

BARBOUR

RALPH HENRY

LEFT TACKLE THAYER

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CHAPTER I

A NEW BOY AND AN OLD ONE

A boy in a blue serge suit sat on the second tier of seats of an otherwise empty grand-stand and, with his straw hat pulled well over his eyes, watched the progress of a horse-drawn mower about a field. The horse was a big, well-fed chestnut, and as he walked slowly along he bobbed his head rhythmically. In the seat of the mower perched a thin little man in a pair of blue overalls and a shirt which had also been blue at one time, but which was now faded almost white. A broad-brimmed straw hat of the sort affected by farmers, protected his head from the noonday sun. Between the overalls and the rusty brogans on his feet several inches of bare ankle intervened, and, as he paraded slowly around the field, almost the only sign of life he showed was when he occasionally stooped to brush a mosquito from these exposed portions of his anatomy. The horse, too, wore brogans, big round leather shoes which strapped over his hoofs and protected the turf, and, having never before seen a horse in leather boots, the boy on the grand-stand had been for a while mildly interested.

But the novelty had palled some time ago, and now, leaning forward with his sun-browned hands clasped loosely between his knees, he continued to watch the mower merely because it was the only object in sight that was not motionless, if one excepts the white clouds moving slowly across a blue September sky.

Now and then the clouds seemed to shadow the good-looking, tanned face of the youth, producing a troubled, sombre expression. The truth is that Master Clinton Boyd Thayer was lonesome and, although he would have denied it vigorously, a little bit homesick. (At sixteen one may be homesick even though one scoffs at the notion.) Clinton had left his home at Cedar Run, Virginia, the evening before, had changed into a sleeper at Washington just before midnight, and reached New York very early this morning. From there, although he had until five in the afternoon to reach Brimfield Academy, he had departed after a breakfast eaten in the Terminal and had arrived at Brimfield at a little before nine. An hour had sufficed him to register and unpack his bag and trunk in the room assigned to him in Torrence Hall. Since that time—and it was now almost twelve o'clock—he had wandered about the school. He had peeped into the other dormitories and the recitation building, had explored the gymnasium from basement to trophy room and, finally, had loitered across the athletic field to the grand-stand, where, for the better part of an hour, he had been sitting in the sun, getting lonelier every minute.

Clint—everyone had always called him Clint and we might as

well fall in line—had never been farther north than Baltimore; and today he felt himself not only a long way from home but in a country somehow strangely and uncomfortably alien. The few persons he had encountered had been quite civil to him, to be sure; and the sunlight was the same sunlight that shone down on Cedar Run, but for all of that it seemed as if no one much cared where he was or what happened to him, and the air felt differently and the country looked different, and—and, well, he rather wished himself back in Virginia!

He had never been enthusiastic about going North to school. It had been his mother's idea. Mr. Thayer was willing that Clint should prepare for college in his native state, but Clint's mother had other ideas. Mr. Thayer had graduated from Princeton and it had long been settled that Clint was to be educated there too; and Clint's mother insisted that since he was to attend a Northern college it would be better for him to go to a Northern preparatory school. Clint himself had not felt strongly enough about it to object. Several of his chums had gone or were going to Virginia Military College; and Clint would have liked to go there too, although the military feature didn't especially appeal to him. Brimfield Academy, at Brimfield, New York, had finally been selected, principally because a cousin of Clint's on his father's side had once attended the school. The fact that the cousin in question had never amounted to much and was now clerking in a shoe store in Norfolk was not held against the school.

So far the boy had liked what he had seen of Brimfield well

enough. The thirty-mile journey from New York on the train had been through an attractive country, with now and then a fleeting glimpse of water to add variety to the landscape; and the woods and fields around the Academy were pretty. From where he sat at the east end of the athletic field he could look along the backs of the buildings, which ran in a row straight along the edge of a plateau. Nearest at hand was the gymnasium. Then came Wendell and Torrence, the latter having the honour of being Clint's abode for the ensuing nine months. Next was Main Hall, containing recitation rooms, the assembly room, the library and the office; an older building and built all of brick whereas the other structures were uniformly of stone as to first story and brick above. Beyond Main Hall were Hensey and Billings, both dormitories, and, at the western end of the row and slightly out of line, The Cottage, where dwelt the Principal, Mr. Fernald, of whom Clint knew little and, it must be confessed, cared, at the present moment, still less. In front of the buildings the ground fell away to the country road over which Clint had that morning travelled behind a somnolent grey horse and a voluble driver, to the last of which combination he owed most of his information regarding the Academy.

Behind the buildings—in school parlance, the Row—lay the athletic field, almost twelve acres in extent, bordered on the further side by a rising slope of forest. Here there were football grid-irons—three of them, as the six goals indicated—quarter-mile running-track, a baseball diamond and a dozen tennis courts. The

diamond was most in evidence, for the grand-stand stood behind the plate and the base paths, bare of turf, formed a square in front of it. Even the foul lines had not been utterly obliterated by sun and rain, but were dimly discernible, where the mower had passed, as yellower streaks against the vivid green. It was a splendid field; Clint had to acknowledge that; and for a time the thought of playing football on it had almost dispersed his gloom. But the after-reflection that for all he knew his services might not be required on the Eleven, that very possibly his brand of football was not good enough for Brimfield, had caused a relapse into depression. Thrice he had told himself that as soon as the plodding horse reached the further turn he would get up and go back to his room, and thrice he had failed to keep his promise. He wondered who his room-mate was to be and whether that youth had yet arrived, but his curiosity was not strong enough to get him up. Now, however, the mower was again traversing the opposite end of the field, and again approaching the further corner, and once more he made the agreement with himself, really meaning to live up to it. But, as events proved, he was not destined to keep faith.

From around the corner of the stand furthest from the Row appeared a boy in a suit of light grey flannels. The coat, hanging open, displayed a soft shirt of no uncertain shade of heliotrope. A bow-tie of lemon-yellow with purple dots nestled under his chin and between the cuffs of his trousers and the rubber-soled tan shoes a four-inch expanse of heliotrope silk stockings

showed. A straw hat with a particularly narrow brim was adorned with a ribbon of alternating bars of maroon and grey. He was indeed a cheerful and colourful youth, his cheerfulness being further evidenced by the jaunty swinging of a stick which he had apparently cut from a willow and by the gay whistling of a tune. On sight of Clint, however, the stick stopped swinging and the whistling came to an end in the middle of a note.

"Hi!" said the youth in surprised tones.

"Hello," answered Clint politely.

The newcomer paused and viewed the boy on the stand with frank curiosity. Then his gaze wandered across to the mower, which was at the instant making the turn at the further corner, over by the tennis courts. Finally,

"Bossing the job?" he asked, nodding toward the mower.

Clint smiled and shook his head. "No, just—just loafing."

"Hot, isn't it?" The other pushed the gaily-ribboned hat to the back of his head and drew a pale lavender handkerchief across his forehead. "Been moseying around over there in the woods," he continued when Clint had murmured agreement. "Studying Nature in her manifold moods. Nature is some warm today. There's a sort of a breeze here, though, isn't there?"

Clint agreed again, more doubtfully, and the boy who had been studying Nature seated himself sidewise on a seat below, drawing his feet up and clasping his hands about his knees. He was a good-looking, merry-faced chap of seventeen, with dark-brown eyes, a short nose liberally freckled under the tan and

a rather prominent chin with a deep dimple in it. His position revealed a full ten inches of the startling hose; and, since they were almost under his nose, Clint gazed at them fascinatedly.

"Some socks, are they not?" inquired the youth.

Clint, already a little embarrassed by the other's friendliness, removed his gaze hurriedly.

"They're very-nice," he murmured.

The other elevated one ankle and viewed it approvingly. "Saw them in a window in New York yesterday and fell for them at once. I've got another pair that are sort of pinky-grey, ashes of roses, I guess. Watch for them. They'll gladden your heart. You're new, aren't you?"

"Yes, I got here this morning," replied Clint. "I suppose you're-you're not."

"No, this is my third year. I'm in the Fifth Form. What's yours?"

"I don't know yet. I reckon they'll put me in the Fourth."

"I see. How's everything below the Line?"

"Below the line?" repeated Clint.

"Yes, Mason and Dixon's. You're from the South, aren't you?"

"Oh! Yes, I come from Virginia; Cedar Run."

The other chuckled. "What state did you say?" he asked.

"Virginia," responded Clint innocently. "Great! 'Vay-gin-ya.'" He shook his head. "No, I can't get it."

It dawned on Clint that the other was trying to mimic his pronunciation of the word, and he felt resentful until a look at

the boy's face showed that he intended no impertinence.

"I love to hear a Southerner talk," he went on. "There was a chap here named Broland year before last; came from Alabama, I think. He was fine! Red-hot he was, too. You could always get a fall out of Bud Broland by mentioning Grant or Sherman. He used to fly right off the handle and wave the Stars-and-Bars fit to kill! We used to tell him that the war was over, but he wouldn't believe it."

Clint smiled doubtfully. "Is he here now?" he asked.

"Broland? No, he only stayed a little while. Couldn't get used to our ways. Found school life too—too confining. He used to take trips, and Faculty didn't approve."

"Trips?" asked Clint.

The other nodded. "Yes, he used to put a clean collar in his pocket and run down to New York for week-ends. Faculty was sort of narrow-minded and regretfully packed him off home to Alabam'. Bud was a good sort, but—well, he needed a larger scope for his talents than school afforded. I guess the right place for Bud would have been a good big ranch out West somewhere. He needed lots of room!"

Clint smiled. "What time do we eat?" he asked presently, when they had silently watched the passage of the mower. The other boy tugged at a fob which dangled at his belt and produced a silver watch.

"Let's see." He frowned intently a moment. "I was twelve minutes fast yesterday afternoon. That would make me about

twenty minutes ahead now. I'd say the absolutely correct time was somewhere between eleven-fifty-eight and twelve-six. And dinner's at half-past."

"Thank you," laughed Clint. He pulled forth his own watch and looked at it. "I make it two minutes after," he said, "and I was right this morning by the clock in the station in New York."

"Two minutes past, eh?" The boy below set his timepiece and slipped it back under his belt. "It must be great to have a watch like yours. I used to have one but I left it at the rink last Winter and it fell into the snow, I guess, and I never did find it. Then I bought me this. It's guaranteed for a year."

"Why don't you take it back, then?"

"Oh, I've got sort of used to it now. After all, there's a certain excitement about having a watch like this. You never know whether you're going to be late or early. If I have to catch a train I always allow thirty minutes leeway. It's twelve o'clock, all right. Solomon's quit." He nodded toward where the man in the blue overalls was unhitching the horse from the mower. "You can't fool Solomon on the dinner hour."

"Is that his name?" inquired Clint.

"I don't suppose so. That's what he's called, though. He never says anything and so he seems to be all-fired wise. There's a lot in that, do you know? Bet you if I didn't talk so much I'd get the reputation of being real brainy. Guess I'll have to try it." He grinned broadly and Clint smiled back in sympathy.

"Let's tell our names," said the other. "Mine's Byrd; first

name, Amory; nicknamed Amy. Pretty bad, but it might be worse."

"Mine's Clinton Thayer."

"Thayer? We've got some cousins of that name. They're Northerners, though. Live in New Hampshire. No relation to you, I guess. I suppose fellows call you Clint, don't they?"

"Yes."

"All right, Clint, let's mosey back and have some dinner. I had a remarkably early repast this morning and feel as though I could trifle with some real food."

"So do I," replied Clint as he climbed down. "I had my breakfast at half-past six."

"Great Scott! What for?"

"The train got in at six and there was nothing else to do. I got here before nine."

"You did? I thought I was one of the early Byrds—Joke! Get it?—but I didn't sight the Dear Old School until after ten. Couldn't find any fellows I knew and so went for a walk. Most of the fellows don't get here until afternoon. By the way, who do you room with?"

"I don't know," replied Clint. "I didn't ask. They put me—"

"I don't know either," sighed Amy. "I found a lot of truck in my room, but I haven't seen the owner yet. The fellow who was in with me last year has left school. Gone to live in China. Wish I could! I suppose the fellow I draw will be a regular mutt." They had reached the corner of Wendell, and Amy paused. "The

dining room's in here. If you don't mind waiting until I run up and wash a bit we'll eat together."

"I'd like to," answered Clint, "but I reckon I'll wash too."

He moved along with the other toward the next dormitory.

"Aren't you in Wendell?" asked Amy.

"No, this next one. Torrey, isn't it?"

"Torrence." Amy stopped and viewed him With sudden interest. "Say, what number?"

"Fourteen."

"*Well, what do you know about that?*"

"What?" Clint faltered.

"Why—why—" Amy seized his hand and shook it vigorously.

"Clint, I want to congratulate you! I do, indeed!"

Clint smiled. "Thanks, Byrd, but what about?"

"Byrd?" murmured the other disappointedly. "Is that the best you can do after our long acquaintance? You—you grieve me!"

"Amory, then," laughed Clint.

"Call me Amy," begged the other. "You'll call me worse than that when you've known me longer, but for now let it be Amy."

"All right. And now, please, what am I being congratulated for?"

Amy's face became suddenly earnest and sober, "Because, my young friend, you are especially fortunate. A kindly Providence has placed you in the care of one of the wisest, most respected, er—finest examples of young manhood this institution affords. I certainly do congratulate you!"

Amy made another grab at Clint's hand, but the latter foiled him.

"You mean the fellow I'm going to room with?" he asked.

"Exactly! Faculty has indeed been good to you, Clint. You will take up your abode with a youth in whom all the virtues and—
and excellencies—"

"Who is he?" demanded Clint suspiciously.

"His name"—Amy drew close and dropped his voice to an awed and thrilling whisper—"his name is—Are you prepared?"

"Go on. Ill try to stand it."

"His name, then, is Amory Munson Byrd!"

"Amory Mun—"

"—son Byrd!"

"You mean—I'm in with you?"

"I mean just that, O fortunate youth! Forward, sir! Allow me to conduct you to your apartment!" And, putting his arm through Clint's, he dragged that astonished youth into dormitory.

CHAPTER II

CAPTAIN INNES RECEIVES

"What's that awful noise?" asked Clint startledly, looking up from his book.

It was the evening of the second day of school and Clint and Amy Byrd were preparing lessons at opposite sides of the green-topped table in Number 14 Torrence.

"That," replied Amy, leaning back until his chair protested and viewing his room-mate under the shade of the drop-light, "is music."

"Music!" Clint listened incredulously. From the next room, by way of opened windows and transoms, came the most lugubrious wails he thought he had ever listened to. "It—it's a fiddle, isn't it?" he demanded.

Amy nodded. "More respectfully, a violin. More correctly a viol-*din*. (The joke is not new.) What you are listening to with such evident delight are the sweet strains of Penny Durkin's violin." Amy looked at the alarm clock which decorated a corner of his chiffonier. "Penny is twelve minutes ahead of time. He's not supposed to play during study-hour, you see, and unless I'm much mistaken he will be so informed before the night is much—"

"Hey, Penny! Cut it out, old top!"

From somewhere down the corridor the anguished wail

floated, followed an instant later by sounds counterfeiting the howling of an unhappy dog. Threats and pleas mingled.

"Penny! For the love of Mike!"

"Set your watch back, Penny!"

"Shut up, you idiot! Study's not over!"

"Call an officer, please!"

But Pennington Durkin was making too much noise on his instrument to hear the remonstrances at first, and it was not until some impatient neighbour sallied forth and pounded frantically at the portal of Number 13 that the wailing ceased. Then,

"What is it?" asked Durkin mildly.

"It's only ten minutes to nine, Penny. Your clock's fast again. Shut up or we'll kill you!"

"Oh!" said Penny surprisedly. "Are you sure? I set my watch—"

"Oh, forget it! You say that every night," was the wearied response. "How the dickens do you think anyone's going to study with that noise going on?"

"I'm very sorry, really," responded Penny, "If I'd known—"

"You never do know, Penny!" The youth outside strode back to his room and slammed the door and quiet prevailed once more. Amy smiled.

"Poor Penny," he said. "He suffers much in the cause of Art. I refuse to study any more. Close up shop, Clint, and let's talk. Now that you've been with us a whole day, what do you think of us? Do you approve of this institution of learning, old man?"

"I think I'm going to like it," replied Clint soberly.

"I do hope so," murmured Amy anxiously. "Still, any little changes you'd like made—"

"Well, you asked me, didn't you?" laughed Clint. "Besides, how can I help but like it when I am honoured by being roomed with you?"

"Sarcasm!" hissed Amy. "Time's up!" He slammed his book shut, tossed it on a pile at his elbow, yawned and jumped from his chair. "Let's go visiting. What do you say? Come along and I'll interdoodle you to some of our prominent criminals. Find your cap and follow me."

"I wish," said Amy, as they clattered down the stairs in the wake of several other boys who had lingered no longer than they after nine o'clock had struck, "I wish you had made the Fifth Form, Clint."

"So do I," was the reply. "I could have if they'd stretched a point."

"Um; yes," mused the other. "Stretched a point. Now that's something I never could make out, Clint."

"What!"

"Why, how you can stretch a point. The dictionary describes a point as 'that which has position but no magnitude.' Seems to me it must be very difficult to get hold of a thing with no magnitude, and, of course, you'd have to get hold of it to stretch it, wouldn't you? Now, if you said stretch a line or stretch a circle—"

"That's what you'll need if you don't shut up," laughed Clint.

"A circle?"

"No, a stretcher!"

"What a horrible pun," mourned Amy. "Say, suppose we drop in on Jack Innes?"

"Suppose we do," replied Clint cheerfully. "Who is he?"

"Football captain, you ignoramus. Maybe if you don't act fresh and he takes a liking to you he will resign and let you be captain."

"Won't it look—well, sort of funny?" asked Clint doubtfully as they passed along the Bow.

"What? You being captain?"

"No, our going—I mean *my* going to see him, Won't he think I'm trying to—to swipe?"

"Poppycock! Jack's a particular friend of mine. You don't have to tell him you want a place on the team, do you? Besides, there'll likely be half a dozen others there. Here we are; one flight."

They turned in the first entrance of Hensey and climbed the stairs. Innes's room, like Clint's, faced the stair-well, being also Number 14, and from behind the closed door came a babel of voices.

"Full house tonight," observed Amy, knocking thunderously. But the knocking wasn't heard inside and, after a moment, Amy turned the knob and walked in, followed by Clint. Nearly a dozen boys were crowded in the room and each of the two small beds sagged dangerously under the weight it held.

"We knocked," said Amy, "but you hoodlums are making so much noise that—"

"Hi, Amy! How's the boy?" called a youth whose position

facing the door allowed him to discover the newcomers. Heads turned and other greetings followed. It was evident to Clint that his room-mate was a popular chap, for everyone seemed thoroughly glad to see him.

"Come here, Amy," called a big fellow who was sprawled in a Morris chair. Amy good-naturedly obeyed the summons and the big fellow pulled up a leg of the other boy's trousers. "They're grey, fellows," he announced sorrowfully. "Someone's gone and died, and Amy's in mourning!"

"Grey!" exclaimed another. "Never. Amy, tell me it isn't true!"

"Shut up! I want to interdoodle my most bosom friend, Mr. Clinton Thayer, of Vay-gin-yah, sah! Clint, take off your hat."

The merriment ceased and the occupants of the room got to their feet as best they might and those within reach shook hands.

"That large lump over there," indicated Amy, "is Innes. He's one of your hosts. The other one is Mr. Still; in the corner of the bed; the intelligent-looking youth. The others don't matter."

"Glad to know you, Thayer," said Jack Innes in a deep, jovial voice. "Hope you can find a place to sit down. I guess that bed near you will hold one more without giving way."

Clint somewhat embarrassedly crowded on to a corner of the bed and Amy perched himself on an arm of the Morris chair. A smallish, clever-looking fellow across the room said: "You're a punk introducer, Amy. Thayer, my name's Marvin, and this chap is Hall and the next one is Edwards, and Still you know, and then comes Ruddie, and Black—"

"Red and Black," interpolated Amy.

"And next to Innes is Landers—"

"Oh, forget it, Marvin," advised Still. "Thayer won't remember. Names don't matter, anyway."

"Some names," retorted Marvin, "have little significance, yours amongst them. I did the best I could for you, Thayer. Remember that. What's the good word, Amy?"

"I have no news to relate," was the grave response, "save that Jordan obtruded his shining cranium as we came in and requested me to inform you fellows that unless there was less noise up here—"

Jeers greeted that fiction. "I love your phrases, Amy," said Marvin. "'Shining cranium' is great"

"Oh, Amy is one fine little phraser," said Innes. "Remember his theme last year, fellows? How did it go, Amy? Let me see. Oh! 'The westerning sun sank slowly into the purple void of twilight, a burnished copper disk beyond the earth's horizon!'"

"I never!" cried Amy indignantly.

"He loves to call a football an 'illusive spheroid,'" chuckled another chap.

"So it is," asserted Amy vehemently. "I know, because I tried to play with one once!"

"I'll bet a great little football player was lost when you forsook the gridiron for the—the field of scholarly endeavour," said Tom Hall.

"He's caught it, too!" groaned the youth beside him, Steve

Edwards. "Guess I'll take him home."

"You're not talking that way yet, are you, Thayer?" asked Jack Innes solicitously.

"I don't think so," replied Clint with a smile.

"You will sooner or later, though. The fellow who roomed with Amy last year got so he couldn't make himself understood in this country and had to go to Japan."

"China," corrected Amy, "China, the Land of the Chink and the chop-stick."

"There he goes!" moaned Still.

"What I haven't heard explained yet," said Steve Edwards, "is what's happened to Amy's glad socks. Why the sobriety, Amy?"

"Wouldst hear the sweet, sad story?"

"Wouldst."

"Then give me your kind attention and I willst a tale unfold. You see, it's like this. Clint there can tell you that just the other day I was a thing of beauty. My slender ankles were sheer and silken delights. But—and here's the weepy place, fellows—when I disrobed I discovered that the warmth of the weather had affected the dye in those gladsome garments and my little footies were like unto the edible purple beet of commerce. And I paid eighty-five cents a pair for those socks, too. I—I'm having them washed."

When the laughter had ceased, Ruddle, who seemed a serious-minded youth, began a story of an uncle of his who had contracted blood-poisoning from the dye in his stockings. What

ultimately happened to the uncle Clint never discovered, for the others very rudely broke in on Ruddle's reminiscences and the conversation became general and varied. The boy next to Clint, whose name he learned later was Freer, politely inquired as to how Clint liked Brimfield and whether he played football. To the latter question Clint confided that he did, although probably not well enough to stand much of a chance here.

"Oh, you can't tell," replied Freer encouragingly. "Come out for practice tomorrow and see. We're got a coach here that can do wonders with beginners."

"Of course I mean to try," said Clint. "I reckon you wear togs, don't you, when you report?"

"Yes, come dressed to play. You'll get a workout for a week or so, anyway. Three-thirty is the time. You won't feel lonesome. We've got more fellows here this year than we ever had and I guess there'll be a gang of new candidates. Got a lot of last year's 'varsity players left, too, and we ought to be able to turn out a pretty fair team."

"Where does Captain Innes play?" Clint asked

"Centre, and he's a peach. Marvin, over there, is first-string quarter this year. Edwards will be one of our ends and Hall will have right guard cinched, I think."

"And where do you play?" Clint inquired.

"Half, when I play," laughed the other. "I'm going to make a good fight for it this year. How'd you know I did play, though?"

"I—just thought so," said Clint. "You sort of look it, you

know."

That seemed to please Freer. "Well, I've been at it three years," he said, "and this is my last chance."

"I hope you make it."

"Thanks. Same to you! Well, I must get along."

The gathering was breaking up. Most of the fellows were careful to bid Clint good night as they went and several told him to get Amy to bring him around to see them. Captain Innes crowded his way through the confusion of visitors and furniture and sought Clint where he stood aside in the corner.

"I believe you play football, Thayer?" he said inquiringly.

"Yes, some."

"Well, you're modest, anyway," the big centre laughed. "Don't overdo it, though; it doesn't pay. What's your position?"

"I played tackle at home."

"Well, you come out tomorrow and show your goods, Thayer. We need all the talent we can get. Hope to see you do splendidly. Good night. Awfully glad to have met you. Good night, Amy. Hope those socks will come out all right."

"They'll never be the same," replied Amy sadly. "Their pristine splendour—"

"Get out of here, Amy! You remind me unpleasantly of tomorrow's English and the fact that I haven't looked at it yet!" And Freer, who was a rather husky youth, pushed Amy into the corridor without ceremony.

On the way back to Torrence Clint asked curiously: "How do

you suppose Innes knew I played, Amy?"

"Oh, he's a discerning brute," responded the other carelessly.

"But he said he *believed* I did. That sounds as if someone had told him. Did you?"

"Well," replied the other hesitantly, "now that you mention it, summon it, as it were, to my attention, or, should I say, force it on my notice; or, perhaps, arouse my slumbering memory—"

"Meaning you did?"

"I might have."

"When?"

"S afternoon. We met by chance. Casually I mentioned the fact that you were probably one of the niftiest little linemen that ever broke through the—er—stubborn defence of a desperate enemy—"

"You idiot!"

"And that, if properly encouraged, you would very likely be willing to lend your helpful assistance to the Dear Old Team. And he said: 'Bless you, Amy, for them glad tidings. All is not lost, With Clint Thayer to help us, victory may once more perch upon our pennant!' Or maybe it was 'banner.'"

"Honest, Amy," pleaded Clint, "what did you say?"

"Only that you were rooming with me and that I'd heard you say you, played and that I meant to bring you around to see him this evening."

"And he said?"

"He said 'Of course, bring him along.'"

"Oh," murmured Clint

"Just the remark I was about to make," declared Amy.

CHAPTER III

AMY AIRS HIS VIEWS

Clint settled down into his appointed niche at Brimfield, one of one hundred and seventy-two individuals of various ages between twelve and twenty. At Brimfield there were six forms, and Clint had, after a brief examination, been assigned to the fourth. He found that he was well up with the class in everything save Greek and Latin, and these, Greek especially, soon proved hard sledding. The instructor, Mr. Simkins—or "Uncle Sim," as he was called—was no easy taskmaster. He entertained a profound reverence for Aristotle and Vergil and Cicero and Homer and all the others, and failed to understand why his classes thought them tiresome and, sometimes, dry. His very enthusiasm, however, made him easy to impose on, and many a fellow received good marks merely because he simulated a fervid interest. But Clint was either too honest or possessed too little histrionic talent to attempt that plan, and by the time the Fall term was a week old, he, together with many another, was just barely keeping his head above water. He confessed discouragement to his room-mate one evening. Amy was sympathetic but scarcely helpful.

"It's tommyrot, that's what it is," Amy said with conviction. "What good does it do you to know Greek, anyway? I'll bet you anything that Uncle Sim himself couldn't go to Athens tomorrow

and order a cup of coffee and a hard-boiled egg! Or, if he did order them, he'd get a morning newspaper and toothpick. Last Spring I was in the boot-blackening emporium in the village one afternoon and Horace came in to get his shoes shined. There—"

"Who is Horace!" asked Clint dejectedly.

"Mr. Daley; modern languages; you have him in French. Well, there was a notice stuck on the wall across the place. It was in Greek and I couldn't make anything out of it at all and I asked Horace what it said. Of course he just read it right off, with a mere passing glance; did he not? Yes, he did not! He hemmed and hawed and muttered and finally said he couldn't make out the second word. I told him that was my trouble, too. Then we asked the Greek that runs the place and he told us it said that shines on Sundays and holidays were ten cents. Of course, Horace isn't a specialist in Greek, but still he's been through college, and what I say is—"

"I don't believe the men who wrote the stuff really understood it," said Clint.

"Oh, they understood a little of it, all right. They could sign their names, probably. The only consolation I find is this, Clint. A couple of hundred years from now, when everyone is talking Esperanto or some other universal language, the kids will have to study English. Can't you see them grinding over the Orations of William Jennings Bryan and wondering why the dickens anyone ever wanted to talk such a silly language? That's when we get our revenge, Clint. We won't be around to see it, but it'll be there."

Clint had to smile at the picture Amy drew, but he didn't find as much consolation as Amy pretended to, and Xenophon didn't come any easier. He was heartily glad when the study-hour came to an end and he could conscientiously close his books.

The termination of that hour was almost invariably announced by the dismal squawking of Penny Durkin's fiddle. Sometimes it was to be heard in the afternoon, but not always, for Penny was a very busy youth. He was something of a "shark" at lessons, was a leading light in the Debating Circle and conducted a second-hand business in all sorts of things from a broken tooth-mug to a brass bed. Penny bought and sold and traded and, so rumour declared, made enough to nearly pay his tuition each year. If you wanted a rug or a table or a chair or a picture or a broken-down bicycle or a pair of football pants you went to Penny, and it was a dollar to a dime that Penny either had in his possession, or could take you to someone else who had, the very thing you were looking for. If you paid cash you got it reasonably cheap—or you did if you knew enough to bargain craftily—and if you wanted credit Penny charged you a whole lot more and waited on you promptly for the instalment at the first of each month. And besides these activities Penny was a devoted student of music.

He was an odd-looking fellow, tall and thin, with a lean face from which a pair of pale and near-sighted eyes peered forth from behind rubber-rimmed spectacles. His hair was almost black and was always in need of trimming, and his garments—he seldom wore trousers, coat and vest that matched—always seemed about

to fall off him. Clint's first glimpse of Penny came one afternoon. The door of Number 13 was open as Clint returned to his room after football practice and lugubrious sounds issued forth. It was very near the supper hour and Penny's room was lighted only by the rays of the sinking sun. Against the window Clint saw him in silhouette, his hair wildly ruffled, his violin under his chin, his bow scraping slowly back and forth as he leaned near-sightedly over the sheet of music spread on the rack before him. The strains that issued from the instrument were awful, but there was something fine in the player's absorption and obvious content, and what had started out as a laugh of amusement changed to a sympathetic smile as Clint tiptoed on to his own door.

The sorrow of Penny's young life was that, although he had made innumerable attempts, he could not succeed in the formation of a school orchestra. There was a Glee Club and a Musical Society, the latter composed of performers on the mandolin, banjo and guitar, but no one would take any interest in Penny's project. Or no one save a fellow named Pillsbury. Pillsbury played the bass viol, and once a week or so he and Penny got together and spent an entranced hour. Time was when such meetings took place in Penny's room or in Pillsbury's room, but popular indignation put an end to that. Nowadays they took their instruments to the gymnasium and held their chamber concerts in the trophy room. Amy one day drew Clint's attention to a fortunate circumstance. This was that, while there was a connecting door between Number 14 and Number 15,

there was none between Number 14 and Number 13. That fact, Amy declared, rendered their room fairly habitable when Penny was pouring out his soul. "It's lucky in another way," he added, staring darkly at the buff-coloured wall that separated them from Number 13. "If that door was on this side I'd have broken it open long ago and done murder!"

Clint laughed and inquired: "Who rooms on the other side?"

"Schuman and Dreer." The contemptuous tone of his reply caused Clint to ask:

"Anything wrong with them?"

"Oh, Schuman's all right, I guess, but Dreer's a pill." There was a wealth of contempt in the word "pill" as Amy pronounced it, and Clint asked innocently what a "pill" was.

"A pill," replied Amy, "is—is—well, there are all sorts of pills. A fellow who toadies to the instructors is a pill. A fellow who is too lazy to play football or baseball or tennis or anything else and pretends the doctor won't let him is a pill. A fellow who has been to one school and got fired and then goes to another and is always shooting off his mouth about how much better the first school is is the worst kind of pill. And that's the kind Harmon Dreer is. He went to Claflin for a year and a half and then got into some sort of mess and was expelled. Then the next Fall he came here. This is his second year here and he's still gabbing about how much higher class Claflin is and how much better they do everything there and—oh, all that sort of rot. I told him once that if the fellows at Claflin were so much classier than we are

I could understand why they didn't let him stay there. He didn't like it. He doesn't narrate his sweet, sad story to me any more. If he ever does I'm likely to forget that I'm a perfect gentleman."

But Clint's neighbours were not of overpowering interest to him those days. There were more absorbing matters, pleasant and unpleasant, to fill his mind. For one thing, he was trying very hard to make a place on one of the football teams. He hadn't any hope of working into the first team. Perhaps when he started he may, in spite of his expressed doubts, have secretly entertained some such hope, but by the end of the second day of practice he had abandoned it. The brand of football taught by Coach Robey and played by the 'varsity team was ahead of any Clint had seen outside a college gridiron and was a revelation to him. Even by the end of the first week the first team was in what seemed to Clint end-of-season form, although in that Clint was vastly mistaken, and his own efforts appeared to him pretty weak and amateurish. But he held on hard, did his best and hoped to at least retain a place on the third squad until the final cut came. And it might just be, he told himself in optimistic moments, that he'd make the second! Meanwhile he was enjoying it. It's remarkable what a lot of extremely hard work a boy will go through if he likes football, and what a deal of pleasure he will get out of it! Amy pretended to be totally unable to get that point of view. One afternoon when Clint returned to prepare for supper with a lower lip twice the normal size of that feature Amy indulged in sarcasm.

"Oh, the proud day!" he declaimed, striking an attitude. "Wounded on the field of battle! Glory! Triumph! Pæans! My word, old top, but I certainly am proud to be the chum of such a hero! I'm so sot-up I could scream for joy. Football's a wonderful pastime, isn't it?"

"Silly chump!" mumbled Clint painfully.

"Yes, indeed, a wonderful pastime," ruminated Amy, seating himself on the window-seat and hugging one knee. "All a fellow has to do is to go out and work like a dray-horse and a pile-driver and street-roller for a couple of hours every afternoon, get kicked in the shins and biffed in the eye and rolled in the dirt and ragged by one coach, one captain and one quarter-back. That's all he has to do except learn a lot of signals so he can recognise them in the fraction of a second, be able to recite the rules frontward and backward and both ways from the middle and live on indigestible things like beef and rice and prunes. For that he gets called a 'mutt' and a 'dub' and a 'disgrace to the School' and, unless he's lucky enough to break a leg and get out of it before the big game, he has twenty-fours hours of heart-disease and sixty minutes of glory. And his picture in the paper. He knows it's his picture because there's a statement underneath that Bill Jones is the third criminal from the left in the back row. And it isn't the photographer's fault if the good-looking half-back in the second row moved his head just as the camera went *snap* and all that shows of Bill Jones is a torn and lacerated left ear!"

"For the love of Mike, Amy, shut up!" pleaded Clint. "You

talk so much you don't say anything! Besides, you told me once you used to play yourself when you first came here."

"So I did," agreed Amy calmly. "But I saw the error of my ways and quit. In me you see a brand snatched from the burning. Why, gosh, if I'd kept on I'd be a popular hero now! First Formers would copy my socks and neckties and say 'Good morning, *Mister* Byrd,' and the *Review* would refer to me as 'that sterling player, Full-back Byrd.' And Harvard and Yale and Princeton scouts would be camping on my trail and offering me valuable presents and taking me to lunch at clubs. Oh, I had a narrow escape, I can tell you! When I think how narrow I shudder." He proved it by having a sort of convulsion on the window-seat. "Clint, when it's all said and done, a fellow's a perfect, A-plus fool to play football when he can enlist in the German army and die in a trench!"

"I got away for twenty yards this afternoon and made a touchdown," proclaimed Clint from between swollen lips, trying to keep the pride from his voice.

Amy threw up his hands in despair.

"I'll say no more," he declared. "You're past help, Clint. You've tasted blood. Go on, you poor mistaken hero, and maim yourself for life. I wash my hands of you."

"You'd better wash them of some of that dirt I see and come to supper," Clint mumbled. "Gee, if I'd talked half as much as you have in the last ten minutes I'd be starved!"

CHAPTER IV

CLINT CUTS PRACTICE

Brimfield played the first game on her schedule a few days later, winning without difficulty from Miter Hill School in ten-minute periods by a score of 17 to 0. There was much ragged football on each side; but Brimfield showed herself far more advanced than her opponent and had, besides, the advantage of a heavier team. Clint looked on from the bench, with some forty others, and grew more hopeless than ever of making good this year. His present status was that of substitute tackle on the third squad, and it didn't look as though he'd get beyond that point. If he had expected his introduction to Jack Innes to help his advancement he must have been disappointed, for the Captain, while he invariably spoke when he saw him, and once inquired in the locker-room how Clint was getting along, paid little attention to him. So far as Clint could see, nobody cared whether he reported for practice or not. Toward the end of an afternoon, when the third was fortunate enough to get into a few minutes of scrimmage with the second, Clint usually finished up at right or left tackle. But he couldn't help thinking that were he not there his absence would go unremarked. Even on the to him memorable occasion when he broke through the second's line on a fumble and, seizing the ball, romped almost unchallenged

over the last four white lines for a touchdown the incident went apparently unnoticed. One or two of his team-mates patted him approvingly on the back, but that was all. Clint was beginning to have moments of discouragement.

But two days after the Miter Hill game an incident occurred which proved him wrong in thinking that no one knew or cared whether he reported for practice. That morning's Greek had gone unusually badly for Clint and Mr. Simkins had kept him after class and talked some plain talk to him. When Clint's final recitation of the day was over at three he was out-of-sorts and depressed. He felt very little like playing football and still less like studying, but Mr. Simkins had as much as told him that unless a decided improvement was at once apparent some direful fate would be his, and the instructor had a convincing way of talking and Clint quite believed him. Consequently, of two evils Clint chose the more necessary and dedicated that afternoon to the Iliad. The dormitory was very quiet, for it was a fine, mild day and most of the fellows were out-of-doors, and concentration should have been easy. But it wasn't. Clint couldn't keep his mind on his book, try as he might. Through the open window came sounds from the grid-irons and ball-field; shouts, the honking of Manager Black's horn, the cries of the coaches and players, the crack of bat and ball where the Nine was holding Fall practice; even, now and then, the voices of the tennis players far down the field. He tried closing the window, but that made the room hot and stuffy, and he opened it again. Four o'clock sounded and he

was still dawdling. Then footsteps sounded on the stairs, the door of Number 13 opened and shut, and a minute or two later the wailing of Penny Durkin's violin broke onto the silence of the deserted dormitory. That ought to have ended Clint's chances of study, it seemed, but, oddly enough, after he had listened for five minutes or so, his eyes sought the page in front of him and then—well, then it was more than an hour later, the violin was silent and someone was knocking on his door!

Clint gazed with surprise on the pencilled notes adorning the margins of the pages, from them to the open lexicon, from that to the pencil in his hand. He had absolutely done five pages! And then the knock at the door was repeated and Clint stammered "Come in!" and Tracey Black entered.

The football manager was a slimly-built, nervous-mannered chap of eighteen and wore glasses through which he now regarded Clint accusingly.

"What's wrong with you, Thayer?" he demanded brusquely. "Sick?"

"Sick" repeated Clint vaguely. "No, thanks, I'm all right."

"Then why do you cut practice?" asked Black severely. "Don't you know—" It was then that Black recalled Clint's face and remembered having met him in Innes's room a week before. "Hello," he said in a milder tone. "I didn't recognise you. Er—you see, Thayer, when you fellows don't show up I have to find out what the reason is. Maybe you didn't know it, but it's the customary thing to get permission to cut practice."

"Oh! No, I didn't know it, Black," replied Clint. "I'm sorry. I got in a mess with my Greek and thought I'd better stay away and take a fall out of it. Besides, I didn't think anyone would care if I didn't report."

"Didn't think anyone would care!" exclaimed Black, seating himself on an arm of the Morris chair and viewing Clint with astonishment. "How the dickens do you suppose we can turn out a team if we don't care whether fellows report or not? Suppose the others thought that, Thayer, and stayed away!"

"I meant that—that I'm not much use out there and it didn't seem to me that it mattered very much if I stayed away once. I'm sorry, though, if I've done wrong."

"Well, that's all right," returned Black, mollified. "If you didn't know, that's different. Only another time you'd better see Mr. Robey and get permission to cut. You see, Thayer, at this time of year we need all the fellows we can get. Maybe you think you're not very important out there, but that isn't the way of it at all. Everyone counts. You are all—ah—you are all parts of the—ah—machine, if you see my drift, Thayer, and if one part is missing, why—ah—Well, you see what I mean?"

"Yes, of course. I'll remember the next time."

"Well, I wouldn't let there be any next time if I were you. To be frank, Thayer, Robey doesn't like fellows to cut. If you do it much he's awfully likely to tell you to—ah—stay away altogether!"

"Well, in my case—" began Clint, with a smile.

"Now today," went on Black, "Robey wanted you for the

second when Tyler got hurt and you weren't there and we had to play a second squad half-back at tackle. Robey didn't like it and jumped on me about it. And of course I had to tell him that I hadn't given any cuts. I'm not supposed to, anyway, but he seemed to think that maybe I had. If you don't mind, Thayer, it wouldn't be a bad idea to tell him if he asks you that you were—ah—sick, you know."

"Do you mean," asked Clint incredulously, "that he wanted me to play on the second this afternoon?"

"Yes, you see Tyler got an awful bat on the head and he's out of the game for several days, I guess. It's none of my business, in a way, of course, but, if you don't mind me saying so, Thayer, it's a poor idea to let chances get by. If you'd been there today you might have had a slice of luck and found yourself on the second for keeps. A fellow's got to be on the *qui vive* all the time and not miss any chances, old chap."

"I reckon that's so," agreed Clint regretfully. "You don't think he will want me for the second tomorrow, Black?"

"Oh, maybe. You be there, anyhow. And if he asks you you'd better fake sickness, I think."

"I dare say he won't remember by tomorrow," said Clint. "But if he does—"

"Don't bank on that," replied Black, shaking his head. "Robey has a fierce memory. You'll find that out for yourself if you stay around awhile longer."

"If I do," murmured Clint.

"Well, I think you will unless you get Robey down on you by too many cuts."

"Really?" Clint asked eagerly.

"Sure. You see most fellows want to be backs or ends; about eight out of ten want to be half-backs and the ninth wants to be either full-back or end. The tenth fellow is willing to play in the line."

"Oh," said Clint. "And how about quarters?"

"You have to almost beg 'em to try for quarter-back. I don't know why, but almost every fellow is leery of that position. Usually a coach makes a quarter out of a fellow who thinks he's a born half or end. Well, I must beat it. See you tomorrow, then?"

"Yes, indeed, I'll be there!" replied Clint earnestly. "Thanks for coming around."

"Oh, that's all right. All in the way of duty, you know. So long!"

Clint thoughtfully placed a marker in his book and closed it.

"That's a good afternoon's work," he reflected, "but if it's lost me a place on the second—" He shook his head ruefully. Then he smiled.

"Gee," he murmured, "I don't know whether I'm more scared of Mr. Simkins or Mr. Robey!"

The next day he made such a satisfactory showing in Greek that Mr. Simkins took him back into his good graces. "Ha, Thayer," he said, "you lead me to suspect that you spent a little time on your lesson last evening. I am not doing you an injustice,

Thayer?"

"No, sir, I put in two hours on it."

"Marvellous! Is there any other member of the class who wasted so much of his time in such manner? Raise your hands, please. One—two—three—Burgess, you hesitate, do you not? Ah, I thought so! You were merely going to scratch your head. Wise youth, Burgess. Scratch hard. Set up a circulation if possible. Hm. That will do, Thayer. Burgess, if it is not asking too much—"

Unfortunately—or perhaps fortunately—Clint's showing on this occasion was accepted by Mr. Simkins as a standard to which future performances were required to conform. "What has been done once may be done again, Thayer," he would inform him. And Clint, not being able to deny the logic of this statement, was forced to toil harder than ever. But there came a time, though it was not yet, when he found that his difficulties were lessening, that an hour accomplished what it had taken two to accomplish before; and that, in short, Greek, while not a study to enthuse over, had lost most of its terrors. But all that, as I say, came later, and for many weeks yet "Uncle Sim" pursued Clint in his dreams and the days when he had a Greek recitation were dreaded ones.

The afternoon following that on which he had absented himself from practice saw Clint approaching the field at three-thirty with misgivings. He feared that Coach Robey would remember his defection against him and at the same time he knew that he would feel flattered if the coach did! The question was soon settled, for Clint had no more than reached the bench

when Mr. Robey's eyes fell on him.

"Thayer!"

"Yes, sir!" Clint hurried toward him.

"Where were you yesterday?"

"In my room, sir. I had—"

"Sick?"

"No, sir, I wanted to—"

"Anyone tell you you might cut practice?"

"No, sir, I didn't know—"

"Never mind what you knew or didn't know. You know now that if you stay away again without permission you'll get dropped. That's all."

Clint returned to the bench contentedly. After all he was, it seemed, not such an unimportant unit as he had supposed! Later he discovered that Tyler was not present and hoped so hard that he would fall heir to that disabled player's position on the second squad that he fell under the disfavour of the third squad quarterback and was twice called down for missing signals.

And then, when, finally, the first and second lined up for a twenty-minute scrimmage, he saw the coveted place again filled by the substitute half-back and found himself sitting, blanket-wrapped, on the bench!

Tracey Black, catching his eye between periods, smiled sympathetically. Tracey could have told him that Coach Robey was punishing him for yesterday's misdemeanour, but he didn't, and the explanation didn't occur to Clint. And the latter followed

the rest back to the gymnasium after practice was over, feeling very dejected, and was such poor company all evening that Amy left him in disgust at nine and sought more cheerful scenes.

CHAPTER V

ON THE SECOND

At the end of a fortnight Clint had, so to speak, become a regular student of Brimfield Academy in good standing. That is, he had learned the manners and customs and the language, for Brimfield, like every similar institution, had its own ways and its own speech. Clint no longer said "Hello!" or "How do you do?" on meeting an acquaintance. He said "Hi!" and threw his head back with a little jerk. He bought a diminutive grey cap with a small visor and wore it so far on the back of his head that it was not discernible from the front. (If you belonged on one of the teams you wore your insignia in maroon above the visor, or, if you had won two "B's," you wore a maroon cap instead and the insignia was in grey. But Clint hadn't come to that yet.) He offhandedly referred to the Principal as "Josh," to the instructors as "Horace" or "Uncle Sim" or "Jordy," as the case might be. He knew that a Hall Master was an "H.M."; that he and one hundred and seventy-one other youths were, in common parlance, "Brims"; that a "Silk Sock" was a student of Claflin School, Brimfield's athletic rival; that Wendell Hall was "Wen"; Torrence, "T"; Hensey, "Hen" or "The Coop," and Billings, "Bill." Also that an easy course, such as Bible History, was a "doze"; that to study was to "stuff"—one who made a specialty of

it being, consequently, a "stuffer"; that a boy who prided himself on athletic prowess was a "Greek"; that a recitation was a "recit"; that the recitation rooms were "cells," and many other important things.

He subscribed to the school monthly, the *Review*,—or, rather, he chipped in with Amy, which produced the same result at half the cost,—contributed to the Torrence Hall football fund, became a member, though not yet a very active one, of the debating club and paid in his dues, and spent all his October and November allowance in advance, together with most of the money he had in hand, in the purchase of a suit of grey flannel at the local tailoring establishment. When completed—of course it couldn't be paid for at once—it was at least two sizes too large for him, such being the accepted fashion at Brimfield just then; had the pockets set at rakish angles, exhibited a two-and-a-half-inch cuff at the bottom of the trousers and contained a cunning receptacle for a fountain pen and pencil in the waistcoat, (Clint called it a vest, but the tailor set him right.) Amy viewed that suit with frank envy, for the coat was fully two inches wider across the shoulders than his and the trouser cuffs were deeper. He tried it on before the glass and promptly offered to buy it of Clint at an advance of two dollars, which offer was as promptly declined.

"The trouble with my coat," said Amy mournfully when all blandishments had failed and he was regretfully removing the garment, "is that it pretty near fits me. I told the man he was making it too snug!"

By this time Canterbury High School had been met and defeated, by the score of 15 to 6, and the football team had entered on its third week. Clint still hung on, sometimes much discouraged, and took his share of hard knocks and gruelling labour. Tyler having returned to his position on the second, Clint told himself that his last chance to make that team had vanished. But, just when he had about given up hope of advancement, a fortuitous combination of briskness on the part of the weather and "ginger" on the part of Clint produced unexpected results.

The 'varsity team was composed largely of substitutes when scrimmage with the second began that afternoon, for the Canterbury game three days before had left a number of the regulars rather played out. Lacking a left tackle for Saunders' place, Coach Robey took Cupples from the second, and Captain Turner, of the latter team, filled the vacancy with Bobbins, who, like Clint, was a new candidate. Clint viewed the proceeding gloomily. It seemed to him that he was more justly entitled to a place on the second's list of substitutes than Bobbins. His judgment was speedily vindicated, for Bobbins put up such a weak exhibition at left tackle that Turner impatiently sent him off, and the scrimmage stopped while he looked doubtfully toward the bench.

"I want a tackle," he announced. "Who's there, Danny?"

Danny Moore, the trainer, ran a sharp eye along the blanketed line. "Tackle!" he cried. "Who's playing tackle?"

Both Clint and another boy jumped forward, and as it

happened Danny's sharp green eye fell first on Clint. "Get in there, then, on the second, me boy!"

Morton, the assistant manager, who was keeping the record, called as Clint trotted past him, "Hi! What's the name?"

"Thayer," answered Clint.

"Left tackle," instructed Captain Turner. "Know the signals?"

"Yes," Clint replied, jumping into place. Kingston, a heavily-built, shock-headed youth whom Clint knew well enough to nod to, played left guard. "Hi!" he said as Clint poised himself in the line. "Use your arms and turn him in, boy!"

"Help your guard," instructed Turner, at left end, "and watch for an inside run."

It was the 'varsity's ball near the second's twenty-five-yard line, and Carmine, who had taken Marvin's place at quarter, sent Still plunging at the left of the second's line on the first play. Roberts, who played opposite Clint, was a big, heavy chap, and when he threw himself forward Clint, who had been playing too high, was hurled aside like a chip and Still went through for three yards before the secondary defence brought him down. Turner thumped Clint on the back.

"Watch for that, left tackle! Play lower! Get the jump!"

The next play struck the centre and piled through Peters for the distance. An end run, with Carmine carrying the ball, was spoiled by Turner. Then came another attack on the left. Clint, playing a half-yard outside the opposing end, watched the ball snapped and sensed the play.

"Left!" he shouted. "Left!" He heard Kingston grunt as he plunged into his opponent. Then he was holding Roberts off as best he could, neck and hip, and Kendall, the 'varsity right half, was cutting in. With a lunge, Clint pivoted around Roberts and tackled hard and firm as the half-back came through. He was dragged a foot or two before his secondary defence hurled itself against the runner, but the gain was less than a yard and Turner thumped him ecstatically as he pulled himself out of the pile.

"That's the ticket, feller! Run him out and get him! Third down, second! Stop 'em now!"

The second didn't stop them, but it made them resort to a fake-kick to get their distance on fourth down. From the fifteen yards Kendall tried a field-goal and missed narrowly and the second put the ball in play on the twenty yards.

The first play went through for two yards on the other side of the line. Then came a criss-cross, with the runner plunging at right guard. Clint started with the ball and had his man out instantly. The play followed through for three yards. Again the quarter chose that point and again the second's left side made the opening. But, with three to go on fourth down, a punt was imperative and Martin, the full-back, was called on. As Martin was a right-foot punter Clint had little to do save get through and down the field, and the instant the ball was snapped he dashed into his opponent, beating him by a fraction of a second and upsetting his balance beautifully. When the sound of boot and leather came Clint was past the 'varsity's backfield and, with

Turner but a yard or two in advance, was sprinting fast. Carmine was playing back in centre, with Kendall across the field, and it was into Carmine's territory that the ball was going. Suddenly Clint saw Carmine start quickly up the field toward them and guessed that the kick was short. Kendall was heading across to interfere for the catcher.

"Get the interference," cried Turner.

But it wasn't to happen that way, for Edwards had circled around and, even as Turner issued his command, Edwards and Kendall went over together in a heap and the ball settled into Carmine's arms. Turner leaped toward him, Carmine swayed aside and Turner went past. It was Clint who hurled himself at the quarter, wrapped eager arms about his knees and toppled him to earth so savagely that the pigskin bounded out of his clutch. There was a scramble for the ball, but Tyler, the second's right tackle, got it and reached the twenty-yard line before he was pulled down from behind.

"That's the way to tackle, Thayer!" Clint, trotting down the field to the new line-up, turned to find Coach Robey beside him. "That was good work," commended the coach. "Keep it up."

The 'varsity made some changes then. Kendall went out and was replaced by Freer, Still gave way to St. Clair, and Gafferty went in for Hall at right guard. The fresh players saved the day for the 'varsity, for, although the second finally reached the twelve yards, it could go no further, and Captain Turner's try at a place-kick went a yard under the cross-bar. And that ended the practice

for the day.

In the locker-room Turner sought Clint out and said several nice things about his playing, ending with: "Guess we'll have to have you on the second, Thayer. You report to me tomorrow."

That undoubtedly was the turning point in Clint's football career for that year, for three days later the second cut came and the third squad ceased to be. Some fifteen fellows retired to private life or to their Hall teams and the rest were gathered into the second or went to the 'varsity to be tried out as substitutes. Clint was pretty certain that, had it not been for that Tuesday performance, he would have been one of the unfortunate fifteen.

Amy pretended to view Clint's advancement to the second team with alarm. "First thing I know," he said gloomily, "I'll be rooming with a regular Greek. You'll be having photographs taken to show your superb physical development, I dare say, and writing letters to the *Bulletin* signed 'Athlete.' As a matter of fact, Clint, I happened to see that performance this afternoon and you didn't fool me a bit. You tackled Carmine because he was in the way and you ran into him and put your arms around him to keep from falling on your nose. It was no brilliancy of yours that made the poor chap fumble the ball. You hit him like a load of bricks! If I'd been Carmine I'd have up and biffed you one! You were—were distinctly ungentlemanly, Clint. You should remember that even in football there are limits. To deliberately try to kill an opponent, as you did today, is not considered good form. Besides, Carmine's a friend of mine. We come from the same metropolis.

It would be a very painful thing if I had to write home to his folks that he had been killed on the field of battle by my room-mate. A most painful and embarrassing duty for me, Clint."

"It's going to be my painful and embarrassing duty to stuff a towel in your silly mouth in about two minutes," replied Clint. "How did you happen to see practice? I thought you were going to play tennis with Scannel."

"He didn't show up. I suppose his courage failed him at the last moment."

"Yes, it must be trying to beat anyone the way he beats you. I don't blame him for shirking it."

"When Bob Scannel beats me," replied Amy serenely, "you'll be playing football on the Varsity, old top, and I'll be getting A's in math., a far, far day!"

"I suppose I'll be going to training table before long," said Clint reflectively.

Amy groaned. "There you go! That's the sort of stuff I'll have to listen to from now on. I hope to goodness you choke on a prune! That's about all you'll get there; prunes and boiled rice. I'm not sure about the rice, either, at the second's table. I think the second simply has prunes. Boiled prunes for breakfast, roast prunes for dinner and dried prunes for supper. I—I shall expect to notice a wonderful imprunement in you very soon, Clint."

"And that's the sort of stuff *I* have to listen to!" exclaimed the other. "Honest, Amy, you make the bummiest jokes!"

"I think that was rather good, myself," said Amy cheerfully.

"I believe I'll send it to the *Bulletin*. I've observed of late that the *Bulletin* has lacked humour."

"Did it ever have any?" asked Clint, folding the letter he had been struggling over.

"Unconsciously, yes. Last year someone contributed a sonnet called 'Truth.' No one could see much sense in it until some smart chap discovered that the first letters of each line spelled 'The Bulletin is Punk.' Now when you want anything printed in the *Bulletin* you have to send a sworn statement that there isn't an acrostic concealed in it. The editors went gunning for the fellow who sent in the sonnet, but they never found him."

Clint laughed. "They didn't try 14 Torrence, then, did they?" he inquired. Amy smiled noncommittingly.

"Your insinuation pains me," he murmured.

"Why don't you deny it, then?"

"It is quite unnecessary. Anyone knowing my blameless career—"

"Have you saved a copy of it?"

"I believe there's one somewhere in my scrapbook," replied Amy carelessly. "Some time, if you are good, I'll look it up. Meanwhile, if you're through with your ridiculous chatter, we'll go to supper."

CHAPTER VI

THE RUNAWAY WHEEL

The following Saturday Brimfield went to Thacher to play Thacher School. As there was to be no practice for the second team, Clint decided to see the game. Rather to his surprise, Amy readily agreed to accompany him. Amy pretended a deep disdain for football and seldom attended practice or, for that matter, minor contests. It is probable that he consented to go to Thacher less to watch the game than for the sake of Clint's society, for by that time the two were fairly inseparable. The team started off about noon, but the "rooters", most of whom had eleven-thirty recitations, started an hour later, after a hurried dinner. Thacher was only twenty-odd miles away, but the journey occupied more than an hour, since it was necessary to take train to Wharton and change there to the trolley line.

It was a mild day, sunny and cloudless, and travelling, especially on the electric car, was very pleasant. The fellows were full of spirits and a bit noisy, and played pranks on each other and had a thoroughly good time. The only untoward incident occurred when Peters, the second team centre, fell off the running-board of the trolley car and rolled down a six-foot embankment. Fortunately the accident occurred on a curve and the car was running slowly. Still more fortunately, perhaps, Peters

was a rotund youth well padded with flesh and he sustained no injuries beyond a sprained thumb. By the time the car had been stopped and hurried back to the rescue Peters was climbing a trifle indignantly up the bank. For the rest of the way he amused himself and others within hearing by estimating the amount of damages he could collect from the railway company.

Something like an hour later, however, when Peters made the discovery that in his spectacular disembarkment he had emptied his pocket of all the money he had with him, a matter of ninety-four cents, he could no longer see the humorous aspect of the incident. For nearly two months he conducted a campaign of correspondence with the railway company seeking a refund of his money. Peters' claim against the company became a standing joke. In the end he was defeated. His contention that the company owed him the amount of money lost from his pocket resulted, after many days, in a reply from the claims agent to the effect that since the money was undoubtedly just where he had lost it and could be found by search the company could not be held responsible. To this Peters laboriously wrote that since the money had been abstracted from him while a passenger on the company's car it was up to the company to find it and return it to him. Also that, if the loss wasn't made good, he would bring suit against the company for injuries sustained. After a lapse of a fortnight the agent countered with a statement that as Peters had been riding on the running-board, contrary to the rules of the company, the company was in no way liable

for his injury. Peters replied that he had not ridden on the running-board from choice but that he had been unable to find accommodations on any other part of the car, and he wanted ninety-four cents, please. Whereupon a brief epistle announced that the matter had been referred to the legal department and, upon advice, the road was regretfully obliged to refuse further consideration of the claim. That settled the matter, except that Peters wrote once more and told the agent quite frankly what he, Peters, thought of the railway, its officers, legal department, road-bed, rolling-stock and claims department; especially claims department! Undoubtedly the company had grounds for libel after the receipt of that epistle, but it never made use of them.

But we are far ahead of our story.

The Thacher game was not especially interesting. Thacher faced Brimfield with a light team, and, unable to gain consistently through the line, reverted to kicking. This gave the visiting backs some good practice in the handling of punts but gained the home team little advantage. Brimfield rolled up twenty-six points in four ten-minute periods and was scored on but once when, in the third quarter, Thacher managed a brilliant field-goal from the enemy's thirty-three yards.

The contest was all over before four o'clock and Brimfield made a wild rush from the grounds to the town in the endeavour to get the four-fifteen trolley for Wharton. The team, which was provided with a coach, and about half the "rooters" succeeded, but the rest, Clint and Amy among them, arrived too late.

As there was not another car until a quarter to five, they set out to kill time by viewing the town. Thacher was not a very large place and, after wandering up one side of the main street and down the other, looking in all the windows, and leisurely partaking of college-ices at the principal drug store, there was still ten minutes left to be disposed of. At the moment of making the discovery they were a block from the square from which the trolley car trundled away to Wharton, and they could have covered the distance in something like ten seconds from a standing start. In spite of this, however, they never got that car!

Gradually they had become separated from the other fellows, and now they were alone in their grandeur watching the efforts of a youth of about twenty to start an automobile which stood in front of Thacher's principal hotel, the Commercial House. They were not especially interested in the spectacle and really didn't much care whether the youth ever got going, but there wasn't much else to look at. Every time the engine started and the youth made a wild dash at the throttle he reached it too late. Before he could pull it down the chug-chugging died away. Several minutes passed and Clint viewed the clock in front of a jewelry store across the street apprehensively. It was seventeen minutes of five. He tugged Amy's sleeve.

"Come on," he said. "We don't want to miss this one."

"Right-o," replied Amy. "Let's see, though, if he makes it this time."

"Say, one of you fellows pull that throttle down when I get her

going, will you?" asked the automobilist. Amy nodded and put his hand on the quadrant.

"Now then!" The engine started after several crankings and Amy pulled a lever. Unfortunately, however, he pulled the wrong one and the engine, as Amy said, immediately choked to death. The youth observed him more in sorrow than in anger and drew a sleeve over his perspiring forehead.

"Awfully sorry," said Amy. "I got the wrong handle. Try it again."

The clock showed four-forty-four and Clint saw the car roll around the corner into the square. "Come on," he begged. "We'll have to beat it, Amy." Amy nodded, but the youth was cranking again and he didn't want to desert his post. This time their combined efforts were crowned with success. The car awoke to a steady, frantic chugging. The youth mopped his forehead again.

"Want a ride?" he asked. "I'm going by the school."

"Not our school," said Amy. "We're from Brimfield."

"Well, I'll put you down in Wharton before the trolley gets there. That's where I'm going. Jump in."

Amy looked eagerly at Clint. "Want to?" he asked.

"Got to," replied Clint gloomily. "There goes the car, you silly chump!"

"All right," said Amy. "We don't have to get there until five-twenty, anyway. Come on, Clint."

They climbed into the back of the car and threw themselves luxuriously against the cushions.

"Home, James," commanded Amy.

The driver turned and grinned. He was a not-over-clean youth, and his hair was badly in need of a barber's attentions, but he was evidently good-natured. The car, which was an old one and had undoubtedly seen much better days, swung around and headed back toward Thacher School and the football field. The youth talked to them over his shoulder.

"She's hard to start," he said, "when she's been standing, but she can go all right. You wait till we're out of town and I'll show you. I got to go over to Wharton to get Mr. Cumnock."

"Who's he?" asked Amy disinterestedly.

"He runs the Commercial House. He comes out from New York on the express and I go over and get him."

"Oh, is this his car?"

"No, it belongs to Sterry, the liveryman. I drive for him. It's been a good car in its day, but it's pretty old now. Runs pretty well, though, when it's in shape."

"I hope," said Clint, "it's in shape today."

"Sure. I was two hours fixing it this morning. Now I'll show you if she can go."

He did and she could! They passed the school and the football field at a thirty-mile clip and, a little further out of town, hit it up still faster. Clint and Amy bumped around in the tonneau like two dried peas in a pod. The engine was by no means noiseless and from somewhere under their feet there came a protesting grind that nearly drowned their efforts at conversation.

Not that that mattered, though, for they were going too fast to talk, anyway. At first they were a bit uneasy, but presently when they found that the car did not jump into a ditch or vault a fence, they got over their nervousness and thoroughly enjoyed the well-nigh breathless sensation. The driver lolled back on his spine with a nonchalance that aroused Clint's admiration and envy. He wondered whether he would ever own a car and be able to go dashing through the scenery at forty miles an hour like this. And he was still wondering when something happened.

It happened so quickly that it was all over before it had begun. At least, so Amy declared afterwards. The car, which fortunately had decreased its speed to negotiate an abrupt turn in the road, suddenly shot down a slope at the left, turned around once and stopped with a disconcerting abruptness, its radiator against a four-inch birch tree. Clint and Amy picked themselves from the bottom of the tonneau and stared, more surprised than frightened. Behind them, on the level road, a wheel-present investigation showed that it was the forward left one—was proceeding firmly, independently on its way! As they looked, open-mouthed, it began to wobble, as though doubtful of the propriety of going off on its own hook like that, and finally, after turning around several times, like a dog making its bed, it subsided in the dust.

The driver of the car, still clutching the steering-wheel, turned a mildly surprised gaze on the boys. "Now, what," he asked slowly, "do you think of that?"

They both thought it decidedly strange, but they didn't say so. Clint laughed uncertainly and took a long breath and Amy viewed his surroundings interestedly.

"When," asked Amy, "does the next car go, please?"

That flippant remark broke the tension and the driver climbed gingerly out and viewed the bare hub. "It's lucky," he ruminated, "I had you fellows in back there. If you hadn't been there I guess she'd have turned turtle on me. Well, say, I've known this old boiler to do a heap of tricks, but this is a new one on me, all right!" He stood off and sought inspiration by scratching his head. The boys joined him on the ground. "Just naturally slid off the hub and rolled away!" murmured the youth. "What do you think of that?"

"I'd hate to tell you what I think of it," responded Amy. "Can you put it on again?"

"Yes, but it won't stay, because the nut's gone." He went off and rescued the wheel. "I guess the nut and the hub-cap came off down the road somewhere. Might look for 'em, but like as not they're a mile or two back."

"What will you do then?" asked Clint.

"Foot it to Wharton, I guess. Maybe I can find a telephone this side somewhere." He reflected. "I guess there's one at Maxwell's Stock Farm about three miles from here. I'll get Bumstead in Wharton to send out and tow me in."

"That's all right for you," said Amy, "but what are we supposed to do?"

"Guess you'll either have to foot it or wait till someone comes along. Sorry, but I didn't know that wheel was thinking of leaving."

"Do you reckon there'll be someone along?" asked Clint.

"Sure to be sooner or later."

"We'll get 'sooner or later' if we're not back at school in time for supper," murmured Amy. "Guess we'd better hike along, Clint. How far is Wharton from here?"

"About five miles, by road," said the youth. "Maybe less if you cross over there and hit the trolley line. Say, if you get over there you might catch a car. What time is it?"

"Just five-three," answered Clint.

"Oh, well, then there won't be one along for most a half-hour. That'll be your shortest way, though."

"We'll never get back before six," said Clint.

"More likely eight," replied Amy. "Well, it can't be helped. We might as well make the best of it. What are you going to do?"

The driver of the automobile looked up the road and down. "I might go back and look for that nut," he muttered, "or I might go on to Maxwell's, or I might stay here and wait for someone to come along. Guess I'll wait a while."

"Well, we've got to beat it," said Amy. "Sorry about your car. Is there anything we can do if we ever reach Wharton?"

The youth shook his head philosophically. "No, I'll get word to Bumstead before you get there, I guess. Much obliged. I'm sorry I got you into such a fix, fellows. I meant well." He grinned

broadly.

"That's all right," Clint replied. "It wasn't your fault. Good-bye. Straight across that field there, you say? How far is it to the trolley?"

"About half a mile, I guess. You'll see the poles pretty quick. Good-bye, fellows. Hope you get home all right. So long."

CHAPTER VII

LOST!

It was all well enough for the automobile driver to tell them go straight across the field, but it was quite another thing to do it, for there was a broad and deep stream in the middle of it and no sign of a bridge anywhere in sight. There was nothing to do but follow the stream in the general direction of Wharton until they could reach the trolley line. That brook wound in a most exasperating manner, finally heading back toward where they supposed the dirt road to be. Amy stopped and viewed it disgustedly.

"I'm going to wade it," he declared.

But Clint persuaded him against that plan, pointing out that he would be extremely uncomfortable riding on the trolley car with his clothes soaking wet. Amy grumbly agreed to give the stream another chance to behave itself. By that time they had been walking fully fifteen minutes and the scene of the accident was lost to sight and as yet there was no trace of the trolley line. Clint looked at his watch.

"I reckon," he said, "we wouldn't get that car even if we were on the other side now. The best thing for us to do is hit the road again and beat it for Wharton on foot."

Amy agreed and they turned their backs on the stubborn brook and set off across a meadow which presently gave place to a hill-

side field overgrown with bushes and weeds and prickly vines which clung to their trousers and snarled around their feet. Clint said they were wild raspberry and blackberry vines and Amy replied that he didn't care what sort of vines they were; they were a blooming nuisance. To avoid them, they struck westward again toward a stone wall, climbed it and found themselves in a patch of woods. They kept along the stone wall, dodging in and out through the trees, and ascending a hill. Presently it dawned on Clint that the stone wall, like the brook, was having fun with them. For, instead of running straight, as one would expect any decent stone wall to run, it was bending all the time to the west. Clint knew it was the west because the sun was disappearing there; perhaps *had* disappeared by now. He acquainted Amy with the discovery and they crawled across the wall again and found themselves in a worse tangle of briars than before. But they were desperate now. It was well after five and the shadows were getting long and black. They were both secretly rather glad to be out of the woods, although progress through the briars was far from enjoyable.

Finally Amy, pausing to wrest himself from the frantic clutches of a blackberry vine, raised his head and viewed Clint solemnly.

"Clint," he announced, "I've got something to tell you."

"Fire away."

"We're lost."

"I knew that ten minutes ago," was the reply.

"Then why didn't you tell a fellow? When I'm lost I like to know it. It's the—the uncertainty that worries me. Now that I know I shall never see school and Josh again I feel better." Amy looked about him appraisingly. "Have you noticed any berries or nuts, Clint? I suppose we'll have to live on them for a few days."

"You're the only nut I've seen so far," laughed Clint. "Come on and let's get out of here. If I've got to be lost I'd rather be lost where there aren't so many stickers."

"Yes," agreed Amy, "I suppose we must do the usual thing. We must walk until we drop. Then we cover ourselves with leaves, pillow our heads on a rock and sleep the sleep of exhaustion."

"What was that?" asked Clint.

"What was what? Don't tell me you heard a bear!"

"I guess it was the trolley car. Only it seemed to come from over that way, and that fellow said the trolley line was over there."

"I don't believe that fellow very well," responded Amy pessimistically. "He said he'd get us to Wharton, and he didn't. He said his old car would go, and it didn't. He said we could cross that field, and it didn't—I mean we couldn't. Anyway, I propose we find the road again and sit down and wait until someone comes along and gives us a lift."

"That's all very well, but which way *is* the road?"

Amy considered. "Search me," he said finally. "Let's play it's over there, though. After all, it doesn't matter which way you walk when you're lost. You always walk in circles. We'll be back here in a while, Clint. Why not make believe we've walked and

are back again?"

"Don't be an idiot," said Clint. "Come on. It'll be dark first thing we know and then we *will* be in a fix!"

"And I'm getting most awfully hungry," murmured Amy. "I shall search for berries as we toil weariedly onward."

When they at last left the pasture behind them they found themselves in another wood. Clint leaned hopelessly against a tree and shook his head.

"This has ceased to be a joke, Amy. We're just about lost as anything."

"Right-o!" Then he added cheerfully: "But we didn't walk in a circle, Clint. That's something. And that road must be somewhere around here. When you think of it it's mighty funny. There we were with a perfectly good road on one side of us and a trolley line on the other. We haven't crossed either of them. Now where the dickens are they?"

"The way I figure it," replied Clint thoughtfully, "is that the trolley was a lot farther off than he said it was and that the road turned to the left again after we got off it. One thing is certain, and that is that if we haven't crossed it it must be in front of us somewhere, and the only thing to do is keep on going."

"Until we drop," agreed Amy. "I shall begin and look for a nice comfortable place to drop. Say, we won't get a thing but hard looks when we get back—if ever we do."

"We'll be lucky if we get off with hard looks, I reckon," said Clint gloomily.

They went on through the woods. They were tired now and it was quite dark under the trees and they made slow progress. Once Clint tripped over a fallen branch and measured his length and once Amy ran head-on into a sapling and declared irately, as he rubbed his nose, that he would come back the next day with an axe and settle matters. At last, after a silence of many minutes: "We're doing it, I'll bet you anything," said Amy.

"Doing what?" asked Clint from the twilight.

"Walking in a circle. We must be. We've been in this place for twenty minutes, at least, and we haven't found a way out yet. Which way is it you go when you walk in a circle? To the left, isn't it?"

"Right, I think," answered Clint doubtfully.

"No, I'm pretty sure it's the left. Tell you what we'll do, we'll take shorter steps with our right legs, Clint"

They tried it, but nothing resulted. It was pitch-black now and, since the sun was gone, getting chillier every minute. Clint wished he had put on a vest, or, rather, waistcoat. He was about ready to give up when a patch of grey showed ahead and they made toward it to find themselves at the edge of the wood on a little hill. Below them spread uncertainly a bare field. Overhead a few stars shone. If the road was near it was too dark to see it. They sat down on the ground to rest. For several minutes neither spoke. Then Clint heard a chuckle from Amy.

"Glad you find it so funny," he grumbled resentfully.

"I was just thinking of something," gurgled Amy. "This is

Saturday, you know, and we always have cold lamb for supper on Saturdays. I hate cold lamb."

"I don't see where the joke comes in," grumbled Clint.

"Why, I don't have to eat the lamb, do I? Isn't that funny?"

"No, it isn't. I could eat cold-cold-cold dog! Come on. We might as well walk as sit here and freeze to death."

"I've read," said Amy, "that freezing was a pleasant death, but it doesn't seem so. Maybe, though, it's painful just at first." He arose with a groan and followed Clint down the slope. There were more briars, and now and then they stumbled over outcropping rocks. The field seemed interminable, but after awhile Clint bumped into a wall. They climbed over it and started on again.

"If there was only a moon," said Clint, "it would help some. You can't see a blessed thing."

"If there was a moon it wouldn't get through the clouds. It feels to me as if it might rain."

"You certainly have cheerful thoughts," Clint grumbled. "I wonder if it would do any good if we yelled."

"We might try it. Suppose we give the Brimfield cheer, Clint."

"Oh, shut up! You make me tired, Amy. Come on, now. Yell as loud as you can. All ready?"

"Hold on I What am I to yell?"

"Yell 'Help!' you idiot!"

"Oh, all right." They raised their voices together in a loud appealing shout. Then they listened. Not a sound answered them.

"Once more," said Clint. Again they shouted and again they

listened. Deep silence, broken only by the chirping of crickets.

"No good, I guess," said Clint despondently.

"Nobody home," murmured Amy. "Now what? I'll tell you frankly, as man to man, that I can't go on walking all night, Clint. I'm dog-tired and my left leg's got a cramp in it and I'm weak with hunger. Let's find a cosy corner somewhere and go to sleep."

"I reckon we'll have to. I'm about all in, too. We'd better find a place where there's more shelter than there is here, though. Gee, but we are certainly a fine pair of idiots!"

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