

Barbour Ralph Henry

**The Arrival of Jimpson, and
Other Stories for Boys about
Boys**



Ralph Barbour
The Arrival of Jimpson, and
Other Stories for Boys about Boys

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=23150451

The Arrival of Jimpson, and Other Stories for Boys about Boys:

ISBN <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/45689>

Содержание

THE ARRIVAL OF JIMPSON	4
I	4
II	9
III	12
BARCLAY'S BONFIRE	27
MARTY BROWN – MASCOT	35
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	47

Ralph Henry Barbour

The Arrival of Jimpson, and Other Stories for Boys about Boys

THE ARRIVAL OF JIMPSON

I THE DEPARTURE

The rain fell in a steady, remorseless drizzle upon the rain-coats and umbrellas of the throng that blocked the sidewalks and overflowed on to the car-tracks; but the fires of patriotism were unquenchable, and a thousand voices arose to the leaden sky in a fierce clamor of intense enthusiasm. It had rained all night. The streets ran water, and the spouts emptied their tides between the feet of the cheerers. The lumbering cars, their crimson sides glistening, clanged their way carefully through the crowds, and lent a dash of color to the scene. The back of Grays loomed cheerless and bleak through the drizzle, and beyond, the college yard lay deserted. In store windows the placards were hidden

behind the blurred and misty panes, and farther up the avenue, the tattered red flag above Foster's hung limp and dripping.

Under the leafless elm, the barge, filled to overflowing with departing heroes, stood ready for its start to Boston. On the steps, bareheaded and umbrellaless, stood Benham, '95, who, with outstretched and waving arms, was tempting the throng into ever greater vocal excesses.

"Now, then, fellows! Three times three for Meredith."

"Rah, 'rah, 'rah! 'rah, 'rah, 'rah! 'rah, 'rah, 'rah! Meredith!" A thousand throats raised the cry; umbrellas clashed wildly in mid-air; the crowd surged to and fro; horses curveted nervously; and the rain poured down impartially upon the reverend senior and the clamorous freshman.

"Fellows, you're not *half* cheering!" cried the relentless Benham. "Now, three long Harvards, three times three and three long Harvards for the team."

"Har-ward, Har-ward, Har-ward! 'Rah, 'rah, 'rah! 'rah, 'rah, 'rah! 'rah, 'rah, 'rah! Har-ward, Har-ward, Har-ward! Team!"

Inside the coach there was a babel of voices. Members of the eleven leaned out and conversed jerkily with friends on the sidewalk. Valises and suit-cases were piled high in the aisle and held in the owners' laps. The manager was checking off his list.

"Cowper?"

"Here."

"Turner?"

"All right."

“Truesdale?”

“Hey? Oh, yes; I’m here.” The manager folded the list. Then a penciled line on the margin caught his eye.

“Who’s Jameson? Jameson here?”

“Should be Jimpson,” corrected the man next to him; and a low voice called from the far end of the barge:

“Here, sir.” It sounded so much like the response of a schoolboy to the teacher that the hearers laughed with the mirth begot of tight-stretched nerves. A youth wearing a faded brown ulster, who was between Gates, the big center, and the corner of the coach, grew painfully red in the face, and went into retirement behind the big man’s shoulder.

“Who is this fellow Jimpson?” queried a man in a yellow mackintosh.

“Jimpson? He’s a freshie. Trying for right half-back all fall. I suppose Brattle took him along, now that Ward’s given up, to substitute Sills. They say he’s an A 1 runner, and plucky. He’s played some on the second eleven. Taunton told me, the other day, that he played great ball at Exeter, last year.”

The strident strains of the Washington Post burst out on the air, urging the cheerers to even greater efforts. They were cheering indiscriminately now. Trainer, rubbers, and coaches had received their shares of the ovation. But Benham, ’95, with his coat soaked through, was still unsatisfied, and sought for further tests. Two professors, half hidden under umbrellas, had emerged from the yard, and were standing at a little distance,

watching the scene.

“Three times three for Professor Dablee!” The cheers that followed were mixed with laughter, and the two professors moved off, but not until the identity of the second had been revealed, and the air had filled with the refrain of “Rah, ’rah, ’rah! Pollock!”

“They look as though they ought to win; don’t you think so?” asked one of them.

The other professor frowned.

“Yes, they look like that; every eleven does. You’d think, to see them before a game, that nothing short of a pile-driver or dynamite could drive them an inch. And a few days later they return, heartbroken and defeated.”

Across the square floated a husky bellow:

“Now, then, fellows! Once more! All together! Three times three for Harvard!”

The band played wildly, frenziedly, out of time and tune; the crowd strained its tired throats for one last farewell slogan; the men in the barge waved their hands; the horses jumped forward; a belated riser in Holyoke threw open a front window, and drowsily yelled, “*Shut up*”; and the Harvard eleven sped on its way up the avenue, and soon became a blur in the gray vista.

“Say, Bob, you forgot to cheer Jimpson.”

The wearied youth faced his accuser, struck an attitude indicative of intense despair, and then joyfully seized the opportunity.

“Fellows! Fellows! Hold on! Three times three for Jim – Jim – who’d you say?”

“Jimpson,” prompted the friend.

“Three times three for Jimpson! Now, then, all together!”

“Say – who *is* Jimpson?” shouted a dozen voices at once.

“Don’t know. Don’t care. Three times three for Jimpson!”

And so that youth, had he but known it, received a cheer, after all. But he didn’t know it – at least, not until long afterward, when cheers meant so much less to him.

II

A LETTER

New Haven, Conn., November 19.

Dear Mother: I can imagine your surprise upon receiving a letter from this place, when your dutiful son is supposed to be “grinding” in No. 3 °College House, Cambridge. And the truth is that the dutiful son is surprised himself. Here am I, with some thirty-five other chaps, making ready for the big football game with Yale to-morrow. Here is how it happened:

Yesterday morning, Brattle – he’s our captain – came to my room, routed me out of bed, and told me to report to the coaches for morning practise. You know, I’ve been trying for substitute right half-back. Ward, the regular, sprained his knee in the Dartmouth game, and a few days ago it went lame again. So now Sills has Ward’s place, and I’m to substitute Sills. And if he gets laid out – and maybe I ought to hope he won’t – I go in and play. What do you think of that? Of course Sills may last the entire game; but they say he has a weak back, only he won’t own up to it, and may have to give up after the first half. Gates told me this on the train. Gates is the big center, and weighs 196. He is very kind, and we chummed all the way from Boston. I didn’t know any of the fellows, except a few by sight – just enough to nod to, you know.

We left Cambridge in a driving rain, and a big crowd stood out in it all, and cheered the eleven, and the captain, and the college, and everything they could think of. Every fellow on the first and second elevens, and every "sub" was cheered – all except Mr. Jimpson. They didn't know of his existence! But I didn't feel bad – not very, anyhow. I hope the rest of the fellows didn't notice the omission, however. But I made up my mind that if I get half a show, I'll make 'em cheer Jimpson, too. Just let me get on the field. I feel to-night as though I could go through the whole Yale team. Perhaps if I get out there, facing a big Yale man, I'll not feel so strong.

You know, you've always thought I was big. Well, to-day I overheard a fellow asking one of the men, "Who is that little chap with the red cheeks?" I'm a midget beside most of the other fellows. If I play to-morrow, I'll be the lightest man on the team, with the exception of Turner, our quarterback, who weighs 158. I beat him by three pounds.

Such a hubbub as there is in this town to-night! Everybody seems crazy with excitement. Of course I haven't the slightest idea who is going to win, but to look at our fellows, you'd think they would have things their own way. I haven't seen any of the Yale players. We practised on their field for an hour or so this afternoon, but they didn't show up. There was a big crowd of Yale students looking on. Of course every fellow of us did his very worst; but the spectators didn't say anything – just looked wise.

Most of the fellows are terribly nervous to-night. They go around as though they were looking for something, and

would cry if they didn't find it soon. And the trainer is the worst of all. Brattle, the captain, is fine, though. He isn't any more nervous than an alligator, and has been sitting *still all the evening*, talking with a lot of the old graduates about the game. Once he came in the writing-room, where I'm sitting, and asked what I was doing. When I told him, he smiled, and said to tell you that if anything happened he'd look after my *remains* himself! Maybe he thought I was nervous. But if I am, I'm not the only one. Gates is writing to his mother, too, at the other table.

Give my love to Will and Bess. Tell Will to send my old skates to me. I shall want them. There is fine skating on Fresh Pond, which, by the way, is a lake.

We're ordered off to bed. I guess some of us won't sleep very well. I'm rather excited myself, but I guess I'm tired enough to sleep. I'll write again when I get back to college. With bushels of love to all,

Yours affectionately,

Tom.

III

THE “ARRIVAL”

Jimpson sat on the ground, and watched with breathless interest two charging, tattered, writhing lines of men. Jimpson felt a good deal like an outcast, and looked like a North American Indian. Only legs and face were visible; the rest of Jimpson was enveloped in a big gray blanket with barbaric red borders. Some two dozen counterparts of Jimpson sat or lay near by, stretching along the side-line in front of the Harvard section of the grand stand. Behind them a thousand enthusiastic mortals were shouting pæans to the goddess of victory, and, unless that lady was deaf, she must have heard the pæans, however little she approved of them. The most popular one was sung to a well-known tune:

“As we’re strolling through Fifth Avenue
With an independent air,
The ladies turn and stare,
The chappies shout, ‘Ah, there!’
And the population cries aloud,
‘Now, aren’t they just the swellest crowd,
The men that broke Old Eli at New Haven!’”

And a mighty response swept across the field from where a

bank of blue rose from the green of the field to the lighter blue of the sky. It was a martial air, with a prophecy of victory:

“Shout aloud the battle-cry
Of Yale, Yale, Yale!
Wave her standard far and high
For Yale, Yale, Yale!
See the foe retreat before us,
Sons of Eli, shout the chorus,
Yale, Yale, Yale, Yale, Yale!”

Harvard and Yale were doing battle once more, and twenty thousand people were looking on. The score-board announced: Harvard, 4; Yale, 0. Yale's ball. 15 minutes to play.

The story of twenty minutes of the first half is soon told. It had been Yale's kick-off. Haag had sent the ball down the field to Harvard's 20-yard line, and Van Brandt had gathered it in his long arms, and, with Meredith ahead, had landed it back in the middle of the field. But the fourth down gave it to their opponents after a loss of two yards, and the pigskin went down again to Harvard's territory, coming to a stop at the white line that marked thirty-five yards. Here Harvard's new half-back kick had been tried, and the ball went high in air, and the field went after it; and when the Yale full-back got his hands on it, he was content with a bare five yards, and it was Yale's ball on her 40-yard line. Then happened a piece of ill luck for the wearers of the blue. On the second down, Kurtz fumbled the pass, the ball rolled toward

Yale's goal, and Brattle broke through the opposing left tackle and fell on it.

And while a thunderous roar of joy floated across the field from the followers of the Crimson, the teams lined up on Yale's thirty yards. Twice Meredith tried to go through between center and left guard, and a bare yard was the reward. Then Van Brandt had run back as for a kick; the ball was snapped, passed to Sills, Harvard's right half-back, and, with it safely under his arm, he had skirted the Yale left, and fallen and wriggled and squirmed across the goal-line for the first touch-down.

Then ensued five minutes of bedlam, and after the victorious seats had settled into excited complacency, Van Brandt had tried for goal. But success was too much to hope for, and the two teams trotted back to the middle of the field, with the score 4 to 0. Then had the sons of Eli shown of what they were made, and in the next ten minutes the ball had progressed with fatal steadiness from the center of the field to the region of the Crimson's twenty yards. And now it was Yale's ball on the second down, and the silence was so intense that the signal was heard as plainly by the watchers at the far end of the field as by the twenty-two stern-faced warriors who faced each other almost under the shadow of the goal-posts.

"Twelve, six, twelve, fifty-two!"

And the backs, led by the guards, hurled their weight against Harvard's right tackle; and when the ball was found, Baker held it within a few inches of the 10-yard line.

The cheers of Yale had now grown continuous; section after section passed the slogan along. The stand across the field looked to Jimpson like a field of waving blue gentians. On the Harvard seats the uproar was less intense, and seemed a trifle forced; and the men near by were breathing heavily, and restively creeping down the line.

Again the lines were formed. Jimpson could see the tall form of the gallant Gates settle down into a hunchback, toad-like position to receive the coming onslaught. Billings, the right tackle, was evidently expecting another experience like the last. He looked nervous, and Gates turned his head and spoke to him under cover of the first numbers of the signal.

The guards were back of the line again, and their elbows almost brushed as they stood between the half-backs. Silence reigned. The referee skipped nimbly out of the way.

"Seven, seventeen, eighty-one, thirty!"

Again the weakening tackle was thrust aside, and although the Crimson line held better, the ball was three yards nearer home when the whistle blew, and Billings, somewhat dazed, had to call for a short delay.

"First down again," muttered a brawny sub at Jimpson's elbow. "Why doesn't he take Billings out?"

Again the signal came. Again a jumbled mass of arms and legs for a moment hid the result. Then the men on the stand overlooking the goal-line arose *en masse*, and a mighty cheer traveled up the field, growing in volume until Jimpson could not

hear his own groans nor the loud groans of a big sub. Back of the line, and almost equidistant of the posts, lay the Yale full-back; and the ball was held tightly to earth between outstretched hands. The prostrate players were slowly gaining their feet; but Billings and Sills lay where they had fallen. Then Brattle stepped toward the side line, holding up his hand. With a leap Jimpson was on his feet. But the big chap beside him had already pulled off his sweater, and now, tossing it into Jimpson's face, he sped gleefully toward the captain.

Jimpson sat down again in deep disappointment; and a moment later, Billings, supported on either side, limped from the gridiron, amid the cheers of the Harvard supporters. Sills was on his feet again, and the trainer was talking to him. Jimpson could see the plucky fellow shaking his head. Then, after a moment of indecision, the trainer left him, the whistle sounded, the Crimson team lined up back of the line, and Kurtz was poising the ball for a try at goal. The result was scarcely in doubt, and the ball sailed cleanly between the posts, a good two feet above the cross-bar; and the score-board said, "Harvard, 4; Yale, 6"; and there were three minutes more of the half.

Back went the ball to the 55-yard line, and loud arose the cheers of the triumphant friends of Yale. Gates kicked off, and Warner sent the ball back again, with a gain of ten yards. Sills caught it and ran, but was downed well inside Harvard territory, and the half ended with the ball in Yale's hands. Jimpson seized his blanket, and trotted after the eleven to the quarters. He found

Gates stripping for a rub-down.

“Well, my lad,” panted the latter, “could you discern from where you were just what kind of a cyclone struck us?” But Jimpson was too much interested for such levity.

“Do you think I’ll get in this half, Gates?”

“Can’t say. Take a look at Sills, and judge for yourself.”

That gentleman was having his lame back rubbed by a trainer, but he appeared to Jimpson good for at least another quarter of an hour.

It seemed but a moment after they had reached the rooms that the word of “Time’s up, fellows,” was passed, and renewed cheering from without indorsed the fact. But a moment or two still remained, and that moment belonged to Brattle. He stood on a bench and addressed the hearers very quietly:

“We’re going to kick, this half, fellows. I want every man to get down the field on the instant, without stopping to hold. I don’t think they can keep us from scoring at least once more; but every man has got to *work*. When the time comes to put the ball over the line, I expect it to go over with a rush. Let every man play the best game he knows, but *play together*. Remember that lack of teamwork has often defeated us. And now, fellows, three times three for Harvard!”

And what a yell that was! Jimpson went purple in the face, and the head coach cheered his spectacles off. And then out they all went on a trot, big Gates doing a coltish handspring in mid-field, to the great delight of the Crimson’s wearers. The college band

played; thirty thousand people said something all together; and then the great quadrangle was silent, the whistle piped merrily, and the ball soared into air again.

Jimpson took up his position on the side-line once more, and watched with envious heart the lucky players. For the great, overwhelming desire of Jimpson's soul was to be out there on the torn turf, doing great deeds, and being trampled under foot. He watched the redoubtable Sills as a cat watches a mouse. Every falter of that player brought fresh hope to Jimpson. He would have liked to rise and make an impassioned speech in the interests of humanity, protesting against allowing a man in Sills's condition to remain in the game. Jimpson's heart revolted at the cruelty of it.

Some such idea as this he had expressed to Gates, that morning; and the big center had giggled in deep amusement; in fact, he had refused to recognize the disinterested character of Jimpson's protest.

"Don't you think," Jimpson had pleaded, "that I might ask Brattle to give me a show in the second half?"

"No, I don't," Gates had answered bluntly. "You're an unknown quantity, my boy; as the Frenchies say, you haven't 'arrived.' For a player who hasn't 'arrived' to try to give the captain points would be shocking bad taste. That's how it is. Sills is a good player. As long as he can hold his head up, he'll be allowed to play. When he's laid out, Brattle will give you a show. He can't help himself; you're the only chap that he can trust

in the position. And look here; when that time comes, just you remember the signals, and *keep your eyes on the ball*. That's all you'll have to do. Don't take your eyes off the leather, even if the sky falls!"

Jimpson remembered the conversation, and thought ruefully that it was easy enough for a fellow who has everything that heart can desire to spout good advice to chaps on the side-lines. Perhaps if Gates were in his (Jimpson's) place he'd not be any too patient himself. The score-board said fifteen minutes to play. Sills still held up his stubborn head, and Jimpson's chances grew dimmer and dimmer as moments sped.

Harvard's kicking tactics had netted her long gains time and again, and twice had she reached Yale's 10-yard line, only to be grimly held and hurled back. Yale, on the other hand, had only once reached scoring distance of their opponent's goal, and had been successfully held for downs. Veterans of the game declared enthusiastically, between bets, that it was "the snappiest game of the decade!" and supporters of Harvard said among themselves that it was beautifully conducive to heart-disease. Perhaps never had the two colleges turned out teams so evenly balanced in both offense and defense. The bets had become "one to two that Harvard doesn't score again."

Harvard's quarter had given place to a substitute, and her left guard had retired injured. Yale had fared no better, possibly worse, since her crack full-back had been forced to yield to a somewhat inferior sub. And now the hands on the score-board

turned again, and only ten minutes remained.

The ball was down near Harvard's 40-yard line, and when it was snapped back, Sills took it for a "round-the-end run." But Yale's big left half-back was waiting for him, and the two went to earth together near the side-line and almost at Jimpson's feet. And then it was that that youth's heart did queer feats inside him, and seemed trying to get out. For Sills lay a while where he had fallen, and when he could walk the doctor had sent him from the field. Brattle beckoned to Jimpson. With trembling fingers Jimpson struggled with his sweater; but had not a neighbor come to his assistance, he would never have wriggled out of it before the game was called.

Brattle met him, and, laying an arm over his shoulder, walked him a few paces apart. Jimpson's heart, which had become more normal in action, threatened another invasion of his throat, and he wondered if everybody was looking on. Then he stopped speculating, and listened to what the captain was saying.

"We've only eight minutes to play. The ball has *got* to go over, Jimpson. I've seen you run, and I believe you can make it if you try. The ball is yours on the second down. Try the right end; don't be afraid of swinging out into the field. Whatever you do, don't let go of the ball. If Turner puts you through the line, keep your head down, but jump high. Now, go in, and let's see what you can do." He gave Jimpson an encouraging slap on the back that almost precipitated that youth into the quarter, and Jimpson saw the broad backs before him settling down, and heard the labored

breathing of the men.

"Ninety-one, twenty-eight, seventy-three, sixty-four – six!"

Jimpson suddenly found himself pushing the left half-back against a surging wall of tattered blue. Then some one seized him about the waist, and he picked himself up from the ground eight feet away from the scene of battle.

"That's what comes of being so small and light," he growled to himself, as he trotted back. But the thirst of battle was in Jimpson's soul, and he marked the Yale end who had treated him so contemptuously.

The try between right tackle and end had netted a bare yard, and Jimpson tried to look self-possessed while his back was running with little chills and his throat was dry as dust. The next chance was his, and he waited the signal anxiously, to learn whether the pass was direct or double. The other half-back imperceptibly dropped back a foot. The quarter looked around. The lines swayed and heaved.

"Twenty-seven, sixty-three, forty-five, seventy-two – five!"

Jimpson leaped forward; the left half-back darted across him, the quarter passed neatly, and, with the Harvard left end beside him, he was sweeping down to the right and into the field. The Yale end went down before the mighty Cowper; and Jimpson, sighting a clear space, sped through. He could feel the field trailing after him, and could hear the sounds of the falling men. Before him in the distance, a little to the left, came the Yale full-back. Almost upon him was the Yale left half, looking big and

ugly. But, with a final spurt, Van Brandt ran even, and gave the shoulder to the enemy; and as they went down together, Jimpson leaped free, and, running on, knew that at last he was left to shift for himself. Of the foes behind he had no fear; of the full-back running cautiously down on him he feared everything. But he clutched the ball tighter, and raced on straight as an arrow toward the only player between him and the goal that loomed so far down the field.

He heard now the mighty sound of voices cheering him on, saw without looking the crowded stands to the right; and then something whispered of danger from behind, and, scarcely daring to do so, lest he trip and fall, glanced hurriedly over his shoulder into the staring eyes of a runner. And now he could hear the other's short, labored gasps. Before him but a scant ten yards was the full-back. Jimpson's mind was made up on the instant. Easing his pace the least bit, he swung abruptly to the left. He well knew the risk he ran, but he judged himself capable of making up the lost ground. As he had thought, the pursuer was little expecting such a deliberate divergence from the course, and, as a result, he overran, and then turned clumsily, striking for a point between Jimpson and the left goal-post. The full-back had noted the change, of course, on the instant, and was now running for about the same intersecting point as the other. The three runners formed a triangle. For the moment the pursuer was out of reckoning, and Jimpson could give all his skill to eluding the full-back, who faced him, ready for a tackle.

And here Jimpson's lighter weight stood him in good stead. Clutching the ball tightly, he made a feint to the left, and then flung himself quickly to the right. As he did so he spun around. The full-back's hand reached his canvas jacket, slipped, and found a slight hold upon his trousers; and Jimpson, scarcely recovered from his turn, fell on one knee, the full-back also falling in his effort to hold. At that moment the pursuer reached the spot, and sprang toward Jimpson.

The shouts had ceased, and thirty thousand persons were holding their breath. The next moment a shout of triumph went up, and Jimpson was speeding on toward the Yale goal. For as the last man had thrown himself forward, Jimpson had struggled to his feet, the full-back following, and the two Yale men had crashed together with a shock that left the full-back prostrate upon the turf. The other had regained himself quickly, and taken up the pursuit; but Jimpson was already almost ten yards to the good, and, although his breath was coming in short, painful gasps, and the white lines seemed rods apart, the goal became nearer and nearer. But the blue-stockinged runner was not done, and the cries of the Crimson well-wishers were stilled as the little space between the two runners grew perceptibly less.

Jimpson, with his eyes fixed in agony upon the last white line under the goal-posts, struggled on. One ankle had been wrenched in his rapid turn, and it pained frightfully as it took the ground. He could hear the steps of the pursuing foe almost at his heels, and, try as he might, he could not cover the ground any faster.

His brain reeled, and he thought each moment that he must fall.

But the thought of what that touch-down meant, and the recollection of the captain's words, nerved him afresh. The goal-line was plain before him now; ten yards only remained. The air was filled with cheers; but to Jimpson everything save that little white line and the sound of the pounding steps behind him was obliterated.

Success seemed assured, when a touch on his shoulder made the landscape reel before his eyes. It was not a clutch – just fingers grasping at his smooth jacket, unable as yet to find a hold.

The last white line but one passed haltingly, slowly, under his feet. The fingers traveled upward, and suddenly a firm grasp settled upon his shoulder. He tried to swing free, faltered, stumbled, recovered himself with a last supreme effort, and, holding the ball at arm's length, threw himself forward, face down. And as the enemy crashed upon him, Jimpson tried hard to gasp "Down!" but found he couldn't, and then – didn't care at all.

When he came to he found a crowd of players about him. Faces almost strange to him were smiling, and the captain was holding his head. His right foot pained frantically, and the doctor and rubbers were busy over him.

"Was it – was it over?" he asked weakly.

"Easy, old chap – with an inch to spare," replied the lips above. "Listen!"

Jimpson tried to raise his head, but it felt so funny that he gave

up the effort. But, despite the woolen sweater bunched up for a pillow, he heard a deep roar that sounded like the breakers on the beach at home. Then he smiled, and fainted once more.

But the score-board had changed its figures again: Harvard, 8; Yale, 6. Touch-down. Harvard's ball. 3 minutes to play.

And the deep, exultant roar went on, resolving itself into "H-a-r-vard! H-a-r-vard!"

The band was playing Washington Post. Harvard Square was bright under a lurid glow of red fire. Cheering humanity was packed tight from the street to the balustrade of Matthews, and from there up and across the yard. Cannon crackers punctuated the blare of noise with sharp detonations. The college was out in full force to welcome home the football heroes, and staid and prim old Cambridge lent her quota to the throng. From the back of Grays the cheering grew louder, and the crowd surged toward the avenue. The band broke ranks and skeltered after. A four-horse barge drew up slowly at the curb, and, one after another, the men dropped out, tightly clutching their bags, and strove to slip away through the throng. But each was eventually captured, his luggage confiscated, and himself raised to the shoulders of riotous admirers. When all were out and up, the band started the strains of Fair Harvard, and thousands of voices joined in. The procession moved. Jimpson, proud and happy and somewhat embarrassed, was well up in the line. When the corner was turned and the yard reached the roar increased in volume. Cheers for the eleven, for Harvard, for Brattle, were filling the air. And then

suddenly Jimpson's heart leaped at the sound of his own name from thousands of throats.

"Now, fellows, three long Harvards, and three times three for Jimpson!" In the roar that followed Jimpson addressed his bearers.

"Won't you please let me go now? I – I'm not feeling very well, and – and I'm only a sub, you know."

The plea of illness moved his captors, and Jimpson was dropped to earth, and his valise restored. There was no notice taken of him as he slipped stealthfully through the outskirts of the throng, and as he reached the corner of Holden Chapel he paused and listened.

To the dark heavens arose a prolonged, impatient demand from thousands of Harvard throats. The listener heard, and then fled toward the dark building across the street, and, reaching his room, locked the door behind him. But still he could hear the cries, loudly and impatiently repeated: "We – want – Jimp-son! We – want – Jimp-son! Jimp-son!"

BARCLAY'S BONFIRE

Cobb, 1901, assistant editor of the Daily Quarmazi, left the office, crossed the road and entered the college yard by the simple expedient of placing one hand on the fence and vaulting over upon the forbidden grass. Cobb had a Latin book under one arm – for even if one labors on a college paper to mold undergraduate opinion, he is not exempt from a certain amount of class attendance – and carried an open letter in his hand. His round, good-natured face wore a broad grin; and whenever he looked at the letter the grin increased.

He entered the first entrance to Grays Hall, bounded up two flights of narrow stairway, and pounded at a door. An invitation to enter came faintly through two thicknesses of oak, and Cobb confronted the single occupant of the room.

“How are you, Barclay? Thanks, no, can’t stop! Just dropped ’round to leave this with you. Got it in this morning’s mail at the office. Said to myself, ‘Just one man in college who’ll take interest in this; that’s Barclay.’ So I brought it to you. Might answer it, eh? Good idea, seems to me. Hope you’ll be able to do something about it. ’Bye!” And Cobb, grinning like a jovial satyr, was gone.

Barclay, ’99, laid his pen aside with slow deliberateness, marked his place in the big Greek lexicon beside him, and took up the letter. It was addressed to the editor of the Quarmazi, and

was signed "Hiram G. Larkin, Yale, '99." The writer asked to be put in communication with some student in the rival college who was interested in checkers. He dwelt enthusiastically on the formation of a dual checker league. He pointed out the fact that although chess, whist and other games of skill and science were recognized and participated in each year by teams representing the two universities, the noble game of checkers had been hitherto woefully neglected. He suggested that teams be formed at each university, and that a tournament be played to decide the championship.

When Barclay laid aside the letter, his long and ascetic face held an expression of enthusiastic delight. The one dissipation and hobby of Barclay's studious existence was checkers. He held a college-wide reputation as a "grind" of the most pronounced type. Barclay did not look down on the usual pleasures and frolics of the undergraduate; they simply had for him no appeal. He had nothing against football or baseball or track athletics; but he felt no enthusiasm for any of them.

Of course he was always glad when the college teams won; he was "patriotic" to a high degree, and sometimes, when the bonfires burned and the students cheered and sang, he acknowledged a wish, lying deep down in his heart, that he, too, might be able to derive pleasurable emotions from such celebrations. Barclay, in short, loved Xenophanes and Xenophon; and next to them, checkers.

Before he went to bed that night he answered the Yale man's

letter; indorsed the project voluminously; pledged immediate cooperation, and remained fraternally his, Simonides P. Barclay.

I have no intention of specifying in detail the steps which resulted in the formation of the Intercollegiate Checkers Association. Barclay and Larkin wrote to each other at least every other day, and at the end of three weeks the matter was settled – not, perhaps, just as they had hoped for. Barclay had labored heroically to find a membership for the Checkers Club, but without avail. None wanted to join. Many scoffed, and instead of enthusiasm, he awakened only ridicule. And the Yale man reported like results. So when the rival teams met in a private room in Young's Hotel one December day, they consisted of just Larkin, Yale, '99, and Barclay.

The tournament was held behind tightly closed doors; consequently I am unable to report the play for the reader's benefit. Enough that deep silence and undoubted skill held sway until dusk, at which time the two teams passed into the dining-hall and ate a dinner, at which much good feeling was displayed by both, and at which the day's play was rehearsed scientifically, from oysters to coffee. The teams then shook hands and parted at the entrance.

Barclay boarded a car and returned to college, filled with overwhelming triumph. He had won three out of the seven games and drawn two. The checkers championship rested with Harvard!

Such a spirit of jubilation possessed Barclay that when he reached his unadorned room and had changed his gold-rimmed

glasses for his reading spectacles, he found that Greek for once did not satisfy. He tried light reading in the form of a monograph on the origin of Greek drama, but even then his attention wandered continually. He laid down the book, wiped his glasses thoughtfully and frowned at the green lamp-shade. Plainly something was wrong; but what? He pondered deeply for several minutes. Then his brow cleared, and he settled his “specs” over his lean nose again; he had found the trouble.

“The victory,” said Barclay, soberly, to the lamp-shade, “demands a celebration!”

The more he thought of it the more evident it appeared that the day’s triumph over the Yale Checkers Club deserved some sort of a public jubilee. He might, considered Barclay, put his head out of the window and cheer. But he wasn’t sure that he knew how. Or he might shoot off a revolver – if he had one. Or he might start a bonfire – ah, that was it; a bonfire! The idea appealed strongly to him; and he remembered that as a boy on a New Hampshire farm bonfires had ever moved him strangely.

He arose and thrust his feet into a pair of immense overshoes, tied a muffler about his long neck, donned his worn ulster, turned down the lamp, and passed out of the room. Yes, he would celebrate with a bonfire. A victory over Yale at checkers was quite as important in Barclay’s estimation as a triumph over the blue-stockinged football warriors.

Fifteen minutes later a window at the upper end of the college yard was slammed open, and a voice bawled into the frosty night:

“Heads out! All heads out!”

Then up and down the quadrangle, casements were raised and broad beams of light glowed out into the gloom, while dozens of other voices passed on the slogan:

“Heads out, fellows! Heads out!”

“What’s up?” cried a thin voice from an upper window of Thayer.

“Bonfire in front of University!” was the answer.

“Bonfire in the yard! All heads out!” sped the cry.

“Everybody get wood!” shouted a voice from Weld.

“Everybody get wood!” shouted half a hundred other voices.

Then windows were shut and eager youths clattered downstairs and into the yard, and suddenly the quiet night had become a pandemonium. In front of University Hall a lone figure fed, with shingles and odd bits of wood, a small bonfire, which cast its wan glow against the white front of the sober pile, as if dismayed at its own temerity. For bonfires in the yard are strictly forbidden, and it was many years before that the last one had sent its sparks up in front of University. Barclay knew this, and welcomed the danger of probation or dismissal as adding an appropriate touch of the grand and heroic to his celebration.

“Everybody get wood!” “What’s it for?” “Rah for the bonfire!” “Who’s doing it?” “Wood, wood, get wood, fellows!”

One of the first to reach the scene was Cobb, 1901. A dozen others were close behind him.

“Hello, what’s up? What we celebrating?” he asked

breathlessly; then he caught a glimpse of the thin, bespectacled visage of Barclay, and gasped, "Why, why, it's old Barclay!"

"Rah for Barclay, old grind!" shouted another. "He's the stuff! Everybody get wood!"

At that moment a worn-out hen-coop arrived suddenly on the scene, and a shower of sparks told that the fire was gaining courage.

"But, say, old man, what's it all about?" asked Cobb.

"We are celebrating a victory over Yale," answered Barclay, soberly, as he adjusted a plank with his foot. There was no undue excitement exhibited by this tall figure in the long ulster, but underneath his calm the blood raced madly through his veins, and a strange and well-nigh uncontrollable joy possessed him as the flames leaped higher and higher. He stooped and picked a brand from the edge of the fire. He waved it thrice about his head, sending the flaring sparks over the ever-increasing crowd.

"Hooray!" he yelled, in queer, uncanny tones.

"Rah, 'rah, 'rah!" answered the throng. "Everybody get wood!"

"But what'd we do to 'em?" asked Cobb, wonderingly. "What was the victory?"

"Won the checker championship!" answered Barclay, proudly.

A roar of laughter went up; fellows fell on their neighbors' necks and giggled hysterically; a football man sat down in the fire and had to be rescued by his friends; Cobb hugged Barclay and patted him on the back.

“Good old Barclay!” he gurgled. “Oh, good old Barclay! Won the checker champ – champ – champ – oh, dear, oh, dear! Somebody hit me before I – I – ”

“More wood!” bawled some one. “Rah for Barclay, the champion checkerist! Everybody cheer for Barclay!”

And everybody did, many, many times. More wood leaped from out the darkness and fell upon the flaming heap, which now rose to the fellows’ shoulders and crackled right merrily. The vicinity of the bonfire was black with yelling, laughing students; and every moment their number grew, as the light was seen at distant dormitories or the shouting was heard across the avenue.

“Speech!” cried the throng. “Speech! Speech!” And Barclay was quickly elevated to the shoulders of Cobb and another, and from there spoke feelingly of the inception and growth of the Checkers Club; of the tournament and of the victory. Very few heard all that speech, for it was cheered incessantly; and those at the edge of the crowd yelled: “Who’s the fellow that’s talking?” “What’d he do?” “It’s Dewey!” “No, it’s – ”

At that moment some one started a song, and by common impulse the students formed in line and began the circuit of the yard, Barclay, on the shoulders of the two riotous friends, leading the procession. Thrice around they went, singing the college songs, cheering on every provocation, claspings arms and swinging ecstatically from side to side and raising such an uproar as the old college had not often heard.

“The most gorgeous bonfire since we won the boat-race!”

panted a senior, at the end of the parade. "And the biggest celebration; but I'd like jolly well to know what it's for!"

"Join hands!" was the cry, and soon three great rings of dancing, striding youths were circling the fire, their fantastic shadows leaping grotesquely across the front of the buildings. And just when the frolic was at its height, and the fire was crackling more joyously than ever; just when the quiet winter stars were hearkening for the fiftieth time to the hoarse cheers in honor of Barclay, the dean and three professors walked into the circle of radiance, and the throng melted as if by magic, until Barclay, spectacleless, hatless, but exultant, was left standing alone by his bonfire.

"Ah, Mr. Barclay," said the dean, pleasantly, "will you kindly call on me to-morrow?"

"I think we will let the matter drop," said the dean next day, hiding a smile under an affected frown, "if you will promise, Mr. Barclay, to indulge yourself in no more – ah – " the dean's voice failed him, and he swallowed spasmodically twice before he found it again – "no more celebrations of victory."

And Barclay, very remorseful and chastened this morning, promised, and hurried off to his beloved Greek.

Both Barclay and the Yale Checkers Club graduated from their respective universities the following spring, and consequently the Intercollegiate Checkers Association died. But although gone, it is not forgotten; and "Barclay's bonfire" is still spoken of as "the most gorgeous thing that ever happened."

MARTY BROWN – MASCOT

Martin – more familiarly “Marty” – Brown’s connection with the Summerville Baseball Club had begun the previous spring, when, during a hotly contested game with the High School nine, Bob Ayer, Summerville’s captain, watching his men go down like nine-pins before the puzzling curves of the rival pitcher, found himself addressed by a small snub-nosed, freckle-faced youth with very bright blue eyes and very dusty bare feet:

“Want me ter look after yer bats?”

“No.”

“All right,” was the cheerful response.

The umpire called two strikes on the batsman, and Bob muttered his anger.

“I don’t want nothin’ fer it,” announced the boy beside him, insinuatingly, digging a hole in the turf with one bare toe.

Bob turned, glad of something to vent his wrath upon. “No! Get out of here!” he snarled.

“All right,” was the imperturbable answer.

Then the side was out, and Bob trotted to first base. That half inning, the last of the seventh, was a tragedy for the town nine, for the High School piled three runs more on their already respectable lead, and when Bob came in he had well-defined visions of defeat. It was his turn at the bat. When he went to select his stick he was surprised to find the barefooted, freckle-

faced youth in calm possession.

“What – ?” he began angrily.

Marty leaped up and held out a bat. Bob took it, astonished to find that it was his own pet “wagon-tongue,” and strode off to the plate, too surprised for words. Two minutes later, he was streaking toward first base on a safe hit to center field. An error gave him second, and the dwindling hopes of Summerville began to rise again. The fellows found the High School pitcher and fairly batted him off his feet, and when the side went out it had added six runs to its tally, and lacked but one of being even with its opponent. Meanwhile Marty rescued the bats thrown aside, and arranged them neatly, presiding over them gravely, and showing a marvelous knowledge of each batsman’s wants.

Summerville won that game by two runs, and Bob Ayer was the first to declare, with conviction, that it was all owing to Marty. The luck had changed, he said, as soon as the snub-nosed boy had taken charge of the club’s property.

Every one saw the reasonableness of the assertion, and Marty was thereupon adopted as the official mascot and general factotum of the Summerville Baseball Club. Since then none had disputed Marty’s right to that position, and he had served tirelessly, proudly, mourning the defeats and glorying in the victories as sincerely as Bob Ayer himself.

Marty went to the grammar-school “when it kept,” and in the summer became a wage-earner to the best of his ability, holding insecure positions with several grocery and butcher

stores as messenger and "special delivery." But always on Saturday afternoons he was to be found squatting over the bats at the ball-ground; he never allowed the desire for money to interfere with his sacred duty as mascot and custodian of club property. Every one liked Marty, and he was as much a part of the Summerville Baseball Club as if one of the nine. His rewards consisted chiefly of discarded bats and balls; but he was well satisfied: it was a labor of love with him, and it is quite probable that, had he been offered a salary in payment of the services he rendered, he would have indignantly refused it. For the rest, he was fifteen years old, was not particularly large for his age, still retained the big brown freckles and the snub nose, had lively and honest blue eyes, and, despite the fact that his mother eked out a scanty living by washing clothes for the well-to-do of the town, had a fair idea of his own importance, without, however, risking his popularity by becoming too familiar. The bare feet were covered now by a pair of run-down and very dusty shoes, and his blue calico shirt and well-patched trousers were always clean and neat. On his brown hair rested, far back, a blue-and-white baseball cap adorned with a big S, the gift of Bob Ayer, and Marty's only badge of office.

To-day Marty had a grievance. He sat on a big packing-box in front of Castor's Cash Grocery and kicked his heels softly against its side. Around him the air was heavy with the odor of burning paper and punk, and every instant the sharp sputter of fire-crackers broke upon his reverie. It was the Fourth of July

and almost noon. It was very hot, too. But it was not that which was troubling Marty. His grief sprung from the fact that, in just twenty minutes by the town-hall clock up there, the Summerville Baseball Club, supported by a large part of the town's younger population, would take the noon train for Vulcan to play its annual game with the nine of that city; and it would go, Marty bitterly reflected, without its mascot.

Vulcan was a good way off – as Marty viewed distance – and the fare for the round trip was \$1.40, just \$1.28 more than Marty possessed. He had hinted to Bob Ayer and to “Herb” Webster, the club's manager, the real need of taking him along – had even been gloomy and foretold a harrowing defeat for their nine in the event of his absence from the scene. But Summerville's finances were at low ebb, and, owing to the sickness of one good player and the absence of another, her hopes of capturing the one-hundred-dollar purse which was yearly put up by the citizens of the rival towns were but slight. So Marty was to be left behind. And that was why Marty sat on the packing-case and grieved, refusing to join in the lively sport of his friends who, farther up the street, were firing off a small brass cannon in front of Hurlbert's hardware store.

Already, by ones and twos, the Vulcan-bound citizens were toiling through the hot sun toward the station. Marty watched them, and scowled darkly. For the time he was a radical socialist, and railed silently at the unjust manner in which riches are distributed. Presently a group of five fellows, whose ages varied

from seventeen to twenty-one, came into sight upon the main street. They wore gray uniforms, with blue and white stockings and caps of the same hues, and on their breasts were big blue S's. Two of them carried, swung between them, a long leather bag containing Marty's charge, the club's bats. The players spied the boy on the box, and hailed him from across the street. Marty's reply was low-toned and despondent. But after they had turned the corner toward the station, he settled his cap firmly on his head and, sliding off the box, hurried after them.

The station platform was well filled when he gained it. Bob Ayer was talking excitedly to Joe Sleeper, and Marty, listening from a distance, gathered that Magee, the Summerville center-fielder, had not put in his appearance.

"If he fails us," Bob was saying anxiously, "it's all up before we start. We're crippled already. Has any one seen him?"

None had, and Bob, looking more worried than before, strode off through the crowd to seek for news. Of course, Marty told himself, he didn't want Summerville to lose, but, just the same, if they did, it would serve them right for not taking him along. A long whistle in the distance sounded, and Bob came back, shaking his head in despair.

"Not here," he said.

A murmur of dismay went up from the group, and Marty slid off the baggage-truck and approached the captain.

"Say, let me go along, won't yer, Bob?"

Bob turned, and, seeing Marty's eager face, forgot his worry

for the moment, and asked kindly: "Can you buy your ticket?"

"No." Marty clenched his hands and looked desperately from one to another of the group. The train was thundering down the track beside the platform. "But you fellows might buy me one. And I'd pay yer back, honest!"

"Say, Bob, let's take him," said Hamilton. "Goodness knows, if we ever needed a mascot, we need one to-day! Here, I'll chip in a quarter."

"So'll I," said Sleeper. "Marty ought to go along; that's a fact."

"Here's another." "You pay for me, Dick, and I'll settle with you when we get back." "I'll give a quarter, too."

"All aboard!" shouted the conductor.

"All right, Marty; jump on," cried Bob. "We'll find the money – though I don't know where your dinner's coming from!"

Marty was up the car-steps before Bob had finished speaking, and was hauling the long bag from Wolcott with eager hands. Then they trooped into the smoking-car, since the day-coaches were already full, and Marty sat down on the stiff leather seat and stood the bag beside him. The train pulled out of the little station, and Marty's gloom gave place to radiant joy.

The journey to Vulcan occupied three-quarters of an hour, during which time Bob and the other eight groaned over the absence of Magee and Curtis and Goodman, predicted defeat in one breath and hoped for victory in the next, and rearranged the batting list in eleven different ways before they were at last satisfied. Marty meanwhile, with his scuffed shoes resting on the

opposite seat, one brown hand laid importantly upon the leather bag and his face wreathed in smiles, kept his blue eyes fixedly upon the summer landscape that slid by the open window. It was his first railway trip of any length, and it was very wonderful and exciting. Even the knowledge that defeat was the probable fate ahead of the expedition failed to more than tinge his pleasure with regret.

At Vulcan the train ran under a long iron-roofed structure, noisy with the puffing of engines, the voices of the many that thronged the platforms, and the clanging of a brazen gong announcing dinner in the station restaurant. Marty was awed but delighted. He carried one end of the big bag across the street to the hotel, his eager eyes staring hither and thither in wide amaze. Vulcan boasted of a big bridge-works and steel-mills, and put on many of the airs of a larger city. Bob told Marty that they had arranged for his dinner in the hotel dining-room, but the latter demurred on the score of expense.

“Yer see, I want ter pay yer back, Bob, and so I guess I don’t want ter go seventy-five cents fer dinner. Why, that’s more’n what three dinners costs us at home. I’ll just go out and get a bit of lunch, I guess. Would yer lend me ten cents?”

Marty enjoyed himself thoroughly during the succeeding half-hour: He bought a five-cent bag of peanuts and three bananas, and aided digestion by strolling about the streets while he consumed them, at last finding his way to the first of the wonderful steel-mills and wandering about freely among the

bewildering cranes, rollers, and other ponderous machines. He wished it was not the Fourth of July; he would like to have seen things at work. Finally, red-faced and perspiring, he hurried back to the hotel and entered a coach with the others, and was driven through the city to the ball-ground. This had a high board fence about it, and long tiers of seats half encircling the field. There were lots of persons there, and others were arriving every minute. Marty followed the nine into a little dressing-room built under the grand stand, and presently followed them out again to a bench in the shade just to the left of the home plate. Here he unstrapped his bag and arranged the bats on the ground, examining them carefully, greatly impressed with his own importance.

The Vulcans, who had been practising on the diamond, trotted in, and Bob and the others took their places. The home team wore gray costumes with maroon stockings and caps, and the big V that adorned the shirts was also maroon. Many of them were workers in the steel-mills, and to Marty they seemed rather older than the Summervilles. Then the umpire, a very small man in a snuff-colored alpaca coat and cap, made his appearance, and the men at practise came in. The umpire tossed a coin between Bob and the Vulcans' captain, and Bob won with "heads!" and led his players into the field. A lot of men just back of Marty began to cheer for the home team as Vulcan's first man went to bat.

It were sorry work to write in detail of the disastrous first seven innings of that game. Summerville's hope of taking the one-hundred-dollar purse home with them languished and

dwindled, and finally faded quite away when, in the first half of the seventh inning, Vulcan found Warner's delivery and batted the ball into every quarter of the field, and ran their score up to twelve. Summerville went to bat in the last half plainly discouraged. Oliver struck out. Hamilton hit to second base and was thrown out. Pickering got first on balls, but "died" there on a well-fielded fly of Warner's.

Vulcan's citizens yelled delightedly from grand stand and bleachers. Summerville had given a stinging defeat to their nine the year before at the rival town, and this revenge was glorious. They shouted gibes that made Marty's cheeks flush and caused him to double his fists wrathfully and wish that he were big enough to "lick somebody"; and they groaned dismally as one after another of the blue-and-white players went down before Baker's superb pitching. Summerville's little band of supporters worked valiantly against overwhelming odds to make their voices heard, but their applause was but a drop in that sea of noise.

The eighth inning began with the score 12 to 5, and Stevens, captain and third-baseman of the Vulcans, went to bat with a smile of easy confidence upon his face. He led off with a neat base-hit past short-stop. The next man, Storrs, their clever catcher, found Warner's first ball, and sent it twirling skyward in the direction of left field. Webster was under it, but threw it in badly, and Stevens got to third. The next batsman waited coolly and took his base on balls. Warner was badly rattled, and had there been any one to put in his place he would have

been taken out. But Curtis, the substitute pitcher, was ill in bed at Summerville, and helpless Bob Ayer ground his teeth and watched defeat overwhelm him. With a man on third, another on first, and but one out, things again looked desperate.

Warner, pale of face, wrapped his long fingers about the ball and faced the next batsman. The coaches kept up a volley of disconcerting advice to the runners, most of it intended for the pitcher's ear, however. On Warner's first delivery the man on first went leisurely to second, well aware that the Summerville catcher would not dare to throw lest the runner on third should score. With one strike against him and three balls, the man at bat struck at a rather deceptive drop and started for first. The ball shot straight at Warner, hot off the bat. The pitcher found it, but fumbled. Regaining it quickly, he threw to the home plate, and the Vulcan captain speedily retraced his steps to third. But the batsman was safe at first, and so the three bases were full.

"Home run! Home run, O'Brien!" shrieked the throng as the next man, a red-haired little youth, gripped his stick firmly. O'Brien was quite evidently a favorite as well as a good player. Warner and Oliver, Summerville's catcher, met and held a whispered consultation to the accompaniment of loud ridicule from the audience. Then the battery took their places.

"Play for the plate," cried Bob at first base.

Warner's first delivery was a wide throw that almost passed the catcher. "Ball!" droned the umpire. The men on bases were playing far off, and intense excitement reigned. On the next

delivery Warner steadied himself and got a strike over the plate. A shout of applause from the plucky Summerville spectators shattered the silence. Another strike; again the applause. O'Brien gripped his bat anew and looked surprised and a little uneasy.

"He can't do it again, O'Brien!" shrieked an excited admirer in the grand stand.

But O'Brien didn't wait to see. He found the next delivery and sent it whizzing, a red-hot liner, toward second. Pandemonium broke loose. Sleeper, Summerville's second-baseman, ran forward and got the ball head high, glanced quickly aside, saw the runner from first speeding by, lunged forward, tagged him, and then threw fiercely, desperately home. The sphere shot like a cannonball into Oliver's outstretched hands, there was a cloud of yellow dust as Stevens slid for the home plate, and then the umpire's voice droned: "Out, here!"

Summerville, grinning to a man, trotted in, and the little handful of supporters yelled themselves hoarse and danced ecstatically about. Even the Vulcan enthusiasts must applaud the play, though a bit grudgingly. For the first time in many innings, Marty, squatting beside the bats, drew a big scrawling 0 in the tally which he was keeping on the ground, with the aid of a splinter.

It was the last half of the eighth inning, and Bob Ayer's turn at the bat. Marty found his especial stick, and uttered an incantation beneath his breath as he held it out.

"We're going to win, Bob," he whispered.

Bob took the bat, shaking his head.

“I’m afraid you don’t work as a mascot to-day, Marty,” he answered smilingly. But Marty noticed that there was a look of resolution in the captain’s face as he walked toward the box, and took heart.

Summerville’s admirers greeted Bob’s appearance with a burst of applause, and Vulcan’s captain motioned the field to play farther out. Vulcan’s pitcher tossed his arms above his head, lifted his right foot into the air, and shot the ball forward. There was a sharp *crack*, and the sphere was sailing straight and low toward center field. Bob touched first and sped on to second. Center field and left field, each intent upon the ball, discovered each other’s presence only when they were a scant four yards apart. Both paused – and the ball fell to earth! Bob, watching, flew toward third. It was a close shave, but he reached it ahead of the ball in a cloud of dust, and, rising, shook himself in the manner of a dog after a bath. Summerville’s supporters were again on their feet, and their shouts were extraordinary in volume, considering their numbers. Vulcan’s citizens, after a first burst of anger and dismay, had fallen into chilling silence. Marty hugged himself, and nervously picked out Howe’s bat.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.