream of blood trickled down his mud-stained cheek. He was steaming like a "yoke of oxen," and his canvas jacket was drenched with sweat, one stocking was down over his shoe, and a sleeve of his jersey was gone, showing the huge arm with its corded muscles.

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He knew well enough that the "touchdown" must come unless something was done, but no good chance did he get until the ball was inside the five-yard line. "Four-twelve-twenty" called out the "quarter back," and the big "senior centre," crouching low against Shack's strong shoulder, snapped the ball back just as he had done a hundred times before that day. He got a bit too low,

in fact, for Shack gave him a jerk, and before the little "quarter" could get the ball out of his hands Shack's big paw was on him, rolling him over like a kitten, and before he knew what had happened he had lost the ball, and Shack had it snugly tucked under his arm.

How the Sophs cheered, and when a moment later the whistle blew they would have shouldered Shack had he not made it impossible by lying flat on the muddy ground.

During these last five minutes Mud had been deserted and well-nigh forgotten, mascot though he was. The crowd had surged up the field where the fierce struggle was going on, and the little fellow was left all alone, with nothing to occupy him but his own thoughts. He could look across to "Billy" on the other side, tied to a post, and alternately barked at him and whined for the friends who had left him.

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Mud had no chains but those of duty, yet for him they were sufficient. He would very much have liked to follow the crowd, or better still to have had his own little game of football with "Billy" across the way, with neither an umpire nor a referee to keep account of distance or prevent rough play; but here was Shack's precious sweater, and here he was bound to stay.

It had been raining too for a little while, and the little fellow was getting cold and wet. He trotted around the narrow limits of his desert island, giving an occasional shiver of discomfort, and wishing in his heart that he was in his own snug place by Shack's warm fireside. The thought of Shack warmed him a bit, despite the cold, and he lay down again, waiting patiently for his master.

When the whistle blew he sprang to his feet, for he knew as well as anybody that the game was now over, and when he heard the shouts he gave a bark or two of triumph. His friends would be back soon, and might perhaps lead him around the field again. He could not see very well, for it was almost dark, and still the crowd lingered at the far end of the field. At last they began to come toward him; at first moving slowly, then more hurriedly at the thought of dinner, until some started to run, and there was a big rush for the narrow path which opened through the trees not far from where Mud stood.

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The latter saw them coming, and he waved his stump of a tail and wiggled his little body as he thought of the hand touches, and the "Good old Mud" he was so soon to hear from Shack himself.

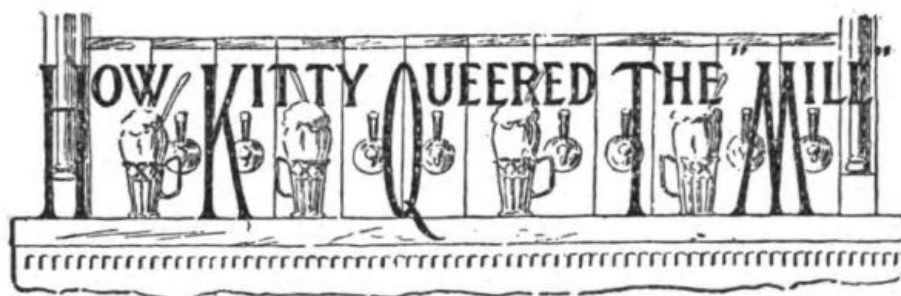
The crowd came like a wide, wide sea; but little Mud had no thought of danger until they were close to him. He saw the big wave about to roll over, he half turned as if for flight, and then, crouching low, he sprang at the first man who set foot on the sweater he was left to guard. He made no sound, and in the darkness and confusion the wave of humanity swept over him, and did not pause until it left him crushed and scarce alive. When Seever saw him as he followed the rushing mob, the little fellow was dragging himself painfully back to the big sweater and had a bit of gray cloth in his sharp teeth, which he had torn from the first intruder.

Shack was giving a shoulder to Marlowe when some one cried out, "Shack, old man, Mud's hurt;" and he left Marlowe in an instant, and was off like a shot with a dozen men after him.

When they reached the crowd that clung in a dense circle, much as on the first night, they found Mud lying on the sweater, his poor little body a shapeless thing.

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Shack bent over him with a groan, then lifted him tenderly in his arms, and for a moment there came in the little fellow's fast-glazing eyes the light of recognition. He licked the big hand that held him so carefully, shivered a little, crept close to Shack's stained jacket, trembled a little longer, and then lay still at last on Shack's broad breast.



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I hear it whispered every now and again that the reason a probable winner disappoints is because he is drugged. This is why that quarter on which Tom White had a mortgage goes to an inferior man, and because of this Jack Lewis, who was yards better than his field, is beaten out in the "run in" of the "220" hurdles.

Now, I am prepared to say, after a longer track experience than falls to the lot of most men, that in almost all such affairs the fault is with the men themselves, who have either not done their work, or, more likely still, have overtrained and gone stale.

Indeed, I honestly believe that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the best man wins because he is the best man, and the rest of the field lose simply because they have not the legs, lungs, heart, or courage necessary to bring them in first. There is mighty little "hocus-pocus" business in amateur athletics, and the atmosphere of the cinder-path is, after all is said, as pure as any on earth, not excepting that of politics and the legal profession.

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I know a very few events where men were drugged to put them out of contests, but they are, in the main, uninteresting tales which I do not care to tell.

In the little crack I mean to have with you, although no drugs were used, there is about the clearest case of "fix" I know, and, what is more to the point, I'll bet a fiver you will read it to the end.

I became acquainted with Kitty Murray when I was putting the finishing touches to the athletic team of a large New England academy, just what and where I cannot say, for very obvious reasons.

They had on their list an annual contest in field sports with a rival academy, and called in outside training talent only six or eight weeks before the games.

Kitty, with whom I struck up a friendship a day or two after my arrival, was a little English girl, as fresh and fragrant as an "Old-Country" rose such as I used to find long ago in a distant Lancashire garden. She was only five years over, and it seemed like going back again just to hear her talk. We became great friends during my stay in the little town, and I shall never quite forget her.

I hope the story I am about to tell will not be thought to reflect on her, and it will not, unless I bungle badly in the telling of it. Now, I do not, of course, defend the "queering" of a race, and Kitty as surely put a contestant out of winning place as if she had used a drug, yet it was not done for money. The man did not deserve to win, and I confess I like her all the better for the deed.

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Kitty's father had come from an Oldham factory, thinking, like many another, that in America he would own his mill within a five year. The five years had passed, and he was still running his eight looms in the big weave-shed by the river, where he first went to work.

Kitty had tended her five looms by his side for a year or so, and then found more congenial as well as more remunerative surroundings in a little store near the academy grounds.

This store occupied the lower story of a dwelling-house, which had been built out toward the street, until its wooden porch infringed on the sidewalk, and its flight of long steps rose from the edge of the gutter.

Whether it fractured any of the town ordinances by preëmpting the sidewalk in this way I do not know, but it had a particularly inviting appearance, like a host coming half way to meet you, and the porch, sheltering from sun and shower, was a perfect drag-net for customers.

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The front was all window, and the stock in trade plainly visible from the opposite side of the street. Here was candy in jars on the shelves and in trays on the counter, fruit in boxes and baskets by the windows, a huge soda fountain near the door, and an ice-cream parlor back of the store, with its horrible marble-topped tables, like gravestones awaiting the inscription of "Sacred to." I have travelled a bit, first and last, but nothing more dismal than an American ice-cream parlor do I remember to have seen.

While it cannot be denied that Kitty's confectionery was often stale, her fruit flavorless, her soda frothy, and her ice-cream as full of starch as a Chinese laundry, Kitty herself was all right, and fresh and dainty enough to offset all the deficiencies of her wares.

I can see her now, as I tell this story, with her bright "Old-Country" blushes, her soft brown hair, her blue eyes, and her trim little figure which her gowns always fitted so snugly. She was a marvel of neatness from ribbon to shoe tip, and was rather extravagant in the matter of foot-gear, for Kitty had a sweet foot and ankle of her own, concerning which she was not ignorant.

Cap'n Holden, the proprietor of the store, was a long, lank Vermonter, who had run a ding-dong race with consumption for twenty years, and was likely now to make an age record ahead of many a hearty man. He lived in a couple of rooms back of the ice-cream parlor, and left the management of the store very largely to Kitty, doing the drudgery, and leaving the high artistic to his assistant, content to find the money-drawer comfortably filled each night.

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There was a steady stream of the academy boys flowing in and out the door of Holden's store all day, ruining their digestions, and going broke on pocket-money for the sake of basking in Kitty's smiles. A clever little business woman was she, too, for eighteen years, and very well aware of her worth, as Mr. Holden had learned to his cost, for he paid her what seemed a fabulous salary.

Now, my coming to the town was a serious misfortune to Kitty's business. The taking some thirty of her best customers and forbidding their accustomed indulgence in sweets, under penalty of not making the team, must have resulted in serious inroads on her trade.

She laughingly took me to task for this, one morning, soon after my arrival, asking me how I expected her to get her living, and declaring that Mr. Holden was looking at the poor-house with fearful glances. And then, as I leaned on the counter, she began to pump me in a very pretty way concerning the academy's chances in the coming games, showing an especial interest in the mile. Would I please tell her who would win in this event?

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Now, it must not be thought that I have been in the habit of giving tips to inquisitive young ladies, for one thing a successful trainer must learn is to hold his tongue; but in this case there was no secret involved, and almost no money on, so I told her frankly that there were only two men of any use at all, Black and Harris.

Well, would I please tell her (ladies always say "please" in a particularly wheedling way when they ask what they know they should not),—would I please tell her which was the faster.

I answered that Harris was a very neat little runner who would win in average company, but that Black's stride was too much for him, and Harris could not show within five seconds of Black's time for the distance. Here the corners of Kitty's pretty mouth dropped most suddenly, and I then and there surprised the secret that under the folds of her flowered muslin lurked a shy liking for Jack Harris.

This was not at all to be wondered at, for Jack was a mighty nice boy, pleasant to every one, and a fine performer in almost all branches of sport. Black was about the same age as Harris, nearly twenty, and, unlike Harris, was tall and dark, and rather surly and superior. They were both to leave for college at the end of the year, considered themselves men grown, and cherished a mighty strong liking for little Kitty. They were equally anxious to win the "mile," and to this end had trained very conscientiously, breaking the tape in the sight of Kitty's bright eyes being, after all, the strongest incentive.

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I talked quite freely with the little girl, for she reminded me of old Lancashire, and she on her part took no particular care to conceal the fact that she should like very much to see Jack Harris win.

As the days went by I took special pains with Jack, but though he improved nicely he could not quite reach Black, and as the time of the contests approached I could give Kitty no encouragement, much as I should have liked to do so.

The very night before the games I went into the store and, in answer to her question, told her plainly that unless Black was taken suddenly ill, he would certainly best Jack, and that from all reports Harris was just as sure of second place, as the other academy had only moderate talent to offer in the "mile."

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"And would Jack win, then, if Black was out of it, or a bit off?" she asked, with a little tremble of disappointment in her voice.

I answered that a race was never won until the tape broke, and the judges had given their decision, but that it certainly looked that way; and while Kitty was weighing out some peppermints to an old lady, with an ounce of smiles for which she did not charge, I passed quietly through the ice-cream parlor into Mr. Holden's little den in the rear. Holden and I were quite cronies by this time; we often chatted together of an evening, and I dropped quite naturally into a rocking-chair near the door, which was ajar, and through which I could get a good view of the store without being myself observed.

He was reading the "Boston Globe" with the aid of his glasses, his pipe, and a pitcher of hard cider. He filled me a glass of the last, pushed the tobacco-jar across the table toward me, and handed me the sporting half of the paper without a word. I took a drink, lit my pipe, and pretended to read the paper, keeping a close watch on the front shop meanwhile.

Now, I had a method in all this, which was to be where I could see that none of the boys broke training in this most dangerous place, on the night before the contests. I had given the boys a much more rigorous course of training than was usual, and was a bit afraid of some of them, not accustomed to deprivations of any kind.

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I sat smoking my pipe, and reading my paper, a fragment at a time, customers coming and going, but saw nothing of interest until about nine o'clock, when Harris entered, looking particularly well in tennis flannels and sweater. He bade Kitty a "good evening," in that pleasant way of his, and asked for a pound of mixed chocolates.

"A pound of mixed chocolates!" exclaimed Kitty, instantly alert. "Why, Jack Harris, you know you ought not to touch a single piece, and you to run to-morrow! Not an ounce will I give you."

I think Harris was pleased at the motherliness of the little girl, for he told her without any chaffing that the candy was intended for his sisters, who were spending the night at the hotel, with their aunt. "Do you know, Kitty," said he, "they would not give up their chocolates to win a world's championship?"

"I would, then," said Kitty. "It must be splendid to go over the line first, with the rest following after. I suppose that's what you'll do to-morrow."

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"Not likely," he answered frankly; "Black is yards better, and unless he has a stroke of paralysis in the stretch, I shall have the pleasure of following him in, and must content myself with second place or worse."

"Oh, Jack," said Kitty, "I wish you could win; you must win. Can't I help you in some way?"

"I don't know how," he answered, "unless you can furnish me a pair of legs as long and as good as Black's, and they are hard to find."

"Don't joke," said Kitty, with a look of reproach. "If I were you I'd beat him without any legs, I'd get ahead, and stay there if it killed me."

There was in this just a hint of reflection on the boy's courage, but it was given in such good heart, that he could not take offence, and he laughed in rather a forced way and said, "I suppose I am an awful duffer not to be able to call the trick, for I have worked my best, and not thrown away a single chance. The truth is that Black is a better man at the distance, has been as careful as myself, and is not likely to take any liberties with himself until the race is over. I saw him a little while ago, and he was looking 'out of sight.'"

At this there was silence for a little, for the outlook was certainly quite hopeless. From my seat by the door I could see them plainly, and I felt rather like an eavesdropper, when Kitty put her hand

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on Jack's sleeve in her earnestness.

They made a pretty picture with their flushed faces and easy attitudes, and I thought of an old garden-gate in Lancashire where there had been much the same scene long ago.

They talked together a moment or two longer in low tones, and then Kitty became suddenly conscious, and went back again behind the counter, with a touch of embarrassment. Jack took his box of candy, and said "Good night," stopping at the door a moment to say, "Win or lose, I shall do all I know. I promise you he shall know he has been in a race, and I shall run clear out, or run a winner."

There were only a few more customers, for we kept good hours in the little town, and I was about to take my leave, satisfied that my men were all in bed, when Black entered.

Now, this was clearly in disobedience of my instructions, which were, for this night, bed at nine-thirty, and it was now five minutes later by the clock over the stove. While the training of this academy team was a small matter for me, some of my best friends whom I had handled on big college teams were anxious for them to win, had considered the matter well-nigh settled when they had prevailed on me to take them on, and I had been very strict and painstaking in my handling of them. I was naturally provoked that Black should openly disobey instructions, and I sat back in my chair to watch developments.

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I do not remember what Black said, but he made an effort to be agreeable which was not particularly successful. There was something about his manner indicating condescension, which was not at all pleasing to Kitty's democratic spirit. She very promptly took him to task for being out after hours, and with a very different tone from that used when reproving Jack Harris.

"I don't mean to be dictated to by any old played-out martinet of a trainer," said he gruffly. "It is all well enough for those who have no sure thing. I saw Harris going to his room fifteen minutes ago, but I'll sleep when I like, and beat him then."

At this very foolish and boasting remark, involving also a reflection on Jack's prowess, I could see Kitty's eyes flash, and her cheeks redden, and then there came over her face a very peculiar expression of determination I could not at all understand. She changed gradually from indifference to interest, and finally said, with a well-assumed air of admiration, "It must be splendid to be so sure of winning; and don't you have to train at all?"

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"Deuced little," he answered; "I go through the motions with old Brown, but eat and drink just what I like, and sleep four or eight hours, as I prefer."

Now, this was a bare-faced lie, and his sin found him out as quickly as in any "goody" book I ever read, for Kitty went on to say in her pretty way, becoming every moment more genial and fascinating, "Isn't that nice? then you can take a soda with me before I start for home."

Remember that I was all the time in the back room with Mr. Holden, listening to the talk, rather hot under the collar at Black's "old played-out martinet," and wondering what in the world little Kitty was plotting.

Black looked a bit doubtful at her offer; he had trained to the dot, and did not mean to throw away a single chance to win, but such an invitation from Kitty was an unheard-of honor, he could not very well eat his words, so he consented with an assumed alacrity, and Kitty proceeded to draw a glass of soda for him.

And such a glass of soda as it was! If Mr. Holden had seen it he would have had a fit; nothing like it had ever gone over his counter, expense was not considered, and profit there could have been none. I could see the whole devil's brew myself, but Black could not, for Kitty stood between him and the glass.

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First she put in a double quantity of heavy, thick chocolate, then a liberal lump of ice-cream, and finally hardly enough soda to mix them. She drew a glass of Vichy for herself, and I watched as they drank, and chatted, and laughed together.

Now, what were the reasons why I did not interfere, while my best mile-runner was getting outside of this horrible mixture?

The first was, that we did not need him to win the "mile"; the second was, that his remarks concerning myself were not inclined to make me care for him personally; the third was, that I thought defeat might teach him a much-needed lesson; and the last and most potent, I must confess, was, that I had not the heart to spoil Kitty's wicked little game, which she was playing so beautifully.

As I said before, it was as clear a case of "fix" as if she had given him a drug, and between a mild dose of poison and the glass she mixed, there was little for an athlete in training to choose.

I sat in the back room for at least a half-hour longer, and saw Black drink three more glasses of different flavors, chosen with special reference to their baleful effects; and so pleasant and jolly was Kitty, and so happy was Black, that I am sure she could have substituted a dose of rhubarb without his notice.

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It was after ten o'clock when Kitty put on her hat, and I afterward learned that she talked a full hour longer with him at her gate, an unheard-of thing for Kitty, who was particularly careful of gossip, and it was midnight when he rolled into bed.

He must have had the digestion of an ostrich not to have been immediately and positively ill; but he was not, and barring a little lack of color, he gave no indication of his previous night's

extraordinary training, when he went to the mark for the mile.

It had been a mighty busy day for me; the boys were young, some of them had never been contestants before, and they were nervous and uncertain. I got through the morning as best I could, giving advice here, answering a question there, telling some little fellow with a white face that there was no doubt of his winning, and another, who was over-confident, that he had no chance unless he followed instructions to the dot.

Dinner over (for at our boarding-house we dined at noon) I started for the "grounds," which were over on the other side of the little town. The wide street was well dotted with carriages, and the sidewalks crowded with townspeople, country folk, and a liberal sprinkling of the supporters of the rival academy. Most of the mill-hands were out, and the rattle of the looms was subdued, half of them being silent.

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I threaded my way through the mob as best I could, for, every few feet, some one would buttonhole me to ask a fool question. Then again, did you ever notice how much harder it is to work your way through a crowd of country people than one of equal density in the city? There is a sluggishness and inertness very different from the quick movements of those whose feet are accustomed to tread city paves.

However, when I got beyond the shopping quarter, where the dwelling-houses began, the streets were free enough, and I crossed over to the south side, the day being warm, and the shade of the elms grateful. I was passing Holden's store, when Kitty appeared in the doorway, as if by accident, and with a very pretty look of mingled surprise and pleasure. She looked as if she had just arrived from Arcadia, or had stepped out of a Dresden dish, with her fresh muslin figured with little sprays of flowers, a big hat on her soft brown hair, and a parasol in her hand which displayed the academy color.

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Her cheeks were bright, and grew a shade brighter as she asked, "Please, Mr. Brown, may I walk along with you?" Receiving my very hearty assent she tripped down the steps and across the street, taking special pains to save the figured muslin from the dust of the street. I think I said that Kitty's ankles were irreplaceable.

Although it was very evident Kitty had been to some pains to see me, I found her very silent and preoccupied. She had said not much more than a silly word or two about the weather, when we reached the Lee place, where she said she must leave me, as she had promised to stop for Sally and Kate. As she put her hand on the latch of the gate she gave me the first hint of what was burdening her mind by asking, "Are the boys all feeling well?"

I said, "Yes, as far as I know," and then to try her, "though Black looks a bit queer, for some unaccountable reason."

"That's too bad," answered Kitty, with considerable affectation of sorrow, as she swung the gate open; but I noticed a little widening of the mouth, and a tell-tale dimple in her cheek almost betrayed her. Not once did she raise her eyes to mine either, something very unusual with her, for she had the frankest glance possible.

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I watched her as she mounted the steps and rang the bell, and then walked on beneath the tall elms, philosophizing over that most interesting subject, "a woman and her ways," something the masculine mind cannot understand, but likes to struggle with.

The track was in the centre of the "campus," an enclosure of several acres of soft green turf, fringed and fenced by its row of tall trees. Around the track the spectators were gathering, and the grand stand was beginning to fill. All the officials and most of the contestants were already inside the ropes, the former bustling around with their bright-colored badges flapping, and extremely busy doing nothing; the latter, in their spotless trunks and jerseys, with bare brown legs and arms, looking "sweet enough to kiss," so I heard a pretty little matron say on one of the lower seats. Indeed, I know few finer sights than a young fellow, clean-limbed and lithe, trained to perfection, with eyes bright, and face darkened by the sun, waiting in his running-togs, with a background of green grass, and overhead the cloudless sky.

As soon as I got among them, the boys flocked around me, and after a hearty word or two I sent the team off by the catcher's fence, a little beyond, for there were no dressing-rooms, and I wanted to know where to find them. Jack was looking "finer than silk," and Black not half bad, although a trifle dark under the eyes. I was not at all sure that even Kitty's dose was enough to stop him.

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Now, I do not propose to say a word about any event but the "mile." This was the last event on the list, we were comfortable winners already, and everybody was speculating how badly Black would fracture the record; there seemed to be no doubt about his winning, and, unpopular as he was, it was with many admiring exclamations that he ran a few yards to limber up. His long legs moved like clock-work, and his stride was remarkable.

We had just lost the final heat of the "220," and when the starter's whistle blew for the "mile" I could see the faces brighten up, for it was confidently expected that Black and Harris would run first and second, and leave a pleasant taste in the mouth to take home to supper.

There were six starters, and when Jack took his place on the outside, he was the finest-looking boy of the lot. Not having grown so fast, he was more rounded and filled out than the others, though he carried not an ounce of useless tissue. His arms and legs were better developed, and his face was clean cut as a cameo.

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Kitty sat directly on a line with the tape, on the top row of seats, between the Lee girls. One of

them, I could see, was keeping a watchful eye on the west, where the thunder heads were gathering.

But Kitty did not see any clouds, not she. She did not care if the deluge came after this race; and what was a shower, or a wet gown? She was red and pale by turns, breathing hard, and had both elbows on the top rail behind her, as if to brace herself for the ordeal. Wonderfully attractive was she in this attitude of repressed excitement, and though the grand stand was full of pretty girls, dressed in their best bibs and tuckers, I saw none to compare with her.

When Jack glanced up at her, she leaned forward and waved her hand, giving him a look that brought the color to his cheeks. But when he turned, got on his mark, and put out his hands, his flush faded, the half smile disappeared, and in their place came as stern a look of resolution as I ever saw in a boy's face.

And yet I doubted he could win.

True, he was just the one to do a shade better in competition than in training, but Black was likely to do no worse (unless pulled back by the sodas), and with a strong five seconds to the good, it was a beautiful race to guess on. [Pg 127]

"Marks! Set!" The bang of the pistol, with its little wreath of smoke rising in the still air, and they are off. "Crunch, crunch, crunch" sound the quick feet on the cinders, a stout fellow, not half trained, taking the lead, and bound to drop out before the "half," unless I am no judge. They disappear a second behind the catcher's fence, emerge again, swing round the turn, straighten out again, and the men are well trailed, as usual, at the lower turn. Down the stretch they come, and just before they pass the posts Black jumps into the lead, amid the applause of the grand stand. Where is Jack? Why, where he ought to be with the pace like this, and three-quarters more to run. He has followed my orders to the dot, starting off easily (one of the almost impossible things to teach a young runner), trailing behind the field, and he finishes the first quarter last of the six, and a full twenty yards behind Black, running strong and well, though not so showily as his rival.

I see poor little Kitty's face grow white and hopeless as they go by.

Round the track they swing again, two men dropping out at the lower turn, already run off their feet, and one of them the stout fellow, as I expected. Indeed, as they pass the posts the second time all have come back a bit to Jack but Black, and Kitty's face is touched by grim despair, for that dreadful twenty yards still stretches between the one she wishes to win and the one she tried to put out of the race. [Pg 128]

On the third quarter Jack lets out a link, picking up one after another, until only Black leads him, and when they start on the last lap he is running strong and fairly fresh, only ten yards behind, and the rest trailed badly.

Kitty's face is the queerest mixture of hope and fear I ever saw.

Black runs with the confidence of repeated victories in trials, and attempts to open up the gap again; but Jack has a bit up his sleeve still, answers with a little spurt of his own, will not be denied, and is only a bare five yards to the bad as they straighten out for the last hundred yards.

Here Black glances over his shoulder, and I can see his look of surprise. Jack has never been so close up at this stage of the game. It is evident that both the boys are approaching "Queer Street," "Queer Street" with its pounding heart and panting lungs, its parched mouth, singing ears, and leaden feet. Both are game to the core, and it is now only a question of endurance. Here is the runner's purgatory, where the sins of the past are settled, and here it is that Kitty's ice-cream sodas take a hand in the sport. [Pg 129]

What would Black give if he had not imbibed their awful sweetness?

Inch by inch Jack draws up on him, his jaw set, his eyes aflame, his stride shortening, but still quick and straight. Black's face is leaden, his eyes glassy, his long legs giving at the knees at every stride.

Down the stretch they come, the crowd on its feet, but too excited to yell, Kitty with her hand over one eye, and her handkerchief tight between her white teeth.

For twenty yards they run almost side by side, and then Jack pumps ahead and breaks the tape, a winner by a scant yard. Black follows over in a heap, staggers a step or two, and falls before any one can catch him.

Sick, was he? Well, rather!

He had a touch of colic that doubled him up like a grasshopper. He groaned and coughed, he writhed and twisted, like a lobster on the coals. I knew it was not a dangerous matter, and gave him little sympathy, extracting a half confession concerning his training escapade of the previous evening.

Kitty, the little Jezebel, blushed like a rose when Jack waved his hand at her, as he was carried off on the shoulders of some enthusiastic friends. [Pg 130]

Little did he know how he came to win over a faster man; little did Black understand there had been a plot for his undoing; and unless she reads this story, Kitty will always think her secret is a secret to all the world.

ATHERTON'S LAST HALF

Back in the mountains of North Carolina, where the air is like a tonic, free from all taint of river mist and swamp malaria, and medicined by the fragrance of pine and hemlock, lives Teddy Atherton.

His house is perched on a spur of the mountains, and can be seen with a good glass from Asheville on a clear day. It has green blinds, tall wooden pillars, and granite steps. It is the pattern that New England builders used to fancy fifty years ago or more, and looks a bit strange in its setting of mountain and forest. Here Teddy spends his time among his books, fishing and hunting, in the company of his dogs, or the society of an occasional friend, truant from business or profession.

For a few weeks only in midsummer he risks the dangers of our east winds, and is seen at the Somerset and Country Clubs, much to the gratification of a host of friends.

He has had me South with him a couple of times, and never goes back without inviting me to dine with him. I always accept, though the pleasure of his society is more than offset by painful recollections. We linger long at the table over my favorite madeira, and we talk of the old days, the old contests, and the old boys, grown now to be stout merchants, lawyers, and I know not what. Some of them have lads who will bring new honor to names already famous on track and field, and some, alas! have been beaten out by that famous runner and certain final winner, old Death himself.

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Often, as I sit and watch Atherton across the table, there comes into my eyes, not at all accustomed to such a freak, so clear a hint of moisture, that nothing but a mighty volume of smoke saves me from detection.

He is a small man, five feet five or less, and not exceeding eight stone in weight. His closely shaven face is thin and brown, his eyes dark and full of fire, his mouth firm and sensitive. There is nothing of the despairing or helpless invalid about him; his shoulders are square, and his movements resolute; yet he knows, and I know, that his life hangs by a thread. I know whose fault it is, in part at least, that his days are numbered, that his chest is hollow, and that, despite his self-control, he cannot restrain every now and again that hacking cough.

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I shall tell the story, not because I like to, but as a warning to those who are willing to make a winner, no matter what the risk or cost.

Late on an afternoon, just before the inter-collegiate games of 188-, there sat on the gymnasium steps a group of college sports, with heavy brows and serious minds.

Even the weather was dubious, for the wind had worked round into the east, the clouds were gathering, and the air was damp and dismal. What few men there were on the track wore sweaters, and one or two had pulled long trousers over their trunks to keep their legs warm. The elms had got their heads together, as if conspiring mischief, and we had talked ourselves pretty well out, with no good results.

We had that day given the team a serious "try out," and were fairly contented with its showing in all the events but the "half."

There was no question about it, Bates could not call the trick; that is, not with his present showing.

We all agreed that he was good enough, but he had no head at all. He ran his second quarter to the "queen's taste," and finished strong and well; but on his first lap he sogered like a Turk, and came in at least five seconds slow. He had no idea whatever of pace, was not a sprinter, and was easy for any opponent with a turn of speed, who would trail him round and pass him in the stretch.

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We had told Sherman (who had no chance to win, and knew it) to run the first lap in fifty-nine, instructing Bates to stay with him. Bates stayed all right, but Sherman was as far off as the man he paced,—in the first trial running in sixty-three, which was as bad as ever; and in the second pulling him out to fifty-six, so that neither finished.

The question was, who should make pace for Bates.

There were, sprawling on the steps that night, beside myself, Griffith, Smith, "Doc," and of course Tom Furness, for Tom had missed few such conclaves in the last half-dozen years.

Now, the public knows pretty well who wins the events, but mighty little about the planning and contriving by which the athletic material of a college is developed and made the most of. Upon us five rested much of the responsibility for making winners of the team of 188-. With me it was a matter of business and professional standing; to the others, the glory of their college, and the personal satisfaction of having added to it. All of them were practical men, who had in days gone by carried their college colors, and Tom Furness had been a mighty good athlete, who had put a record where it stood untouched for a good five years. Tom was tall, fair, and sanguine. An optimist by nature, he never dreamed of anything but success, was a favorite with the graduates, while the college worshipped him. I never saw the man who could put heart into a losing team like Tom Furness.

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Just below him sat "Doc" Peckham, dark and silent. He was short and brown bearded, the very opposite of Tom, and had a rather embarrassing way of puncturing Tom's pretty bubbles. He was not so well liked as Furness, but was after all fully as valuable an adviser. He had a good practice in the city, but managed, in some way, to leave it whenever he was needed. Griffith and Smith were men who, as a rule, agreed with the majority, and myself in particular; so they were quite as useful as if they had been perpetually inventing foolish plans.

We had been silent a full minute, which is not long for a crowd of college "gray-beards," when Tom Furness jumped to his feet with the air of a man who has made up his mind, expects opposition, but is still confident of the integrity of his position, and said, "Teddy Atherton's our man."

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"Teddy Atherton be blowed," said "Doc," who sat on the bottom step, his knees under his chin, drawing inspiration from his pipe. "He's run nothing but the 'quarter' for the last three years, and while he shows a fraction slower than Allen and Waite in practice, has a better head, and I would not give a toss-up for the difference between them."

"That's it," said Furness; "it's Teddy's good head that we want. Now listen to me. We have three 'quarter milers' who finish under a blanket, and any one of them is about good enough to win. Allen has shown a shade the best time, and we certainly cannot pull him out, while Waite would sulk like a bear with a sore head if asked to make pace, and probably be worse than useless. Atherton, beside having better judgment, is a particularly unselfish chap, and if handled right will consent, and fill the bill exactly."

"Deuced hard on Atherton," said Smith; "he's trained faithfully, has a chance to win in the 'quarter,' and yet we ask him to sacrifice himself in the 'half' because Bates is a duffer and will not use his head."

We discussed the matter a while longer, and had barely arrived at an agreement, when who should come briskly from the gymnasium but Teddy himself. He jumped down the steps, and was hurrying away, with a joke at our serious faces, when I spoke up and said (for such uncomfortable commissions were usually assigned to me), "Wait a minute, Atherton, we want a word with you."

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"All right, old man," he said, "but be quick about it, for I've a dinner waiting for me that will be cold after seven o'clock." He was fresh from his shower-bath and rub-down, and looked as if he had stepped out of a bandbox. We could guess where the dinner was, for Atherton was very serious about Mollie Kittredge; and whether Mollie smiled or not, Mollie's mamma was complacent enough, and did her best to give Teddy a clear track and no contestants. Mollie was a howling favorite, "blonde, bland, and beautiful," who, it was rumored, did not care to be won by a "walk-over," and would have liked Teddy better if he had been a bit more difficult.

Now, I believe it is best to go at once to the point with a disagreeable matter, so I said bluntly, "I'm sorry, Atherton, but we have decided to ask you to run in the 'half'; it is a late day to make the change, and it will, of course, give you no chance to win; but it seems to us the only thing to do under the circumstances."

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The boy winced, looked at us keenly to see if we were serious, then grew grave and said, rather sarcastically, "Your reasons for selecting me in particular as the scape-goat are of course good and sufficient, and you will pardon me for asking what they are?"

I went over the matter with him in detail, assisted by Furness, giving all our reasons, doing my best to make the project as inviting as possible; and Atherton finally consented, as we expected. It was, however, a very serious face he carried off, and one very different from that which smiled upon us at the beginning. We were all mighty sorry for the boy, and I felt as if I had committed a petty theft, and deserved the penitentiary, or worse. I had only been the spokesman for the rest, and had racked my brains to think of some way to save Atherton from the sacrifice; but Tom was really unassailable in his position, and even "Doc" did not oppose him.

I watched the lithe figure as it disappeared around the corner of the fence, realizing how full of disappointment my message must have been, and was sorry enough about it.

Atherton had arrived at college without either athletic training or ambition. A student of the first rank, so that he was known at once where muscular ability is much more likely to obtain recognition than mental strength, it was not until his second year that I saw much of him.

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He then took up running, not so much with a view of contesting, as to fill out his lungs and increase his strength. It was not long, however, before he began to show decided improvement, and steadily gaining, had run unplaced, but close up, in his junior year. He had brought himself out in this way without in the least losing rank as a scholar, and I knew it was his one remaining ambition to get a place in athletics, and win a point for the old college on this last competition to which he would be eligible. If he had been a musty bookworm I should not have cared so much, but he was a splendid fellow, of good family, and a great favorite of mine, because of his pluck and good nature.

He appeared next day on the track, as agreed, a little serious, but not at all disagreeable; which made me feel more guilty than ever. In fact, I tried to apologize, and for this received, as I deserved, a sharp answer, that the decision was doubtless correct, and there was no necessity for further talk.

He listened to my instructions carefully, took Bates along within a half second of the fifty-nine, and left him in the stretch to finish four seconds better than ever before. Teddy was badly used up, of course, for he was not at all accustomed to the distance, and when I gave him a shoulder to

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the gymnasium, he was as limp as possible. He took our congratulations with a half smile, and would not confess that he was much the worse for the effort.

Tom Furness was much elated, insisting there was no question but that we had made a change to the advantage of all but Teddy, and it was right that he should suffer for the good of the cause. It is wonderful with what complacency we look upon the sacrifice of others.

As I thought it over that night, I had serious doubts about Atherton's condition, and the next morning I told Furness just how badly he was used up; but I did not take a decided stand, as I should have done, and the reason was purely selfish and unworthy. I was, of course, anxious to win the cup; it meant much to me, and I decided to take the risk.

The day came round, particularly sultry and close. The sky was brassy, the sun a ball of fire, and what little wind there was felt like the breath of a furnace.

It was a day to break records, and to break a trainer's heart as well; for often a man who is right "on edge" will show up limp and lifeless under such conditions, going stale in a night. [Pg 141]

I had changed rooms at the hotel so that the men might sleep with all the air possible, given them an early breakfast, and got them over to the grounds before the sun was very hot.

We settled ourselves in the dressing-rooms, and the men stripped at once for the sake of comfort and coolness. A beautiful sight it was. An athlete looks much like a city clerk with his clothes on, but stripped to the buff there is a mighty difference. No weak, skinny legs, no fat disfigured bodies, no bunched and rounded shoulders.

You may boast of your fine horses and beautiful women, but give me an athlete in perfect training, particularly if I have had the handling of him, and have seen the fat disappear and the strong, clean muscle take its place.

The boys are seated on the long benches or standing in front of the lockers. Here is the slender figure of a sprinter, not an ounce of superfluous flesh or unused muscle, the cords of his shapely legs standing out clear and firm through the satin skin. There is a shot-putter, stopping a moment to chaff with a friend, stripped to the waist, his shirt in his hand. See how the mighty muscles stretch across his breast and back! See the big, square neck, and that right arm and shoulder, round and firm and hard! [Pg 142]

It is not men like the last that I worry about, for the heat will do nothing but good to an anatomy like this; but the thin and slender chaps, with not too much vitality at best, and trained close to the limit—these I look over closely and carefully. I was more anxious about Atherton than any other, and found him off in a corner by himself, near the window. Perhaps the most popular man on the team, he was not over jolly this morning, and the boys saw it, and left him alone. His clothes were already hung in his locker, in that particularly neat way that some of the boys might have copied to advantage. He had on his trunks and jersey, and was lacing his running-shoes.

I asked him how he felt. "All right," he said; but I knew better. The hot night had told on him, and he was a bit pale and tired-looking. I told him to get into his wrap, find a cool and comfortable place, and take it easy until he was wanted. He followed instructions, as usual, and I saw almost nothing of him until the "half" was called, late in the afternoon. As usual, we had pulled off some unexpected wins, and lost several "lead-pipe cinches." The latter, however, were far more numerous, and I was decidedly on the anxious seat. Indeed, as near as I could figure, unless Bates won the "half" we were out of it. [Pg 143]

Of Sherman we expected nothing; he was put in to fill out the string, and because a man will sometimes surprise those best informed of his incapacity.

Bates we hoped would win, and Atherton was expected to run his first lap in fifty-nine cutting wind and setting pace, to keep on in the second lap at the same speed until he reached the stretch, where he was to drop out (probably dead beat), leaving Bates to run in and break the tape. There was little glory in this programme for Atherton, and I had seen his face lengthen out when Allen and Waite romped in, first and second in the "quarter." It was "dollars to doughnuts" he would have made a strong third or better, and I saw he thought so himself, although he said nothing.

We had just won a first and third in the high jump, and I was feeling a little better when the men were called for the "half." I met Teddy in the middle of the field, and walked along with him to the start. He was looking very white and serious; but I said nothing at all to hearten him, for I knew he was clear grit and did not want it. [Pg 144]

I did tell him that the race was more in his hands than Bates', and that from those who knew he would receive all the credit of a win, if he brought Bates in first. He said not a word in answer, only nodded his head, threw me his wrap, and went to the mark.

As the numbers were being called, I had a chance to look around me. There was the usual crowd inside the ring, the officials, the reporters, and those infernal nuisances the men with a pull, who do nothing, and interfere with all who have duties to perform.

The grand stand was right in front of me, spread like the tail of a huge peacock, and a perfect riot of color, for every second person was a lady, and what better opportunity than this to wear what was loud and bright? As my eye wandered over the crowd, I began to pick out familiar faces, for I have a keen sight for a friend.

There was Jack Hart and Tom Finlay, two of my old boys, sitting together, one of them from Denver, and the other professor in a Maine college; there was Dr. Gorden a bit lower, and Fred

Tillotson with his pretty wife; there was Charlie Thomas with a little fellow in a sweater, evidently a dead game sport already, and a chip of the old block, for his face is red with excitement, and his eyes like saucers with enthusiasm.

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I was taking my eyes away to look at the men, when they fastened on a figure a few rows from the top. It was that of one of the most striking girls I have ever seen, as perfect a blonde as even Old England could show, and with a very British air of reserve, despite the excitement around her. She was a marvel,—tall and well-developed, groomed and gowned to the dot. I could see she was looking straight at Teddy in the calmest style imaginable, but still rather surprised that he did not return her glance.

But Teddy had for the moment quite forgotten her. He was bent over his mark, his eyes straight ahead, ready for the first sound of the pistol, for his instructions were to take the lead from the beginning.

There was a strapping field of a dozen or more, but most of the others were prepared to take the customary start for a "half"—easy away, and fast work when heart and lungs had worked up to it.

"Marks! Set!" the crack of the pistol, and Teddy shot out as if for a sprint, slowing immediately, however, when he had taken his place.

Bates pulled out of the ruck at the turn, and fell in behind him, following orders. Round the track they swung, stringing out, one and another coming up and going back as if on wires, but Teddy and Bates holding the lead. My watch showed fifty-eight and three-quarters as they finished the first lap, a beautiful performance on Teddy's part, though I had expected it, for he was a connoisseur on time, if I ever saw one.

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There followed them over, and close up, a cadaverous-looking man from one of the minor colleges, whose style I did not like, but who was going very strong, and whom I might have thought dangerous had I not been told he never finished. Sherman was twenty-five yards back, in the rear of the lot, and running in a very hopeless fashion.

I was relieved to see how well Teddy did his work, and noticed the slight flush on his cheeks as he passed.

I could see that Mollie Kittredge too had a little added color in her cheeks, but in no other way did she show any particular interest in the race.

For the first half of the second lap our programme was followed out all right, Atherton still leading at a lively clip, Bates right at his heels, and the tall outsider barely holding his own.

Then the unexpected happened. Bates began to show signs of tiring, fell back inch by inch, and the tall outsider came up at the same rate. Just before the lower turn they got together, and there was a short struggle; but Bates was as arrant a cur as ever wore a shoe, and he yielded the place, though he had strength enough to run another lap, had he the heart to go with it.

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Teddy was, perhaps, five yards to the good when he swung into the stretch, and looked over his shoulder, expecting to see his college mate close up and ready to take up the running. Instead, he saw an unexpected contestant, coming fast, and Bates was full five yards behind, slowing, and evidently out of it.

Now Atherton was, of course, well-nigh spent; he had followed instructions to the dot, and was not expected to finish.

There was a half-second's hesitation and a look of fear; but as quick as he realized the conditions, the little fellow swung his face to the front and set his teeth with the evident determination of making a fight for the race.

A mighty cheer went up from the spectators, for Teddy had many friends, and the whole college knew under what circumstances he was running; but I doubt if he heard anything but the crunch, crunch, crunch of the swift feet behind him. I knew it was a hopeless task, for his opponent was fresh as paint, and full of running. Gradually his longer stride drew him up, but when he tried to pass, Teddy still had a word to say, and met him with the most stubborn resistance. He was almost gone, his face white as death, his eyes glazed, and he kept his speed only by sheer force of will.

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Somehow, I know not how, for I could hardly have taken my eyes from the runners, I knew that Mollie Kittredge was on her feet with a look of horror in her face.

Down the stretch they came, the little fellow with the drawn cheeks, and his opponent tall and strong and confident. Side by side they came, neither gaining, until perhaps fifteen yards from the finish, when the big fellow shot by.

Teddy staggered on, but lurched forward, and fell, a few feet short of the line, just as the winner broke the tape.

He fell without an effort to save himself, plowing through the cinders with his white face. There was a convulsive struggle to crawl over, and then he lay still, dead to the world, with one hand stretched out toward the line.

The half-dozen who finished ran by the motionless figure, and I was over it a second after. Tom Furness was almost as soon as myself, and together we lifted and placed it on the soft turf inside the track. We were surrounded by a crowd of contestants and track officials, but a cry, followed by a commotion in the grand stand, drew their attention, and we were left alone.

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So full of agony was the cry, that I looked up myself, and was just in time to see the statuesque

Mollie throw up her hands and fall back in a dead faint. Yes, blondes have hearts, after all.

We were not much troubled by the crowd, for they thought it was only a man "run out," and that he would be all right in a minute or two, and walk off as well as ever.

Alas! I knew better; it was a bad case, and I could find little sign of life in the limp body. We made an effort to revive him, but Tom could not get a drop from his flask through the clenched teeth, and one side of the face was bleeding, where it had slid over the cinders. The crowd was coming back, the spectators were beginning to notice us, so I told Tom to take the legs, and I took the head and shoulders, and we started for the dressing-rooms.

A pathetically light weight was it, and I was heart-sick, for, though one hand was over the heart, I could feel no motion through the thin jersey. "Doc" joined us at the door, and I was never so pleased to see any one in my life, for I knew that he would do all that could be done, and we need not experiment with some one we did not know.

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When we got into a quiet room we placed Teddy on a rubbing-couch, and "Doc" immediately applied the most powerful remedies to revive him. They were at first unsuccessful, but by hypodermic injections of strychnine and brandy, the wearied heart and lungs were at last induced to start feebly on their accustomed tasks.

We were standing by the couch, watching the hint of color grow in the boy's cheeks, when suddenly the limp figure made a convulsive effort (consciousness taking up the thread where it had been broken, a few feet short of the tape), and he almost lifted himself to his feet before we could catch him. As he fell back in our arms, there came to his lips the bright-red blood-spots, precursors of a fearful hemorrhage.

It was almost impossible for us to check it, for the boy was delirious, would not lie still, and kept saying in a determined way, "I will win! I must win!"

He would turn his head, and call, "Bates! Bates!" in a frenzy of fear and disappointment. "Bates, where are you? My God, where are you? I'm sure I followed orders, and did not come too fast."

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Then he would find Bates, and say contentedly, "There you are, old man, close up; I'll drop out now, I'm almost gone; push out and win."

Suddenly he would discover it was the outsider, and would cry out with fevered lips, and try to break away from us and run.

Then he would lie still, but in his mind was going over the agony of the finish again and again. He would turn to me and say excitedly, "You told me I need not finish. I can't run the 'half,' and you know it. It's dark, and they have run off with the tape. I finished long ago, and still you make me run."

Sometimes he would drop his hands and say despairingly, "I cannot do it, I cannot reach the worsted; O God, I cannot!"

Then he would discover Tom, who was almost as crazy as Teddy himself, and had been utterly useless from the time the hemorrhage set in. He would say to Tom, "Don't look at me like that, old man; I know I lost the race, but I did my best, my very best, and ran clear out. Look at my cheek, where I fell; you must see I was dead beat." He would try to argue with Tom, who had not a word to say, except of sorrow and self-reproach. He would look at Tom, and say, "Perhaps you're right, and I'll not complain, but why did you tell me to set pace, if you meant to make me finish?" Or he would say over and over again, "I was not strong enough; I did the best I could; I did the best I could."

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Indeed, he did not cease talking all the time we were with him, until he was given opiates and taken to the hospital.

Here he spent many weary weeks, and was only pulled through after the most persistent care. But though he got on his feet again, he did not fully recover, and even a long trip to the Bermudas did not get his lungs in shape. He spent some months in Southern California, and settled finally among the Carolina hills, the nearest point to his old New England home, where he could expect to prolong his days.

I have seen many gallant winners, many whose courage and determination made them such; but when I tell the story that comes closest to my heart, I tell of one a notch above them all. I tell of Teddy Atherton, of his last "half" which he *lost*.



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There were three of us in my office at the gymnasium. It was late afternoon of a February day. The hail was beating against my windows, and a punching-bag was drumming the "devil's tattoo" in the next room. There were all sorts of sounds outside, from the clatter of pulley weights

dropped on the floor to the steady tramp of the runner's feet on the track overhead, but in my room a Sabbath stillness reigned.

Fred Seever was perched on a chair in one corner ready dressed for departure, and N. P. Sawyer, familiarly known as "Shack," sat on the weighing scales clad only in trunks, jersey, and an air of melancholy. It would not have been a comfortable seat for most anatomies, and the metal work must have felt chilly; but Shack had eccentric tastes, and never occupied a chair if he could find anything else to hold him.

I had just remarked in the quietest manner possible, "It is pretty well settled that Seever does not run this year." This was the cause of Shack's melancholy and Seever's silence.

"Well, if that's the verdict," said Seever, with considerable heat for one so quiet, "it's mighty hard lines, and a blooming hothouse plant it makes of me. I've been planning the whole year to get back at the Dutchman, and now at the last moment you say I don't start." [Pg 154]

"Yes," spoke up Shack, "you should get a glass case for the dear boy, and put him in it, labelled 'Rare Specimen,' 'A Runner too Good to Run.'" He followed up this ingenious suggestion by untangling his long legs, rising slowly to his feet, and suddenly throwing a stray boxing-glove which he had picked up from the floor, hitting the "Rare Specimen" a blow in the short ribs that brought forth an involuntary grunt. "By the way, Professor," he continued, "do you think it quite safe for a little chap like me to toy with a sixteen-pound shot? Mightn't I drop it on my precious toes some day?"

"I've told you my reasons plainly enough," I answered, looking up from my desk and laughing at big Shack in spite of myself. "You remember last year. Seever went into this same 'mile handicap,' running from scratch. There were thirty-odd entries, and he was blocked, elbowed, and pocketed all the way through, getting a toss from Kitson in the last lap that sent him rolling into a corner with skin enough off his knees to make parchment for his diploma." [Pg 155]

"I wasn't hurt, though," argued Seever, "only sore for a few days."

"'Twas luck that saved you then," I answered; "suppose you'd broken a leg, as you might easily have done on that hardwood floor, where would we have been at Mott Haven, with not a man jack of you good for four-thirty?"

"Give it up," said Shack. "Did you notice that the same field, too, let the Dutchman through like a greased pig? Hartman had half a dozen club mates in the lot, and as many more were quite willing to do all within the law to keep a college man out of it."

"Well," continued I, "Fred Seever is neither a wrestler nor a football player. These indoor games are all right, and for the average man there is no better place to learn quickness than in a mob of runners swinging round the raised corners of a slippery board track. But Fred has had experience enough, and is sure to appear on the cinder-path with the warm spring days in good condition if left entirely to himself. In the second place, he is too slender to take any chances."

"Yes," interrupted Shack, "those pipe-stem legs are marked 'breakable.'"

I concluded with, "The verdict is that, unless I have some good reason to change my mind, Seever's name will certainly be scratched." [Pg 156]

At this there was a dead silence. Shack looked at Seever questioningly, then shook his head, and began to whistle "Ben Bolt" in a particularly dismal manner.

When I found they had nothing more to say, I resumed my examination of the list of entries to the first big "Indoor Athletic Games" of the season. I had just received it from the "official handicapper," and was considerably interested to find what my men had been given. They figured in every handicap, and in the "forty-yard novice" there were no less than fourteen of them, nearly all Freshmen, with two or three who would show a turn of speed. There were a few I did not intend should run, among them Seever, for the reasons I had already given.

These games are a perfect godsend to a trainer, coming as they do at a time when it is very hard to keep the men up to their work. The gymnasium is indispensable in a country where from December to April the cinder-path is either hard with frost or white with snow. But when a man has done his fifteen minutes at the pulley weights for the hundredth consecutive afternoon, he finds the excitement of "One, two, three, four, five, six," begins to pall on him, and by the last of February even "practising starts" loses its charms. It is then the circuit of a billiard-table becomes the favorite track work, and the digestion of a good dinner the principal muscular exercise. [Pg 157]

I had checked off about half the names, finding few surprises, when the quiet of my room was broken by the entrance of a dozen fellows who had just learned of the arrival of the list. Did you ever hear the work of that very conscientious gentleman the "official handicapper" discussed by a crowd of contestants? Of half a dozen men perhaps one is pleased and says so, two or three have no fault to find but do nevertheless grumble out of principle, and the remainder "kick like veteran mules," and blackguard in shameful fashion the man whose only sin has been to overrate their abilities.

"What's this?" cried Ferris, a high jumper, looking over my shoulder. "I get only four inches, and Bob here gets six. That's highway robbery, and I don't care who knows it. He did five-eight to my five-seven only yesterday."

"Here's little Larry with five yards in the 'forty,'" spoke up Shack, who had monopolized the view from my right side, his broad shoulders shutting off all the rest; "the infant won't do a thing to [Pg 158]

them, will he?"

"What do you get yourself?" inquired Turner, who was bigger than Shack, but not quite quick enough to get a place of vantage.

"That's what I ought to be looking for," answered Shack, "but I always think of others first. They'll put something of that kind on my tombstone. Where's the 'shot'?" He ran his big finger down the page, remarking meanwhile, "I gave Jones [the handicapper] a good cigar only last week, and told him that I had not been myself the whole winter." Shack said this with a deep sigh, as if he well knew he was threatened with an early decline. "I expect to find nothing less than the same old eight feet for yours truly." His finger suddenly stopped, as he said this, and then straightening himself with an energy that sent two or three men flying backward, he exclaimed: "Great Jupiter! Look at that! Only look at that! And 'twas a good cigar too. He gives me just four feet, the least of any of you, and Turner here, who tied me this afternoon, gets the eight instead." At this there was a big laugh at Shack, whose woes were a joke to all.

Down the list they went until all were informed, and then they gradually sifted out, leaving Seever and Shack still with me. I could not understand why they stayed, for they knew well enough that further argument would be useless; but I paid no attention to them, going on with my checking.

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The "mile handicap" was almost the last event. I crossed out Seever's name, which figured alone at "scratch," saw that Hartman had his twenty-five yards, the same as last year, marked off Root at fifty and Murphy at seventy yards, and then suddenly discovered, just below, the names of G. Turner and N. P. Sawyer with the same allowances. To say I was surprised would but faintly express my feeling, as Turner was a shot and hammer man who had played football, weighed nearly one hundred and ninety pounds, and had never to my knowledge run a yard on a track in his life. N. P. Sawyer was the seldom used patronymic of Shack, who had resumed his seat on the scales in the corner, and was evidently by his air of expectancy waiting for an explosion. I had sent in neither name, and was utterly at sea regarding the whole affair.

"Well, Sawyer," said I, turning rather abruptly toward him, "what does this mean?"

"Simply this," replied Shack, very frankly, as if he had expected the question and had his answer ready,— "simply this, that I thought we would pay the devil in his own coin, and give Hartman and his fellow-pirates of the 'Rowing Club' a taste of their medicine; let the Dutchman carom against Turner and myself a few times, permit Kitson to enjoy the experience of a tumble like that he gave Fred last year, and carry the latter bit of 'rare porcelain' through the mob without getting chipped."

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"A very pretty plan," I remarked sarcastically, "but why was I not consulted in the matter?"

"Simply because we were doubtful of your consent, and wished to get as far along as possible before we had our little talk with you."

"Of course," remarked Seever, "we knew you would have the final word to say, but we thought you would prefer not to have the plan yours, and to be able to say that you did not even send in the entries."

"That was certainly very thoughtful of you."

"Yes," interposed Shack, "there is a remote chance of a little 'shindy' when the 'Heavy Brigade' gets well started."

"If you and Turner are mixed up in it, I should think the chances considerably more than even," I remarked; "but why in the world did two ice-wagons like you and Turner go into it? You can neither of you run a mile in ten minutes."

"Ten minutes," cried Shack. "We'll let you hold a watch over us and see. You said just now that Seever was neither a wrestler nor a football player. Well, this is, you admit, something of a football game, and we have a football aggregation for it. Root is in it too. He played 'left half,' Turner 'right,' and I 'full back' on the team all last fall. Root has been doing the mile for a couple of years, and is a fair performer. Turner is a mighty fast man for his weight, and can go the distance. As for myself, although my well-known modesty shrinks at the assertion, I am a 'crack-a-Jack' at any distance from one hundred yards to ten miles. I am indeed. With a seventy-yard handicap Seever has no show with me. I thought we three could do the trick nicely with a little of the interference we worked up together and found mighty useful on the 'gridiron.'"

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"That's your plan, is it?" I asked. "Well, 'tis as crazy as its maker, which is saying a great deal."

At this there was silence again, Seever twirling his thumbs, and Shack running his fingers through his mop of hair in a hopeless fashion.

"I am not sure, however, but that with some modification I shall let you try it." At this Seever looked a shade less discouraged, and Shack gave a broad smile of triumph, and then listened with much seriousness as I said, "In the first place, there must be no interference with Hartman; do you promise this?"

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"We do," answered Shack, who was quite willing to make any condition if Seever could be allowed to run.

"In the second place, you must make pace for Seever as decently as possible, and not one of you catch a judge's eye."

"We swear it," replied Shack, raising his big hand solemnly above his head.

"All right; if you will look out for these things I will let you try. It is time something was done, and even an extreme step like this may be the means of straightening matters out."

We talked the affair over for some time together, and when we parted our plans were well matured. I found that Root, Turner, and Shack had been training carefully for several weeks with this in view. They had all done the "mile" in fair time, although the last "quarter" was something of a task for big Turner. Shack, however, very much to my surprise, showed me a performance on the short gymnasium track that proved with seventy yards' start no one on earth could catch him, and the event was simply at his mercy. Seever begged him to go in for himself and pull the thing off, and I advised the same; but this did not tempt Shack at all.

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"I had rather see Fred beat out the Dutchman than to win a dozen races," he declared, rubbing his hands.

So the affair was settled. I gave him a careful trial a few nights before the "games," and decided that Hartman with his first mate Kitson and his "fellow pirates," as Shack called them, were likely to find rough sailing on Saturday night.

There is an almost endless variety in outdoor games. The weather conditions alone are enough to make each day stand out by itself. Cloud and sunshine, heat and cold, wind and calm, not to speak of the occasional smart shower at about five o'clock when interest is at its height, make an almost limitless combination.

There is none of this diversity to indoor games. The track is neither fast nor heavy, and the boards are no softer on one evening than another. The temperature is always a bit too high for comfort, the air too close for laboring lungs, and the same bright light glares on all. There may of course be something in the games themselves to make them noteworthy, and those of February, 189-, I shall always remember through the charge of the "Heavy Brigade," so called by Shack, who claimed it quite outclassed the performance of the "Light Brigade," because the danger was greater and there were no dead nor wounded.

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When I arrived at the "hall" at a little after seven o'clock, they were preparing to start the preliminary heats of the "forty-yard novice," a weeding-out process quite necessary, but not particularly exciting. The "clerk of the course" was calling off the names of the contestants, and nearly a hundred young fellows were gathered around him, answering one after the other, as he checked off the list. Some were hidden from shoulder to toe by voluminous wraps, some wore sweaters of various shapes and colors, and some were clad only in jersey, trunks, and running shoes. The officials, who wore their badges and an air of *blasé* indifference to distinguish them from common mortals, were much in evidence, and a good-sized squad of carpenters and helpers were busying themselves around the track.

The men on the floor far outnumbered the spectators, who as a rule were content to wait for the semi-finals at eight o'clock and enjoy an unhurried dinner meanwhile. There were a few boys in the gallery, here and there a little bunch of a half-dozen or so in the seats surrounding the track, and on the platform only two pretty girls occupied seats on the very back row, who were anxious to see somebody win his heat,—a brother perhaps.

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In a far corner of the gallery the musicians were arriving. They would not begin to play for some time, however, and meanwhile the high walls echoed to every sound, and the long strips of bunting hanging from the ceiling waved slowly with the wind from the open windows.

I could see among the crowd of contestants who gathered around the white lines at the start several boys in whom I was interested; but I had nothing to say to them, and went over to the opposite corner, where the judges clustered around the finish posts. The red worsted was waiting for its first break, and beyond, hung against the walls, were the mattresses to catch the sprinter unable to check his speed. On one side were the hurdles in a long row ready to be pushed into place. In a third corner was the seven-foot circle with its raised cleat for the "shot put," and the last triangle was occupied by the standards and cross bar for the "high jump." The movable platforms for the raised corners were in two sections, and pulled apart so as not to interfere with the "dash."

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I had only time for a word or two, a nod here and a handshake there, when, at a sign from the starter, the judges took their places, and the timekeepers stood with watch in hand ready to record the flying fifth seconds. I could look along the smooth floor and see the men take their places. There was Downer, a little Freshman, white with the excitement of his first public performance. He was a nervous chap, and one of my most promising men. Up goes the starter's hand, "Marks," "Set," the report of the pistol, and out of the circling crowd break the five struggling forms. There is the beat of eager feet, one, two, three, four, and between the posts they dash, little Downer coming away in the last few strides. "Thud" he goes against the mattress; "thud," "thud," "thud," "thud," go the other four, and the first heat is over. As they come back, the judges check off the "37" from Downer's back, his nervousness all gone, and in its place a confidence for which there is as little excuse.

There were a score of heats varying little from this, as many more in the "forty-yard handicap," and when they were finished nearly every seat in the building was taken, and the platform had blossomed out like a bank of flowers with the bright colors which the ladies wore. Now the band starts up with a swinging "March," and everything takes on a new life.

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In the next two hours there was nothing particularly worth recording. Shack won the "shot put" in spite of the four feet about which he had complained so loudly, thus proving the astuteness of the much maligned "handicapper." Sawyer came to me with Root and Turner just before the "mile" was called, his long wrap dangling loose around his heels, and a broad grin on his face. He answered my inquiry as to whether everything was all right with an expressive nod, and then quoted a line or two from some pathetic ballad in which the horrors of a death on the battle-field were vividly depicted. He called off the roll very solemnly. Root and Turner answering to their names, he told them to look to their accoutrements, to tighten their horses' girths, and when the starter sent them to their places, he gave the order to "saddle" with great seriousness, leaving me with a step or two in imitation of a particularly clumsy charger.

He was fixed with Turner at the seventy-yard mark, among a crowd of a score of limit men. When they took their places, Shack was well outside in the first row, and Turner well inside on the second. Root was twenty yards back with another smaller knot of men at the fifty-yard mark, and there were half a dozen at the thirty-five.

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Fritz Hartman was alone on the twenty-five-yard line, and Seever stood by himself at "scratch." Fritz was a well put together little chap, with curly yellow hair, round face, and a great favorite with the gallery and the "Rowing Club." There were a half dozen of the latter among the contestants, all of them showing the crossed oars on the breasts of their jerseys. Seever was almost as fair as the Dutchman, but he was a bit browner, his hair was darker without the curl, and he stood at least three inches taller. He kept his wrap on until the last moment, taking no chances with a draft of cool air which blew from an open window behind him. I knew there was nothing to be said to him, for he knew his business perfectly, but took my position near the limit men, who were having considerable fun with Shack and Turner.

One little fellow told Shack he would be quite a sprinter when he "got his growth." And Shack confessed he did not feel quite strong enough for the distance. When Turner pulled off his sweater, revealing his enormous shoulders and chest, he did appear a bit out of place among the lighter men around him. One of them said Turner was in good shape, but a "bit fine," and asked if he had not done a "trifle too much work." Another declared that Shack was so wide, he blocked the whole track. There seemed to be an impression that the two big fellows had gone in for a lark, or with the idea of settling who was the best at the distance, and with no idea of winning. Of the real plan of the "Heavy Brigade" there was no sign that any one had the least suspicion.

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There was some cheering from the galleries for Hartman when he took his place, and when Seever threw off his wrap there came a little burst of applause from the spectators on the platform, and from the seats which circled the track.

Many remembered Seever's nasty fall of the previous year, and it was pretty well surmised that he meant to make a mighty hard try to win where he had failed before. Indeed, by that peculiar telegraphy which runs through a large crowd, almost every one knew that the "mile" was to be the event of the evening. Seever was a fine sight in his spotless running suit, his arms a bit slender, not an ounce of useless weight above the belt, and his legs long and lithe as a greyhound's. He might not be a "hothouse plant," but he was certainly not qualified to join the ranks of the "Heavy Brigade."

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The band stops in the middle of a bar at a signal from the "announcer," while he calls out the winners of the "high jump" in stentorian tones. Then comes almost perfect silence as the thirty-odd men bend over their marks, and are off with the sound of the pistol. They make a noise like a heavy freight-train, and when the limit men strike the first corner it was a case of the "ready shoulder" and "useful elbow," sure enough. Three or four went down, sliding along the smooth boards. A couple were up almost without loss, but one of them has enough and goes limping off the track. Big Turner, despite his football experience, almost comes to grief, for he had a man right under his feet; he staggers through, however, with a plunge that sends another man to the edge of the track, and is by Shack's side a moment later. Of course anything with a pair of legs can run a single lap at the speed with which the best of them start out who mean to finish in good time. The first lap showed few changes, except that the whole lot had strung out in a long procession, first one and then another coming up or going back, but with no very radical changes. There were a couple of fellows with no idea of pace who started from limit as if they had a hundred yards only before them, and who came up close to Seever, who was in no hurry yet.

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In the second lap Hartman began to draw away, and at the end of the third passed a man or two and came up to a little bunch of nine or ten close together. Root was among them, and made a little spurt as Fritz went by; but the rest opened a gap like a barn door, through which the Dutchman slipped with ease, and set out for those ahead.

"That was very pretty," said I to myself; "now we will see if Seever gets the same chance." Fred, who had now struck his gait, and got his heart and lungs in good working order, quickening his stride, passed a few stragglers almost before they saw him, and came up to the same bunch through which Hartman had gone so easily. He trailed after them a little, and then swung wide to go by on the outside; but a stout fellow with the crossed oars on his breast went with him, his right arm well out, and his elbows up, taking Seever almost to the rail. The latter was forced back again, and in the straight tried to slip through a promising gap, but they put the bars up as he came along, and he found himself, despite his best efforts, nicely pocketed at this early stage of the game. There was considerable indication of disapproval from the audience, and some hisses; but there was Seever, sure enough, "in Coventry" and no mistake.

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All this time Shack and Turner were running easily, and they now began to slip back faster still among the tail-enders, being joined by Root on the way. When Seever found himself blocked, he

slowed a little, according to instructions, and a second or two later the three men came back, and led him with Shack first, Root second, and Turner just ahead. Then, as if a trumpet had been blown, the "Heavy Brigade" swung into position something like the letter "V," with Shack at the apex, Root a little back and outside, and Turner in the same relative position on the inside. There was nothing at all conspicuous about all this, and I doubt if any one noticed it but myself. Seever now came up a little, and took his place behind the "troop." They ran in this way for a few strides, and then, as if the order to charge had been given, the "Heavy Brigade" started at speed.

I held my breath a bit as they came up to the bunch which had blocked Seever a moment before. Shack tried to swing wide, but again the stout fellow with the crossed oars came out, and with him a couple of others. Then Shack came in a little, chose a place where there was a small gap, the trio "hit her up," and went through the crowd like a particularly powerful snow-plough. The stout fellow tried to swing in, but he could make no more impression against Shack than a stone-wall, and when he bumped back against Root the latter worthy sent him to the rear. Turner took care of his corner without a stagger. It was a mighty neat performance, for no one was taken off his feet, though several had been thrown out of their strides when the "Brigade" cut through. The audience cheered as Seever swung by, and set out behind his body-guard at a pace that meant mischief to some one. They had all been running easily, and now they passed one contestant after another until they came to a second bunch a bit more solid than the first.

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Shack trailed them for a half lap; looking in vain for an opening, he swung wide, he made a try for the inside, he stepped this way and that, and then suddenly, as if at the touch of the spur, the "Heavies" cut into the line in front where it was weakest. There was no opening; so Shack selected a little fellow in the middle, and ran right over him, taking pains to send him wide out of Seever's way. Root had little trouble, but Turner found himself in an awful hole. I could see his huge shoulder as he forced through, and at one time I thought he was surely down, but he came through a little behind the rest, puffing like a grampus. He was strong and game, however, and a moment later was in his place again, although far from comfortable.

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The audience was now on its feet, for there were but a couple of laps left, and the real race was now to come. Half of the starters had dropped out, half of the remainder were hopelessly trailed, and the leaders were close together. Hartman had perhaps ten yards over Kitson, and about the same distance back were the "Heavies," with Seever close up. This latter "piece of rare porcelain," as Shack called him, had been taken through without a touch and was running as if on eggs. They pulled Kitson back fast, and caught him at the last corner. He was a tall fellow with a closely shaven head, who was a runner, sure enough, and used his arms almost as much as his legs. It was almost impossible for a light man to get by him on a narrow board track.

Just what he tried to do I never discovered, for the crowd of contestants inside the track were all huddled together and partly hid my view. All I am sure of is that the man with the "useful elbow" suddenly performed a parabola of surpassing splendor, and landed in a very dazed condition between the knees of a fat man in the front row of spectators.

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Kitson had no sooner been put out of danger than Root and Shack swung wide, and Turner also stepped out of the way, falling among the crowd inside the track pretty well run out, and Seever came through and set out for Hartman like the "Headless Horseman."

The Dutchman ran as if the famous spectre of Sleepy Hollow was indeed after him, but Seever was as fresh as paint and would not be denied. Foot by foot he gained, and passing him at the last corner broke the tape a comfortable winner by a couple of yards.

Of course he received plenty of acknowledgment for his plucky race, but not half the applause that came to Shack, the doughty leader of the "Heavy Brigade," who came romping in third, with a grin on his face like the first quarter of a harvest moon.

A VIRGINIA JUMPER



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I remember it was on a Monday morning that I sat in my office at the gymnasium, opening a three-days' mail. I had been out of town, and found quite a formidable accumulation of letters on my desk.

It was early, not later than eight o'clock. The November sun was shining, and the woodbine that framed the eastern window was blazing almost as brightly as the fire in the grate. It was all very cheerful. I was glad to get back again, and with an old cricket jacket around my shoulders I set myself to clean up the arrears of work.

I always handle my mail on the principle of elimination; that is, I first open the unsealed envelopes containing circulars, then those of apparently little consequence, and so on down to the most interesting and important. Of course I sometimes make mistakes, but not very often. I distinctly remember that on that day an envelope with a black border was saved for the very last. The postmark was illegible, and it was addressed to me in a particularly old-fashioned and graceful hand.

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When at last I broke the seal, I found its contents as follows:

THE OAKS, FAIRFAX CO., VA.

DEAR SIR: I am desirous that my son may win distinction in some form of athletic sport. I understand that you have charge of the instruction in this department. It is my wish that he be given especial training in that exercise to which he is best adapted. I have already advised him concerning my plan. I write you also, because he has unfortunately little ambition in this direction, and I must ask that he be given particular care and attention. I shall be pleased to have you send me the customary bill for such extra work. My son comes of a family renowned for strength and vigor, and should be able to surpass all competitors. I should consider a second place no better than absolute failure. Asking your serious consideration of the above, I am,

Sincerely yours,
MARGARET LEE FAIRFAX.

TO MR. WALTER BROWN.

Now, I have received a great many letters concerning athletic matters in my time, but few more interesting than this. Concealed under a very matter-of-fact speech and manner, there is in me a vein of the imaginative which I occasionally indulge. Sometimes a very small matter will be enough to send me on a very wild flight. I remember that I read the letter with the black border again and again, trying to picture to myself the one who wrote it. There were nine sentences, and six of them beginning with the "I,"—evidently a woman of strong personality. "I am desirous," "It is my wish," certainly indicated one accustomed to have her inclinations respected. "He comes of a family renowned for strength and vigor, and should be able to surpass all competitors," plainly showed a woman proud of her birth, and ambitious for success. A Virginian, a Fairfax. I made a mind picture of her as she wrote the letter, sitting in a cool and shaded room in one of those white-pillared, wide-halled mansions, built a century ago among the oaks. She was dressed in black, her figure tall and slender, her back straight and her head well poised. Her hair had a few threads of white in it, but a hint of color still showed in her cheeks, and the light had not yet gone out of her dark eyes. Her mouth I pictured a trifle thin-lipped and positive. At an old mahogany desk with big brass escutcheons she sat, the magnolias' heavy fragrance in the air, the song of the darkies sounding faintly from the distant fields. This is the picture I made on that November morning, and how long I should have dreamed I cannot say, had not Paddy's voice from under my window waked me from my trance, with "Jerry, ye Kildare divil, luk at the rake ye lift out the night; it's half a mind I hev to comb yer thick hid wid it."

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Jerry protested his innocence in tones only less strident than Paddy's own, and the remarkably fluent and aggressive tirade of the latter was only lost to me when they had walked down the track and out of ear-shot.

Now, I defy any one to make mind pictures under such conditions, and I became my practical self at once. I shut off the romantic stop with a thud, and turning on the business pipe, proceeded to answer my mail. Most of the circulars went into the waste basket; receipted bills into one compartment, unpaid into another. I answered a few of the routine letters, and then oddly enough I broke my rule, and took up the black-bordered letter again.

Who was this candidate for athletic fame? His name was not even mentioned in the letter. Evidently the son of Margaret Lee Fairfax was supposed to be too well known to need any further title. A reference to my list gave me among the freshmen, "Richard Spotswood Fairfax, The Oaks, Fairfax Co., Va.," but this did not help me at all. He had certainly not appeared on track or field, or I should have remembered him, and he had even neglected a physical examination. He was probably bandy-legged, big-waisted, round-shouldered, and hollow-chested. He might be a sufferer from dyspepsia and heart disease; there were chances that he had a fancy for Greek roots, and thought football brutal. I have been asked by doting parents to make champion sprinters and weight putters out of just such timber,—although the age of miracles is past.

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I had a conventional way of answering such letters, and prepared to go through the usual forms. A modest request it was indeed! "I should consider a second place no better than absolute failure." Little did she realize what a combination of excellences go to make up a winner, nor how many good men train faithfully for four years without getting a place.

Give him "especial care and attention"? Well, hardly, if he does not care enough about himself even to have his chart made out.

I had taken the sheet of paper and written the "Dear Madam," when there came a knock at the door, and at my "Come in," it swung leisurely open. Just how I came to the conclusion I cannot tell, but I knew the first moment I set eyes on my visitor that it was Richard Spotswood Fairfax himself. He was not at all the monstrosity I had painted him; in fact, he was a mighty good-looking fellow. He was a little above average height, with a dark oval face, brown hair, and a wide smile that "wud timpt a man to borry a dollar," as Paddy once said. His tailor knew his business, though his suit of brown tweed fitted a trifle more loosely than our Northern style would have permitted. He also wore a low roll-collar, that showed a firm, round neck to advantage. He smiled when he entered, and sank into a chair by the side of my desk with a sigh of content and another smile. He was in no hurry to speak, and as I learned after was never in a hurry to do anything. He looked me over a moment with his handsome sleepy blue eyes, and then spoke in that melodious drawl which is taught nowhere else but in "ole Virginny." I do not remember how he introduced the subject, for I was too much taken with his voice to notice. I

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cannot begin to describe it, or the easy way in which the words followed each other, divorced from all such aggressive letters as *r*, *g*, and *t*.

He told me he wished to be examined, and assigned some branch of sport to which he could give his attention; in effect, just what his mother had written, except that he omitted to say anything about winning or a first place. I asked him if he had ever done anything in athletics, and he said that barring a little gunning, a moderate amount of riding, and considerable fishing, he had done nothing at all in sports. He expressed a decided preference for the fishing, which I thought was characteristic.

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To my question as to whether he had any choice whatever concerning work on track or cinder-path, he answered, none at all, except that which called for the least exertion would best suit his book. I decided that his mother had written truly when she said he "lacked ambition in this direction," and might have said that he lacked ambition in any other. It was surprising that I did not take a dislike to one who professed such a decided aversion to manly sports, but the boy was so open and frank about it that the impression was not at all disagreeable.

After Fairfax had told his story and answered a few questions, I ordered him in a short, Yankee fashion (that seemed almost brutal compared with his easy tones) to strip and I would take his measurements. At my direction he rose slowly, went over to the corner, leisurely took off coat and vest, and when he got down to the buff, and I looked up from my writing, as I live, I had answered three letters, and the clock had ticked off a full five minutes. (Two is usually enough to transform a shackled slave of Fashion to the freedom of a state of nature.) I laid my pen aside, and taking tape in hand began to look him over. I confess I could hardly restrain an exclamation of surprise. His languid ways and slow movements had not prepared me for any such development as he showed. The conventional costume of the nineteenth century is a wonderful disguise, designed by some man-milliner to hide the imperfections of a degenerate race. The trained athlete and the flabby dude look much alike in loose trousers and padded coats.

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Now, Dick was neither athlete nor dude, though if I ever saw a man cut out for the former, he was the one. His skin was dark, but clear and velvety. He stood easily, with every muscle relaxed, and was as symmetrical as a demi-god. There was nothing out of proportion, no fat, no unused muscle, and no over-development. Indeed, I surmised, what afterward proved true, that he was the best specimen of an embryo athlete that it had ever been my good fortune to see.

I took him to the standard and found his height five feet ten and one-half inches. He lifted the scales at one hundred and fifty-eight, and then I put my tape on him and began my measurements. As I marked down one after another my admiration grew, and when I had finished and he had dressed and left me, I could not deny myself the pleasure of making out his chart, even before I finished the mail. A wonderful chart it was, too. The average percentage was not as high as that of one or two fellows who had the advantages of intelligent handling by good men at first-class preparatory schools, but when it came to symmetrical development, there was not one in the same class with him. The line was almost straight, a slight advantage only showing in measurements below the waist.

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After the chart was finished I put it in a conspicuous place on the mantel, went back to my letters, and finally wrote Mrs. Fairfax as follows: "I shall be pleased to give your son the attention you ask. Although it is impossible to guarantee any degree of success, he has the advantage of an unusually good development, and may make something of himself if he is willing to work faithfully and follow orders. It rests more with him than myself. There will be no extra charge."

It may seem rather a curt letter, but compared with what I usually write in answer to like requests it was remarkably "Chesterfieldian." Not that I am ever likely to so far forget myself as to neglect the common courtesies, but it is often necessary to be very positive in order to protect against further annoyance. I received an acknowledgment from "The Oaks" a few days after, which was not quite as dictatorial as the first, and in which the "I" was not nearly so much in evidence. It also asked me to report occasionally, and hinted that maternal authority might be invoked in case of difficulty, and that Richard Spotswood Fairfax had been taught to respect it thoroughly.

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Dick appeared on the cinder-path the second day after his call on me, clad in irreproachable track costume, and I gave him a little trial with some of the other freshmen who had been out several weeks. He had never worn a running-shoe before that day, nor entered a contest, and yet he ran the "hundred" in eleven and three-fifths, and the "quarter" a little under the minute, coming in as fresh as paint, and without turning a hair. It was odd to see him standing with a half-dozen other fellows, who were drenched with perspiration, and wheezing like blacksmiths' bellows, while he was not even tired.

The next day he cleared four feet eleven in the "running high," and nearly seventeen in the "running broad." Now, these were wonderful performances for a novice, particularly as Dick seemed not to exert himself in the least.

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That night, as I sat in my room smoking a comforting pipe, I thought the matter over very thoroughly. I am a shy bird for "wonders," and doubtful concerning "phenoms," but I made up my mind in cold blood that almost anything was possible for Richard Spotswood Fairfax, of "The Oaks." With the advantages of my handling, he ought to be a world beater, and no mistake. As Tom Furness expresses a good thing, "There was frosting on top, and jelly between the layers."

Of course I said nothing of this to Dick, but ordered him regular all-round work in the gymnasium for the winter, and told him if he took good care of himself, we might make something of him in the spring. In those days we had no big indoor meets, and the men were allowed to do very much

as they pleased until near the end of the winter. I am of the opinion that such rest is better in the end than a continuous course of training, particularly for men under twenty-one.

I saw considerable of Dick, and was well satisfied to have him keep to easy exercise. He filled out a bit, and the muscles on his shapely body grew large and firm as the days went by. I was a bit troubled by the boy's extreme popularity, for it brought continual temptation to shirk work. Some one or another was perpetually asking him away, when if he had possessed fewer friends, he would have been less troubled. He was a mighty fine-looking fellow, and with an unlimited fund of good nature and good cash (two most essential passports to college popularity), spring found him the best known and best liked man of his class, a favorite with man, woman, and beast. He had stuck to his work most faithfully, and barring a little fling or so, such as all boys of his age are likely to take, I had little fault to find with him. I remember I expressed one day my surprise that he had not missed his hour in the gymnasium more than once or twice since he started in, and was told, as if the answer was conclusive, that he had given his promise. He also added later that a Fairfax never broke his word, even in the least degree.

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One common difficulty I escaped with Dick, that of keeping him from the football field, the grave for the hopes of so many a promising athlete. Dick pronounced the game altogether too much like work to suit him, and no entreaty would move him in the least; not even the plea that he was "needed," or the threat that he would be considered disloyal to his class, had any effect whatever on him.

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Now, it must not be thought for a moment that I object to football in its proper place. It is the king of sports, and stands by itself, unrivalled in its attractions for all of Anglo-Saxon blood. It is the best successor to the knightly tourney that this prosaic century has left us. Neither an occasional accident, nor the foolishness of some of its supporters, with excuses for defeat, nor demands for apologies, will ever succeed in killing it.

The game is made, however, only for strong, stocky men. To see one with a turn of speed, long, shapely legs, and slender body mixed up in a scrimmage, and sure to end in the hospital at last, is more than I can stand. It should not take those unfitted for its fierce struggles, but qualified by nature for other forms of sport.

After considerable thought I decided to have Dick try for the running broad jump, and for these reasons: First, the team was weak in this department. Second, this was a trifle his best performance. Third, Dick chose it, as calling for the least labor. Indeed, he absolutely declined distant running, unless he was bound to it by his promise to his mother.

So Dick settled down to regular work and practice at the "running broad," and appeared each day as surely as the clock struck the hour; not even Frost, a veteran of four years, was as much to be depended on.

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Now, there is no more practical school than that of the cinder-path; with given athletic material, a certain amount of work should bring exact results. We look for them just as confidently as the farmer looks for his crops in the autumn, after the planting of the spring and the cultivation of the summer. There may be accidents, just as the farmer has a hail-storm, or like fruit under an untimely frost a man may go stale at the last moment. But, barring accidents, we expect a gradual growth and development in just proportion to the natural ability of the man.

Now, strange to say, Dick Fairfax contradicted all known laws; his style improved, and his physical condition as well, but his jump was the same old jump after several weeks of practice. He worked up to an average of nineteen-six, but there he stuck, and no handling, instruction, or care could pull him on to the even twenty feet. Encouragement, blame, the incentives of trial contests, and even ridicule were all the same to Dick. I did all I knew,—and a bit well-informed I claimed to be,—giving him more attention than any three other men. This was partly because I liked the boy, and partly because I received a letter from "The Oaks" once every week asking how Richard was getting on. I have a decided aversion to lying, and I disliked to tell the truth to the lonely woman who looked forward so confidently to her son's success. But most of all I stuck to Dick because of the possibilities I saw in him. His legs were marvels; from toe to thigh, muscle, sinew, and bone were perfect. And yet Seever, with his crooked joints and spindle shanks, could best Dick's best effort by a good foot. I racked my brain for reasons of the failure, but with no result. I tried all possible changes, even to a take-off with the left, but all in vain. Nineteen-six he could do before or after breakfast, and probably at midnight, if tried at that unusual hour. He was the most consistent performer I have ever seen. The trouble was that it was consistency to a distance of no use at all to us. Little Jack Bennett, who had started in with something like a thirteen-foot jump, had plugged away day after day, until he was "hoss and hoss" with Dick, and the latter was quite content. Approval or disapproval were all the same to him, and he answered both with a smile, or a careless glance from his sleepy blue eyes.

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Beside Dick and Jack there were Frost and Seever, two veterans who had reached their limit, and were good for a scant twenty-one. We had not one first-class man.

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Now, while I am telling this tale more particularly for the initiated, I mean to make it plain to others less well informed, and will for their sakes say that the honor of the broad jump championship is to-day divided between Reber in America and Fry in the Old Country, both of whom have negotiated twenty-three feet six and one-half inches. No one jumping less than twenty-one feet has any chance in a first-class competition, and it would have done us as much good if Dick had done nine feet as nineteen; that is, no good at all.

Mrs. Fairfax reminded me in her first letter, after I had informed her that Dick had chosen the "running broad" as his special event, that this was a traditional Virginia sport, and she was

pleased with the selection. She called my attention to the fact that Thackeray in his story of the "Virginians" makes Harry Warrington cover twenty-one feet three inches against his English rivals, and says that Col. George Washington could better this by a foot. Now, if this is history, and the truthful George did the distance with a short run on grass, and no take-off but a line on the turf, he was a wonder, and better than any we can show to-day. If Reber and Fry had lived in his time they would not have been in his class, and should George Washington return to earth, and enter a contest to-day (I hope there is nothing sacrilegious in the thought), he would distance their best efforts. A mighty fine pair of legs he must have had, and what he could have done with modern improvements, such as spiked shoes, a five-inch joist, on a nice cinder-path, and with prepared ground to land in, we can only guess; I should say he could have bettered his record by a good yard. It is easy to understand how such a man could succeed in the great game of war.

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Our Virginian jumper, despite all his advantages, was content with a performance of nearly three feet less than that of the father of his country, who had hailed from the same State.

So matters went on, until one morning late in April I arranged with Dick to give him an early morning trial alone. He demurred at this most decidedly, being very fond of his morning nap, but consented finally, if I would agree to call him. I cannot tell how I allowed him to wheedle me as he did; but it was a way he had with all, and few could resist him.

It was a little after seven when I left my door and started for Dick's room. Now, I am no spring poet; in fact, thirty years' connection with the cinder-path has knocked most of the romance out of me, but I remember that morning still. It had been a late winter, and this was really the first dawn with no chill on the air; the trees were blossoming, the birds singing, the sun shining, the air like a tonic, and there was an indescribable something which told that winter was gone at last.

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After some delay at Dick's door,—for he was a wonderful sleeper, particularly in the early morning,—I succeeded in waking him, and sat in the window-seat while he took his tub. I helped him a little in the rub-down, and a man more fit I never saw. This over, Dick pulled on his trunks, jersey, and sweater, and taking his shoes in his hands he followed me leisurely down-stairs. We waited a moment on the steps, while he pulled his shoes on, and then jogged over to the track. So fresh was the air, that just before we reached the ground I found myself quickening strides with Dick, until we finished at a very pretty sprint, something I had not done for a long time. It does not help a trainer to compete under any conditions with his man.

Perhaps it was partly because I felt that I had unbent too much with him that I made my lecture, already planned, more severe than intended; at any rate, it was a mighty stiff talk the boy got. I knew it was useless to mince matters, and was resolved to cut through his armor of good nature and indifference, if there was a vulnerable point, and a straight thrust could reach him. A couple of weeks before, the captain of the team, disgusted with Dick's unsatisfactory work, had quite lost his temper with him and told him in so many words that he was not worth the salt of the training-table, and must make a brace or he would not make the team at all.

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Almost any other man would have either got hot and given a sharp answer, or more likely still gone into his boots with disappointment. Dick, however, did neither. He gave one of his wide smiles, maddening enough to an earnest man, took the matter very calmly, and volunteered to get his feed at his own expense whenever we tired of furnishing it. He remarked that a table with a little more variety would suit his palate fully as well, and after the talk went on with his tiresome jump of nineteen-six just as if nothing at all had been said.

Now, while this was provoking enough, and under usual conditions would have resulted in a summary drop from the team, we did not take the boy at his word. We were in desperate need of a broad jumper, and hoped that he might get out of the rut, and pick up that extra foot or two before the games. We thought it possible, also, that in a big contest the boy might be stirred up a bit, very much to his benefit.

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On this April morning I talked about as plainly as I knew, using good old Anglo-Saxon phrases, and not many French idioms. I would not care to see my exact words in print, and I am afraid some of the bright eyes that I hope to please with this book would open wide with surprise. A trainer is given a certain license, like the driver of a yoke of oxen and the captain of a football team. I knew one of the latter who was seriously blamed because his puritanical training forbade the use of any stronger language than "board of health" when a signal was lost or the ball was dropped. Out in the open air, and among strong men, it is very easy to form the habit of using strong words on occasions like this.

I told Dick, in effect, that I had given him time and attention that rightfully belonged to other men on the team, and had nothing to show for it; that he could do better, and must do better; that his lack of improvement was a reflection on me as well as himself; and finally, if he was not an arrant cur, without courage and without honor, he would have tired of a child's jump long ago. "Why, man," said I, "if you had sand enough for an ant-hill, with a pair of legs like yours, you would be making a jump of twenty-three feet this morning."

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Now, Dick was a great pet of mine and had never heard a hot word from me; he was very much surprised, and when I called him an "arrant cur, without courage and without honor," he flushed to the roots of his hair. The question of his honor was what touched him most deeply, for his Virginia atmosphere had made him especially sensitive, if not over careful. I was pleased to see his face grow dark, and the smile fade from the corners of his mouth. He was first indignant, and then in a towering passion. He stepped toward me, with clinched hands, and opened his mouth a couple of times to speak, but not a word did he say. Then he turned suddenly on his heel, walked

away from me down the cinder-path, pulled his sweater over his head, dropped it on the grass, faced toward me again, and set himself for his sprint.

I was standing with him close to the joist when I delivered my lecture, and I remained where I was, wondering what the boy was up to. [Pg 197]

He came down the path for his jump, with his jaw set, his eyes aflame, his brows black, and with two bright red spots in his cheeks. One of Dick's faults was that he would not force himself to full speed, an absolute essential for a good broad jump. In fact, a man who will not or cannot sprint should not be allowed to waste his energies on this event. This morning was an exception to the rule with Dick, for he came toward me like a whirlwind, apparently paying no attention to either stride or distance. He fortunately reached the mark all right, caught the joist firm and strong, and launched into the air with his knees high.

I cannot describe my sensations as he shot by me, better than to say he seemed to fly. I knew before he landed that the old mark of nineteen-six was gone forever, but when he broke ground close to the end of the box, and fell forward, I could not gather my senses for a moment. Dick picked himself up like a flash, his brows still threatening, and coming up to me said hoarsely, "Measure that, you English blackguard!" and strode off to his room without even stopping to pick up his sweater.

I said nothing at all in answer, for I was not in the least offended at the uncomplimentary language. Not that I am accustomed to being addressed in other than a respectful manner, but in this case I had really brought the anger on myself intentionally, and I had been successful beyond my fondest hopes. [Pg 198]

As Dick disappeared behind the fence, Tom Furness swung round the corner, out for an early spin round the track.

"What do you call that?" said he, looking at the marks.

"It is the biggest jump ever made by man," I answered solemnly.

"A jump from the hard ground, either sidewise or backward," said Tom; "nothing but wings could carry a man from the joist to those marks."

"Look them over," I said, "before you question them."

Well, to make a long story short, the marks told their own tale; the ground was unbroken except by his feet, for there had been a shower the night before. There were proofs enough to convince Tom that Dick's shoes with Dick in them had run down that cinder-path, and from the joist had jumped the distance. Tom saw readily that the heel prints were too deep for a short jump backward, and too even for one sidewise. There was the broken ground, showing that the impetus was from the joist and the jumper was at a high rate of speed, and had lifted high in the air. [Pg 199]

When we had argued it all out satisfactorily, Tom suggested that we had better measure it before we talked any longer, for it might not show up to what I thought.

He took the end of the tape and held it to the joist, while I walked ahead, with the reel rattling as I pulled it out. By the well-worn figures up to twenty-one I went; twenty-two and twenty-three were slightly blurred, but the twenty-four was fresh and bright, and at twenty-four two and one-quarter I stopped, and looked back to see if the tape was all right. I lifted my hand again, examined the ground very carefully, pulled the tape tight, and made the mark twenty-four feet one and three-quarter inches, back of which there was not the hint of a break.

Then Tom and I changed ends and he found it just the same.

There was no mistake about it. Given a competition and witnesses on that April morning, and the record would not stand to-day at twenty-three six and one-half, but a good seven and one-quarter inches better, and the name of Richard Spotswood Fairfax would be fastened to it.

Now, I expected that Dick would be all right with me the next time we met. I thought he would be pleased that my words, however severe, had forced him to the big jump, and even anticipated an apology for his offensive words. In this, however, I was mistaken. I did not realize the extreme sensitiveness of a Virginian and a Fairfax to any reflection upon his honor. Dick met me courteously enough, but distantly, and indeed was never the same to me again. [Pg 200]

I found, too, that my lecture had only a temporary effect, for he took up the old jump of nineteen-six the same as before, apparently as contented as ever.

Tom Furness was foolish enough to tell the story of Dick's big jump, and was jollied therefore by everybody, receiving credit for a most Munchausen imagination. Tom let them rough him all right, for nothing pleased him better, but came to me at last with Sam Hitchcock asking me to settle a bet, whether or no Dick Fairfax had broken the record of the running broad jump in practice.

Of course I could but tell the truth under such circumstances, although I knew I was putting my reputation for veracity to a severe test. I declared very seriously that Dick had certainly bested the twenty-four-foot mark under record conditions. Sam was incredulous, and went so far as to remind me that it was not at all a joking matter, for a good ten-dollar note must change hands on my decision. At this, I repeated my statement positively as before, and Sam paid over the money without any further remark. [Pg 201]

It was altogether too good a story for him to keep, and it soon became an interesting subject of

discussion. Those who knew me best (and Sam among them, despite his loss) believed the tale, but there were many "doubting Thomases." Some made it a subject for senseless jokes and witless questions, such as, "Was the tape elastic?" "Did he jump from the roof?" or "Did he do it very, very early in the morning?" Other "smart Alecs" declared the twenty-four feet was all right, but the extra one and three-quarters inches they could not go.

Now, I am not at all averse to a draw on the long bow when swapping lies with a sporting friend and both know the game we play, but when I speak seriously I wish to be taken in the same way. Beside, I had allowed money to pass on it, and that should have settled the matter.

It was partly due to my resentment at this banter that Dick finally made the team and little Jack Bennett did not. The latter certainly became better in practice, but I claimed that neither were of any use at their regular jumps, and that Dick's extraordinary performance, for which I vouched again, while not likely to be repeated, was possible, and made Dick the better man for the choice.

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When the decision was finally made, about a week before the games, I wrote Mrs. Fairfax a long letter, telling her the whole truth, giving special emphasis to the early morning trial. I declared my only hope for Dick's success (and that a faint one) was that the heat of a contest with men of other colleges, and before a crowd, might wake him up and get him a place. I did not see how he could win except by a miracle. I declared that I had kept my promise to her most faithfully, and that my disappointment was, if possible, greater than her own.

I received an answer promptly, which read as follows:

THE OAKS, FAIRFAX CO., VA.

DEAR SIR: I understand the conditions perfectly, but am still confident that Richard will win. He must win. Give him the enclosed note just before his last trial. On no account allow him to see it before, nor permit any considerable interval between the reading and Richard's last jump.

Sincerely yours,
MARGARET LEE FAIRFAX.

TO MR. WALTER BROWN.

Now, I confess that when I finished the reading I really questioned the sanity of the "châteline" of "The Oaks." What effect could a note have, no matter how worded, upon easy-going Dick Fairfax? What appeal could she make that would add the necessary feet to his jump? It made me think of boyish stories of the age of chivalry, when talismanic words were efficacious. I read this short note over as carefully and even more wonderingly than the first black-bordered letter written by the same hand. Then I put it away in my pocket, resolved to follow instructions implicitly, no matter how foolish they might seem. I should have nothing with which to reproach myself, and would give Mrs. Fairfax no occasion for fault-finding. So the matter was left, and Dick went on with the rest of the team, perfectly contented with himself and all around him.

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The games that year were not particularly interesting, except the one event for which we were so poorly prepared, and in which even Tom Furness did not have the courage to claim a single point.

It was a clear day after a three-days' rain, and the track was heavy, which happened to suit us. We had a couple of "mud larks" who scooped the sprints, though a dry-track would not have given them a place.

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Dick spent most of the day watching the contests, as disinterestedly as if he was a native of the Isle of Java. He was clothed in a big gray blanket wrap and an omnipresent smile. The wrap had crimson cords and tassels, was extremely becoming, and more than one pair of bright eyes looked at him approvingly from the grand stand. Our Virginia jumper was certainly the handsomest and most distinguished-looking of all the contestants, and the girls always wish such a man to win, and are surprised and disappointed when some raw-boned chap with carrot hair, freckled face, and not a regular feature beats out their favorite. It was a glorious day, the sun bright, the sky cloudless, the seats crowded, and the college cheers like volleys of infantry at short range. When the "running broad" was on, and the numbers were called, Dick did not answer to his, and we were forced to look him up, the clerk meanwhile fussing and fuming, and using language more forceable than polite. At last I found him looking dreamily across the track at a pretty girl in the grand stand, as if this was his only business. He followed me with a bored look, and several backward glances delayed his sufficiently leisurely footsteps.

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There was another delay on account of the ground; for, as frequently happens, the soil in the box where the men landed was so soft that it broke back several inches. Seever was the first man, and I did not want him to throw away a single chance. A spade was sent for and the loose earth flattened down a bit, but it took considerable time. The clerk, measurer, and almost every one else were put out but Dick, who had thrown himself full length on the soft turf by the side of the path, and bore the delay with extreme fortitude.

Most of the other contestants had taken a trial jump or two to get their strides and make their marks, but Dick waited contentedly for his number to be called, and would have been just as well satisfied if he had been skipped altogether.

Seever was the first of a large field, and when his number was announced he threw off his wrap and walked down the path. He was one of the most awkward men I ever saw, but as honest as he was homely. All his opponents wished him well, and several of them, as they sprawled around on the grass, had a joke or a bit of chaff for him as he left them. I always like to see the first trial of the "running broad." There is the narrow cinder-path, the whitewashed joist, and the soft earth,

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smoothed by repeated rakings ready to receive the prints of the spiked shoes. After that it is tedious until the weeding-out process is completed, and the three best men fight it out for the places.

I could have told within three inches of what Seever would do before he made his jump, for he was extremely steady, and had been at it for four years, and reached his limit. He came down the track awkwardly, but at a good speed, caught the joist firmly with his big foot, rose in the air with a grunt, and landed with a thud. The measurer announced twenty feet one-quarter inch without hesitation, for Seever always jumped high, and kept his heels together. Two or three others tried, and then came Frost, our second man, a little fellow with curly black hair. He was a bit better or worse than Seever, but inclined to be careless, and to-day it cost him dear. He overstepped the joist so far that he wrenched his ankle badly and was forced to retire, limping off to the dressing-room on a couple of the boys' shoulders.

Dick was almost last, and when he was called, he rose slowly, with a yawn, threw the gray wrap over Seever's head, and walked down the path as if he cared not where it led. When he turned, he looked up to the grand stand and gave the little blonde in the blue dress a glance and smile, for which he was most liberally applauded. At first only a few pairs of little gloved hands clapped, but they were persistent; others, who supposed for some reason or other applause was the proper thing at this time, joined in, and Dick received quite an ovation, although he had done nothing and was expected to do nothing.

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I can see him to-day as he looked then. His arm out for his sprint; his bare legs, brown and sinewy, but smooth and graceful as a girl's; his whole figure a model for an artist. He was much surprised at the applause, for he was not used to it, and did not expect it. The color rose in his dark cheeks as he started down the path, quickening speed with every step, until just as his college cheer sounded its first sharp note he caught the joist, and bounded into the air. It was a perfect jump, barring a little lack of determination, but with much more fire than usual. I watched as the measurer pulled out his tape, and was pleased enough when he gave the distance as twenty-one two. I had been thinking all the day of the mother down in the old home, whose heart was so bound up in the success of her boy. I would have given a month's salary to have been able to send her the telegram she hoped for.

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One after another, tall and short, stout and slender, good and bad, had their three trials, and Dick was in the finals by an inch and a half. Poor old Seever was out of it, and Dick was the only string we had left. All of our people were perfectly satisfied at this, and Tom was smiling as a Cheshire cat. I had absolutely no hope that Dick would do better than third, for after his first attempt, although the applause had been louder than ever, he had taken no notice of it, and had apparently lost all interest in the sport. Being accustomed to his surroundings, he went through his performances in a perfunctory fashion, showing a fraction over twenty feet, and then a fraction under. Indeed, he had become his old listless, careless self again.

In the finals he did first nineteen-nine, and then, despite the desperate effort I made to stir him up with sharp words, he fell back to his old maddening distance of nineteen-six and one-half.

The other two competitors, a little fellow with light hair, and a big chap with not much hair of any color, had respectively twenty-two one and one-half, and twenty-one and three-quarters inch to their credit. All seemed over but the shouting when Dick walked slowly down the cinder-path for his last trial. No applause did he get either, except from the gloved hands, for men do not like to see an athlete without determination, no matter how well they may like him in society.

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As he walked down the path, I followed along a little behind him on the turf. I waited until he put his hand out, in exact accordance with instructions, and then I handed him his mother's message. He looked at me a moment with surprise, then took the black-bordered note and broke the seal.

He read it hastily, and the color left his face as if a mortal fear had stricken him. Into his eyes there came first a far-away look, then one of the fiercest determination. He crumpled the note in his left hand, faced around for his sprint, and was off like a flash. I watched the lithe figure and followed it, but Dick had landed long before I reached the joist. He had caught the timber much as he had done on the April morning, and had thrown his knees high as before. I saw him cut the air, and my heart came into my mouth as I thought of a win and a broken record both. But it was not to be. I saw him land in the end of the box, far beyond any other jump; but, to my horror, he had reached too far with his feet, and though he made a desperate effort, he balanced a moment, and then threw himself on his back and side. He picked himself up without a word, and throwing his gray wrap over his shoulder pushed his way through the little crowd of contestants and officials, and strode off toward the dressing-rooms without even waiting for the measurer.

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I had eyes now only for the tape. The footmarks were plain as possible, and on the right and several inches back were the prints of Dick's thigh and elbow in the brown earth. The measurer pulled the tape out carefully, and I saw his finger slide by the twenty-two mark, where they hesitated a moment. He examined the broken ground with eager eyes, and at last his thumb stopped at the three and one-quarter inch. The little fellow who had made the twenty-two one and one-half was close by my side, and I heard him sigh at the sight. He had another trial; but the first place had seemed his already, and now he must fight for it with only one more chance. I was quite sure that Dick's jump was good enough, and so it proved. Richard Spotswood Fairfax was a winner. I was delayed a little, and when I reached the dressing-room I learned that the boy had dressed hurriedly, and driven off in a carriage by himself, without a word for any one. When I reached the hotel, he had taken his departure, waiting neither for congratulations nor farewells.

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The first telegram I sent that night was to Virginia, and the first letter I read, on my return, was

one with a black border.

THE OAKS, FAIRFAX Co., VA.

DEAR SIR: I am in receipt of your telegram. I must thank you for the faithfulness with which you have fulfilled my request. It is not probable that Richard will continue in athletics. I enclose herewith a compensation which is certainly due you. I shall be greatly disappointed if denied the pleasure of its acceptance. Wishing you the success you deserve in your profession, I am,

Sincerely yours,
MARGARET LEE FAIRFAX.

TO MR. WALTER BROWN.

So closed my correspondence with the "châtelaine" of "The Oaks," whom I never saw, but about whom I have often thought. What did she write in that black-sealed, black-bordered note? I have puzzled my brain over it many and many an hour. I think I have guessed the riddle; but true or false, it must be kept a secret still.

Dick himself is certainly not an enigma. He is only the most pronounced case of a description I have met before and since. [Pg 212]

He had ability, but not the inclination nor the will. A temporary anger on that April morning had given him the necessary determination to force his muscles to their extreme exercise of power. His mother's note had furnished a motive which had brought him in a winner. Without incentives, his muscular powers were not exercised, and his performances were ordinary.

Sometimes, as I sit by the fireside, smoking my pipe over old memories, I think of Dick, and wonder what he would have done had he Teddy Atherton's head on his shoulders, or his heart inside his ribs.

Of all my athletic disappointments Dick furnished me with the most disheartening, and among all the surprises of field and track none has equalled the Virginia jumper.



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We are winners. The lobby of the hotel is crowded. Athletes, college men, travellers, and a curious public are well shuffled together. It is the same old pack of cards that I have seen for years, though the faces change. That "know-it-all" by the post is a new man, yet he is telling just how and why we won, like the wiseacres who preceded him, and the others who will follow; for this line of succession never runs out. He is telling how he has foreseen the result for weeks, and can call witnesses to prove his faultless prediction of six months ago. Yes, he can, though we only pulled out by the skin of our teeth, after sitting on the anxious seat all the afternoon; and had not Jim Harding thrown the hammer ten feet farther than ever before, we never should have won at all. But this only makes the "know-it-all's" wisdom more remarkable, and my ignorance as well, for I had thought the team a losing one, though I had, of course, held my tongue.

Bah! Thirty years have not reconciled me to this gentry, with the addled brains and brazen throats. [Pg 214]

Most of the college men are gathered in little groups, around which the crowds ebb and flow in a surging tide. That its strongest current is through the swinging door of the bar-room cannot be denied, nor that it shows signs of the source from which it sprang. There are at least three grains of talk to one of listen, which is the regular dose, though the athletes pull the proportion down. They are, as usual, quietest of all. They have developed other muscles than those of the tongue; and yet even they are a bit talkative to-night, and have an unmistakably festive air about them.

After months of preparation and weeks of strict training, when rigid rules prohibit, and all the pleasant things of life seem labelled "Keep off the grass," there is a maddening pleasure in being free again,—free to taste that favorite dish, palatable but indigestible; free to inhale the fragrance of a good cigar; free to watch the hands of the clock swing into the small hours; free, as Harry Gardner expresses it, "to do as you darn please once more."

For those who have lost there is the necessity of drowning sorrow, and it is certainly the duty of a good winner to give his victory a fitting celebration. There is not as much difference in the two ceremonies as might be imagined. [Pg 215]

Our team has broken training, and some of them are breaking it badly. There are the long summer months before them, with the leisure hours at seashore or mountains, and no more work until the cool winds of autumn begin to blow. Even those of the most regular habits are kicking over the traces, and some of the wilder spirits, that make a trainer's hair gray before its time, to whom the six months' restraint has been a galling yoke, are giving themselves very loose rein. I am sorry to say that this particular team has not a large percentage of either deacons or

clergymen, though Jim Harding afterward took holy orders, became an honor to the cloth, and will some day be a bishop. I occasionally attend his church; and when I see his huge form at the desk, and hear his voice, powerful and earnest, as it echoes to the farthest corner, I wonder if he has forgotten the night when we looked for "Paddy's cousin, the copper," when "every one was a winner."

As I enter the hotel lobby, after dinner, on this evening of the games of 188-, I discover Jim standing near the street entrance with Harry Gardner, and a little knot of college friends and admirers. They are smoking like bad chimneys, and between puffs are giving a green reporter some most surprising bits of information, much to their own enjoyment and the delectation of their friends. The little reporter is taking copious notes, which will create a sensation in the morning, if the sporting editor does not discover them before they get into print. Jim is big and blond, and Harry slender and dark; the former has made a first in the "hammer-throw;" the latter, after winning his trial heat in the "hundred" with ease, got away badly in the finals, and had to content himself with adding a single point to our score.

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Now, Jim and Harry are particular friends of mine; I shall never handle them again, and I want a last word or two of farewell. They have developed under my care from awkward boys to the finished athletes they are to-night. I have seen the firm, round muscles becoming more and more perfect; the heart and lungs grow equal to more and more severe tests, and the increasing courage and self-reliance (without which there can be no success on the cinder-path) which will help them through many a struggle with the world they are about to enter. It is one of the sad parts of a trainer's life that he must lose such friends.

I force my way through the crowd, getting numberless nods and greetings of a warmer nature, for I am a well-known man in such a gathering. I strike the strong current flowing to and from the bar; but a little patience, and a liberal use of the elbow, brings me to the boys at last. I give them each a hand, and we exchange a word or two of congratulation. Harry is, I see, a bit sore at his misfortune, for he had been picked as a sure winner. I give him a word of praise for his gallant effort to make up a three-yard loss at the start. There are many sprinters who would not have tried at all, let alone have pulled off the much-needed point. I tell Harding, with assumed resentment, that he has been sogering all the time, abusing my confidence by playing the sleeper, and that he has always been good for the extra ten feet.

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At this Jim gives one of his basso profundo laughs, and in answer to my question as to what mischief he is plotting, replies that Harry and himself are waiting for Paddy, who has gone with Tom Furness for a little something "to kape the night out," and that they have promised the Irishman to help him look up his cousin "Dinny Sullivan, a copper."

I find that all they know about this cousin is that he is a policeman, on duty somewhere in the Bowery district. The boys admit the scent is not strong, but anticipate good sport in the hunt, whether they bag the game or not. There is always fun with Paddy, for though he has become a mighty knowing man on cinder-path and track, and is not as green as when he tackled the "ghostly hurdler," he is a delicious bit still.

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He appears a moment after, the "Knight of the Rake and Roller," accompanied by Tom; and judging from the aroma that clings to them, the necessary precautions have been taken against the baleful influences of the night air.

Tom is as happy and sanguine as ever, shakes me by the hand as if my arm was a pump-handle in midsummer, and immediately protests that not a step will he take out of the house unless I go with him.

At this they all insist that the party will be incomplete without me. I must go, or I shall break up the party and spoil sport. After considerable resistance, which I admit now was assumed, I consented at last. The truth was that, while I had not trained as had the boys, I had given many months of care and anxiety to them, and really wanted a bit of a fling myself. I knew very well what the little walk would lead up to, but reasoned that the boys were bound to get into trouble, and that it would be a charity to look after them. In fact, I played the hypocrite in a way for which I should have been ashamed.

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Although Tom and the boys gave unmistakable signs of "having dined," and Paddy of his heroic remedies against the night, we all meander to the bar for a last measure of precaution, light fresh cigars, and sally forth.

The clocks are striking eight as the door swings behind us, the stars are beginning to show, and the street lights to shine. The air is mild, and the pavements seem like a country road after the awful crowd of the lobby. The rattle of the pavements is silence compared with the rattle of tongues which we have left behind us.

We pile into a carriage which Paddy selects from a number drawn up to the curb,—because the driver is a Connemara man. We are not particularly comfortable with three on one seat, and five pairs of long legs interlaced; but our ride is enlivened by Paddy's conversation, no less brilliant than fluent, which is a magnificent compliment. Occasionally Tom succeeds in getting in a word, but the rest of us are out of it. He is about to give us some reminiscences of "Dinny's" boyhood when the carriage stops, much to our surprise, for we do not realize the lapse of time.

We alight before a corner drug-store, and Paddy calls the "Connemara man" an "Irish thief" when Tom pays him an exorbitant charge. He is easily placated, however, and goes into the store to inquire after Dinny, while we wait outside. We look through the window, between the red bottle on the right and the blue bottle on the left, and see him go up to the clerk at the soda fountain.

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The latter, a tall, pale-faced youth, answers shortly, and points to a big directory on a little shelf in the corner. Paddy walks over, upsetting a rack of sponges on the way, opens the directory doubtfully, turns over its leaves, runs his finger down a page or two, looks more and more puzzled, and at last beckons us in.

We enter, and find him looking blankly at an almost unending list of Dennis Sullivans, engaged in many occupations, and several of them "on the force." After a careful examination, befitting the seriousness of the occasion, we pronounce the task hopeless, and file out again. Our departure is apparently greatly to the relief of the pale young man, for we had laughed until the bottles rattled when Paddy described his cousin as a "big chunk av a man, wid a taste for gin, an' a bad habit av snorin'."

We halt in the lee of the mortar and pestle, while the crowd surges past, and hold a council of war. Harding suggests that our best plan is to form a rush line, letting none pass until they tell all they know about "Dennis Sullivan, the copper." This proposition is hailed with delight by all but Tom and me, and though we are in the minority our opposition succeeds. To spread a drag-net across a Bowery sidewalk I believe to be a decidedly hazardous proceeding, and likely to result in the catching of fish too big to land. We finally form, with Paddy ahead, then Jim and Harry, Tom and myself bringing up the rear.

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We had not taken a dozen steps before Paddy halts a tough-looking chap with "Do yes know me cousin, Dinny Sullivan?" The prisoner wears a very short sack-coat, plaid trowsers, and a tall silk hat. He has a "mouse" under one eye, and the other, though lacking the honorable decoration of its companion, is red and angry. His mustache is closely clipped and dyed a deathly black; the cigar in the extreme corner of his mouth is tilted at an acute angle. He blows a cloud of smoke over Paddy's shoulder, and looks us all over suspiciously, each in turn.

Now, we are rather a formidable party: Paddy and Jim as big as houses, Tom tall and angular, myself a rugged specimen, and Harry, though not adding much to our physical strength, evidently spoiling for trouble. As a rule, the little men are the aggressors, and most dangerous of all if they have a crowd with them.

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Paddy's first captive, in deference to our superior force, decides to act the civil, and asks gruffly, "What's his biz?"

"He's a cop," answered Paddy, "a big chunk av a man, wid a scar over the lift eye, under the hair." Identifying a man by a concealed scar is too much for Tom, who breaks into a hearty laugh, and the prisoner himself gives a half smile, when after denying all knowledge of "Dinny" he is allowed to pass on.

We next halt a couple of young fellows, evidently gentlemen, out on a lark. They recognize in Paddy a character worth cultivating, and keep him talking several minutes, asking fool questions; but they finally admit that "me cousin Dinny Sullivan" is not on their list of acquaintances.

We spent some time in this way, Paddy doing picket duty, the main army close up in support. After questioning a dozen or more we make up our minds that Dinny is certainly not as well known on the Bowery as John L. or Tony Pastor, and that the success of our mission is doubtful. We had enjoyed the dialogues immensely, particularly that with a good-natured German. The latter understood hardly a word of English, but spoke his own language like a cuckoo clock. Paddy, of course, knew not a single word he said, but stuck to him for several minutes, giving up English at last, and treating us to the classic accents of old Ireland.

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Nearly all we met had taken the matter good-naturedly, but one or two did not see the joke, and turned ugly. One big fellow talked fight, but the proposition was received by Paddy with such extreme joy, and preparations were made with such alacrity, that he thought better of the plan and withdrew his challenge. This was greatly to Paddy's disappointment, and Harry's as well, the latter offering to take the Irishman's place, though he would have been fifty pounds short weight.

We had been stopping frequently for Paddy to take further precautions to "kape the night out," and the rest of us doctored with the same medicine in smaller doses.

Paddy was now perfectly happy, and he had his reasons. The "byes" had won; he was drinking, under Tom's most learned and experienced tuition, a different new drink every time, and in his heart of hearts was sure of a fight before the sun rose.

What more could an Irishman ask; and a Connemara Irishman at that? His face was growing redder and more smiling every minute, and his feet, although they performed their duties after a fashion, would certainly not have been equal to the "crack in the floor test," as on the night when he encountered the "ghostly hurdler."

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But although Pat would have been contented to continue in the same blissful state until the crack of doom, the rest of us began to tire of the quest, and to look around in search of other things beside "Dinny, the copper." The streets were crowded, the stores open, the bar-rooms doing a rushing business, and the places of amusement in full blast.

Suddenly Jim stopped before the bulletin board of a little variety theatre, and began to examine it critically. There was a long list of names in black letters,—singers, dancers, acrobats, boxers, and I know not what else; but Jim's eyes were fixed with great seriousness at the tall red letters at the bottom. They declared, in extremely mixed metaphor, "A Galaxy of Stars, and Every One a Winner."

"I'm going in," said Jim, with much gravity, throwing his cigar away.

"How about Paddy's cousin, the copper?" asked Harry.

"He's as likely here as anywhere," Jim answered: "beside, it says that 'every one's a winner,' and that's the only kind for us to-night." [Pg 225]

We were all of us quite ready for a change, so we stepped into the little lobby, Paddy first going up to the ticket office to ask, "Is me cousin, Dinny Sullivan, the copper, inside?"

The ticket-seller, a big, fat fellow, with weak eyes and a Roman nose, thought Paddy was trying to jolly him, and answered "No," quite tartly. Paddy, of course, resented the incivility, and declared himself to be a gentleman, and he cared not who knew it. He further ventured to doubt whether the man behind the window was in the same class with himself, and, gradually abandoning the reproachful accents with which he had begun, became first unparliamentary, and then abusive.

The ticket-seller stood it for a while, and then told Paddy to pass along, that "Dinny Sullivan" was not inside, but that they had two other policemen who were no relation of Pat's, but would take care of him just the same.

This last threat raised Paddy's anger to the boiling point, so that he first tried unsuccessfully to enter through the locked door, and then reaching his huge fist through the little open place in the window, shook it as near the Roman nose as the length of his arm would permit. [Pg 226]

We finally persuaded him to subside, and Harry took his place with a roll of bills to purchase the tickets. He had hardly begun to speak, however, before Harding caught him, and lifted him, despite his struggles, on to the shoulder of a big statue of Terpsichore, in the corner, reminding him, gently but firmly, that the invitation was his, and he must be permitted to pay the bills. He obtained five seats in the front row of the orchestra, and parted therefor with two dollars and fifty cents.

We were inspected a trifle suspiciously by the door-keeper, but filed in, and found the little theatre filled with a numerous and enthusiastic audience. The gallery was packed, the cheap seats on the rear of the floor well taken, and only a few of the more expensive ones in the front of the house unoccupied. The air was hot, and full enough of the fumes of alcohol to burn. Before we had adjusted our lungs to the new conditions, a little fellow in a dirty zouave suit took the checks from Jim, and ushered us down the centre aisle to our seats in the front row. We made considerable noise, for the steps were of uneven depths, and at unequal distances, and Paddy stumbled all over himself at every opportunity. [Pg 227]

Harry went in first, followed by Pat, Tom, myself, and Jim, in the order named. We were obliged to squeeze by an old lady and her daughter who occupied the end seats, and the former, sitting next to Jim, resented the necessary crowding by sundry sniffs and looks of disgust. Her displeasure was so evident that Jim felt called upon to apologize, which he did in his most grandisonian manner, and in tones not less loud than those of the singer on the stage, "I beg your pardon, madam; I assure you it was unintentional; I have tender feet myself, and can sympathize with you."

At this there was a burst of applause and laughter. I looked around and could see a number of college men scattered through the orchestra, evidently ready to encourage any exploit to which such "dare-devils" as Jim and Harry might treat them.

There were a few of the gentler sex in the audience, but the great majority were men, the flotsam and jetsam of the Bowery. Some of these joined in the laughter at Jim's elaborate apology, and others scowled their resentment at the disturbance. From the abode of the gallery gods (filled mostly with boys, big and little) came a shrill "Put 'em out!" and a big wad of paper composed of an entire "World," and thrown by a skilful hand, which landed on the top of Jim's head. [Pg 228]

But Jim, apparently not at all noticing the attention which he was attracting, unfolded his play-bill, and began to study it with the air of a connoisseur, or a provincial manager in search of talent. The document was headed with "BILLY JAYNE'S REFINED VAUDEVILLE CO.," and near the bottom of the first page was bracketed, "Robert Loring, Basso Profundo, Nautical Songs, Without a Rival."

It was evidently Robert who was "doing his turn" when we entered, for his song told of "wild waves, brave ships, oak timbers, fearful storms, wrecks, and watery graves," in tones deep enough to make the heart quake. He ended, just as we were well settled in our seats, with a row of descending notes, the last several feet below the lowest brick of the cellar, and bowed himself off the stage, amid a burst of applause, which was followed by another demonstration, well mingled with laughter, when Jim remarked very audibly to the old lady by his side, "I really wonder how he does it," and "Shouldn't you think it would hurt him?"

Loring had already occupied the full time for "his turn" (we discovered later that the performer came out and filled up his ten minutes just the same, whether applauded and encored, or greeted with stony silence), so, notwithstanding vigorous clapping, assisted by the more demonstrative boot-heel, Robert only made his bow from the wings, and departed. [Pg 229]

As he disappeared on one side, a diminutive little darky hurried on from the other, and changed the cards, announcing as the next star, "Sam Walker." An examination of the play-bill rewarded us also with the information that Sam was the "World's Champion Clog Dancer, Lancashire Style." Two attendants in ragged costumes brought out a big square of white marble, which they deposited with considerable labor on one side of the stage, and after a little delay, to make the audience impatient, the distinguished Walker appeared, clad in well-chalked white tights, and with the champion's belt buckled round his waist. It was at least six inches wide, and so heavy with gold, silver, and precious stones that the redoubtable Sam was obliged to remove it before he could dance at all. Sam's brother Alfred, in a rusty dress suit, took his seat in a chair on the

other side of the stage, and with an enormous accordeon furnished the music for the champion, who treated us to a continuation of festive taps, stopping with wonderful precision whenever the music broke off, even if in the middle of a note.

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Next came "Annette Toineau," the "Queen of French Song, Fresh from Her Parisian Triumphs;" and the big man at the piano began to execute a lively tune, which set all the feet in the house in motion, until Annette herself appeared. This she did with a nod, a wink, and a kick that won instant applause, even before she opened her mouth to sing. An enthusiastic admirer in the gallery called out, "You're all right, Liz, old girl," from which remark, and the accent (much more Celtic than French) with which she afterward treated us, I argued that Annette was but a stage name, and the "Parisian Triumphs" probably a fiction of the manager. Annette was a very pretty little girl, with a trim figure in abbreviated skirts, and she sang rather naughty songs in a manner that made them worse than they were written.

I could hear Jim, after she was through, remark to the old lady by his side, that such songs were likely to lead to the perversion of youth, and should not be sung except to those who had reached the age of discretion; by which I suppose he meant himself and the old lady, though she was old enough to be his grandmother. Jim's censorious remarks were, however, more than offset by Harry, who, at the other end of our line, applauded so vociferously that Annette rewarded him with a direct and beaming smile when she made her last bow.

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Then followed "Leslie and Manning, Knock-about Grotesques," "Cora, the Queen of the Slack Wire," and "Sam Berne, the Dutch Monarch;" the last of whom first convulsed us by asking Tom, in a sepulchral whisper, to "Please wake your friend," pointing to Paddy, who was indeed asleep; and then had a very funny dialogue with the piano-pounder, in which they both pretended to get in a towering passion over the question as to whether the singing or the accompaniment was the worse.

The delights of the play-bill were now well-nigh exhausted, the next to the last on the list being "Alice Wentworth, America's Most Dashing Soubrette." She appeared to the tune of some gay waltz notes from the long-suffering piano. Alice was a slender girl, with brown hair and large, dark eyes. I doubt she could ever have been "dashing," though pretty she certainly had been. There were also signs that "once she had seen better days," as the old song goes. But now, despite the assistance of paint and padding, it was evident that sickness or dissipation had robbed her of most of the attractions she had once possessed. Her face was too thin for the bright color on her cheeks, her steps were too listless for the generously filled stockings, and she coughed several times before she began her song. It was a jolly little thing, sung in good time and tune, and with those touches which indicate unmistakably the rudiments, at least, of a musical education. The song was well received, but at the end of the verse she had a dance, which called for considerable exertion, and was very trying for her. She got through the first two verses all right, but when she started the third her strength was gone; she broke down, and gasped for breath. The piano continued for a few notes, then stopped, and there was a dead silence. It was a pitiful sight enough: the poor girl trying to get strength enough to continue, coughing and gasping painfully; but some one in the orchestra back of us hissed, there was a cry from the gallery of "Take her off," and then a chorus of yells and cat-calls. It was the same old wolf instinct which makes the pack tear to pieces the wounded straggler,—the wolf instinct in some way transmitted to man.

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I was indignant enough, and looked around at the audience after the chap that made the first hiss, but should probably have done nothing had not Tom Furness, who has the biggest heart in the world, made an effort to stem the tide. He jumped on his feet, rising to his full height, and began to applaud with all his might. Of course we all joined in, Paddy's big feet and hands making a prodigious noise; and the better nature of the audience being given a lead, the hisses were drowned by a great storm of applause that fairly shook the old theatre.

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Poor Alice succeeded in getting enough breath to finish her song, and, dancing no more, gave as an encore "Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonny Doon," in a way that reached the hearts of the toughest in the house. It is wonderful how such an audience is affected by the pathetic. An allusion to an "old mother," an "old home," or suffering from sin and wrong will catch them quicker than the most doubtful verse.

The last word of the old Scotch song ended, Alice made her bow amid applause as hearty if not as noisy as when we drowned the hissing, and I hope the poor girl was able to keep her place, or, better still, went back to the old home, among the New Hampshire hills, perhaps, or under the shadow of the Maine pines.

There was now a great bustle on the stage, a rush of "supes," and a clamor of orders. The scenery was pushed back and the drop-scenes hoisted out of the way. Padded posts were set in the floor, ropes strung and pulled taut, making a very satisfactory ring, and the chairs placed in the corners. By the demonstration on the stage and the eagerness of the audience, it was evident that we had now come to the great attraction of the evening. The play-bill read "George Johnson, Heavy-Weight Boxer, Will Knock Out Three Opponents in Three Rounds Each, or Forfeit \$50 to the Man Who Stays."

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Now, although I was fairly well informed concerning the boxing world, I was unable to remember "George Johnson's" name, and wondered why he had not been taken on by some of the well-known men who intruded themselves into the papers so frequently. The play-bill said clearly that he had challenged the world, and Tom suggested that Johnson was probably too good for them to take him on, or perhaps he had not a diligent backer who could wield a vigorous pen. Harry, who stripped at one hundred and thirty, declared his willingness to put on the gloves with Mr.

Johnson if they would let him stand on a chair. Paddy, to whom the performance had become a dreadful bore, endured only through respect for the high society in which he was travelling, had now become wide awake, and at Harry's remark pricked up his ears and asked with much interest if they gave any one in the audience a chance to put on the gloves. Jim told him that there were probably three "stiffs" already engaged to go through the motions of a knock-out, and Paddy remarked that it was a pity, and subsided for the time.

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When everything was arranged, the pails of water, sponges, and towels handy, and the gloves thrown into the middle of the ring, the manager introduced Mr. Richard Foley as the referee of the bouts, ending his remarks with some very florid compliments to Mr. Foley's well-known fairness in such matters. What was our surprise to discover in the gentlemanly referee the identical man we had first stopped on the street to inquire for "Dinny Sullivan, the copper." He wore the same short coat and plaid trousers, but had discarded the tall hat and the cigar, without which he looked lonely. The mouse under his eye had also disappeared, the artist having succeeded in disguising its mournful hue by a skilful application of flesh paint.

After the enthusiasm which greeted his appearance had a little subsided, Mr. Foley raised his hand in a Napoleonic fashion to command silence, stepped to the front of the stage, and hanging on the ropes in an attitude of extreme ease and freedom from restraint, made the usual little speech without which a boxing contest would seem out of joint. He declared the bout to be one of "a friendly nature" for "scientific points only," and ended with the warning that any disturbance from the audience would stop the contest immediately.

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At the close of his remarks appeared the celebrated George Johnson, a tall mulatto, who took his seat in the chair facing the audience, followed by his handlers. He was stripped to the waist, and wore a blue sash, white trunks, and tan shoes. He was a powerful fellow, well trained, and looked like a bronze statue when he rose, bowing and smiling at a little group of colored friends who called to him from the front of the gallery.

A moment later "Jack Costigan, the Jersey blacksmith," made his début, and was greeted with even more enthusiasm than Johnson, probably because of the predominating nationality of the audience, for he was certainly not a beauty, or even a well-built man. Indeed, he was a mighty tough-looking customer, his black hair clipped close enough to reveal a number of white scars, his face pockmarked, his shoulders stooping, and he was at least ten pounds lighter than Johnson, with much less height and reach. He looked sheepish enough to prepare us for the "lie down" that was to follow, and seemed pleased that his chair gave him the opportunity to turn his back to the spectators.

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After the very labored introductions by Mr. Foley, in which a slight allusion was made to their previous records, the men took their corners, and at the call of "time" they shook hands and got to business. Now, I shall have hardly a word to say concerning this bout, for there was a much more stirring one to follow. It was evident from the beginning, although Johnson was the better man, and could have won anyway, that Costigan was not sent to do his best. He was an old war-horse, performed his part well, kept up the mill until the middle of the third round, and then at a comparatively light blow went down. He pretended to make a desperate effort to rise while the ten seconds were counted, then picked himself up, and Johnson was declared the winner.

After Costigan disappeared there was a long wait, the house growing more and more impatient. At last the manager appeared and announced his great regret that the two other boxers had disappointed him. He announced that one of them had a broken arm, and read a physician's certificate to that effect. The other, as far as we could learn, was suffering from a broken heart; that is, he had, after looking the redoubtable Johnson over, declined to face him for any consideration.

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The manager, again expressing his sorrow at the unavoidable disappointment, handed our friend, Mr. Foley, a fifty-dollar bill, making a great splurge about it, and asked if there were not some gentlemen in the house who would take the places of the delinquents.

At this there was a dead silence, except the noise made by Paddy and Harry whispering together, but what they said I did not understand. Again the manager repeated the request, evidently not expecting its acceptance, and ended with a challenge reflecting delicately upon the courage of his audience.

He had hardly spoken the words when suddenly, to my surprise and dismay, Paddy rose slowly to his feet, and clearing his throat said, in husky tones, "Faith, thin, 'tis a pity it is not to hev the foight, and lackin' a better I'll give him a bit av a go meself."

There had been many murmurs of disappointment when it looked as if there would be but one bout, instead of three as advertised, and at Paddy's speech there was deafening applause. I did my best to dissuade him, as did Tom Furness as well; but Jim took up the plan with enthusiasm, and despite our protests the three "devil-may-cares" crowded along the aisle, and disappeared through a little door under the gallery, which led to the stage. A few moments later they filed on, all three with their coats off, stepped through the ropes, and Paddy took his seat in the chair facing Johnson, his red face wreathed in smiles, and his sleeves rolled up to the elbows, Jim and Harry going to work in a very business-like manner to prepare for the contest.

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Now, all this was great fun for the audience, the manager, and even Johnson himself, who grinned back at Paddy, showing a long row of white teeth. It took no expert to see that the Irishman was dead easy, and there were the anticipated windmill swings, and abortive efforts to hit on his part, and a scientific exhibition from Johnson, with a knock-out to follow.

Tom and I expected nothing better, unless Johnson should be careless enough to let Paddy hit him once, in which case he might be treated to a surprise party, for Pat had an arm like a gorilla, and a fist as big as a small ham. Indeed, when Jim tried to push the gloves on which Costigan had discarded, after his lie down, he found it a job requiring the exercise of patience and considerable strength as well.

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At last Paddy was all right, Harry fanning him with the towel, Jim kneeling behind him, whispering sage advice into his ear, to which Paddy nodded his head with a confident grin. We were close enough to hear his husky, "'Tis right you are," and "Sure that wud phase 'im." The boys looked striking enough on the stage, with their refined faces, fashionable clothes, and spotless linen. Not one in the building but knew they were gentlemen, and nearly all wished them success with their man. Paddy himself had caught the crowd also, the gallery becoming his at first sight of his wide smile and the sound of his "illigant brogue."

Mr. Foley called "time," and at the word Harry gave a last flap, Jim a final word of advice, and as Paddy rose to his feet they pulled the chair through the ropes, and left their man in the ring, to do his "*devoir*" as best he might.

He certainly was not anxious, nor did he lack confidence in himself. He advanced cheerfully, shook his opponent by the hand, and got in position. Now, where Paddy learned to "shape himself" I never heard, but I doubt if there is anything like it in the long history of "Fistiana." I have seen many queer things in old sporting prints, where the fancy of the artist, I am sure, has maligned the science of good men with their "fives," but nothing like Paddy's pose has ever appeared to me before or since. His left foot was well forward, his left arm high, as if he feared the rap of a "shillalah" instead of the straight blow of a fist. His right hand he held low behind him, ready to hit, as if he held a flail or a "bit av a scythe," and he swung his fist round and round in a little circle. Even Tom and I could not refrain from laughter, the crowd yelled themselves hoarse, and Johnson could hardly restrain himself.

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The latter shaped beautifully. After his first surprise was over he grew serious, stepped in, led lightly, landing on Pat's nose, and when Paddy, after a belated duck, swung a terrific blow at his opponent, he found him well out of reach. It was just as I expected: Johnson could hit Paddy when and where he pleased. He played with him as a cat would with a mouse. He made a punching-bag of him, hit and got away. He ducked, he countered, he dodged, he swung on Pat's jaw. He side-stepped, and tapped him lightly; he uppercut him when he made a bull rush, so that his head lifted as if on a hinge. He hooked him with right and left, and played the "devil's tattoo" all over his body, ending with a rib-roaster that made even Paddy sigh. In short, when Patrick O'Malley, our "Knight of the Rake and Roller," took his seat at the end of the first round his smile was gone, and he looked like a man in a trance.

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Johnson had hit hard enough to have put most men to sleep, but on Paddy's tough anatomy had made no serious impression, after all. Pat's right eye was in a fair way to close, and his face looked puffy and his neck sore, but he was as strong as ever, and his courage as good, though he probably would have been willing to admit that over the picnic aspect of the occasion there had come a cloud. Harry and Jim got at work at him with sponge and towel the minute he took his seat. A very artistic exhibition they gave, and no doubt Jim's advice which he whispered was very good, but there was nothing before Paddy but a "knock-out" unless the unexpected happened.

Johnson was without a mark, and I question whether he had been hit at all. He took his drink, smiled up at his handlers as they worked the cool sponge over his hot chest and arms, and leaned back on the ropes with an air of extreme contentment.

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When the bell rang for the second round Paddy came up in good condition, but with a somewhat dubious expression on his countenance, and he kept his left a little lower, ready to stop some of the straight punches he had accepted so generously in the first round. He did not swing quite as wildly as before, and although hit harder, the blows did not land quite as often. In the last half-minute, however, Johnson cut loose, and Paddy's broad face and thick neck were visited in a savage manner. The bell barely saved him, for the poor fellow was fairly smothered with blows, and yet he stood up to his punishment without flinching, and fought back as best he could.

Tom had lost patience when he saw Paddy staggering like a bullock under an axe, and though I told him we could do nothing to help, he insisted we should at least be with the rest of the party. So the minute the bell rang for the end of the round, we crowded along the seats, and hurrying through the door, I was just in time to reach Paddy's corner before he started in for the third and last round. Now, of all men on earth Paddy believed in me; Jim and Harry were all right, and doing all possible for him, but when he felt my hand on his arm, and heard my whisper in his ears, his heart, almost gone, came back to him. He turned his swollen face up to me, and with a new light in his eyes he said, "Tell me what I'll do, Misther Brown; tell me, darlin', an' I'll lick the nager yet."

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There was something wonderfully pathetic in his blind confidence, and I never cared so much for the big-hearted Irishman as I did that minute. To tell the truth, I had been half willing to see him knocked out after his foolish persistence against my advice. Then again I knew it was not at all a serious matter to one with his strength and vitality, and a dash of cold water would leave him no worse memories than a sore head and a few bruises. But after his appeal I felt very different. I racked my brain, but though I had been studying his opponent from the beginning, trying to find his weak point, he was so very shifty on his feet, and Paddy was so deathly slow, I could think of nothing. Pat had been swinging at his opponent's head, from the very start, the same old blow, landing never. He had not tried for the body once, and I made up my mind just before the bell rang, and whispered, "Never mind his top-knot, Paddy; wait until he leads, then step in, and hit

him in the ribs; and hit him hard."

The third round started much like the others, but now on Paddy's face was not the foolish smile of the first, nor the dubious look of the second. "Misther Brown" had told him what to do, he was supremely confident in my wisdom, and had no doubt of the result. His mouth was firm and his eyes clear as he faced his opponent and waited for his opportunity.

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I could see that Johnson did not half like the change. He was altered too, his face had grown cruel, his eyes fierce, and he came in like a tiger crouching for a spring. The joke was all gone out of the game now; he must knock Paddy out in the next three minutes or the fifty dollars would be forfeited. Nothing but a blow in the right spot would be of any use, and it must have the full swing of the body behind it. I could see plainly by his high guard that he feared nothing from Paddy but a swing on the head, and I doubt if he thought of much else beside how he could land on the point of Paddy's jaw just the right blow. As I knelt between Jim and Harry, peering through the ropes, I made up my mind that Paddy had good enough advice if he knew how to use it.

As usual, Johnson stepped in, leading with his left a light tap, meant only to open up Paddy's guard, so he could swing on him. As usual, he landed on Paddy's nose, the blood starting freely; but instead of answering with a blind swing as before, this time Paddy took the blow coming on; indeed, he started in before he was hit, and the blow did not stop him at all. The result was, he found himself, for the first time, almost, since he had put his hands up, at a good striking distance. With a fierce grunt he smashed his huge fist full on the mark where the ribs branch, just above the belt. It was a terrible blow, unexpected, given with all the good intentions that a sense of debt could foster, and with the impetus of their two weights, for Johnson was coming in himself.

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It doubled his antagonist up like a frog, and Paddy was kind enough to undouble him with a straight push in the face that straightened him up again. Harry could not refrain from calling, "Now's your time, Pat!" for which he was very properly warned by the referee; but Paddy really did not hear him, and needed no advice. Science was forgotten, and in the mix-up that followed, Paddy showed a ready hand, cultivated by many a boyish fight and youthful set-to. Johnson was now not so much interested in putting Paddy out, as in saving himself; he was fighting blindly, hugging and clinching when he could; keeping away as much as possible, and growing more and more groggy under the shower of blows that were rained on him. Time was nearly up when, after a break away, Paddy stepped back, gathered himself, rushed in, and swung his huge right hand with all the strength of his powerful body. It was a half hook, and it landed on Mr. Johnson's jaw, and he went down like a felled tree, falling with stiff knees, and striking nothing until his face reached the floor with a thud. He made no effort to rise, and Paddy was so wild that, had I not called to him, I think he would have gone into Johnson's corner for a fresh antagonist among his handlers. Johnson lay on the floor while the ten seconds were ticked off, and then Mr. Foley stepped to the footlights, and, announcing that Mr. O'Malley had won the bout, handed him the fifty-dollar bill.

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Paddy hesitated a moment, for he had not thought once of the money; then he drew from his hip pocket an old-fashioned leather folding wallet, much worn and discolored, and with a chuckle put the big bill safely away. The audience had risen as one man to cheer Paddy when the decision was given, and now the tumult broke out again, and he was forced to bow his acknowledgments from over the footlights. Even this was not enough, and he finally cleared his throat, and made a short speech, of which I could distinguish nothing but the last words, as he gave a comprehensive sweep of his gloved hand, including our whole company, and yelled, "An' ivery wan a winner." He would have spoken longer had not the manager, with rare presence of mind, dropped the curtain in front of him. Johnson had come to himself very quickly with the assistance of his handlers, and now stepped up to Paddy with very honest congratulations, and the contestants shook hands with mutual respect and no ill will.

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We were delayed a few minutes by our inability to get the boxing-glove off of Paddy's big right hand; the left he had removed himself on receipt of the bill. We finally cut it off him, formed in line of march, and threading our way through the wings, joined the last stragglers of the audience as they filed out. I tried hard to subdue the spirits of my companions, but with little success. Jim and Harry were greatly elated, and Tom (who of all men enjoys winning) was now as bad as the others, and deserting me, left the conservative vote in a very decided minority.

There was certainly nothing lacking in the perfect success of the evening but the fact that "Dinny, the copper," the great object of our search, had evaded us. I voted to give him up and go back to the hotel; the others hesitated, but Tom, who never despairs,—Tom still declared that Dinny would yet appear. Tom is a man who has faith that a ball team will win with the score five to one against in the ninth inning, two out, and a weak hitter at the bat.

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Jim and Harry were too much elated by their success with Paddy in the "squared circle" to ask for much else. In fact, they were slightly hilarious. The intoxication of victory, on top of their efforts to "kape the night out," was a bit too much for them. In passing along they tipped over a table by the door, sending a shower of play-bills on the floor, and when a stout fellow remonstrated, Jim promptly "crowned" his derby hat with a blow that sent it down to his chin.

In the lobby the big wooden statue of Terpsichore, standing in scant attire, with one foot lifted for the dance, caught Harry's eye. He whispered to Jim and Paddy, and before I could interfere, they had torn her from her fastenings, and "stood the old girl on her head." As the muse was being balanced in this undignified position in the corner, there suddenly arose a cry of "Police!" "Police!" in high-pitched and nasal tones from the ticket office. It was Paddy's "ancient enemy"

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who had discovered us, with his face close to the aperture, secure in the protection of the window. He called lustily, until a huge fist swung through the hole, and landed on the Roman nose with a dull, sickening thud. Silence followed Paddy's skilful blow, but the mischief was done, for there suddenly appeared through the door behind us a knock-kneed bobby, club in hand. Tom called "Ware the cop!" and by giving the promptest kind of leg bail they just escaped him, bolting out the door, and across the Bowery, the crooked-legged copper close after.

Harry, who was leading, swung down a dimly lighted alley, Jim and Paddy following in order. The policeman, who apparently had little confidence in his ability to catch such nimble-footed gentry, stopped at the corner, and commenced a devil's tattoo with his night club on the pavement as a signal for some compatriot to head off the fugitives. Tom and I, who were close up, dashed by him without a word, resolved to stick to our friends, no matter what the cost. Tom was chuckling with delight, gave me a look over his shoulder, and set a killing pace, with the laudable ambition of running me off my feet, as well as distancing our pursuers. Chasing and being chased is one of the primitive pleasures of man, and I doubt if we ever quite outgrow it. We cut through the darkness, with the cool night air in our faces, sprinting over the slippery cobble-stones of the pavement as if in the finals of a "hundred." There was a mad pleasure in it all, and the listening for sounds of pursuit and the looking sharply ahead for threatening danger added a double zest. It reminded me of a night in old Lancashire, when with some schoolmates I had raided a farmer's orchard, and with the spoils under our jackets we had led him a cross-country run of a couple of miles, knowing that a good thrashing was close behind as the punishment for a stumble or a temporary shortness of breath.

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We were gaining on the three dark forms ahead, for we could see them more and more plainly as they bobbed against the lights at the end of the street. Occasionally some one would yell at us from a window or doorway, but the pounding of the knock-kneed bobby was growing more and more faint, and we heard no footsteps at all behind us. We had almost reached Paddy, whose boxing efforts had told on his endurance, and I was just about to call to Jim and Harry, when suddenly there emerged from the darkness a herculean figure in brass buttons.

It floated into the middle of the alley, like the ghost of Hamlet's father, silent, huge, portentous. A long arm reached for Harry as he dodged to one side of the alley, and gathered the little fellow in, while Jim slid by on the other side. Paddy sprang to Harry's assistance, and got a blow with the flat of the hand that sent him in a heap on the pavement. Jim was about to mix in the fracas, but Tom and I, who knew better than to assail the majesty of the law, caught and held him. For a moment neither of us spoke, watching Harry's futile struggles. He was being held firmly, but gently, like a fractious child, and a voice of a richness that cast Paddy's brogue quite in the shade said soothingly, "Arrah there, be aisy. It's hurtin' yesel' ye are. Be aisy, or I'll pull ye in."

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I was glad to hear the figure speak, for the silence was quite uncanny. Tom advanced in that conciliatory way of his when he feels that he has a delicate task before him, and was about to make his little appeal, with one hand on the roll of bills in his pocket, when Paddy, who had sat up at the sound of the voice, and was looking fixedly at Harry's captor, gave a howl of mingled surprise and joy, and exclaimed, "Begorry, Dinny, ye Connemara divil, let the lad go, or I'll break yer face."

At these words Harry stopped his struggles and Jim abandoned his efforts to break away from me. Tom stood with his mouth wide open, uncertain what to do, and I waited as if I was watching a play, and the dramatic climax was about to be sprung on me.

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Paddy rose slowly and unsteadily to his feet; and the big policeman took him by the collar with his unoccupied hand, and led him to the light of a little window, where he studied his face a moment in silence. Gradually over the big copper's face there spread a grin of recognition, his brown mustache drawing up at the corners, despite his efforts to look severe.

"Sure, 'tis yesilf, Patrick, ye blaguard," he said at last, shaking his head; "but frind or no frind, divil a wan o' me cares, if wrong ye've done."

"It's only a bit av a lark, an' no harm at all, at all," answered Paddy; and then he told the story of the evening, the search, the boxing contest, and the mischief in the lobby, making as little as possible of the latter, and expatiating at length on our efforts to find "Dinny, the copper," with our extreme pleasure at final success. He ended by introducing us all with much pride and satisfaction.

Dinny listened at first with suspicion, afterward with a flash in his blue eyes as Paddy described his victory over Johnson, and finally with a slow smile, expanding into a grin, as the adventure in the lobby was described.

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When Paddy finished, the "arm-of-the-law" turned without a word, letting Harry and Paddy go free again, tapped on the little window, through whose brown curtain enough light had streamed to make recognition possible, and waited in silence until there came a sound of moving bolts. He then pushed a door open, led us through a dark entry, and into a little back room, where was a long table, plenty of chairs, and a kettle singing on the stove in the corner. I have a suspicion that it was from this very same snug retreat that Dinny emerged when the sound of the rattling night club disturbed him. I learned that the little room was the sanctum sanctorum of the widow Rafferty, whose bar-room in front was too public to suit the refined taste of Mr. Dennis Sullivan, and was also perhaps more exposed to the gaze of an inquisitive inspector.

Dinny went to a corner cupboard, with the air of a man who knew the way, took from it a brown jug, and placed it carefully on the table with a half-dozen tumblers. He pointed to the chairs with a wave of his hand, and when we were seated he broke the silence with, "Gintlemen, 'tis proud I

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am to meet ye all, though in bad company ye come" (the last with a smile at Paddy). "I've a little something here" (looking fondly at the jug) "will keape the night out; 'tis the rale old stuff, such as we used to drink in old Connemara. 'Tis aisy I've been with yes, but, faith, I swear to pull in ivery mother's son that will not drink with me."

We all filled our glasses, though Tom called us to witness that he drank under protest, and only through fear of arrest. Just how long we lingered in the widow Rafferty's back room I cannot tell, but we discovered Dinny to be the very prince of coppers, able to tell a good story and sing a better song. He was a broth of a boy, and would have gladdened the eyes of the manager of a football team. He stood six feet three in his stockings, and weighed two hundred and fifty pounds, all good stuff, and as hard as nails. His uniform was fresh, and fitted him like a glove, while every button was bright as a West Point cadet's. When we came to part with him it was with mutual expressions of good will, which were increased when we discovered he had sent for a carriage, and the same awaited us in the dark alley. If he has his dues he is chief of police by this time.

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We were a bit quiet on the way home, a little weary, and very contented and happy. There was a hint of the morning in the east as we alighted at the hotel, and the lobby was silent and deserted.

We were much pleased to find that the elevator was still running, and we climbed aboard, at peace with all the world, and just ready for bed. As Tom said, a five minutes earlier or later would have spoiled it. When we reached the third floor, Paddy insisted that we must go with him to the fifth, so we kept on, and Harry unlocked the door and Jim lit the gas. When we bade him "good-night" and the elevator began to drop, he stood in his doorway, a smile of perfect bliss shining on his honest face. He waved his big hand at us with a gesture that was half farewell, half a benediction, and murmured huskily "An' ivery wan a winner."

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