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***** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK T. HAVILAND HICKS SENIOR *****

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T. HAVILAND HICKS SENIOR

BY J. RAYMOND ELDERDICE

TO MASTER LLOYD ELDERDICE

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T. HAVILAND HICKS, SENIOR

CHAPTER I

HICKS--WILD WEST BAD MAN

"Oh, a bold, bad man was Chuckwalla Bill--
An' he lived in a shanty on Tom-cat Hill;
Ten notches on the six-gun he toted on his hip--
For he'd sent ten buckos on the One-way Trip!"

Big Butch Brewster, captain and full-back of the Bannister College football squad, his behemoth bulk swathed in heavy blankets and crowded into a narrow bunk, shifted his vast tonnage restlessly. He was dreaming of the

wild and woolly West, and like a six-reel Western drama thrown on the screen in a moving-picture show, he visioned in his slumbers a vivid and spectacular panorama.

The first lurid scene was the Deserted Limited held up at a tank station in the great Mojave Desert by a lone, masked bandit who winged the dreaming Butch in the shoulder, the latter being an express guard who resisted. After the desperado, Two-Gun Steve, had forced the engineer to run the train back to a siding, he had ordered Butch to vamoose. Quite naturally, then, the collegian next found himself staggering across the arid expanse, until at last, half dead from a burning thirst, seeking vainly for a water-hole, the vast stretch of sandy, sagebrush-studded wastes shimmered into a gorgeous ocean of sparkling blue waters. Then, as he collapsed on the scorching-hot sand, helpless, the cool water so near, suddenly the scene shifted.

In quick and vivid succession, Butch Brewster beheld a burning stockade besieged by howling Indians, and a frontier town shot up by recklessly riding cowboys on a jamboree. Then he became a tenderfoot, badgered by yelling, shooting roisterers, and later a sheriff, bravely leading his posse to a sensational battle with that same Two-Gun Steve and his gang, entrenched in a rock-bound mountain defile.

Finally, he stood with hands above his head in company with other passengers of the Sagebrush Stagecoach, while a huge, red-shirted Westerner with a fierce black mustache and a six-shooter in each hand belching bullets at Butch's dancing feet, roared out huskily: "Oh--I'm a ring-tailed roarer (<i>bang-bang</i>)! I'm a rip-snortin', high-falutin', loop-the-loopin' <i>bad</i> man (<i>bang-bang</i>)! I'm wild an' woolly, an' full o' fleas, an' hard to curry below the knees--I'm a roarin' wild-cat, an' it's my night to howl (<i>bang-bang</i>)! Yip-yip-yip-<i>yeee</i>!"

Big Butch, opening his eyes and starting up, gazed about him in sheer surprise; for an instant, in that state of bewilderment that comes with sudden awakening, he almost believed himself in a Western ranch bunkhouse, and that some happy cowboy outside roared a grotesque ballad. He gazed at the interior of a rough shack built of pine boards, with bunks constructed in tiers on both sides. There were figures in them--Western cowboys, perhaps. Then it seemed, somehow, that the voice drifting from the outside was strangely familiar. Back at Bannister College, where he remembered he had gone in the dim and dusty past, he had often heard that same fog-horn voice, roaring songs of a less blood-curdling character, and accompanied by that same banjo twanging, which tortured the campus, and bothered would-be studious youths!

"I'm not in a moving-picture show," Butch informed himself, as he donned khaki trousers, football sweater, and heavy shoes. "I'm not on a Western ranch, either. I'm in the sleep-shack of Camp Bannister, the football training-camp of the Bannister College squad! Those fellows in the bunks are not cowboys, Indians, and bandits--they are my teammates! I did dream stuff that would shame a Wild West scenario, but I understand it all now--my dreams were influenced by T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.!"

At that dramatic moment, to substantiate his statement, the raucous voice, accompanied by resounding chords strummed on a banjo, sounded again. The vocal and instrumental chaos was frequently punctured by revolver reports, as the torturous Caruso outside roared:

"Oh, Chuckwalla Bill thought life was sweet--
Till he met up with Sure-shot Pete;
A hotter shootin' match Last Chance never saw--
But Sure-shot Pete was some quicker on the draw!"

The pachydermic Butch, fully dressed--and awake, raging in his wrath like an active volcano, glanced at his watch, and discovered that it was exactly five A.M.! Intensely pacified by this knowledge, he lumbered toward the bunkhouse door and flung it open, determined to crush the pestersome youth who thus unfeelingly disturbed the quietude of Camp Bannister at such an unearthly hour! However, his grim purpose was temporarily thwarted--before him spread a beautiful panorama, a vast canvas painted in rich hues and colors, that indescribably charming masterpiece of nature, entitled dawn.

Butch, gazing from the bunkhouse doorway toward the pebbly shore of the placid lake stretching out for two miles before him, beheld Old Sol, blood-red, peeping above the wooded hills on the far-off, opposite strand of Lake Conowingo; the luminous orb laid a flaming pathway across the shimmering waters, and golden bars of light, like gleaming fingers outstretched, fell athwart the tall pines that towered on the high bluff back of the camp. The glorious sunshine, succeeding a flood of rosy color, inundated the scene; it bathed in a gorgeous radiance the early autumn woods, it illumined the bunkhouse, and another rude shanty known to the squad as the grub-shack, it poured down on old Hinky-Dink, the ancient negro cookee, setting the breakfast tables just outside the canvas cook-tent.

"Deed, cross mah heart, Mistah Butch," grinned old Hinky-Dink, seeing, as a motion picture director would express it, "Wrath registered on the countenance" of Butch Brewster, "Ah done tole dat young Hicks dat a bird what cain't sing an' will sing mus' be made <i>not</i> to sing! Ah done info'med him dat yo'-all was layin' fo' him, cause he done bus' up yo' sleep!"

A jay bird, a flashing bit of vivid blue, shot from a tall pine, jeering shrilly at Butch; out on the lake, a trout leaped above the water for an infinitesimal second, its shining scales gleaming in the sunshine. From the cook-tent, where old Hinky-Dink grumbled at the frying pan, the appetizing odor of frying fish assailed the football captain, softening his wrath.

High above the shanties, on a tall flagpole made from a straight young pine, floated a big gold and green banner, its bright colors gleaming in the sunshine; it bore the words:

CAMP BANNISTER
TRAINING CAMP
THE FOOTBALL SQUAD
BANNISTER COLLEGE

Head Coach Corridan, smashing the precedent that had made former Gold and Green squads have their training camp at Bannister College, had brought the Varsity and second-string stars to this camp on the shore of Lake Conowingo, in the Pennsylvania mountains. For two weeks, one of which had passed, they were to train at Camp Bannister, until college officially opened; swimming, hunting, cross-country runs, and a healthful outdoor existence would give the athletes superb condition, and daily scrimmages on the level field back of the bluff rounded out an eleven that promised to be the strongest in Bannister history.

As big, good-natured Butch Brewster stood in the bunkhouse doorway, his wrath at the pestiferous Hicks forgotten, in his rapture at the glorious dawn, he saw something that showed why his dreams had been of the wild West! The expression of indignation, however, yielded to one of humorous affection, as he gazed toward the shore.

"I can't be angry with Hicks!" breathed Butch, beholding a spectacle more impressive than dawn. "So, the irrepressible wretch has Coach Corridan's revolvers, used in starting our training sprints, and a lot of blank cartridges! He is giving an imitation of a Western bad man. No wonder I dreamed of Indians, cowboys, and hold-ups; I'll have revenge on the heartless villain, routing me out at five!"

He saw a massive rock, rising thirty feet in air, its sheer walls scaled only by a rope-ladder the collegians had rigged up on one side. Atop of "Lookout There!" as the campers humorously designated the rock, roosted a youth who possessed the colossal structure of a splinter, and whose cherubic countenance was decorated with a Cheshire cat grin. Quite unaware that his riotous efforts had brought out the wrathful Butch Brewster, the youthful narrator of Chuckwalla Bill's stormy career continued his excessively noisy seance.

His costume was strictly in character with his song. He wore a sombrero, picked up on his Exposition trip the past vacation, a lurid red outing-shirt, and he had wrapped a blanket around each locomotive limb to imitate a cowboy's chaps. Two revolvers suspended from a loosened belt, a wild West, and as Butch stared, the embryo Western bad man twanged a banjo noisily, and roared the concluding stanza of his desperado hero's history:

"Said Chuckwalla Bill, 'Oh, boys, plant me
With my boots on--on the wide prair-eee'--
Where the coyotes howl, they planted Bill--
An' so far as I know, he's sleepin' there still!"

"Here they come," grinned Butch, hearing a tumult in the bunkhouse, and a confused Babel of voices. "Hicks has awakened the camp. Now watch the fellows wreak summary vengeance on his toothpick frame!"

From the sleep-shack, aroused at that weird hour by the clamor of the irrepressible youth, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., tumbled others of the squad, in varying stages of *deshabille*; big Beef McNaughton, right half-back, Roddy Perkins, the Titian-haired right-end, Pudge Langdon, a ponderous

tackle, and Monty Merriweather, a clean-cut, aggressive candidate for left end. From within, other wrathful youths howled vociferous protests at their tormentor:

"Stop that noise; put your muzzle on again, Hicks!"--"Where's the fire? Say, Hicks, muffle your exhaust!"--"Say, Coach, must we endure this day and night?"

The bunkhouse fairly erupted angry collegians, boiling out like bees swarming from a disturbed hive; Hefty Hollingsworth, the Herculean center-rush. Biff Pemberton, left half-back, Bunch Bingham, Tug Cardiff, and Buster Brown, three huge last-year substitutes; second-string players, Don Carterson, Cherub Challoner, Skeet Wigglesworth, and Scoop Sawyer. A dozen others, from sheer laziness, hugged their bunks devotedly, despite the terrific turmoil outside.

"It's a disgrace, a *howling* shame!" exploded Beef, his elephantine frame swathed in blankets to conceal a lack of vestiture, "Last night, until midnight, that graceless wretch roosted on 'Lookout There' and because the glorious moonlight made him sentimental and slushy, he twanged his banjo and warbled such mushy stuff as 'My Love is young and fair. My Love has golden hair!' When does he expect us to sleep?"

"He doesn't!" explained Monty Merriweather, with succinct lucidity, grinning at his comrades. "Say, fellows, you know how Hicks dreads a cold shower-bath; well, some of you rage at him from the other side of the rock, while *I* climb up the rope-ladder and close with him! Then some of you prehistoric pachyderms ascend, and we'll chuck that pestersome insect into the cold, cold lake--"

"Done!" chuckled Butch Brewster, delightedly. So, while he, Beef McNaughton, Hefty Hollingsworth, and others beguiled the jeering Hicks, expressing in dynamic, red-hot sentences their exact opinions of his perfidy, the athletic Monty imitated a mountain-scaling Italian soldier. He climbed stealthily up the swaying rope-ladder; nearer and nearer to the unsuspecting youth he crept, while the cherubic Hicks, to tantalize the group below, again burst forth:

"*Whoop-eee!* I'm a bold, *bad* man (*bang-bang!*) I got ten notches on my ole six-gun--I'm a *killer*. I wings a man before breakfast every day! I got a private burying-ground, where I plants my victims (*bang-bang!*) Yip-yip-yip-*yee!* Oh, I'm a--*Ouch!*, Monty--leggo me--Oh, I'll be good--why didn't I pull that rope-ladder up here? Don't bust my banjo --don't let Butch get me--"

Monty Merriweather, reaching the flat top of the rock, had courageously flung himself, without regard for the Bad Man's desperate record, on the startled Hicks, whose first thought was for his beloved banjo. While he held the blithesome tormentor helpless, Butch, Beef, and Roddy Perkins climbed the rope-ladder, and the grinning youth was soon in their clutches, while the collegians below, like a Roman, mob aroused by the oratory of Mr. Mark Antony, howled for revenge:

"Bust the old banjo over his head, Butch!"--"Sing to him, Beef--that's an awful revenge on Hicks!"--"Tie him to the rock--make him miss his breakfast!"

"Hicks," growled Butch, eyeing his sunny comrade ominously, "you ought to be tarred and feathered, and shot at sunrise! When Bannister opens, you will be a Senior, and you'll disgrace '19's dignity! This is a sample of what we have endured at college for three years, and the worst is yet to come! You have committed the awful atrocity of awakening Camp Bannister at five A. M. with your ridiculous imitation, of a Western desperado. To dampen your ardor, we will chuck you into the cold lake--just as you are!"

"Help! Assistance! Aid! Succor!" shouted the happy-go-lucky Hicks, as the behemoth Butch and Beef seized him, swinging him aloft with ludicrous ease, "Police! Fire! Murder! Take care of my banjo, Monty. Tell all the fellows at old Bannister I died game, and plant Hair-Trigger Bill with his boots on! *Oooo*, Beef, Butch, *have a heart*, that water is *cold*!"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., relieved of banjo and revolvers, but his shadow-like structure still clad in shoes, trousers, with imitation "chaps" and flamboyant red shirt, with his classic head still adorned by the sombrero, was swung back and forth by the two bulky football stars--once--twice--

Three--"Let him go!" shouted Butch Brewster, and like a falling meteor, the splinter-like youth, who had already fallen from grace, shot from the rock, head-first, disappearing with a spectacular splash in the icy waters of Lake Conowingo. Knowing Hicks to be as much at home in the water as a fish in an aquarium, the hilarious squad on shore prepared to jeer his reappearance above the water; however, their program was interrupted by old Hinky-Dink, who stood in the cook-tent doorway, belaboring a dishpan lustily with a soup-ladle, and shouting:

"Breakfus' am served; fus' an' las' call fo' breakfus; all dem what am late don't git no breakfus!"

"Breakfast!" exclaimed Monty Merriweather, who, with Roddy, Butch, and Beef, remained on the rock, despite the summons of the Cookee. "Hurry up, Hicks, I'm ravenous. Say, Butch, suppose all that Western regalia makes him water-logged; he's a terribly long while down there! Didn't he look like the hero in a moving-picture feature? We've given him the water-cure, but he will do that same stunt over again. That sunny-souled Hicks is simply Incorrigible!"

A second later, the grinning, cheery countenance of T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., shot above the water, and simultaneously with his appearance, just as though he had been chanting below the surface, for the entertainment of the finny denizens of Lake Conowingo, the irrepressible youth roared:

"A hotter shootin' match Last Chance never saw--
But Sure-Shot Pete was some quicker on the draw!"

CHAPTER II

"LEAVE IT TO HICKS"

Head Coach Patrick Henry Corridan, known to toil-tortured Gold and Green football squads from time immemorial as "the Slave-Driver," Captain Butch Brewster, and serious Deacon Radford, the star Bannister quarter-back, foregathered around a table in the Camp Bannister grub-shack.

It was ten-thirty of the morning whose dawn T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., had blithesomely hailed with an impromptu musicale and saengerfest on "Lookout There!" rock, and the football triumvirate were in togs. The squad, over in the bunkhouse, noisily donned gridiron armor for the morning practice, and the pestiferous Hicks was maintaining a mysterious silence, somewhere.

This football trio, on whom rested the responsibility of rounding out a winning Bannister eleven, vastly resembled a coterie of German generals, back of the trenches, studying a war-map. Before them was spread what seemed to be a large checker-board. It was a miniature gridiron, with the chalk-marks painted in white; there were thumb-tacks stuck here and there, some with flat tops painted green and gold, others, representing the enemy, were solid red. The former had names printed on them, Butch, Roddy, Beef, and so on. By sticking these on the board, the three directors of Bannister's football destiny could work out new plays, and originate possible winning lineups.

"We've just got to win the State Championship this season, Coach!" declared Butch, banging the table emphatically, as he stated a self-evident fact. "It's my last year for Old Bannister, and so with Beef and Pudge. I'll give every ounce of strength I possess in every game, to make that pennant float over Bannister Field!"

"Bannister *will* win it!" vowed the behemoth Beef, his good-natured countenance grim, and his jaw set. "Not for five years has a Gold and Green team won the Championship--not since the year before Butch and I were Freshmen! We've got a splendid bunch of material to build a team with, and--"

"Our biggest problem is this," spoke Coach Corridan, as with a phenomenal display of strength he took Beef McNaughton between thumb and forefinger and placed him on the field. "We must strengthen both line and backfield, for we lost by graduation Babe McCabe, Heavy Hughes, and Jack Merritt. Now, to replace that lost power--"

Just then, from directly beneath the open window by which they had gathered, like the midnight serenade of a romantic lover, sounded the well-known foghorn voice of T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., as to the plunkety-plunk of a banjo accompaniment, he warbled melodiously:

"Gone are the days--I used to spend with Car-o-li-nah!
She had the sunshine in her laughter (<i>plunkety-plunk</i>)
Just like that state they named her after--"

"</i>Hicks</i>!" announced Butch, stealthily approaching the window, and beckoning his companions. "Easy--look at him, Deke, there he is, Hicks, the irrepressible! We might as well attempt to stab a rhinoceros to death with a humming-bird's feather, as to try and reform <i>him</i>!"

Arrayed like a lily of the field, a model of sartorial splendor, Hicks occupied a chair beneath the window, tilted back gracefully against the side of the grub-shack. He had decked his splinter-structure with a dazzling Palm Beach suit, and a glorious pink silk shirt, off-set by a lurid scarf. A Panama hat decorated his head, white Oxfords and flamboyant hosiery adorned his feet, while the inevitable Cheshire cat grin beautified his cherubic countenance. A latest "best seller" was propped on his knees, and as he perused its thrilling pages, he carelessly strummed his beloved banjo, and in stentorian tones chanted a sentimental ballad:

"Gone are the days--the golden days I'm dreaming of,
I think I hear her softly calling (plunkety-plunk)
'Will you be back? Will you be back? (plunk-plunk)
Back to the Car-o-li-nah you love?'"(plunkety-plunk),

For three golden campus years T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., had gayly pursued the even tenor (or <i>basso</i>, since he possessed a foghorn, subterranean voice) of his Bannister career. He absolutely refused to take life seriously, and he was forever arousing the wrath--mostly pretended, for no one could be really angry with the genial youth--of his comrades, by twanging his banjo and roaring out rollicking ballads at all hours. He was never so happy as when entertaining a crowd of happy students in his cozy quarters, or escorting a Hicks' Personally Conducted expedition downtown for a Beef-Steak Bust, at his expense, at Jerry's, the rendezvous of hungry collegians.

However, despite his butterfly existence, Hicks, possessed of a scintillating mind, always set the scholastic pace for 1919, by means of occasional study-sprints, as he characteristically called them. But when it came to helping his beloved Dad realize a long-cherished ambition to behold his only son and heir shatter Hicks, Sr.'s, celebrated athletic records, it was a different story. T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., ever since he committed the farcical <i>faux pas</i> of running the wrong way with the pigskin in the Freshman-Sophomore football contest of his first year, had been a super-colossal athletic joke at old Bannister.

His record to date, beside that reverse touchdown that won for the Sophomores, consisted of scoring a home-run with the bases congested, on a strike-out; of smashing hurdles and cross-bars on the track; endangering his heedless career with the shot and hammer; and making a ridiculous farce of every event he entered, to the vast hilarity of the students, who, with the exception of Butch Brewster, had no idea his ridiculous efforts were in earnest. In the high-jump, however, Hicks had given considerable promise,

which to date the grasshopper collegian had failed to keep.

Hicks, the lovable, impulsive, and irrepressible, with his invariable sunny disposition, his generous nature, and his democratic, loyal comradeship for everybody, was loved by old Bannister. The students forgave him his pestersome ways, his frequent torturing of them with banjo-twanging and rollicking ballads. His classmates idolized him, Juniors and Sophomores were his true friends, and entering Freshmen always regarded this happy-go-lucky youth as a demigod of the campus.

Big Butch Brewster, who was forever futilely lecturing the heedless Hicks, thrust his head from the grub-shack window, fought down a grin, and sternly arraigned his graceless comrade:

"Hicks, you frivolous, campus-cluttering, infinitesimal atom of nothing, you labor under the insane delusion that college life is a continuous vaudeville show. You absolutely refuse to take your Bannister years seriously, you banjo-thumping, pillow-punishing, campus-torturing nonentity. You will never grasp the splendid opportunities within your reach! You have no ambition but to strum that banjo, roar ridiculous songs, fuss up like a tailor's dummy, and pester your comrades, or drag them down to Jerry's for the eats! You won't be earnest, you Human Cipher, Before you entered Bannister, you formed your ideas and ideals of campus life from colored posters, moving-pictures, magazine stories, and stage dramas like 'Brown of Harvard'; you have surely lived up, or down, to those ideals, you--"

"Them's harsh words, Butch!" joyously responded the grinning Hicks, unchastened, for he knew good Butch Brewster would not, for a fortune, have him forsake his care-free nature. "Thou loyal comrade of my happy campus years, what wouldst thou of me?--have me don sack-cloth and ashes, strike 'The Funeral March' on my golden lyre, and cry out in anguish, </i>'ai! ai</i>! 'Nay, nay, a couple of nays; college years are all too brief; hence I shall, by my own original process, extract from them all the sunshine and happiness possible, and by my wonderful musical and vocal powers, bring joy to my colleagues, who--</i>Ouch</i>, Butch--look out for that nail, you inhuman elephant--"

Big Butch, at that juncture of Hicks' monologue, had effectively terminated it by leaning from the window, grasping his unsuspecting comrade by the scruff of the neck, and dragging him over the window-ledge, into the grub-shack, and the presence of Coach Corridan and Deacon Radford. Strenuous objection was registered, both by the futilely struggling Hicks, and a nail projecting from the sill, which caught in the Palm Beach trousers and ripped a long rent in them; fortunately, Hicks' anatomy escaped a similar fate.

"A ripping good move, eh-what?" chuckled Hicks, twisting like a contortionist, to view the damage done his vestiture, "Hello, what have we here?--the German field-map, by the Van Dyke beard of the Prophet! I bring the Kaiser's order, ham and eggs, and a cup of coffee. No, that's a mistake. General Hen Von Kluck, lead a brigade of submarines up yon hill to thunder the Russian fort! Von Hindering-Bug, send a flock of aeroplanes and

Zeppelins to the Allied trenches, the enemy is shooting Russian caviare at--"

"Hicks," said Head Coach Corridan, smiling at Butch Brewster's indignation, "you are such a wonder at solving perplexing problems by your marvelous 'inspirations,' suppose you turn the scintillating searchlight of your colossal intellect upon the question that Bannister must solve, to produce a championship eleven!"

It was T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.'s, inveterate habit, whenever a baffling situation, or what the French call an "*impasse*" presented itself, to state with the utmost confidence, "Oh, just leave it to Hicks!" On most occasions, when he made this remark, accompanied by a swaggering braggadocio that never failed to make good Butch Brewster wrathful, the happy-go-lucky youth possessed not the slightest idea of how the problem was to be solved. He just uttered his rash promise, and then trusted to his needed inspiration to illuminate a way out! And, as the Bannister campus well knew, Hicks had solved more than one torturing question by an inspiration that flashed on his intellect, when all hope of a satisfactory solution seemed dead.

For example, in his Sophomore year, when the Freshman leader, James Roderick Perkins, that same Titian-haired Roddy who was now a bulwark at right end, became charged with a Napoleonic ambition, and organized a Freshman Equal Rights campaign, paralyzing Bannister football by refusing to allow Freshmen to try for athletic teams, unless their demands were granted. Hicks, when his inspiration finally smote him, smashed the Votes-for-Freshmen crusade, and quelled Roddy, Futilely racking his brain for a counter-attack, having blithely told the troubled campus, "Just leave it to Hicks," he had ceased to worry, and then the inspiration had come, By The Big Brotherhood of Bannister giving the upper-classmen full government over Freshmen, a scheme successfully carried through, the peril had been thwarted.

"I got a letter from Dad yesterday," began Hicks, somewhat irrelevantly, considering the Coach's remarks, "and he said--"

"--Inclosed find the check you wrote for," quoth Deacon Radford, humorously. "If you keep up this pace, I shall have to turn my steel mills to producing war munitions, to pay your college bills.' Say, Hicks, seriously, listen to our problem, and suggest what Coach Corridan should do."

While Hicks' athletic powers were known to equal those of the paralyzed oldest inhabitant of a Civil War Veterans' Home, the sunny youth knew football thoroughly; often he originated plays that the team worked out with success, and his suggestions were always weighed carefully by the football directors. So, after he had adjusted his lurid scarf at the correct angle, and gazed ruefully at his torn habiliments, the sunshiny Senior seated himself at the table, before the "war-map," and gave heed to the Coach.

[Illustration A: 'Here's the problem, Hicks']

"Here's the problem, Hicks," said the Slave-Driver, indicating the Bannister eleven, represented by the gold and green topped thumb-tacks. "From the line we lost Babe, a tackle, Heavy, a guard, and Jack Merritt, a star end. Now, Monty Merriweather will hold down Jack's place O. K.--I can shift Beef from right half to guard, and put Butch at right-half, while Bunch Bingham can take care of Babe's old berth at tackle. But I have no one to shoot in at full-back, when I shift Butch; you see, Hicks, my plan is to build an eleven that can execute old-time, line-smashing football, and up-to-date open play as well; I want fast ends and halves, with a snappy quarter, and I have them; also, the backfield is heavy enough for line-bucking, if I get my beefy full-back. I must have a big, heavy, fast player, a giant who simply can't be stopped when he hits the line. With Butch and Biff at halves, Deke at quarter. Roddy and Monty ends, and my heavy line--why, a ponderous, irresistible Hercules at full-back will--"

"Say!" grinned the irrepressible Hicks, as Coach Corridan warmed up to his vision, "you don't want *<i>much</i>*, Coach! Why don't you ask Ted Coy, the famous ex-Yale full-back, to give up his business and play the position for you? Maybe you can persuade Charlie Brickley, a *<i>fair</i>* sort of dropkicker, to quit coaching Hopkins, and kick a few goals for old Bannister! I get you, Coach--you want a fellow about the size of the *<i>Lusitania,</i>* made of structural steel, a Brobdingnagian Colossus who will guarantee to advance the ball fifteen yards per rush, or money refunded!

"Why, Coach, while you are wanting things, just wish for a chap who will play the entire game himself, taking the ball down the field, while the rest of the team are pushed along in rolling-chairs, while imbibing pink tea. Get a prodigy who will instill such terror into our rivals that instead of playing the schedule, Bannister will simply arrange with other teams to mark themselves down defeated, and then agree what the scores shall be."

"I knew it!" growled Butch Brewster, glowering at the jocular youth. "We should never have consulted him on this problem, for it is not one within his power to solve, even though he performed the miracle of talking seriously about it Now--"

"Now--" echoed Hicks, with pretended seriousness, "Coach, you just hand me the blue-prints and specifications of said Gargantuan Hercules, and I'll try to corral just such a phenomenon as you desire. Never hesitate to consult me on such important matters, for I am ever-ready to cast aside my own multifarious duties, when my Alma Mater needs my mental assistance, or--"

"Hicks, are you *<i>crazy</i>*?" fleered Deacon Radford, moved to excitement, despite his great faith in the versatile youth. "Full-backs like that do not grow on trees; the only one I ever read of was *<i>Ole Skjarsen</i>*, in George Fitch's 'Siwash College Stories,' and he was purely fictitious. We know you have accomplished some great things by your 'inspirations,' but as for this--"

"Just leave it to Hicks" quoth the irrepressible youth, swaggering toward

the door with an affected nonchalant self-confidence that aroused Butch to wrath, and vastly amused his companions. "I'll admit a human juggernaut like Coach Corridan dreams of will be hard to round up, but, I'll have an inspiration soon. Don't worry about your old eleven, your problem will be solved, and you will have a team that can play fifty-seven varieties of football. *Raw revolver*, my comrades."

When the graceless T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., had sauntered gracefully out of the grub-shack, big Butch Brewster, almost exploding with suppressed wrath, stared at Slave-Driver Corridan and staid Deacon Radford a full minute; then he grinned,

"That--Hicks!" he murmured, struggling against a desire to laugh. "What a ridiculous prophecy! 'Just leave it to Hicks!' Well, that means the problem goes unsolved, for though I confess he *is* brilliant, and his so-called 'inspirations' have helped old Bannister; when it comes to rushing out and lassoing a smashing, Herculean full-back--*bah*!"

Ten minutes later, when Coach Corridan and the Gold and Green squad climbed the bluff to the field back of Camp Bannister, for morning signal drill, their last memory was of T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., arrayed in radiant vestiture, his chair tilted against the bunkhouse--the chords of the banjo, and his foghorn voice drifting to them on the warm September air:

"Oh, father and mother pay all the bills (*plunk-plunk*)
And we have all the fun (*plunkety-plunk*)
With the money that we spend in college life!"

Two hours afterward, as a tired, perspiring squad scrambled down the bluff, and made for the cool waters of Lake Conowingo, a mysterious silence, like a mighty wave, literally surged toward them. Camp Bannister seemed deserted, the sun was still shining, the birds sang as cheerily as ever, but instinctively the collegians felt an indescribable loneliness, a sense of tremendous loss.

"*Hicks*!" shouted Butch Brewster, loudly, his voice shattering the stillness. "Hicks--ahoy! I say, Hicks--"

Old Hinky-Dink, a letter in his hand, hobbled from the cook-tent toward them; like a sinister harbinger of evil he advanced, grinning deprecatingly at the squad:

"Mistah Hicks am gone!" he announced importantly. "He done gib me fo' bits to row him ober to de village, to cotch de noon 'spress fo' Philadelphy! Heah am a letter what he lef'--"

Big Butch Brewster, to whom the *billet-doux* was addressed in T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.'s, familiar scrawl, tore open the envelope, and while the squad listened, he read aloud the message left by that sunny-souled youth;

"DEAR BUTCH:

"Coach Corridan will have to use the alarm clock from now on! I'm called away on business. See that my stuff gets to Bannister O.K. Stow it in the room next to yours. I'll be back at college some time in the next century. Give my *adieux* to Coach Corridan and the squad.

"Yours truthfully,

"T. HAVILAND HICKS, JR.

"P.S.: Tell Coach Corridan he should worry--*not*! I'm hot on the trail of a fullback that will make Ted Coy at his coyest look like the paralyzed inmate of an old man's home. Just leave it to Hicks!"

CHAPTER III

HICKS' PRODIGIOUS PRODIGY

"Has anybody here seen our Hicks?

H-i-c-k-s!

Has anybody here seen our Hicks?

If you've seen him, answer, 'Yes!'

He's tall and slim, and he wears a grin,

And his banjo-thumping is a sin.

Has *anybody* here seen our Hicks--

Hicks--and his old banjo?"

Captain Butch Brewster, big Beef McNaughton, the Phillyloo Bird--that flamingo-like Senior--and little Theophilus Opperdyke, the timorous boner whom Bannister College called the "Human Encyclopedia," roosted on the sacred Senior Fence, between the Gymnasium and the Administration Building. A gloomy silence, like a somber mantle, enshrouded the four members of '19, as they listened to a rollicking parody on, "Has Anybody Here Seen Kelly?" chanted by some Juniors in Nordyke, with T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., as the object of solicitude. Nor did the melancholy youths respond to the queries hurled down at them from the dormitories' windows:

"Say, Butch Brewster, where is that crazy Hicks?"

"Beef, ain't our Hicks a-comin' back here no more?"

"Hello, Phillyloo, any word from our Hicks yet?"

"Ahoy there, Theophilus, where is Hicks, the Missing?"

The seven-thirty study-hour bell was ringing, its mellow chimes sounding from the Administration Building tower. From the windows of the dormitories gleams of light shot athwart the darkness. Over in Creighton Hall, the

abode of Freshmen, a silence reigned, but in Smithson, where the Sophomores roomed, Nordyke, home of the Juniors, and Bannister, haunt of the solemn Seniors, pandemonium obtained. In these dorm. rooms and corridors that night, just as in the class-rooms, or on the campus, and Bannister Field that day, there was but one topic. Whenever two students met, came the query inevitable:

"Where is Hicks? Isn't Hicks coming back this year?"

The Freshmen, bewildered, quite naturally, at the furore made over one missing student, asked, "Who is Hicks?" Seeking information from upper-classmen they received innumerable tales, in the nature of Iliad and Odyssey, concerning T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.; they heard of his campus exploits, such as his originating The Big Brotherhood of Bannister, and they laughed, at recitals of his athletic fiascos. They were told of his inevitably sunny nature, his loyal comradeship, his generous disposition, and as a result, the Freshmen, too, became intensely interested in the all-important campus problem: "Where is T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.?"

Little Theophilus Opperdyke, whose big-rimmed spectacles, high forehead, and bushy hair gave him an intensely owlish appearance, sighed tremendously, stared solemnly at his class-mates, and became the author of a most astounding statement: "I--I can't study," quavered the "boner," he whose tender devotion to his books was a campus tradition, and whose loyalty to his firm friend, the blithesome Hicks, was as that of Damon to Pythias, "I just *can't* care about my studies, without Hicks here! Somehow, it--it doesn't seem like old times, on the campus."

"I should say not!" ejaculated the Phillyloo Bird, sepulchrally, his string-bean length draped with extreme decorative effect on the Senior Fence, "Life at old Bannister without T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., is about as interesting as 'The Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture!' Prexy thought he started the college on its Marathon three days ago, but Bannister will not be officially opened until Hicks stands by his window some study-hour, twangs that old banjo, and shatters the campus quietude with a ballad roared in his fog-horn voice!"

Big Butch Brewster, enshrouded in melancholy, instinctively gazed up at the windows of the room T. Haviland Hicks, Jr. had reserved on the third floor of Bannister Hall, the Senior dorm., as if he fully expected to behold the missing youth materialize. There, in lonely grandeur, waited the sunny-souled Senior's vast aggregation of trunks, crates, and packing boxes, together with Hicks' baggage brought down from Camp Bannister. The bothersome banjo had disappeared at the same time the youthful Caruso imitated the Arabs, folding his figurative tent, and stealing away.

"It's a strange paradox," boomed Butch Brewster, finding that no Hicks appeared at the window, "but for three years Bannister has stormed at Hicks for bothering us during study-hour, or at midnight, with his saengerfest, and now I'd give anything to see him up there, and to hear that banjo, and his songs! It is just as if the sun doesn't shine on the campus, when T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., is away!"

Bannister College had been running for three days "on one cylinder," as the Phillyloo Bird quaintly phrased it, on account of the gladsome Hicks' mysterious absence. Not a word had the Head Coach, Captain Brewster, the football squad, or any of the collegians received from the blithesome youth, since the *billet-doux* he left with old Hinky-Dink at Camp Bannister. Old students, returning to the campus for another golden year, invaded Hicks' room in Bannister, ready to enjoy the cozy den of that jolly Senior, but they encountered silence and desolation. No one had the slightest knowledge of where the cheery Hicks could be; they missed his singing and banjo strumming, his pestersome ways, his cheerful good nature, his cozy quarters always open house to all, and his Hicks' Personally Conducted tours downtown to Jerry's for those celebrated Beefsteak Busts.

A telegram to Mr. Thomas Haviland Hicks, Sr., in Pittsburgh, sent by the worried Butch Brewster, had brought this concise response:

No knowledge of Thomas' whereabouts. He should be at Bannister.

"Queer," reflected Beef McNaughton, shifting his bulk on the protesting fence. "We know Hicks will be back, for all his luggage is stowed away in his room, and we are sure he is giving us all this mystery just for a joke--he dearly loves to arrange a sensational and dramatic climax--but we just can't get used to his not being on the campus. When Theophilus Opperdyke can't study, it's high time the S.O.S. signal was sent to T. Haviland Hicks, Jr."

"That is not the worst of it," growled Captain Butch Brewster, his arm across little Theophilus' shoulders. "The football squad misses Hicks, Beef. For the past two seasons he has sat at the training-table, his invariable good-humor, his Cheshire cat grin, and his sunny ways have kept the fellows in fine mental trim so they haven't worried over the game. But now, just as soon as he left Camp Bannister, the barometer of their spirits went down to zero and every meal at training-table is a funeral. Coach Corridan can't inject any pep into the scrimmages, and he says if Hicks doesn't return soon, Bannister's chances of the Championship are gone."

"As Theophilus says," responded the gloomy Beef, "we just can't get used to his not being here. We miss his good-nature, his sunny smile, the jolly crowds in his cozy quarters--why, the campus is talking of nothing but Hicks--and I don't know what Bannister will do after Hicks graduates--shut down, I suppose!"

"Well, you know," grinned the Phillyloo Bird, his cadaverous structure humped over like a turkey on the roost, "our Hicks hath sallied forth on the trail of a full-back, a Hercules who will smash the other elevens to infinitesimal smithereens! He told the squad to just leave it to Hicks, so don't be surprised if he is making flying trips to Yale, Harvard, and Princeton, striving to corral some embryo Ted Coy. Remember how Hicks often fulfills his rash prophecies!"

"A Herculean full-back--*Bah!*" fleted Butch, for all the campus knew of T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.'s, extremely rash vow to unearth a "phenom." "The truth of it is, fellows. Hicks has failed to locate such a wonder as Coach

Corridac outlined, for there ain't no such animal! He doesn't like to come back to Bannister without having made good his promise, without that Gargantuan giant he vowed to round up for the Gold and Green."

Just then, as if to substantiate Butch's jeering statement, a youth wearing the uniform and cap of The Western Union Telegraph Company and advancing across the campus at that terrific speed always exhibited by messenger-boys, appeared in the offing. Periscoping the four Seniors on the fence, he navigated his course accordingly and pulling a yellow envelope from his cap, he queried, in charmingly chaste English:

"Say, kin youse tell me where to find a feller name o' Brewster, wot's cap'n o' de football bunch?"

"Right here, Little Nemo," advised the Phillyloo Bird, solemnly. "Hast thou any messages from New York for me? John D. Rockefeller promised to wire me whether or not to purchase war-stocks."

The Phillyloo Bird, at this stage of his monologue, was interrupted by a yell that would have caused a full-blooded Choctaw Indian to turn pale. This came from good Butch Brewster, who, having signed for the message, and imagined all manner of catastrophes, from world-wars, earthquakes, pestilence and loss of wealth, down to bad news from Hicks, after the fashion of those receiving telegrams but seldom, had scanned the yellow slip. Never before, or afterward, not even when the luckless Butch fell in love, and T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., assisted Cupid, did the pachydermic Butch act so insanely as on this occasion.

"Whoop-*eee!* Yee-ow! Wow-wow-wow!" howled the supposedly solemn Senior, tumbling from the Senior fence and rolling on the campus like a decapitated rooster. "Hip-hip-*hooray!* Ring the bell, Beef, get the fellows out, have the Band ready, Oh, where is Coach Corridan? Read it, Beef, Theophilus, Phillyloo. Oh, Hicks is *coming* and he's got--"

It is possible that little Theophilus, who firmly believed that big Butch Brewster had gone emotionally insane, would have fled for help, but at that juncture members of the Gold and Green football squad, with Head Coach Patrick Henry Corridan, appeared, marching funereally toward the Gym., where a signal quiz was booked for seven forty-five. Beholding the paralyzing spectacle of their captain apparently in paroxysms on the grass, Hefty Hollingsworth, Biff Pemberton, Monty Merriweather and Pudge Langdon hurled themselves on his tonnage, while Roddy Perkins sat on his head, and wrested the telegram from his grasp,

"Call up Matteawan," shouted Roddy, unfolding the slip, "Butch is getting barmy in the dome, he--Oh, Coach, fellows--*great joy!* Just heed."

James Roderick Perkins, as excited as a Senator about to make his first speech, read aloud the telegram, on which the heedless Hicks had triple rates:

"BUTCH:

"Coming 8.30 P. M. express today. Discharge entire eleven--got whole team in one. Knock out partitions between five rooms. Make space for Thor, the Prodigious Prodigy! Leave it to Hicks!

"T. HAVILAND HICKS, JR."

"Hicks is coming!" shrieked the Phillyloo Bird, soaring down from the Senior Fence like a condor. "He will be here in less than an hour; he sent this wire just before his train left Philadelphia. Money is no object, when T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., wants to mystify old Bannister."

"Discharge entire eleven," quoth Butch Brewster, having somewhat subdued his frenzy. "Got whole team in one--knock out partitions between *five* rooms--make space for Thor, the Prodigious Prodigy! Now, what in the world has that lunatical Hicks done? Who can Thor be?"

Tug Cardiff, Buster Brown, Bunch Bingham, Scoop Sawyer, little Skeet Wigglesworth, Don Carterson, and Cherub Challoner, not having given their brawn to the subduing of Butch, now kindly donated their brain, in all manner of weird suggestions. According to their various surmises, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., had lured the Strong Man away from Barnum and Bailey's Circus, had in some way reincarnated the mythical Norse god, Thor, had hired some Greco-Roman wrestler, or by other devices too numerous and ridiculous to mention, had produced a full-back according to Coach Corridan's blue-prints and specifications.

Big Beef McNaughton, seized with an inspiration that supplied locomotive-power to his huge frame, lumbered into the Gym., and soon appeared with monster megaphones, used in "rooting" for Gold and Green teams, which he handed out to his comrades. Then the riotous squad, at his suggestion, sprinted for the Quad., that inner quadrangle or court around which the four class dormitories, forming the sides of a square, were built; anyone desiring an audience could be sure of it here, since the collegians in all four dorms. could rush to the Quadrangle side and look down from the windows. In the Quadrangle, under the brilliant arc-lights, the exuberant youths paused,

"One--two--three--let 'er go!" boomed Beef, and the football squad, in *basso profundo*, aided by the Phillyloo Bird's uncertain tenor, and Theophilus' quavery treble, roared in a tremendous vocal explosion that shook the dormitories:

"Hicks is coming! Hicks is coming! Everybody out on the campus! Get ready to welcome our T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.! Hicks is bringing Bannister's full-back--a *Prodigious Prodigy*!"

Windows rattled up, heads were thrust out, a fusillade of questions bombarded the squad in the Quadrangle below; from the three upper-class dormitories erupted hordes of howling, shouting youths, and soon the Quad. was filled with a singing, yelling, madly happy crowd. The Bannister Band, that famous campus musical organization, following a time-honored habit of

playing on every possible occasion, gladsomely tuned up and soon the noise was deafening, while study-hour, as prescribed by the Faculty, was forgotten.

"Everybody on the campus, at once!" Butch Brewster, Master-of-Ceremonies, boomed through his megaphone, having aroused excitement to the highest pitch by reading Hicks' telegram. "Old Dan Flannagan's jitney-bus will soon heave into sight. Let the Band blare, make a <i>big noise</i>. Let's show Hicks how glad we are to have him back to old Bannister."

It is historically certain that Mr. Napoleon Bonaparte returning from Jena and Austerlitz, Mr. Julius Caesar, home at Rome from his Conquests, or Mr. Alexander the Great (Conqueror, not National League pitcher) never received such a welcome as did T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., from his Bannister comrades that night. To the excited students, massed on the campus before the Gym. awaiting his arrival, every second seemed a century; everybody talked at once until the hubbub rivaled that of a Woman's Suffrage Convention. Thomas Haviland Hicks, Jr., was actually returning to old Bannister; and he was bringing "The Prodigious Prodigy," whatever that was, with him. Knowing the cheery Senior's intense love of doing the dramatic and his great ambition to startle his Alma Mater with some sensational stunt, they could hardly wait for old Dan Flannagan's jitney-bus to roll up the driveway,

"Here he comes!" shrieked, little Skeet Wigglesworth, an excitable Senior, who had climbed a tree to keep watch. "Here comes our Hicks!"

"Honk--Honk!" To the incessant blaring of a raucous horn, old Dan Flannagan's jitney-bus moved up the driveway. The genial Irish Jehu, who for over twenty years had transported Bannister collegians and alumni to and from College Hill in a ramshackle hack drawn by Lord Nelson, an antiquated, somnambulistic horse, had yielded to modern invention at last. Lord Nelson having become defunct during vacation, Old Dan, with a collection taken up by several alumni at Commencement, had bought a battered Ford, and constructed therewith a jitney-bus. This conveyance was fully as rattle-trap in appearance as the traditional hack had been, but the returning collegians hailed it with glee.

"All hail Hicks!" howled Butch Brewster, beside himself with joy, "Altogether--the Bannister yell for--<i>Hicks</i>!"

With half the collegians giving the yell, a number shouting indiscriminately, the Bannister Band blaring furiously, "Behold, The Conquering Hero Comes," with the youths a yelling, howling, shrieking, dancing mass, old Dan Flannagan, adding his quota of noises with the Claxon, brought his bus to a stop. This was a hilarious spectacle in itself, for on its sides the Bannister students had painted:

HENRY FORD'S "PIECE-OF-A-SHIP," <i>THE DOVE</i>! ALL RIDING IN THIS JIT DO SO AT THEIR OWN RISK! TEN CENTS FOR A JOY-RIDE TO COLLEGE HILL! YES, IT'S A <i>FORD</i>! WHAT DO YOU CARE? GET ABOARD!

On the roof of "The Dove," or "The Crab," as the collegians called it when it skidded sideways, perched precariously that well-known, beloved youth,

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr. He clutched his pestersome banjo and was vigorously strumming the strings and apparently howling a ballad, lost in the unearthly turmoil. As the jitney-bus stopped, the grinning Hicks arose, and from his lofty, position made a profound bow.

"Speech! Speech! Speech!" A mighty shout arose, and Hicks raised his hand for silence, which was immediately delivered to him.

"Fellows, one and all," he shouted, a mist before his eyes, for his impulsive soul was touched by the ovation, "I--I am <i>glad</i> to be back! Say--I--I--well, I'm glad to be back--that's all!"

At this masterly oration, which, despite its brevity, contained volumes of feeling, the Bannister students went wild--for a longer period than any political convention ever cheered a nominated candidate, they cheered T. Haviland Hicks, Jr. "Roar--roar--roar--<i>roar</i>!" in deafening sound-waves, the noise swept across the campus; never had football idol, baseball hero, or any athletic demigod, in all Bannister's history, been accorded such a tremendous ovation.

"Fellows," called T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., climbing down from his precarious perch, "stand back; I have brought to Bannister the 'Prodigious Prodigy.' I have rounded up a full-back who will beat Ballard all by himself. Behold the new Gold and Green football eleven, 'Thor!'"

From the grinning Dan Flannagan's jitney-bus, like a Russian bear charging from its den, lumbered a being whose enormous bulk fairly astounded the speechless youths; Butch Brewster, Beef McNaughton, Tug Cardiff, Bunch Bingham, Buster Brown, and Pudge Langdon were popularly regarded as the last word in behemoths, but this "Thor" dwarfed them, towered above them like a Colossus over Lilliputians. He was a youth, and yet a veritable Hercules. Over six feet he stood, with a massive head, covered with tousled white hair, a powerful neck, broad shoulders, a vast chest. To a judge of athletes, he would tip the scales at a hundred and ninety pounds, all solid muscle, for that superb physique held not an ounce of superfluous flesh.

"Hicks," said Head Coach Patrick Henry Corridan, gazing at the mountain of muscle, "if <i>size</i> means anything, you have brought old Bannister an entire football squad! What splendid material to train for the Big Games, why--he will be irresistible!"

CHAPTER IV

QUOTING SCOOP SAWYER'S LETTER

"I didn't raise my </i>Ford</i> to be a <i>jitney</i>--
To run the streets, and stay out late at night!

Who dares to put a jitney sign, upon it--
And send my *<i>peace-ship</i>* out for fares to fight?"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., standing by his open window at 3 P. M. one afternoon a week after his sensational return to Bannister College, with the "Prodigious Prodigy" in tow, indulged in the soul-satisfying pastime of twanging his banjo, and roaring, in his subterranean voice, a parody on "I Didn't Raise My Boy to be a Soldier." It was actually the first Caruso-like outburst of the pestersome youth that year, but his saengerfest brought vociferous howls of protest from campus and dormitories:

"*</i>*Bow-wow-wow*</i>*! The Grand Opery season is starting!"

"Sing some records for a talking-machine company, Hicks!"

"Kill that tom-cat! Listen to the back-fence musicale!"

"Say, Hicks--we'll take your word for that noise!"

On the Gym. steps, loafing a few moments before jogging out to Bannister Field for a strenuous scrimmage under the personal supervision of Slave-Driver Corridan, the Gold and Green football squad had gathered. It was from these stalwart gridiron gladiators that the caustic criticism of T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.'s, vocal atrocities emanated, and the imitation of a mournful hound by "Ichabod," the skyscraping Senior, was indeed phenomenal. Added to the howls, whistles, jeers, and shouts of the squad, were like condemnations from other collegians, sky-larking on the campus, or in the dorms.

"At that," grinned Captain Butch Brewster happily, "it surely makes me feel jubilant to hear Hicks' foghorn voice shattering the echoes, with his banjo strumming disturbing the peace--for which offense it shall soon be arrested. We can truly say that old Bannister is now officially opened for another year, for T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., has performed his annual rite--"

"Right--!" scoffed big Pudge Langdon, indignantly, as he gazed up at the happy-go-lucky youth, at the window of his room on the third-floor, campus side, of Bannister Hall, "Hicks ought to be tarred and feathered; there is *<i>*nothing right*</i>* in the way he has acted since his return to college! He struts around like Herman, the Master-Magician, and all the fellows fully expect to see him produce white rabbits from his cap, or make varicolored flags out of his handkerchief."

"We ought to toss him in a blanket," stormed Beef McNaughton, in ludicrous rage. "Ever since he mystified Bannister by going out and corralling a Hercules who is an entire eleven in himself, Hicks has maintained that sphinx-like silence as to how he achieved the feat, and he swaggers around, enshrouded in *<i>*mystery*</i>*! All we know is that 'Thor' is John Thorwald, of Norwegian descent. If we ask *<i>*him*</i>* for information, that wretch Hicks has him trained to say, 'Ask the little fellow, Hicks!'"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., in truth, had acted in a most reprehensible manner since that memorable night when he brought "Thor, the Prodigious Prodigy,"

to the campus. Not that he ceased to be the same sunny-souled, popular and friendly youth. The collegians, happy at finding his room open-house again, flocked to his cozy quarters, Freshmen *<i>fell</i>* under the spell of his generous nature, his Beef-Steak Busts, down at Jerry's were nightly occurrences, and he was the same Hicks as of old. But, after the dramatic manner in which Hicks had mysteriously made good the rash vow uttered at Camp Bannister and had brought to Coach Corridan a blond-haired giant who seemed destined to perform prodigies at full-back, the sunny Senior had evidently labored under the delusion that he was "Kellar, The Great Magician."

Instead of relieving the tortured curiosity of the students, wild to know how and where Hicks had unearthed this physical Hercules, who in every way filled the details of Head Coach Corridan's "blue-prints," T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., enjoying to the full this novel method of torturing his comrades, made a baffling mystery of the affair, much to the indignation of his friends.

</i>"Just leave it to Hicks," *</i>*he would say, when the Bannister youths cajoled, implored, threatened, or argued. "Thor is eligible to play four years of football at old Bannister. I call him Thor, after the great Norse god, Thor; he is of Norwegian descent. That is all of the Billion-Dollar Mystery I can disclose; ten thousand dollars offered for the correct solution."

"Here comes Scoop Sawyer," said Monty Merriweather, as that Senior, waving his arms in air, catapulted from Bannister Hall, and strode toward the squad on the Gym. steps; his appearance registered wrath, in photo-play parlance, and on reaching his comrades he immediately acquainted them with its cause.

"Listen to that Hicks!" he exploded, gesticulating with a sheaf of papers. "Hicks, the mocking-bird! He is mocking *<i>us</i>*--with his 'Billion-Dollar Mystery!' Say--here I am writing to Jack Merritt; he played football four years for old Bannister; he was captain of the Gold and Green eleven; last Commencement he graduated, and the last thing he said to me was, 'Scoop, old pal, write to me next fall, tell me everything about the football season; keep me posted as to new material!' *</i>*Everything*</i>*--keep him posted as to new material--*</i>*Bah*</i>*! If I write that Hicks has brought a fellow he calls 'Thor,' who spreads the regulars over the field, Jack will want to know the details, and--that villainous Hicks won't divulge his dread secret!"

At this moment, Scoop Sawyer, so-called because he was ambitious to be a newspaper reporter, after graduation, and for his humorous articles in the *</i>*Bannister Weekly*</i>*, had his intense wrath soothed by that which has "power to soothe the savage breast"; T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., displaying a wonderful originality by composing, then chanting, his parody, concluded the chorus roaring lustily, to a rollicking banjo accompaniment:

"If street car companies gave seats to all patrons
The strap-hangers in jitneys would not ride.
There'd be no jits. today

If Ford owners would say,
I didn't raise my Ford to be a--jitney!"

"That is too much!" raged Captain Butch Brewster, facing his excited colleagues. "Come on, fellows, we'll invade Hicks' room, read him Scoop's letter to Jack Merritt, and <i>make</i> him solve the Mystery! We're done with diplomacy; now, we'll deliver the ultimatum; when the squad returns from scrimmage, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., will tell us all about Thor, or be tossed in a blanket! Are you with me?"

"We are <i>ahead</i> of you!" howled Roddy Perkins, leading a wild charge for the entrance to Bannister Hall. Following him up the two flights of stairs with thunderous tread came Butch, Beef, Monty, Biff, Hefty, Pudge, Tug, Ichabod, Bunch, Buster, Bus Norton, and several second-team players, Cherub, Chub Chalmers, Don, Skeet, and Scoop Sawyer with his letter. With a terrific, blood-chilling clatter, and hideous howls, the Hicks-quelling Expedition roared down the third corridor of Bannister, and surged into the room of that tantalizing T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.!

"Safety first!" shrieked that cheery collegian, stowing his banjo in the closet and making a strenuous but futile effort to dive head-first beneath the bed, being forcibly restrained by Beef, who clung to his left ankle. "Say, to what am I indebted for the honor of this call? Why, when I got back to Bannister, you fellows gushed, 'Oh, we're <i>so</i> glad you're back, Hicks, old top; we missed even your saengerfests,' and when I start one--"

"Hicks," pronounced Butch Brewster grimly, holding the genial offender by the scruff of the neck, "you tantalizing, aggravating, irritating, lunatical, conscienceless degenerate! You assassin of Father Time, you disturber of the peace, <i>heed</i>! Scoop Sawyer is writing to Jack Merritt, to tell about the football team, and Bannister's chances of the Championship; he wants to tell Jack all about this Thor! Now, you have acted like Herman-Kellar-Thurston long enough, and hear our final word. Read Scoop's letter, and if when you finish its perusal you fail to give us full information, and answer all questions about Thor--"

"The football team will toss you in a blanket until you do!" finished Monty Merriweather, "We intended to wait until after the scrimmage, but Butch evidently believes we should end your bothersome mystery as once, and--"

"Curiosity killed the cat!" grinned T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.; then seeing the avenues and boulevards of escape were closed, but fighting for time, "let me peruse said missive indited by our literarily overbalanced Scoop. I am reluctant to dispel the clouds of mystery, but--"

Scoop Sawyer thrust the typewritten pages of the letter--composed on the battered old typewriter in the editorial sanctum of the <i>Bannister Weekly</i>--into Hicks' grasp and with a grin, that blithesome youth read:

Bannister College, Sept, 27.

DEAR OLD JACK:

There is so *<i>much</i>* to tell you, old pal, that I scarcely know where to start, but you want to know about the football eleven, so I'll write about T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., and his 'Billion-Dollar Mystery,' as he calls it; about Thor, the Prodigious Prodigy. You well know what a scatter-brained wretch Hicks is, and how he dearly loves to plot dramatic climaxes--to mystify old Bannister. Just now Hicks has the campus as wrathful as it is possible to be with that lovable youth; he has originated a great mystery, and achieved a seemingly impossible feat, and instead of explaining it, he swaggers around like a Hindoo mystic enshrouded in mystery and the fellows are wild enough to tar and feather the incorrigible villain!

To get off to a sprint-start, up in Camp Bannister, before college opened, when the squad was in training camp, Butch Brewster says that Coach Corridan one day, before Hicks, expressed a fervid ambition to find a huge, irresistible fullback--

Here the chronicle must hang fire, while T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., grinning at the wrath his mysterious behavior aroused, peruses those sections of Scoop Sawyer's epistle telling of two scenes already described; first, the one in the Camp Bannister grub-shack, where Head Coach Corridan blue-printed the Gargantuan athlete he desired, and the blithesome Hicks confidently requested that the Herculean task be left to him; second, the scene of intense excitement on the campus the night that the missing Hicks returned personally conducting that mountain of muscle, the blond-haired Thor.

Having grinned at these descriptions, the pestiferous Hicks scanned a picturesque description by Scoop of the events that transpired between that memorable night and the present invasion of the sunny Senior's room by the indignant squad.

--Naturally, Jack, old Bannister was intensely curious to know who this "Thor" could be, and how Hicks unearthed such a giant. But, instead of swaggering a trifle, as he inevitably does, and saying, 'Oh, I told you just to leave it to Hicks!' then telling all about it, after accomplishing what everyone believed a ridiculously impossible quest, he maintains that provokingly mysterious silence, and John Thorwald (we know his name, anyway) stolidly refers us to Hicks. So where Thor originated or how under the sun Hicks got on his trail, after making his rash vow to corral a mighty fullback, is a deep, dark mystery.

Now for Thor himself. Words cannot describe that Prodigious Prodigy; he must be seen to be believed! We do know that he is John Thorwald, and of distinctly Norwegian descent, so that calling him after the mythic Norse god is extremely appropriate. And he is reminiscent of the great Thor, with his vast strength and prowess. Thanks to T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.'s, love of mystery, and of tantalizing old Bannister, we know nothing of Thorwald's past, but we are sure he has lived and toiled among *<i>men</i>*, to possess that powerful build. I can't describe him, old man, without resorting to exaggeration, for ordinary words and phrases are utterly inadequate with Thor! Conjure up a vision of Gulliver among the Lilliputians and you can

picture him towering over us. He is a Viking of old, with his fair features and blond hair. Probably twenty-five years old, he has a powerful frame and prodigious strength, he dwarfs such behemoths as Butch and Beef, and makes such insignificant mortals as little Theophilus and myself seem like insects!

Thor is so *big*, Jack, that when he gets in a room, he crowds everyone into the corridor, and fills it alone. No wonder Hicks telegraphed to knock out the partitions between five rooms to make space for Thor! When he stands on the campus he blots out several sections of scenery, and the college disappears, giving the impression he has swallowed it. Thor is a slow-minded being, but possessed of a grim determination. To get an idea into his mind requires a blackboard and Chautauqua lecturer, but once he masters it, he never lets go; so it will be with football signals, once let him grasp a play, he will never be confused. He is simply a huge, stolid giant. He has a bulldog purpose to get an education, and nothing else matters. As for college spirit, the glad comradeship of the campus, he has no time for it; he pays no attention to the fellows at all, only to Hicks.

His devotion to that wretch is pathetic! He follows Hicks around like a huge mastiff after a terrier, or an ocean leviathan towed by a tug-boat; he seems absolutely helpless without T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., and so we have a daily Hicks' personally conducted tour of Thor to interest us. Briefly, Jack, John Thorwald is a slow-moving, slow-minded, grimly bulldog giant, who has come to Bannister to study, and as for any other phase of campus existence, he has never awakened to it!

Now for the football story: Well, the day after Hicks' sensational arrival, which I described, Coach Corridan, Captain Butch Brewster, Beef, Buster, Pudge, Monty, and Roddy with yours truly, went to Thor's room in Creighton just before football practice. We found that Colossus, who had matriculated as a Freshman, aided by Hicks, patiently masticating mental food as served by Ovid. Coach Corridan said, 'Come on, Thorwald, over to the Gym.; we'll fix you out with togs, if we can get two suits big enough to make one for your bulk! Ever play the game?' 'I play some,' rumbled Thor stolidly, never raising his eyes from his Latin. 'Don't bother me, I want to *study.*' I have not time for such foolishness. I am here to study, to get an education!' 'But,' urged the coach earnestly, 'you *must* play football for your Alma Mater, for old Bannister. Why, you--you *must*, that's all!' Thor gazed at Hicks questioningly--I forgot to add that insect's name--and asked, 'Is it so, Hicks? I *got* to play for the college?' And when Hicks grinned, '*Sure*', Thor, it must be did. Bannister expects you to smear the other teams over the landscape,' that blond Norwegian Viking said, 'Well, then, I play.'

All Bannister turned out to behold the "Prodigious Prodigy" on the football field. Somewhere--Hicks won't divulge where--Thor has learned the rudiments of the game. With that bulldog tenacity of his, he has learned them well. Hence he was ready for the scrubs, and in the practice game it was a veritable slaughter of the innocents. The 'Varsity could not stop Thor. Remember 'Ole' Skjarsen, the big Swede of George Fitch's 'Siwash College' tales? Thor, after the ten minutes required to teach him a play, would take the ball and just wade through the regulars for big gains. The only way to

stop him was for the entire eleven to cling affectionately to his bulk, and then he transported them several yards. He is a phenom, a veritable Prodigious Prodigy, and maybe old Bannister isn't *wild* with enthusiasm. His development will be slow but sure, and by the time the big games for the championship come, he will be a whole team in himself. Right now he goes through daily scrimmage as solemnly as if performing a sacred rite. He doesn't thrill with college spirit, but as for football--

Leaving Hicks to read the rest of Scoop Sawyer's long missive, terminating with indignant condemnation of the sunny youth's love of mystery, the terrific enthusiasm roused at old Bannister by the daily appearance on Bannister Field of Thor, and his irresistible marches through the 'Varsity, must be chronicled and explained.

Not for five seasons, not since the year before Hicks, Pudge, Butch, Beef and the others of 1919 were Freshmen, had the Gold and Green corraled that greatest glory, The State Intercollegiate Football Championship! In Captain Butch's Sophomore year, he had flung his bulk into the fray, training, sacrificing, fighting like a Trojan, only to see the pennant lost by a scant three inches, as Jack Merritt's forty-yard drop-kick for the goal that would have won the Championship struck the cross-bar and bounded back into the field. And the past season-old Bannister could still vision that tragic scene of the biggest game.

The students could picture Captain Brewster, with the Bannister eleven a few yards from Ballard's goal-line, and the touchdown that would give the Gold and Green that supreme glory. One minute to play; Deacon Radford had given Butch the pigskin, and like a berserker, he fought entirely through the scrimmage. But a kick on the head had blinded him, in the *melee*--free of tacklers, with the goal-line, victory, and the Championship so near, he staggered, reeled blindly, crashed into an upright, and toppled backward, senseless on the field, while the Referee's whistle announced the end of the game, and glory to Ballard. Even then, after the first terrible shock of the loss, of the cruel blow fate dealt the Gold and Green two successive seasons, the slogan was: "*Next year*--Bannister will win the Championship--*next year*!"

It was now "next year!" Losing only Jack Merritt, Babe McCabe and Heavy Hughes from the line-up, and having Monty Merrlweather and Bunch Bingham, fully as good, Coach Corridan's Gold and Green eleven, before the season started, seemed a better fighting machine than even the one of the year before. But when the irrepressible T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., in some mysterious fashion making good his rash vow to produce a smashing full-back that can't be stopped, towed that stolid, blond Colossus, Thor, to old Bannister, enthusiasm broke all limits!

Mass-meetings were held every night. Speeches by Coaches, Captain, players, Faculty, and students, aroused the campus to the highest pitch; every day, the entire student-body, with The Bannister Band, turned out on Bannister Field to cheer the eleven, and to watch the Prodigious Prodigy perform valorous deeds, like the god Thor. "Bannister College--State Championship!" was the cry, and with the giant Thor to present an irresistible catapulting that could not be stopped, the Gold and Green exultantly awaited the big

games with Hamilton and Ballard.

And yet, the stolid, unemotional, unawakened Thor, on whom every hope of the Championship was based, whom all Bannister came out to watch every day, practiced as he studied, doggedly, silently. It was evident to all that he hated the grind, that he wanted to quit, that his heart was not in the game, but for some cause, he drove his Herculean body ahead, and could not be stopped!

"Now, you abandoned wretch," said Butch Brewster grimly, as the happy-go-lucky Hicks finished Scoop's letter, and glanced about him wildly seeking a way of escape, "in one minute you will tell us all about John Thorwald, alias 'Thor,' or be tossed sky-high in a blanket by the football squad, and please believe me, you'll break all altitude records!"

"Spare me, you banditti!" pleaded Hicks, reluctant to cease torturing Bannister with his Billion-Dollar Mystery, yet equally unwilling to aviate from a blanket heaved by the husky athletes. "Why seek ye to question the ways of T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.? You have your Prodigious Prodigy--your smashing full-back is distributing the 'Varsity over the scenery with charming nonchalance that promises dire catastrophe for other teams, once he makes the regulars, so--"

At that dramatic moment, just as Butch Brewster glanced at Hicks' alarm-clock, to start the minute of grace, a startling interruption saved the gladsome youth from having to make a decision. A heavy, creaking tread shook the corridor, and the squad beheld, looming up in the doorway, Thor. He was not in football togs, and as he started to speak his fair face as stolid and expressionless as that of a sphinx, Captain Butch Brewster stepped toward him.

"Thor!" he exclaimed, seizing the blond Colossus by the arm, "You aren't ready for the scrimmage; hustle over to the Gym. and get on your suit."

But John Thorwald, as passive of feature as though he announced something of the most infinitesimal importance, and were not hurling a bomb-shell whose explosion, was to shake old Bannister terrifically, spoke in a matter-of-fact manner: "I shall not play football--any more,"

"What!" Every collegian in Hicks' room, including that dazed producer of the Prodigious Prodigy, chorused the exclamation; to them it was as stunning a shock as the nation would suffer if its President calmly announced, "I'm tired of being President of the United States. I shall not report for work tomorrow." Bannister College, ever since the night that Thor arrived on the campus, had talked or thought of nothing but how this huge, blond-haired Hercules would bring the Championship to the Gold and Green; his prodigies on the gridiron, his ever-increasing prowess, had aroused enthusiasm to fever heat, and now--

"I was told wrong," said Thor, shifting his vast tonnage awkwardly from one foot to the other, and evidently bewildered at the consternation caused by what he believed a trifling announcement, "I understood that I had to play football, that the Faculty required it of me, and the students let me

think so. I have just learned from Doctor Alford that such is not true, that I do not have to play unless I choose, hence, I quit. I came to college to study, to gain an education. I have toiled long and hard for the opportunity, and now I have it, I shall not waste my time on such foolishness."

Then, utterly unconscious that he had spoken sentences which would create a mighty sensation at old Bannister, that might doom the Gold and Green to defeat, lose his Alma Mater the Championship, and bring on himself the cruel ostracism and bitter censure of his fellows, John Thorwald lumbered down the corridor. A moment of tense silence followed and then Captain Butch Brewster groaned.

"It's all over, it's all over, fellows!" he said brokenly, "Bannister loses the Championship! We know it is impossible to move Thor on the football field, and now that he has said 'No!' to playing football, dynamite can not move him from his decision."

Then, crushed and disconsolate, the football squad filed silently from the room, to break the glad news to Coach Corridan, and to spread the joyous tidings to old Bannister. When they had gone, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., staring at the figurative black cloud that lowered over his Alma Mater, strove to find its silver lining, and at last he partially succeeded.

"Anyway," said Hicks, with a lugubrious effort to grin, "Thor's announcement shocked the squad so much that I was not forced to explain my Billion-Dollar Mystery!"

CHAPTER V

HICKS MAKES A DECISION

"In the famous words of Mr. Somebody-Or-Other," quoth T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., "something has *got* to be did, and immediately to once!"

Big Butch Brewster nodded assent. So did Head Coach Patrick Henry Corridan, Beef McNaughton, Team Manager Socks Fitzpatrick, Monty Merriweather, Dad Pendleton, President of the Athletic Association, and Deacon Radford, quarter-back, also Shad Fishpaw, who, being Freshman Class-Chairman, maintained a discreet silence. Instead of the usual sky-larking, care-free crowd that infested the cozy quarters of the happy-go-lucky Hicks, every collegian present, except the ever-cheerful youth, seemed to have lost his best friend and his last dollar at one fell swoop!

"Oh, yes, something has got to be did!" fleered Beef McNaughton, the davenport creaking under the combined tonnage of himself and Butch Brewster, "But who will do it? Where's all that Oh-just-leave-it-to-Hicks

stuff you have pulled for the past three years, you pestiferous insect?
</i>Bah</i>! You did a lot; you dragged a Prodigious Prodigy to old Bannister, enshrouded him in darkest mystery, and now, when he pushed the 'Varsity off the field and promised to corral the Championship, single-handed, he puts his foot down, and says, '</i>No</i>--I will not play football!' Get busy, Little Mr. Fix-It."

"Oh, just leave it to Hicks!" accommodated that blithesome Senior, with a cheeriness he was far from feeling. "You all do know why Thor won't play football; it is not like last season, when Deke Radford, a star quarter-back, refused either to play, or to explain his refusal. Let me get an inspiration, and then Thor will once again gently but firmly thrust entire football elevens down the field before him!"

As evidence of how intensely serious was the situation, let it be chronicled that, for the first time in his scatter-brained campus career, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., did not dare strum his banjo and roar out ballads to torture his long-suffering colleagues. Popular and beloved as he was, the gladsome youth hesitated to shatter the quietude of the campus with his saengerfest, knowing as he did what a terrible blow Thor's utterly astounding announcement had been to the college.

It was nine o'clock, one night two weeks after the day when John Thorwald, better known as Thor, the Prodigious Prodigy, so mysteriously produced by Hicks, had stolidly paralyzed old Bannister by unemotionally stating his decision to play no more football. Since then, to quote the Phillyloo Bird, "Bannister has staggered around the ring like a prizefighter with the Referee counting off ten seconds and trying to fight again before he takes the count." In truth, the students had made a fatal mistake in building all their hopes of victory on that blond giant, Thor; seeing his wonderful prowess, and beholding how, in the first week of the season, the Norwegian Colossus had ripped to shreds the Varsity line which even the heavy Ballard eleven of the year before could not batter, it was but natural that the enthusiastic youths should think of the Championship chances in terms of </i>Thor</i>. For one week, enthusiasm and excitement soared higher and higher, and then, to use a phrase of fiction, everything fell with a dull, sickening thud!

In vain did Coach Corridan, the staff of Assistant Coaches, Captain Butch Brewster, and others strive to resuscitate football spirit; nightly mass-meetings were held, and enough perfervid oratory hurled to move a Russian fortress, but to no avail. It was useless to argue that, without Thor, Bannister had an eleven better than that of last year, which so nearly missed the Championship. The campus had seen the massive Thor's prodigies; they knew he could not be stopped, and to attempt to arouse the college to concert pitch over the eleven, with that mountain of muscle blotting out vast sections of scenery, but not in football togs, was not possible.

"One thing is sure," spoke Dad Pendleton seriously, gazing gloomily from the window, "unless we get Thor in the line-up for the Big Games, our last hope of the Championship is dead and interred! And I feel sorry for the big fellow, for already the boys like him just about as much as a German

loves an Englishman; yet, arguments, threats, pleadings, and logic have absolutely no effect on him. He has said 'No,' and that ends it!"

"He doesn't understand things, fellows," defended T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., with surprising earnestness. "Remember how bewildered he seemed at our appeal to his college spirit, and his love for his Alma Mater. We might as well have talked Choctaw to him!"

Butch Brewster, Socks Fitzpatrick, Dad Pendleton, Beef McNaughton, Deacon Radford, Monty Merriweather, and Shad Fishpaw well remembered that night after Thor's tragic decision, when they--part of a Committee formed of the best athletes from all teams, and the most representative collegians of old Bannister, had invaded Thor's room in Creighton Hall, to wrestle with the recalcitrant Hercules. Even as Hicks spoke, they visioned it again.

A cold, cheerless room, bare of carpet or pictures, with just the study-table, bed, and two chairs. At the study-table, his huge bulk sprawling on, and overflowing, a frail chair, they had found the massive John Thorwald laboriously reading aloud the Latin he had translated, literally by the sweat of his brow. The blond Colossus, impatient at the interruption, had shaken his powerful frame angrily, and with no regard for campus tradition, had addressed the upperclassmen in a growl: "Well, what do you want? Hurry up, I've got to study."

And then, to state it briefly, they had worked with (and on) the stolid Thorwald for two hours. They explained how his decision to play no more football would practically kill old Bannister's hopes of the Championship, would assassinate football spirit on the campus, and cause the youths to condemn Thor, and to ostracise him. Waxing eloquent, Butch Brewster had delivered a wonderful speech, pleading with John Thorwald to play the game. He tried to show that obviously uninterested mammoth that, like the Hercules he so resembled, he stood at the parting of the ways.

"You are on the threshold of your college career, old man!" he thundered impressively, though he might as well have tried to shoot holes in a battleship with a pop-gun, "What you do now will make or break you. Do you want the fellows as friends or as enemies; do you want comradeship, or loneliness and ostracism? You have it in your power to do two *big* things, to win the Championship for your Alma Mater, and to win to yourself the entire student-body, as friends; will you do that, and build a firm foundation for your college years, or betray your Alma Mater, and gain the enmity of old Bannister!"

Followed more fervid periods, with such phrases as, "For your Alma Mater," "Because of your college spirit," "For dear old Bannister," and "For the Gold and Green!" predominating; all of which terms, to the stolid, unimaginative Thorwald being fully as intelligible as Hindustani. They appealed to him not to betray his Alma Mater; they implored him, for his love of old Bannister; they besought him, because of his college spirit; and all the time, for all that the Prodigious Prodigy understood, they might as well have remained silent.

"I will tell you something," spoke Thor, at last, with an air of impatient

resignation, "and don't bother me again, please! I have come to Bannister College to get an education, and I have the right to do so, without being pestered. I pay my bills, and I am entitled to all the knowledge I can purchase. I look from my window, and I see boys, whose fathers are toiling, sacrificing, to send them here. Instead of studying, to show their gratitude, they loaf around the campus, or in their rooms, twanging banjos and guitars, singing silly songs, and sky-larking. I don't know what all this rot is you are talking of; 'college spirit,' 'my Alma Mater,' and so on. I do not want to play football; I do not like the game; I need the time for my study, so I will not play. Both my father and myself have labored and sacrificed to send me to college. The past five years, with one great ambition to go to college and learn, I have toiled like a galley-slave.

"And now, when opportunity is mine, do you ask me to *play*? You want me to loaf around, wasting precious time better spent in my studies. What do I care whether the boys like me, or hate me? Bah! I can take any two of you, and knock your heads together! Their friendship or enmity won't move me. I shall study, learn. I will not waste time in senseless foolishness, and I *won't* play football again."

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr. was silent as he stood by the window of his room, gazing down at the campus where the collegians were gathering before marching to the Auditorium for the nightly mass-meeting that would vainly strive to arouse a fighting spirit in the football "rooters." That blithesome, heedless, happy-go-lucky youth was capable of far more serious thought than old Bannister knew; and more, he possessed the rare ability to read character; in the case of Thor, he saw vastly deeper than his indignant comrades, who beheld only the surface of the affair. They knew only that John Thorwald, a veritable Colossus, had exhibited football prowess that practically promised the State Championship to old Bannister, and then--he had quit the game. They understood only that Thor refused to play simply because he did not want to, and as to why their appeals to his college spirit and his love for his Alma Mater were unheeded they were puzzled.

But the gladsome Hicks, always serious beneath his cheerful exterior, when old Bannister's interests were at stake, or when a collegian's career might be blighted, when the tragedy could be averted, fully understood. Of course, as originator of the Billion-Dollar Mystery, and producer of the Prodigious Prodigy, he knew more about the strange John Thorwald than did his mystified comrades. He knew that Thor, as he named him, was just a vast hulk of humanity, stolid, unimaginative of mind, slow-thinking, a dull, unresponsive mass, as yet unstirred by that strange, subtle, mighty thing called college spirit. He realized that Thor had never had a chance to understand the real meaning of campus life, to grasp the glad fellowship of the students, to thrill with a great love for his Alma Mater. All that must come in time. The blond giant had toiled all his life, had labored among men where everything was practical and grim. Small wonder, then, that he failed utterly to see why the youths "loafed on the campus, or in their rooms, twanging banjos and guitars, singing silly songs, and skylarking."

"I must save him," murmured Hicks softly, for the others in his room were talking of Thor. "Oh, imagine that powerful body, imbued with a vast love

for old Bannister, think of Thor, thrilling with college spirit. Why, Yale's and Harvard's elevens combined could not stop his rushes, then. I must save him from himself, from the condemnation of the fellows, who just don't understand. I must, some way, awaken him to a complete understanding of college life in its entirety, but how? He is so different from Roddy Perkins, or Deke Radford."

It seemed that the lovable Hicks was destined to save, every year of his campus career, some entering collegian who incurred the wrath, deserved or otherwise, of the students. In his Freshman first term, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., indignant at the way little Theophilus Opperdyke, the timorous, nervous "grind," had been alarmed at the idea of being hazed, had by a sensational escape from a room locked, guarded, and filled with Sophomores, gained immunity for himself and the boner for all time, thus winning the loyal, pathetic devotion of the Human Encyclopedia. As a Sophomore, by crushing James Roderick Perkins' Napoleonic ambition to upset tradition, and make Freshmen equal with upperclassmen, Hicks had turned that aggressive youth's tremendous energy in the right channels, and made him a power for good on the campus.

And, a Junior, he had saved good Deacon Radford. When that serious youth, a famous prep. quarter, entered old Bannister, the students were wild at the thought of having him to run the Gold and Green team, but to their dismay, he refused either to report for practice or to explain his decision. Hicks, promising blithely, as usual, to solve the mystery and get Deke to play, discovered that the youth's mother, called "Mother Peg" by the collegians, was head-waitress downtown at Jerry's and that she made her son promise not to own the relationship, and that while she worked to get him through college, Deacon would not play football. The inspired Hicks had gotten Mother Peg to start College Inn, and board Freshmen unable to get rooms in the dormitories, and Deacon had played wonderful football. For this achievement, the original youth failed to get glory, for he sacrificed it, and swore all concerned to secrecy.

"But Roddy and Deke were different," reflected Hicks, pondering seriously. "Both had been to Prep. School, and they understood college life and campus spirit. It was Roddy's tremendous ambition that had to be curbed, and Deke was the victim of circumstances. But Thorwald--it is just a problem of how to awaken in him an understanding of college spirit. The fellows don't understand him, and--"

A sudden thought, one of his inspirations, assailed the blithesome Hicks. Why not make the fellows understand Thor? Surely, if he explained the "Billion-Dollar Mystery," as he humorously called it, and told why Thorwald, as yet, had no conception of college life, in its true meaning, they would not feel bitter against him; perhaps, instead, though regretful at his decision not to play the game, they would all strive to awaken the stolid Colossus, to stir his soul to an understanding of campus tradition and existence. But that would mean--"I surely hate to lose my Billion-Dollar Mystery!" grinned T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., remembering the intense indignation of his comrades at his Herman-Kellar-Thurston atmosphere of mystery, "It is more fun than, my 'Sheerluck Holmes' detective pose or my saengerfests. Still, for old Bannister, and for Thor."

It would seem only a trifle for the heedless Hicks to give up his mystery, and tell Bannister all about Thor; yet, had the Hercules reconsidered, and played football, the torturous youth would have bewildered his colleagues as long as possible, or until they made him divulge the truth. He dearly loved to torment his comrades, and this had been such an opportunity for him to promise nonchalantly to produce a Herculean full-back, then, to return to the campus with the Prodigious Prodigy in tow, and for him to perform wonders on Bannister Field, naturally aroused the interest of the youths, and he had enjoyed hugely their puzzlement, but now--

"Say, fellows," he interrupted an excited conversation of a would-be Committee of Ways and Means to make Thor play football, "I have an announcement to make."

"Don't pester us, Hicks!" warned Captain Butch Brewster, grimly. "We love you like a brother, but we'll crush you if you start any foolishness, and--"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., with the study-table between himself and his comrades, assumed the attitude of a Chautauqua lecturer, one hand resting on the table and the other thrust into the breast of his coat, and dramatically announced:

"In the Auditorium--at the regular mass-meeting tonight--T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., will give the correct explanation of Thor, the Prodigious Prodigy, and will solve the Billion-Dollar Mystery!"

CHAPTER VI

HICKS MAKES A SPEECH

The announcement of T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., had practically the same effect on Head Coach Corridan and the cheery Senior's comrades as a German gas-bomb would have on the inmates of an Allied trench. For several seconds they stared at the blithesome youth, in a manner scarcely to be called aimless, since their looks were aimed with deadly accuracy at him, but in general, with the exception of Hicks, those in the room resembled vastly some of the celebrated Madame Tussaud's wax-works in London.

"Oh," breathed Monty Merriweather, with the appearance of dawning intelligence, "that's so, Coach, Hicks never has disclosed the details of his achievement; we were about to extort a confession from him, when Thor broke up the league with his announcement, and since then, Bannister has been too worried over Thorwald to trifle with Hicks!"

"That's a good idea!" exclaimed Coach Corridan, who had been remarkably

silent, for him, pondering the football crisis, "Hicks can make his explanation at the regular mass-meeting tonight, in the Auditorium. I'll post an announcement of his purpose, and you fellows spread the news among the students, stating that Hicks will tell how he rounded up Thor. Some have shirked these meetings since Thorwald quit the game, and this will bring them out, so maybe we can arouse the fighting spirit again!"

So well did Butch, Beef, Socks, Monty, Dad, Deacon, and Shad tell the news, that when the bell in the Administration Hall tower rang at ten o'clock it was ascertained by score-keepers that every youth at Bannister, Freshmen included, except that Hercules, Thor, had assembled in the Auditorium. That stolid behemoth, who regarded the football mass-meeting as foolishness, was reported as boning in his cheerless room, fulfilling the mission for which he came to college, namely, to get his money's worth of knowledge, which he evidently regarded as some commodity for which Bannister served merely as a market.

Big Butch Brewster, on the stage of the Auditorium, the big assembly-hall of the college, along with Coach Corridan, several of the Gold and Green eleven, two members of the Faculty, several Assistant Coaches, and T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., stepped forward and stilled the tumult of the excited youths with upraised hand.

"We have with us tonight," he spoke, after the fashion of introducing after-dinner speakers, "Mr. Thomas Haviland Hicks, Jr., the celebrated Magician and Mystifier, who will present for your approval his world-famous Billion-Dollar Mystery, and give the correct solution to Thor, the problem no one has been able to solve. I take great pleasure in introducing to you this evening, Mr. Thomas Haviland Hicks, Jr."

The collegians, firmly believing it was another of the pestiferous Hicks' jokes, and wholly unaware of the deep purpose of the sunny-souled, irrepressible youth's speech, went into paroxysms of glee, as the shadow-like Hicks stepped forward. For several minutes, the hall echoed with jeers, shouts, groans, whistles, and sarcastic comments:

"Hire a hall, Hicks; tell it to Sweeney!"--"Bryan better look out. Hicks, the Chau-talker;"--"Spill the speech, old man; spread the oratory!"--"Oh, where are my smelling-salts? I know I shall faint!"--"You'd better play a banjo-accompaniment to it, Hicks!"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., for once in his campus career, fervidly wished he had not been such a happy-go-lucky, care-free collegian, for now, when he was serious, his comrades refused to believe him to be in such a state. However, quiet was obtained at last, thanks to the fact that the youths possessed all the curiosity of the proverbial cat who died thereby, and the sunny Senior plunged earnestly into his famous speech, that was destined, at old Bannister, to rank with that of Demosthenes "On The Crown," or any of W. J. Bryan's masterpieces.

"Fellows," began Hicks, without preface, "I know I've built myself the reputation of being a scatterbrained, heedless nonentity, and it's too late to change now. But tonight, please believe me to be thoroughly in earnest.

Bannister faces more than one crisis, more than one tragedy. It is true that the football eleven is crippled by the defection of Thor, that we fellows have somewhat unreasonably allowed his quitting the game to shake our spirit, but there is more at stake than football victories, than even the State Intercollegiate Football Championship! The future of a student, of a present Freshman, his hopes of becoming a loyal, solid, representative college man, a tremendous power for good, at old Bannister, hang in the balance at this moment! I speak of John Thorwald. You students have it in your power to make or break him, to ruin his college years and make him a recluse, a misanthrope, or to gradually bring him to a full realization of what college life and campus tradition really mean."

"I have made a great mystery of Thor, just for a lark, but the enmity and condemnation of the campus for him because he quit football suddenly, shows me that the time for skylarking is past. For his sake, I must plead. He is not to blame, altogether, for quitting. Myself, and you fellows, gave him the impression that it was a Faculty requirement for him to play football, for we feared he would not play, otherwise; when he learned that it was not a Faculty rule, he simply quit."

Here T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., seeing that at last he had convinced the collegians of his earnestness, though they seemed fairly paralyzed at the phenomenon, paused, and produced a bundle of papers before resuming.

"Now, I'll try to explain the 'mystery' as briefly and as clearly as possible. Up at Camp Bannister, before college opened, Coach Corridan, as you know, outlined to Butch, Deke, and myself, his dream of a Herculean, irresistible full-back; I said, 'Just leave It to Hicks!' and they believed that I, as usual, just made that remark to torment them. But such was not the case. When I joined them, I remarked that I had a letter from my Dad; Deke made some humorous remarks, and I forgot to read it aloud, as I intended. Then, after Coach Corridan blue-printed his giant full-back, I kept silent as to Dad's letter, for reasons you'll understand. But, after all, there was no mystery about my leaving Camp Bannister, after making a seemingly rash vow, and returning to college with a 'Prodigious Prodigy' who filled specifications, In fact, before I left Camp Bannister, at the moment I made my rash promise--I had Thor already lined up!"

"I shall now read a clipping or two, and a letter or two from my Dad. The clippings came in Dad's letter to me at Camp Bannister, the letter I intended to read to Coach Corridan, Deke, and Butch, but which I decided to keep silent about, after the Coach told of the full-back he wanted, for I knew I had him already! First, a clipping from the *San Francisco Examiner*, of August 25:

MAROONED SAILOR RESCUED--TEN YEARS ON SOUTH SEA ISLAND! SOLE SURVIVOR OF ILL-FATED CRUISE OF THE ZEPHYR

"The trading-schooner *Southern Cross*, Captain Martin Bascomb, skipper, put into San Francisco yesterday with a cargo of copra from the South Sea Islands. On board was John Thorwald, Sr., who for the past ten years has been marooned on an uninhabited coral isle of the Southern Pacific, together with 'Long Tom' Watts, who, however, died several months ago.

Thorwald's story reads like a thrilling bit of fiction. He was first mate of the ill-fated yacht *Zephyr*, which cleared from San Francisco ten years ago with Henry B. Kingsley, the Oil-King, and a pleasure party, for a cruise under the southern star. A terrific tornado wrecked the yacht, and only Thorwald and 'Long Tom' escaped, being cast upon the coral island, where for ten years they existed, unable to attract the attention of the few craft that passed, as the isle was out of the regular lanes. Only when Captain Martin Bascomb, in the trading-schooner *Southern Cross*, touched at the island, hoping to find natives with whom to trade supplies for copra, were they found, and 'Long Tom' had been dead some months."

"Despite the harrowing experiences of his exile, Thorwald, a vast hulk of a stolid, unimaginative Norwegian, who reminds one of the Norse god, 'Thor,' intends to ship as first mate on the New York-Christiania Steamship Line. It is said that Thorwald has a son, at this time about twenty-five years of age, somewhere in this country, whom he will seek, and--"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., at this juncture, terminated the newspaper story, and finding that his explanation held his comrades spellbound, he produced a letter, and drew out the message, after stating the youths could read the entire news-story of John Thorwald, Sr., later.

"This is the letter I received from my Dad," he explained to the intensely interested Bannister youths, who were giving a concentrated attention that members of the Faculty would have rejoiced to receive from them. "Up at Camp Bannister--I was just about to read it to Coach Corridan, Butch, and Deke Radford, when Deke chaffed me, and then the Coach outlined the mammoth full-back he desired, so I kept quiet. I'll now read it to you:

"Pittsburgh, Pa., Sept, 17.

"DEAR SON THOMAS:

"Read the inclosed clipping from the *San Francisco Examiner* of August 25, and then pay close attention to the following facts: At the time of this news-story I was in 'Frisco on business, as you will recall, and for reasons to be outlined, when I read of the *Southern Cross* finding the marooned John Thorwald, and bringing him to that city, I was particularly interested, so much so that I at once looked up the one-time first mate of the ill-starred *Zephyr* and brought him to Pittsburgh in my private car. My reason was this; in my employ, in the International Steel Combine's mill, was John Thorwald's son, John Thorwald, Jr.

"To state facts as briefly as possible, almost a year ago, as I took some friends through the steel rolling mill, I chanced to step directly beneath a traveling crane, lowering a steel beam; seeing my peril, I was about to step aside when I caught my foot and fell. Just then a veritable giant, black and grimy, leaped forward, and with a prodigious display of strength, placed his powerful back under the descending weight, staving it off until I rolled over to safety!

"Well, of course, I had the fellow report to my office, and instinctively

feeling that I wanted to show my gratitude, without being patronizing, he responded to my question as to what I could do to reward him, by asking simply that I get him some job that would allow him to attend night school. He stated that, owing to the fact that he worked alternate weeks at night shift he was unable to do so. Questioning him further, I learned the following facts:

"He was John Thorwald, Jr., only son of John Thorwald, Sr., a Norwegian; his mother was also a Norwegian, but he is a natural born American. Realizing the opportunities for an educated young man in our land, Thorwald's parents determined that he should gain knowledge, and until he was fifteen years old, he attended school in San Francisco. When he was fifteen, his father signed as first mate on the yacht *Zephyr*, going with the oil-king, Henry B. Kingsley, on a pleasure cruise in the Southern Pacific; Thorwald, Sr.'s, story you read in the paper. Soon after the news of the *Zephyr's* wreck, with all on board lost, as was then supposed, Thorwald's mother died. Her dying words (so young Thorwald told me, and I was moved by his simple, straightforward tale) were an appeal to her boy. She made him promise, for her sake, to study, study, study to gain knowledge, and to rise in the world! Thorwald promised. Then, believing both his parents dead, the young Norwegian, a youth of fifteen without money, had to shift for himself.

"Thomas, Jack London could weave his adventures into a gripping masterpiece. Starting in as cabin-boy on a freighter to Alaska, young Thorwald, in the past ten years, has simply crowded his life with adventure, thrill, and experience, though thrills mean nothing to him. He was in the Klondike gold-fields, in the salmon canneries, a prospector, a lumber-jack in the Canadian Northwest, a cowboy, a sailor, a worker in the Panama Canal Zone, on the Big Ditch, and too many other things to remember. Finally, he drifted to Pittsburgh, where his prodigious strength served him in the steel-mills, and, let me add, served *me*, as I stated.

"And ever, no matter where he wandered, or what was his toil, whenever possible, Thorwald studied. His promise to his mother was always his goal, and in the cities he studied, or in the wilds he read all the books he could find. The past year, finding he had a good-pay job in Pittsburgh, he settled to determined effort, and by sheer resolution, by his wonderful power to grasp facts and ideas for good once he gets them, he made great progress in night school, until he was shifted, a week before he saved my life, to work that required him to toil nightly, alternate weeks. So, for a year, Thor has had every possible advantage, some, unknown to him, I paid for myself; I got him clerical work, with shorter hours, he went to night school, and I employed the very best tutor obtainable, letting Thorwald pay him, as he thought, though his payments wouldn't keep the tutor in neckties. The gratitude of the blond giant is pathetic, and suspecting that I paid the tutor something, he insisted on paying all he could, which I allowed, of course.

"Well, in August, a year after Thorwald rescued me from serious injury, perhaps death, I was in 'Frisco, and read of Thorwald, Sr.'s rescue and return. Overjoyed, I took the father to Pittsburgh, to the son. I witnessed their meeting, with the father practically risen from the dead, and all

those stolid, unimaginative Norwegians did was to shake hands gravely! Young Thorwald told of his mother's last words, and of his promise, of his having studied all the years, and of his late progress, so that he was ready to enter college. His father, happy, insisted that he enter this September, and he would pay for his son's college course, to make up for the years the youth struggled for himself--Kingsley's heirs, I believe, gave Thorwald, Sr., five thousand dollars on his return. So, though grateful to me for the aid I offered, they would receive no financial assistance, for they want to work it out themselves, and help the youth make good his promise to his dying mother.

"Much as I love old Bannister, my Alma Mater, I would not have tried to send Thorwald there, had I not deemed it a good place for him. However, since it is a liberal, not a technical, education he wants, it is all right; and that prodigious strength will serve the Gold and Green on the football field. Now, Thomas, I want you to meet him in Philadelphia, and take him to Bannister, look out for him, get him started O. K., and do all you can for him. Get him to play football, if you can, but don't condemn if he refuses. Remember, his life has been grim and unimaginative; he has toiled and studied, it is probable he will not understand college life at first."

"That's all I need to read of Dad's letter, fellows," concluded T. Haviland Hicks, Jr. "After I got it, and Coach Corridan, Butch, and Beef heard my seemingly rash vow to round up a giant full-back, I made a mystery of it; I loafed in Philadelphia and Atlantic City until I met Thor, and brought him here. You have all the data regarding Thor, 'The Billion-Dollar Mystery.'"

The students, almost as one, drew a deep breath. They had been enthralled by the story, and their feeling toward Thor had undergone a vast change. Stirred by hearing of his promise to his dying mother, thrilled at the way the stolid, determined Norwegian had ceaselessly studied to make something of himself for the sake of his mother's sacred memory, the Bannister youths now thought of football, of the Championship, as insignificant, beside the goal of Thorwald, Jr. The blond Colossus, whom an hour ago all Bannister reviled and condemned for not playing the game, who was a campus outcast, was now a hero; thanks to the erstwhile heedless Hicks, whose intense earnestness in itself was a revelation to the amazed collegians, Thor stood before them in a different light, and the impulsive, whole-souled, generous youths were now anxious to make amends.

"Thor! Thor! Thor!" was the thunderous cry, and the Bannister yell for the Prodigious Prodigy shattered the echoes. Then T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., ecstatically joyous, again stilled the tumult, and spoke in behalf of John Thorwald.

"We all understand Thor now, fellows," he said, beaming on his comrades. "We want him to play football, and we'll keep after him to play, but we won't condemn him if he refuses. At present, Thor is simply a stolid, unimaginative, dull mass of muscle. As you can realize, his nature, his life so far have not tended to make him appreciate the gayer, lighter side of college life, or to grasp the traditions of the campus. To him, college

is a market; he pays his money and he takes the knowledge handed out. We can not blame him for not understanding college existence in its entirety, or that the gaining of knowledge is a small part of the representative collegian's purpose.

"Now, boys, here's our job, and let's tackle it together: To awaken in Thor a great love for old Bannister, to cause college spirit to stir his practical soul. Let every fellow be his friend, let no one speak against him, because of football. We must work slowly, carefully, gradually making him grasp college traditions, and once he awakens to the real meaning of campus life, what a power he will be in the college and on the athletic field! Maybe he will not play football this season, but let us help him to awaken!"

With wild shouts, the aroused collegians poured from the Auditorium, an excited, turbulent mass of youthful humanity, a tide that swept T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., on the shoulders of several, out on the campus. Massed beneath the window of John Thorwald's room, in Creighton Hall, the Bannister students, now fully understanding that stolid Hercules, and stirred to admiration of him by T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.'s, great speech, cheered the somewhat mystified Thor again and again; in vast sound waves, the shouts rolled up to his open window:

"Rah! Rah! Rah-rah-rah! Thor! Thor! Thor!" Captain Brewster, through a big megaphone, roared; "Fellows--What's the matter with Thor?"

And in a terrific outburst which, as the Phillyloo Bird afterward said, "Like to of busted Bannister's works!" the enthusiastic collegians responded:

"He's--all--right!"

Then Butch, apparently in quest of information, persisted:

"Who's all right?"

To which the three hundred or more youths, all seemingly equipped with lungs of leather, kindly answered:

"Thor! Thor! Thor!"

Still, though the Phillyloo Bird declared that this vocal explosion caused the seismographs at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, and in Salt Lake City, Utah, to register an earthquake somewhere, it had on the blond Freshman a strange effect. The vast mountain of muscle lumbered heavily across the room, gazed down at the howling crowd of collegians without emotion, then slammed down the window, and returned to study.

"Good night" called Hicks. "The show is over! Let him have another yell, boys, to show we aren't insulted; then we'll disband!"

Considering Thorwald's cool reception of their overtures, which some youth remarked, "Were as noisy as that of a Grand Opera Orchestra," it was quite

surprising to the students, in the morning, when what occurred an hour after their serenade was revealed to them. As the story was told by those who witnessed the scene, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., Butch, Beef, Monty, Pudge, Roddy, Biff, Hefty, Tug, Buster, and Coach Corridan after the commotion subsided, retired to the sunny Hicks' quarters, where the football situation was discussed, along with ways and means to awaken Thor, when that colossal Freshman himself loomed up in the doorway.

As they afterward learned, several excited Freshmen had dared to invade Thor's den, even while he studied, and give him a more or less correct account of T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.'s masterly oration in his defense. Out of their garbled descriptions, big John Thorwald grasped one salient point, and straightway he started for Hicks' room, leaving the indignant Freshmen to tell their story to the atmosphere.

"Hicks," said Thor, not bothering with the "Mr." required of all Freshmen, as his vast bulk crowded the doorway, "is it true that Mr. Thomas Haviland Hicks, Sr., wants me to play football? He has been very kind to me, and has helped me, and so have you, here at college. After a year of study, I should have had to stop night-school, but for him--instead, I got another year, and prepared for Bannister. I did not know that *he* desired me to play, but if he does, I feel under obligation to show my great gratitude, both for myself and for my father,"

A moment of silence, for the glorious news could not be grasped in a second; those in the room, knowing Thomas Haviland Hicks, Sr.'s, brilliant athletic record at old Bannister, and understanding his great love for his Alma Mater, knew that Hicks, Sr., had sent Thor to Bannister to play football for the Gold and Green, though, as he had written his son, he would not have done so had he honestly believed that another college would suit the ambitious Goliath better.

"Does he?" stammered the dazed T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., while the others echoed the words feebly, "Yes, I should say he *does*!"

For a second, the ponderous young Colossus hesitated, and then, as calmly as though announcing he would add Greek to his list of studies, and wholly unaware that his words were to bring joy to old Bannister, he spoke stolidly.

"Then I shall play football."

CHAPTER VII

HICKS STARTS ANOTHER MYSTERY.

"Fifteen men sat on the dead man's chest--

Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
Drink and the Devil had done for the rest--
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!"

T HAVILAND HICKS, JR., his chair tilted at a perilous angle, and his feet thrust gracefully atop of the study-table, in his cozy room, one Friday afternoon two weeks after John Thorwald's return to the football squad, was fathoms deep in Stevenson's "Treasure Island." As he perused the thrilling pages, the irrepressible youth twanged a banjo accompaniment, and roared with gusto the piratical chantey of Long John Silver's buccaneer crew; Hicks, however, despite his saengerfest, was completely lost in the enthralling narrative, so that he seemed to hear the parrot shrieking, "Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!" and the wild refrain:

"Fifteen men sat on the dead man's chest--
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!"

He was reading that breathlessly exciting part where the cabin-boy of the *Hispaniola*, and Israel Hands have their terrible fight to the death, with the dodging over the dead man rolling in the scuppers, the climbing up the mast, and the dirk pinning the boy's shoulder, before Hands is shot and goes to join his mate on the bottom; just at the most absorbing page, as he twanged his beloved banjo louder, and roared the chantey, there sounded, "Tramp--tramp--tramp!" in the corridor, the heavy tread of many feet sounded, coming nearer. Instinctively realizing that the pachydermic parade was headed for *his* room, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., rushed to the closet, murmuring, "Safety first!" as usual, and stowed away his banjo. He was just in the nick of time, for a second later there crowded into his room Captain Butch, Pudge, Beef, Hefty, Biff, Monty, Roddy, Bunch, Tug, Buster, Coach Corridas, and Thor, the latter duo bringing up the rear.

"Hicks, you unjailed public nuisance!" said Butch Brewster, affectionately. "We, whom you behold, are going for to enter into that room across the corridor from your boudoir, and hold a football signal quiz and confab. We should request that you permit a thunderous silence to originate in your cozy retreat, for the period of at least a hour! A word to the *wise* is sufficient, so I have spoken several, that even you may comprehend my meaning,"

"I gather you, fluently!" grinned T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., taking up "Treasure Island" and his graceful pose once more. "Leave me to peruse the thrilling pages of this classic blood-and-thunder book, and I'll cause a beautiful serenity to obtain hither."

"See that you do, you pestiferous insect!" threatened Beef McNaughton, ominously. "Come on, fellows, Hicks can't escape our vengeance, if he bursts into what he fatuously believes is song. Just let him act hippicanarious, and--"

When the Gold and Green eleven, half of which, to judge by size, was Thor, had gone with Coach Corridan into the room across from that of the blithesome Hicks, the sunny-souled Senior tried to resume his perusal of "Treasure Island," but somehow the spell had been broken by the invasion of

his cozy quarters. So, after vainly essaying to take up the thread of the story again, Hicks arose and stood by the window, gazing across the campus to Bannister Field, deserted, since the football team rested for the game of the morrow. As he stood there, the gladsome Hicks reflected seriously. He thought of "Thor," and decided sorrowfully that the problem of awakening that stolid Colossus to a full understanding of campus life was as unsolved as ever.

"But I *won't* give it up!" declared Hicks, determinedly. "I have always been good at math, and I won't let this problem baffle me."

Since the night, two weeks back, when T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., had made his memorable speech, explaining to his fellow-students the "Billion-Dollar Mystery," and arousing in them a vast admiration for the slow-minded, plodding John Thorwald, every collegian had done his best to befriend the big Freshman. Upperclassmen helped him with his studies. Despite his almost rude refusal to meet any advances, the collegians always had a cheery greeting for him, and his class-mates, in fear and trembling, invaded his den at times, to show him they were his friends. Yet, despite these whole-hearted efforts, only two of old Bannister did the silent Thor seem to desire as comrades: the festive Hicks, for reasons known, and--remarkable to chronicle--little Theophilus Opperdyke, the timorous, studious "Human Encyclopedia."

"Colossus and Lilliputian!" the Phillyloo Bird quaintly observed once when this strangely assorted duo appeared on the campus. "Say, fellows--some time Thor will accidentally sit on Theophilus, and we'll have another mystery, the disappearance of our boner!"

The generous Hicks, longing for Thor's awakening to come, was not in the least jealous of his loyal little friend, Theophilus. In fact, he was sincerely delighted that the unemotional Hercules desired the comradeship of the grind, and he urged the Human Encyclopedia to strive constantly to arouse in Thor a realization of college existence, and a true knowledge of its meaning. At least one thing, Theophilus reported, had been achieved by Hicks' defense of Thorwald, and the subsequent attitude of the collegians--the colossal Freshman was puzzled, quite naturally. When over three hundred youths criticized, condemned, and berated him one night, and the next, even before he reconsidered his decision about football, came under his window and cheered him, no wonder the young Norwegian was bewildered.

On the football field, with his dogged determination, his bulldog way of hanging on to things until he mastered them, big Thor progressed slowly, and surely; the past Saturday, against the heavy Alton eleven, the blond Freshman had been sent in for the second half, and, to quote an overjoyed student, he had "busted things all up!" It seemed simply impossible to stop that terrible rush of his huge body. Time after time he plowed through the line for yards, and old Bannister, visioning Thor distributing Hamilton and Ballard over the field, in the big games, literally hugged itself.

And yet, despite Thorwald's invincible prowess, despite the vast joy of old Bannister at the chances of the Championship, some intangible shadow hovered over the campus. It brooded over the training-table, the

shower-rooms after scrimmage, on Bannister Field during practice; as yet, no one had dared to give it form, by voicing his thought, but though no youth dared admit it, something was wrong, there was a defective cog in the machinery of that marvelous machine, the Gold and Green eleven.

"Oh, just leave it to Hicks," quoth that sunny youth, at length, turning from the window; "I'll solve the problem, or what is more probable, Theophilus may stir that sodden hulk of humanity, after awhile. I won't worry about it, for that gets me nothing, and it will all come out O.K., I'm positive!"

At this moment, just as T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., picked up "Treasure Island" again, he heard drifting across the corridor from the room opposite, in Butch Brewster's familiar voice:

"--Yes, I'll win three more Bs'--one each in football, baseball and track; next spring, I'll annex my last B at old Bannister, fellows--"

His *last* B--The words struck the blithesome Hicks with sledge-hammer force. Big Butch Brewster was talking of his last B, when he, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., had never won his first; with a feeling almost of alarm, the sunny youth realized that this was his final year at old Bannister, his last chance to win his athletic letter, and to make happy his beloved Dad, by helping him to realize part of his life's ambition--to behold his son shattering Hicks, Sr.'s, wonderful record. His final chance, and outside of his hopes of winning the track award in the high-jump, Hicks saw no way to win his B.

Thomas Haviland Hicks, Sr., as has been chronicled, the beloved Dad of the cheery Senior, a Pittsburgh millionaire Steel King, was a graduate of old Bannister, Class of '92. While wearing the Gold and Green, he had made an all-round athletic record never before, or afterward, rivaled on the campus. At football, basketball, track, and baseball, he was a scintillating star, annexing enough letters to start an alphabet, had they been different ones. Quite naturally, when the Doctor, speaking anent the then infantile Thomas Haviland Hicks, Jr., said, "Mr. Hicks, it's a boy!"--the one-time Bannister athlete straightway began to dream of the day when his only son and heir should follow in his Dad's footsteps, shattering the records made at Bannister, and at Yale, by Hicks, *pere*.

However, to quote a sporting phrase, the son of the Steel King "upset the dope!" At the start of his Senior year, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr. had not annexed a single athletic honor, nor did the signs point to any records being in peril of getting shattered by his prowess; as Hicks himself phrased it, "Dame Nature was *some stingy* when she handed out the Hercules stuff to me!" The happy-go-lucky youth, when he matriculated as a Freshman at Bannister College, was builded on the general lines of a toothpick, and had he elected to follow a pugilistic career, a division somewhat lighter than the tissue paperweight class would have had to be devised to accommodate the splinter-student. A generous, sunny-souled, intensely democratic collegian, despite his father's wealth, the festive Hicks, with his room always open-house to all; his firm friendship for star athlete or humble boner, his never-failing sunny nature, together with his famous

Hicks Personally Conducted Expeditions downtown to the Beef-Steak Busts he had originated, in his three years at old Bannister, had made himself the most popular and beloved youth on the campus, but, he had not won his B!

And he had tried. With a full realization, of his Dad's ambition, his life-dream to behold his son a great athlete, the blithesome Hicks had tried, but with hilariously futile results. Nature had endowed him, as he told his loyal comrade, Butch Brewster, with "the Herculean build of a Jersey mosquito," and his athletic powers neared zero infinity. In his Freshman year, he inaugurated his athletic career by running the wrong way in the Sophomore-Freshman football game, scoring a touchdown that won for the enemy, and naturally, after that performance, every athletic effort was greeted with jeers by the students,

"I *have* tried!" said Hicks, producing two letters from the study-table, "But not like I should have tried. I could never have played on the eleven, or on the nine, but I have a chance in the high-jump. I know I've been indolent and care-free, and I ought to have trained harder. Well, I just must win my track B this spring, but as to keeping the rash promise I made to Butch as a Freshman--not a chance!"

It had been at the close of his Freshman year, after Hicks, in the Interclass Track Meet, had smashed hurdles, broken high-jumping cross-bars, finished last in several events, and jeopardized his life with the shot and hammer, that he made the rash vow to which he now had reference. Butch, believing his sunny friend had entered all the events just to entertain the crowd, in his fun-loving way, was teasing him about his ridiculous fiascos, when Hicks had told him the story--how his Dad wanted him to try and be a famous athlete; he showed Butch a letter, received before the meet, asking his son to try every event, and to keep on training, so as to win his B before he graduated. Butch, great-hearted, was surprised and moved by the revelation that the gladsome youth, even as he was jeered by his friendly comrades, who thought he performed for sport, was striving to have his Dad's dream come true; he had sympathized with his classmate, and then his scatter-brained colleague had aroused his indignation by vowing, with a swaggering confidence:

"Oh, just leave it to Hicks! Remember this, Butch, before I graduate from old Bannister, I shall have won my B in three branches of sport!"

Butch had snorted incredulously. To win the football or the baseball B, the gold letter for the former, and the green one for the latter sport, an athlete had to play in three-fourths of the season's games, on the "Varsity"; to gain the white track letter, one had to win a first place in some event, in a regularly scheduled track meet with another team. And now, Butch's skepticism seemed confirmed, for at the start of his last year at college, Hicks had not annexed a single B, though he bade fair to corral one in the spring in the high-jump.

"Heigh-ho!" chuckled Hicks, at length. "Here I am threatening to get gloomy again! Well I'll sure train hard to win my track letter, and that seems all I can do! I'd like to win my three B's, and jeer at Butch, next June, but--*it can't be did*! I shall now twang my trusty banjo, and drive dull

care away."

Quite forgetful of the football conclave across the corridor, and of Butch Brewster's request for quiet, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr. dragged out his beloved banjo, caressed its strings lovingly, and roared:

"Fifteen men sat on the dead man's chest--
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
Drink and the--"

"Hicks!" Big Butch Brewster crashed across the corridor, both doors being open. "Is this how you maintain a quiet? I'm going to call Thor over and make him sit down on you! Why, you--"

"Have mercy!" plead the grinning Hicks. "Honest, Butch, I didn't go to bust up the league--I--I heard you talk about your B's, and I got to thinking that I have but little time to make my Dad happy; see, here's proof--read these letters I was perusing--"

Puzzled, Butch scanned the first one, dated back in the May of their Freshman year; Hicks had received it before the class track meet, and, as chronicled, he had heard from his sunny comrade later, how it impelled the splinter youth to try every event, while Bannister believed him to enter them for fun. The letter was post-marked "Pittsburgh, Pa.," and it read:

DEAR SON THOMAS:

Your last term's report gratified me immensely, and I am proud of your class record, and scholastic achievements. Pitch in, and lead your class, and make your Dad happy.

But there is something else of which I want to write, Thomas. As you must know, it has always been a cause of keen regret to me that you have never seemed to care for athletics of any sort; you appear to be too indolent and ease-loving to sacrifice, or to endure the hardships of training. I suppose it is because of my athletic record both at Bannister and at old Yale that I am so eager to see you become a star; in fact, it is my life's most cherished ambition to have you become as famous as your Dad.

However, I realize that my fond dream can never come true. Nature has not made you naturally strong and athletic, and what athletic success you may gain, must come from long and hard training and practice. If you can only win your college letter, your B, Thomas, while at Bannister, I shall be fully content.

I said nothing when you failed even to try for the teams at your Preparatory School, but I did hope that at Bannister, under good coaches and trainers, you would at least endeavor to win your letter. I must admit that I am disappointed, for you have not even made an earnest effort to find your event. Often, by trying everything, especially in a track meet, a fellow finds his event, and later stars in it.

I really believe that if you would start in now to develop yourself by regular, systematic gymnasium work, and if you would only try, in a year or so you could make a Bannister team. Theodore Roosevelt, you know, was a puny, weakly boy, but he built himself up, and became an athlete. If you want to please me, start now and find your event. Attempt all the sports, all the various track and field events, and always build yourself up by exercise in the Gym.

And you owe it to your Alma Mater, my son! Even if, after conscientious effort, you fail to win your B, to know that you have given your college and teams what help you could, will please your Dad. Remember, the fellow who toils on the scrubs is the true hero. If you become good enough to give the first eleven, the first nine, the first five, or the first track squad a hard rub and a fast practice, you are serving Bannister.

I don't ask you to do this, Thomas, I only say that it will make me happy just to know you are striving. If you never get beyond the scrubs, just to hear you are serving the Gold and Green, giving your best, in that humble unhonored way, will please me. And if, before you graduate, you *can* win your B, I shall be so glad! Don't get discouraged, it may take until your Senior year, but once you start, *stick*.

Your loving

DAD.

"Read this one, too, Butch," requested Hicks, hurriedly, as a hail of, "Oh, you Hicks, come here!" sounded down the corridor, from Skeet Wigglesworth's abode. "I'll be back as soon as Skeet finishes his foolishness. Don't wait for me, though, if I am delayed, for you want to be talking football."

Left alone, big Butch Brewster, who of all the collegians that had known and loved the sunny Hicks, some now graduated, understood that his athletic efforts, jeered good-naturedly by the students, were made because of a great desire to win his B and make happy his Dad, read the second letter, dated a few days before:

DEAR SON THOMAS:

You are starting the last lap, son, your Senior year, and your final chance to win your B! Don't forget how happy it will make your Dad if you win your letter just once! Of course, you cannot gain it in football, for nature gave you no chance, nor in baseball; but in track work it is up to you. Train hard, Thomas, and try to win a first place; just win your track B, and I'll rest content!

Your college record gives me great pleasure. You stand at the top in your studies, and you are vastly popular, while the Faculty speak highly of you. Let your B come as a climax to your career, and I'll be so proud of you. Don't forget, you are the "Class Kid" of Yale, '96, and those sons of old Eli want you to win the letter. As to football, you cannot win your gold B

by playing three-fourths of a season's games, but you might get in a big game, even win it, if you'll get confidence enough to tell Coach Corridan about yourself. Don't mind the jeers of your comrades--they just don't know how you've tried to please your Dad; you owe it to your Alma Mater to tell, and, take my word as a football star, you have the goods! Your peculiar prowess has won many a contest, and old Bannister needs it this season, I hear--

There was more, but big Butch scarcely saw it, bewildered as the behemoth Senior was; what new mystery had Hicks set afoot? What did Hicks, Sr., mean by writing, "You might get in a big game, even win it, if you'll get confidence enough to tell Coach Corridan about yourself? You owe it to your Alma Mater to tell, and take my word, as a football star, you have the goods--" Why, everyone knew that T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., possessed no more football ability than a Jersey mosquito, and yet--

"Another Hicks mystery," groaned Butch, holding the two letters thoughtfully. "And father and son are in it, But if Hicks don't get his B, it will be a shame. </i>Say, I know--</i>"

A few moments later, good-hearted Butch Brewster, in the behalf of his sunny comrade, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., was making to the Gold and Green eleven and Coach Corridan, as eloquent a speech as that blithesome youth, two weeks before, had made in defense of the condemned and ostracized Thor! He read them the two letters of Hicks' beloved Dad, and told how the cheery collegian wanted to win his B for his father's sake; graphically, he related Hicks, Sr.'s, great ambition, and how Hicks, Jr., for three years had vainly tried to make good at some athletic sport, and to win his letter. Big Butch, warming to his theme, spoke of how T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., letting the students believe that he entered every event in the track meet of his Freshman year just for fun, had been trying to find his event, and train for it; he explained that the festive youth, ever sunny-natured, under the good-humored jeers of his comrades, who did not know his real purpose, really yearned to win his B.

"You fellows, and you, Coach," he thundered, "all know how Hicks, unable to make the 'Varsity, has always done humble service for old Bannister, cheerfully, gladly; how he keeps the athletes in good spirits at the training-table, and is always on hand after scrimmage to rub them out. He is chock-full of college spirit, and is intensely loyal to his Alma Mater. Why, look how he rounded up Thor--he ought to have his B for that!"

Thanks to Butch's speech, the Gold and Green football stars, most of whom were Hicks' closest friends, saw the scatter-brained, happy-go-lucky youth in a new light; his eloquent defense of John Thorwald had shown old Bannister that he could be serious, but the knowledge that T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., even as he made a ridiculous farce in athletics, was ambitious to win his B, just to make his Dad happy, stunned them. For three years, the sunny Hicks' appearance on old Bannister Field, to try for a team, had meant a small-sized riot of jeers and good-natured ridicule at his expense; but Hicks had always grinned </i>a la</i> Cheshire cat,--and no one but good Butch Brewster, all the time, had known how in earnest the lovable

collegian was.

"Now," concluded Butch, "Hicks *may* win a B in track work, if he gets a first place in the high-jump, and if so, O.K., but if he does not--"

"You mean--" Monty Merriweather--understood, "if he fails, then the Athletic Association ought to--"

"Present him with a B!" said Butch, earnestly, "as a deserved reward for his faithful loyalty and service to old Bannister's athletic teams. Don't let him graduate without gaining his letter, and making his Dad realize a part of his ambition--a two-thirds vote of the Athletic Association can award him his letter, and when all the students know the truth about his ridiculous fiasco on Bannister Field, and realize the serious purpose beneath them all, they--"

"*We'll give him his B!*" shouted Beef, loudly, "If he fails in track work next spring, we'll vote him his letter, anyway!"

Out in the corridor, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., returning from Skeet Wigglesworth's room and entering his own cozy quarters, could not help hearing the conversation, as the doors of both his den and the room across the corridor were open. A great love for his comrades came to his impulsive heart, and a mist before his eyes, as he heard how they wanted to vote him his B in case he failed to win it in track work; he thrilled at Butch's speech, but--

[Illustration B: 'Fellows,...I--I thank you from the bottom of my heart']

"Fellows," he startled them by appearing in the doorway, "I--I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I couldn't help hearing, you know--I *do* appreciate your generous thoughts, but--I can't and won't accept my B unless I win it according to the rule of the Athletic Association."

A silence, and then Butch Brewster, gripping his comrade's hand understandingly, held out to him the two letters.

"Forgive me, old man," he breathed, "for reading them aloud, but I wanted the fellows to know, to appreciate you! And say, Hicks, what does your Dad mean by saying that you are the *'Class Kid'* of Yale, '96, and that those sons of old Eli want you to win your letter? And what does he mean by saying that you may get in a *big game*--*may win* it--that you have the goods in football, but lack the confidence to announce it to Coach Corridan? Also that old Bannister needs just the peculiar brand you possess?"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., his sunny, Cheshire cat grin illuminating his cherubic countenance, beamed on the eleven and Coach Corridan a moment.

"Oh, that's a *mystery*," he said, cheerfully. "If I *do* gain the courage and confidence, I'll explain, but unless I do--it remains a--*mystery*!"

CHAPTER VIII

COACH CORRIDAN SURPRISES THE ELEVEN

"ALL MEMBERS OF THE FIRST ELEVEN ARE URGENTLY REQUESTED TO BE PRESENT IN THE ROOM OF T. HAVILAND HICKS, JR.--AT EIGHT P. M. TONIGHT; YOU WILL BE DETAINED ONLY A FEW MINUTES, BUT LET EVERY PLAYER COME, AS A MATTER OF EXTREME IMPORTANCE WILL BE PRESENTED. PATRICK HENRY COERIDAN, HEAD-COACH."

"Now, what do you suppose is up Coach Corridan's sleeve?" demanded T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., cheerfully. "Has Ballard learned our signals, or some Bannister student sold them to a rival team, as per the usual football story? Though the notice doth not herald it, I am to be present, for my room is to be used, and the Coach gave me a special invitation to cut the Gordian knot with my keen intellect."

The sunny Hicks, with Butch, Beef, Tug, and Monty, had just come from "Delmonico's Annex," the college dining-hall, after supper; they had paused before the Bulletin Board at the Gymnasium entrance, where all college notices were posted, and the Coach's urgent request had caught their gaze. The announcement had caused quite a stir on the campus. The Bannister youths stood in excited groups talking of it, and in the dormitories it superseded all thought of study; however, there seemed little chance that any but the "Varsity" and T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., who was always consulted in football problems, would know what took place in this meeting.

"There is only one way to find out, Hicks," responded big Butch Brewster, his arm across his blithesome comrade's shoulders, "and that is, attend the meeting! You can wager that every member of the eleven will be there, except Thor--he regards it as 'foolishness,' I suppose, and he won't spare that precious time from his studies."

At five minutes past eight, Butch's prophecy was fulfilled, for every member of the eleven *was* in Hicks' cozy room, except Thor, the Prodigious Prodigy, whose presence would have caused a mild sensation. It was an extremely quiet and orderly gathering, for Coach Corridan, who had the floor, was so grave that he impressed the would-be sky-larking youths. Having their undivided attention, he proceeded to make a speech that, to all intents and purposes, had much the same effect on the team and Hicks as a Zeppelin's bombs on London:

"Boys," he spoke, in forceful sentences, driving straight to the point, "I am going to take the eleven, and Hicks, whose suggestions are always timely, into my confidence, in the hope that we, working together, may carry out an idea of mine for the awakening of Thor to a realization of things! I ask you not to let what I shall tell you be known to the student-body, but you fellows play with Thor every day, and you will understand the crisis, and appreciate *why* it is done, if I decide it

necessary to drop John Thorwald from the football squad."

"Drop Thor from the squad!" gasped T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., staggered, and then pandemonium broke loose among the players. Drop the Prodigious Prodigy from the squad, why, what *could* the Slave-Driver be thinking of? Why, look how Thorwald, on the scrubs, tore through the heavy 'Varsity line for big gains. He was simply unstoppable; and yet, almost on the eve of the big game that old Bannister depended on Thor to win by his splendid prowess, he might be dropped from the squad! Excited exclamations sounded from Captain Butch Brewster, Beef, and the others of the Gold and Green eleven:

"Why not give the big games to Ballard and Ham, Coach?"

"Say, shoot Theophilus Opperdyke in at full-back!"

"Good-by, championship! No hopes now, fellows!"

"If Thor doesn't play in the Big Games--good night!"

A greater sensation could not have been caused even had kindly white-haired Prexy announced his intention of challenging Jess Willard for the World's Heavy-Weight Championship. Dropping that human battering-ram, Thor, from the football, squad was something utterly undreamed-of. Coach Corridan raised his hand for silence, and the youths subsided.

"Hear me carefully, boys," he urged, "I know that old Bannister has come to regard John Thorwald as invincible, to use his vast bulk as a foundation on which to build hopes of the Championship, which is a bad policy, for no team can be a *one-man* team and win. I realize that as a football player, Thor hasn't an equal in the State today, and if he had the right spirit, he would have few in the country. It would be ridiculous to decry his prowess, for he is a physical phenomenon. But you remember T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.'s, splendid defense of Thor, a week or so ago? Hicks gave you a full and clear explanation of the big fellow, and showed you *why* he does not know what college spirit is, what loyalty and love for one's Alma Mater mean! His masterly speech changed your attitude toward Thor, and even before he decided to play football, for Mr. Hicks' sake, you admired him, because of his indomitable purpose, his promise to his dying mother. Now *I* am telling you why he may be dropped from the squad, because I want you fellows to give Thor a square deal, to remember what Hicks told you of him, and to keep on striving to awaken him to the true meaning of campus years, to make him realize that college life is more than a mere buying of knowledge. I want to keep him on the squad, if humanly possible, and I shall outline my plot later.

"Tomorrow we play Latham College. It is the last game before the big games for The State Intercollegiate Football Championship. Saturday after this, we play Hamilton, and the following week Ballard, the Champions! The eleven I send in against those teams must be a solid unit, *one* in spirit and purpose--every member of the Gold and Green team must be welded with his team-mates, and they must forget everything but that their Alma Mater must win the Championship! With no thought of self-glory, no other purpose in playing than a love for old Bannister, every fellow must go into those

games to fight for his Alma Mater! Now, as for Thor, I need not tell you that he is not in sympathy with our ambition; he simply does not understand campus tradition and spirit. He is as yet not possessed of an Alma Mater; he plays football only because of gratitude to Mr. Thomas Haviland Hicks, Sr., and he hates to lose the time from his studies for the practice. The football squad knows that his presence is a veritable wet blanket on enthusiasm and the team's fighting spirit."

It was true. That intangible shadow of something wrong, brooding over training-table, shower-room, and Bannister Field, that self-evident truth which almost every collegian had for days confessed to himself yet hesitated to voice, had been given definite form by Coach Corridan talking to the eleven. The good that Thorwald might do for the team by his superb prowess and massive bulk was more than offset and nullified by his attitude.

To the blond Colossus, daily practice was unutterable mental torture. His mind was on his studies, to which his bulldog purpose shackled him; he begrudged the time spent on Bannister Field; he was stolid, silent, aloof. He scarcely ever spoke, except when addressed. He reported for practice at the last second, went through the scrimmage like a great, dumb, driven ox, doing as he was ordered; and when the squad was dismissed he hurried to his room. He was among the squad, but not of them; he neither understood nor cared about their love for old Bannister, their vast desire to win for their Alma Mater; he played football because he was grateful to Hicks, Sr., for helping him to get started toward his goal, but as Coach Corridan now told the 'Varsity, he killed the squad's enthusiasm,

"All of this cannot fail to damage the *esprit de corps*, the *morale*, of the eleven," declared Coach Corridan, having outlined Thor's attitude. "I know that every member of the squad, if Thor played the game because of college spirit, for love of old Bannister, would rejoice at his prowess. But as it is they are justly resentful that he is not in the spirit of the game. What we may gain by his playing, we lose because the others cannot do their best with his example to hurt their fighting spirit. I do not want, nor will I have on my eleven, any player who plays for other reasons than a love for his Alma Mater, be he a Hogan, Brickley, Thorpe, or Mahan. I have waited, hoping Thorwald would be awakened, as Hicks explained, but now I must act. Tomorrow's game with Latham must see Thor awakened, or I must, for the sake of the eleven, drop him from the squad for the rest of the season.

"Yet I beg of you, in case the plan I shall propose fails, remember Hicks' appeal! Do not condemn or ostracize John Thorwald in any degree. He has three more seasons of football, so let us keep on trying to make him understand campus life, college tradition. Be his friends, help him all you can, and sooner or later he will awaken. Something may suddenly shock him to a true understanding of what old Bannister means to a fellow. Or perhaps the awakening will be slow, but it must come. And Bannister can win without Thor, don't forget that! We'll make one final effort to awaken Thor, and if it fails, just forget him, boys, so far as football goes, and watch the Gold and Green win that championship."

"What is your scheme, Coach?" questioned Captain Butch Brewster, his honest countenance showing how heavily the responsibility of team-leader weighed upon him. "You are right; as Thor is now, he is a handicap to the eleven, but--"

"My idea is this," explained the Slave-Driver earnestly. "Select some student to go to Thorwald and try to show him that unless he gets into the game and plays for old Bannister, he will be dropped from the squad. If possible, let the fellow make him understand that, in his case, it will be a shame and a dishonor. Now, Butch, you and Hicks can probably approach Thor, or perhaps you know of someone who--"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.'s, cherubic countenance showed the light of dawning inspiration, and Coach Corridan paused, as the sunny youth exhibited a desire to say something, with him not by any means a phenomenal happening; given the floor, the blithesome youth burst forth excitedly: "Theophilus--Theophilus Opperdyke is the one! He has more influence over Thor than any other student, and the big fellow likes the little boner. Thor will at least listen to Theophilus, which is more than any of us can gain from him."

After the meeting had adjourned, and the last inspection had been made in the other dorms, the Seniors being exempt, several members of the Gold and Green team--Captain Butch, Beef, Pudge, Monty, Roddy, and Bunch, together with little Theophilus Opperdyke, dragged from his studies--foregathered in the cozy room of T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.; those who had heard the coach's talk were still stunned at the ban likely to be placed on the Brobdingnagian Thor. On the campus outside Creighton Hall, a horde of Bannister youths, incited by Tug Cardiff, who gave them no reason for his act, were making a strenuous effort to awaken the Prodigious Prodigy, evidently depending on noise to achieve that end, for a vast sound-wave rolled up to Hicks' windows--"Rah! Rah! Rah! Thor! Thor! Thor! He's--all--right!"

"Listen!" exploded T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., indignantly. "You and I, Theophilus, would give a Rajah's ransom just to hear the fellows whoop it up for us like that, and it has no more effect on that sodden hulk of a Thor than bombarding an English super-dreadnaught with Roman candles! Howsomever, Coach Corridan exploded a shrapnel bomb on old Bannister's eleven tonight."

Then Hicks carefully outlined to the dazed little boner the substance of the coach's talk to the team, and Theophilus was alarmed when he thought of Thor's being dropped from the squad. When Captain Butch had outlined the Slave-Driver's plot for striving to awaken the Colossus to a realization of what a disgrace it would be to be sent from the gridiron, though he did not announce that the Human Encyclopedia had been elected to carry out Coach Corridan's last-hope idea, Theophilus sat on the edge of the chair, blinking owlshly at them over his big-rimmed spectacles.

"After all, fellows," quavered Theophilus nervously, "Coach Corridan, if he drops Thor from the squad, won't create such a riot on the campus as you might expect. You see, the students, even as they built and planned on

Thor, gradually came to know that there is vastly more to be considered than physical power. That great bulk actually acts as a drag on the eleven, because Thor isn't in sympathy with things! Still, if he could only be aroused, awakened, wouldn't the team play football, with him striving for old Bannister, and not because he thinks he ought to play, for Hicks' dad? Oh, I *do* hope the Coach's plan succeeds, and he awakens tomorrow; I know the boys won't condemn him, if he doesn't, but--I--I want him to understand!"

"It's his last chance this season," reflected T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., enshrouded in a penumbra of gloom. "I made a big boast that I would round up a smashing full-back. I returned to Bannister with the Prodigious Prodigy. I made a big mystery of him, and then--biff!--Thor quit football. Then I explained the mystery, and got the fellows to admire him, and when Thor decided to play the game I thought 'All O.K.; I'll just wait until he scatters Hamilton and Ballard over Bannister Field, then I'll swagger before Butch and say, "Oh, I told you just to leave it to Hicks!"' But now Thor has spilled the beans again."

"I--I hope that the one you have chosen to appeal to Thor--" spoke Theophilus timorously, "will succeed, for--Oh, I *don't* want him to be dropped from the squad, and--"

Big Butch Brewster, who had been gazing at little Theophilus Opperdyke with a basilisk glare that perturbed the bewildered Human Encyclopedia, suddenly strode across the room and placed his hand on the grind's thin shoulders.

"Theophilus, old man, it's up to you!" he said earnestly. "Thor has a strong regard for you; in fact, outside of his good-natured tolerance for Hicks, you alone have his friendship. Now I want you to go to him, Theophilus, and make a last appeal to Thor. Try to awaken him, to make him understand his peril of being dropped from the squad, unless he plays the game for his college! It's for old Bannister, old man, for your Alma Mater--"

"Go to it, Theophilus!" urged Beef McNaughton. "Coach Corridan said Thor might be suddenly awakened by a shock, but no electric battery can shock that Colossus, and, besides, miracles don't happen nowadays. Yes, it's up to you, old man."

For a moment little Theophilus, his big-rimmed spectacles falling off as fast as he replaced them, and his puny frame tense with excitement, hesitated. Sitting on the extreme edge of the chair, he surveyed his comrades solemnly and was convinced that they were in earnest. Then, "I--I will *try*, sir!" exclaimed Theophilus, who would *never* forget his Freshman training. "I'm *sure* Hicks, or somebody, could do it better than I; but--I'll try!"

CHAPTER IX

THEOPHILUS' MISSIONARY WORK

"College ties can ne'er be broken--
Loyal will remain each heart;
Though the last farewell be spoken--
And from Bannister we part!

"Bannister, Bannister, hail, all hail!
Echoes softly from each heart;
We'll be ever loyal to thee--
Till we from life shall part!"

Theophilus Opperdyke, the timorous, intensely studious Human Encyclopedia, stood at the window of John Thorwald's study room. That behemoth, desiring quiet, had moved his study-table and chair to a vacant room across the second-floor corridor of Creighton, the Freshman dormitory, when the Bannister youths cheered him, and he was still there, so that Theophilus, on his mission, had finally located him by his low rumblings, as he laboriously read out his Latin. The little Senior was gazing across the brightly lighted Quadrangle. He could see into the rooms of the other class dormitories, where the students studied, skylarked, rough-housed, or conversed on innumerable topics; from a room in Nordyke, the abode of care-free Juniors, a splendidly blended sextette sang songs of their Alma Mater, and their rich voices drifted across the Quad. to Thor and Theophilus:

"Though thy halls we leave forever
Sadly from the campus turn;
Yet our love shall fail thee never
For old Bannister we'll yearn!
Bannister, Bannister, hail, all hail!"

Theophilus turned from the window, and looked despairingly at that young Colossus, Thor. The behemoth Norwegian, oblivious to everything except the geometry problem now causing him to sweat, rested his massive head on his palms, elbows on the study-table, and was lost in the intricate labyrinth of "Let the line ABC equal the line BVD." The frail chair creaked under his ponderous bulk. On the table lay an unopened letter that had come in the night's mail, for, tackling one problem, the bulldog Hercules never let go his grip until he solved it, and nothing else, not even Theophilus, could secure his attention. Hence the Human Encyclopedia, trembling at the terrific importance of the mission entrusted to him, waited, thrilled by the Juniors' songs, which failed to penetrate Thor's mind.

"Oh, what *can* I do?" breathed Theophilus, sitting down nervously on the edge of a chair and peering owlishly over his big-rimmed spectacles at the stolid John Thorwald. "I am sure that, in time, I can help Thor to--to know campus life better; but--*tomorrow* is his last chance! He will be dropped from the squad, unless--"

As Thor at last leaned back and gazed at his little comrade, just then, to the tune of "My Old Kentucky Home," an augmented chorus drifted across the Quadrangle:

"And we'll sing one song
For the college that we love--
For our dear old Bannister--good-by"

To the Bannister students there was something tremendously queer in the friendship of Theophilus and Thor. That the huge Freshman, of all the collegians, should have chosen the timorous little boner was most puzzling. Yet, to T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., a keen reader of human nature, it was clear; Thorwald thought of nothing but study, Theophilus was a grind, though he possessed intense college spirit, hence Thor was naturally drawn to the little Senior by the mutual bond of their interest in books, and Theophilus, with his hero-worshiping soul, intensely admired the splendid purpose of John Thorwald, toiling to gain knowledge, because of the promise of his dying mother. The grind, who thought that next to T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., Thor was the "greatest ever," as Hicks phrased it, had been, doing what that care-free collegian termed "missionary work," with the stolid, unimaginative Prodigious Prodigy for some weeks. Thrilled with the thought that he worked for his Alma Mater, he quietly strove to make Thorwald glimpse the true meaning and purpose of college life and its broadness of development. The loyal Theophilus lost no opportunity of impressing his behemoth friend with the sacred traditions of the campus, or of explaining why Thor was wrong in characterizing all else than study as foolishness and waste of time.

"Thor," began Theophilus timidly yet determinedly, for he was serving old Bannister now, "old man, do you feel that you are giving the fellows at Bannister a square deal?"

John Thorwald, slowly tearing open the letter that had come that night, and had lain, unnoticed, on the study-table while he wrestled with his geometry, turned suddenly. The Human Encyclopedia's vast earnestness and the strange query he had fired at Thor, surprised even that stolid mammoth.

"Why, what do you mean, Theophilus?" spoke Thor slowly. "A square deal? Why, I owe them nothing! I sacrifice my time for them, leaving my studies to go out and waste precious time foolishly on football. Why--"

"I mean this," Theophilus kept doggedly on, his earnest desire to stir Thor conquering his natural timidity. "You were brought to old Bannister by Hicks, who made a great mystery of you, so we knew nothing of you; but the fellows all thought you were willing to play football. Then, after they got enthused, and builded hopes of the championship on <i>you</i>, came your quitting. Hicks defended you, Thor, and changed the boys' bitter condemnation to vast admiration, by telling of your life, your father's being a castaway, your mother's dying wish, your toil to get learning, and your inability to grasp college life. Then from gratitude to Mr. Hicks you started to play again--naturally, the students waxed enthusiastic, when you ripped the 'Varsity to pieces, but now you may be dropped by the coach, after tomorrow, because you don't play for old Bannister, and your

indifference kills the team's fighting spirit. You do not care if you are dropped; it will give you more time to study, and relieve you of your obligation, as you so quixotically view it, to play because Mr. Hicks will be glad; but--think of the fellows.

"They, Thor, disappointed in you, their hopes of your bringing by your massive body and huge strength the Championship to old Bannister shattered, are still your friends--they of the eleven, I mean especially, for, as yet, the rest do not know you may be dropped. And the fellows came beneath your window tonight to cheer you; they will do so, Thor, even if you are dropped and they know that you will not use that prodigious power for their Alma Mater in the big games; they will stand by you, for they understand! Just think, old man; haven't the fellows, despite your rude rebuffs, <i>tried</i> to be your comrades? Haven't they helped you to get settled to work and assisted you with your studies? Why, you have been a big boor, cold and aloof, you have upset their hopes of you in football, and yet they have no condemnation for you, naught but warm friendliness.

"You are not giving them or yourself a square deal, Thor! You won't even <i>try</i> to understand campus life, to grasp its real purpose, to realize what tradition is! The time will come, Thor, when you will see your mistake; you will yearn for their good fellowship, you will learn that getting knowledge is not all of college life. You will know that this 'silly foolishness' of singing songs and giving the yell, of rooting for the eleven, of loyalty and love for one's Alma Mater, is something worth while. And you may find it out too late. Oh, if you could only understand that it isn't what you take from old Bannister that makes a man of you, it is what you give to your college--in athletics, in your studies, in every phase of campus life; that in toiling and sacrificing for your Alma Mater you grow and develop, and reap a rich reward!"

Could T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., Butch Brewster, and the Gold and Green eleven have heard little Theophilus' fervent and eloquent appeal to John Thorwald, they would have felt like giving three cheers for him. They loved this pathetic little boner, who, because of his pitifully frail body, could never fight for old Bannister on gridiron, diamond, or track, and they tremendously admired him for working for his college and for the redemption of Thor. Timorous and shrinking by nature, whenever his Alma Mater, or a friend, needed him the Human Encyclopedia fought down his painful timidity and came up to scratch nobly.

It was Theophilus whose clear logic had vastly aided T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., to originate The Big Brotherhood of Bannister, in 1919's Sophomore year, and quell Roddy Perkins' Freshman Equal Rights campaign. In fact, it had been the boner's suggestion that gave Hicks his needed inspiration. And, a Junior, Theophilus had been elected business manager of the <i>Bannister Weekly</i>, with Hicks as editor-in-chief as a colossal joke. The entire burden of that almost defunct periodical had been thrust on those two, and, thanks to the grind's intensely humorous "copy," the <i>Weekly</i> had been revived and rebuilt. And Theophilus, in writing the humorous articles, had been moved by a great ambition to do something for old Bannister.

"Look at me, Thor!" continued Theophilus Opperdyke, his puny body dwarfed

as he faced the colossal Prodigious Prodigy. "A poor, weak, helpless nothing! I'd cheerfully sacrifice all the scholastic honor or glory I ever won, or shall win, just to make a touchdown for the Gold and Green, just to win a baseball game, or to break the tape in a race for old Bannister! And you--<i>you</i>, with that tremendous body, that massive bulk, that vast strength--you won't play the game for your Alma Mater, you won't throw that big frame into the scrimmage, thrilled with a desire to win for your college! Oh, what wonderful things you <i>could</i> do with your powerful build; but it means nothing to you, while </i>I--</i> Oh, you don't care, you just won't awaken; and, unless you do, in tomorrow's game you'll be dropped from the squad, a disgrace."

John Thorwald-Thor, the Prodigious Prodigy, that Gargantuan Freshman of whom Bannister said he possessed no soul--stirred uneasily, shifted his vast tonnage from one foot to the other, and stared at little Theophilus Opperdyke. That solemn Senior, who had not seen the slightest effect his "Missionary Work" was having on the stolid Thor, was in despair; but he did not know the truth. As Hicks had once said, "You don't know nothing what goes on in Thor's dome. There's a wall of solid concrete around the machinery of his mind, and you can't see the wheels, belts, and cogs at work!"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., with all his keen insight into human nature, had failed utterly to diagnose Thor's case, had not even stumbled on the true cause of that young giant's aloofness. The truth was unknown to anyone, but there was one natural reason for John Thorwald's not mingling with his fellows of the campus--the blond Colossus was inordinately bashful! From his fifteenth year, Thor had seen the seamy side of life, had lived, grown and developed among men. In his wanderings in the Klondike, the wild Northwest, in Panama, his experiences as cabin-boy, miner, cowboy, lumber-jack, and Canal Zone worker, he had existed where everything was roughness and violence, where brawn, not brain, usually held sway, where supremacy was won, kept, and lost by fists, spiked boots, or guns! In his adventurous career, young Thorwald had but seldom encountered the finer things of life, and his nature, while wholesome, was sturdy and virile, not likely to be stirred by sentiment; so that now, among the good-natured, friendly boys of old Bannister, he, accustomed to rude surroundings and rough acquaintances, was bashful.

And Theophilus, as well as T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., shot far wide of the mark in believing that the big Hercules had no power to feel; he possessed that power, but, with it the ability to conceal his feelings. They thought nothing appealed to him, had stirred his soul, at college, but they were wrong; true, Thor was unable to understand this new, strange life; he was puzzled when the collegians condemned and ostracized him at first, when he quit football because it was not a Faculty rule to play, but he was grateful when Hicks defended him, and the admiration of the student-body was welcome to him. He had thought he was doing all they desired of him, when he went back to the game, and now--when Theophilus told him that he might be dropped from the squad, he was bewildered. He could not understand just why this could be, when he was reporting for scrimmage every day!

But the friendliness of the youths, their kind help with his studies,

the assistance of the genial Hicks, and, more than all, above even the admiration of the Freshmen for his promise and purpose, the daily missionary work of little Theophilus, for whom the massive Thor felt a real love, had been slowly, insidiously undermining John Thorwald's reserve. No longer did he condemn what he did not understand. At times he had a vague feeling that all was not right, that, after all, he was missing something, that study was not all; and yet, bashful as he was, fearing to appear rough, crude, and uncouth among these skylarking youths, Thor kept on his silent, lonely way, and they thought him untouched by their overtures. Of late, when unobserved, the big Freshman had stood by the window, watching the collegians on the campus, listening to their songs of old Bannister, and yet because he felt embarrassed when with them, he gave no sign that he cared.

Now, however, the splendid appeal of loyal, timorous Theophilus stirred Thor, and yet he could not break down the wall of reserve he had builded around himself. He had deluded himself that this comradeship was not for him, that he could never mingle with these happy-go-lucky youths, that he must plod straight ahead, and live to himself, because his past had roughened him.

"You are a Freshman!" spoke Theophilus, unaware that forces were at work on Thor, and making a last effort. "You stand on the very threshold of your campus years; everything is before you. I am at the journey's end--very nearly, for in June I graduate from old Bannister. I never had the chance to fight for my Alma Mater on the athletic field, and you--Oh, think of what you can do! About to leave the campus, I, and my class-mates, realize how dear our college has become to us. If *<i>you</i>* could just know that Bannister means something to you, even now, if you only felt it, you could make your years mean great things to you. Thor, could you leave old Bannister tomorrow without regret, without one sigh for the dear old place? We, who soon shall leave it forever, fully understand Shakespeare, when in a sonnet he wrote:

"This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong--
To love that well which thou must leave ere long!"

There was a silence, and then Thor slowly drew out a letter from its envelope, scanning the scrawl across its pages. A few moments, while its meaning seemed to seep into his slow-acting mind, and then a look of helpless bewilderment, as though the stolid Freshman just could not understand at all, came to his face; a minute John Thorwald stood, as in a trance, staring dully at the letter.

"Thor! Thor! What's the matter? What's wrong?" quavered the alarmed Theophilus, "Have you gotten bad news?"

"Read it, read it," said the big Freshman lifelessly, extending the letter to the startled Senior. "It's all over, I suppose, and I've got to go to work again. I've got to leave college, and toil once more, and save. My promise to my mother can't be fulfilled--yet. And just as I was getting fairly started."

Theophilus Opperdyke hurriedly perused the message, which had come to Thor in that night's mail but which the blond giant had let lie unnoticed while he tackled his geometry. With difficulty Theophilus deciphered the scrawl on an official letterhead:

THE NEW YORK-CHRISTIANA STEAMSHIP LINE

(New York Offices)

Nov. 4, 19--.

DEAR SON:

I am writing to tell you that I've run into a sort of hurricane, and you and I have got a hard blow to weather. I started you at college on the \$5,000 received from the heirs of Henry B. Kingsley, on whose yacht, as you know, I was wrecked in the South Seas, and marooned for ten years. I figured on giving you an education with that sum, eked out by my wages, and what you earn in vacations.

I had the \$5,000, untouched, in a New York bank, and I wanted to take it over to Christiania; when I was about to sail on my last voyage, I drew out the sum, and put it in care of the Purser of the *Norwhal*, on which I was mate, intending, of course, to get it on docking, and deposit it in Christiania. At the last hour I was transferred to the *Valkyrie*, to sail a few days later, and I knew the *Norwhal's* purser would leave the \$5,000 for me in the Company's Christiania offices, so I did not bother to transfer it to the *Valkyrie*.

Perhaps you read in the newspapers that the *Norwhal* struck a floating mine, and went down with a heavy loss of life. The Purser was among those lost, and none of the ship's papers were saved; my \$5,000, of course, went down also.

I am sorry, John, but there seems nothing to do but for you to leave college and work. For your mother's sake, I wish we could avoid it; but we must wait and work and tackle it again. Your first term expenses are paid, so stay until the term is out. Perhaps Mr. Hicks can give you a job in one of his steel mills again, but we must work our own way, son. Don't lose courage, we'll fight this out together with the memory of your promise to your dying mother to spur you on. The road may be long and rocky but we'll make it. Just work and save, and in a year or two you can start at college again. You can study at night, too, and keep on learning.

I'll write later. Stay at college till the term is up, and in the meantime try to land a job. However, you won't have any trouble to do that. Keep your nerve, boy, for your mother's sake. It's a hard blow, but we'll weather it, never fear, and reach port.

Your father,

JOHN THORWALD, SR.

P.S. I am sailing on the *Valkyrie* today, will write you on my return to New York, in a few weeks.

Theophilus looked at the massive young Norwegian, who had taken this solar-plexus blow with that same stolid apathy that characterized his every action. He wanted to offer sympathy, but he knew not how to reach Thor. He fully understood how terrific the blow was, how it must stagger the big, earnest Freshman, just as he, after ten years of grinding toil, of sacrifice, of grim, unrelenting determination, had conquered obstacles and fought to where he had a clear track ahead. Just as it seemed that fate had given him a fair chance, with his father rescued and five thousand dollars to give him a college course, this terrible misfortune had befallen him. Theophilus realized what it must mean to this huge, silent Hercules, just making good his promise to his dying mother, to give up his studies, and go back to work, toil, labor, to begin all over again, to put off his college years.

"Leave me, please," said Thor dully, apparently as unmoved by the blow as he had been by Theophilus' appeal. "I--I would like to be alone, for awhile."

Left alone, John Thorwald stood by the window, apparently not thinking of anything in particular, as he gazed across the brightly lighted Quad. The huge Freshman seemed in a daze--utterly unable to comprehend the disaster that had befallen him; he was as stolid and impassive as ever, and Theophilus might have thought that he did not care, even at having to give up his college course, had not the Senior known better.

Across the Quadrangle, from the room of the Caruso-like Juniors, accompanied by a melodious banjo-twanging, drifted:

"Though thy halls we leave forever
Sadly from the campus turn;
Yet our love shall fail thee never
For old Bannister we'll yearn!

"Bannister, Bannister, hail, all hail!
Echoes softly from each heart;
We'll be ever loyal to thee
Till we from life shall part."

Strangely enough, the behemoth Thorwald was not thinking so much of having to give up his studies, of having to lay aside his books and take up again the implements of toil. He was not pondering on the cruelty of fate in making him abandon, at least temporarily, his goal; instead, his thoughts turned, somehow, to his experiences at old Bannister, to the football scrimmages, the noisy sessions in "Delmonico's Annex," the college dining-hall, to the skylarking he had often watched in the dormitories. He thought, too, of the happy, care-free youths, remembering Hicks, good Butch Brewster, loyal little Theophilus; and as he reflected, he heard those Juniors, over the way, singing. Just now they were chanting that

exquisitely beautiful Hawaiian melody, "Aloha Oe," or "Farewell to Thee," making the words tell of parting from their Alma Mater. There was something in the refrain that seemed to break down Thor's wall of reserve, to melt away his aloofness, and he caught himself listening eagerly as they sang.

Somehow he felt no desire to condemn those care-free youths, to call their singing silly foolishness, to say they were wasting their time and their fathers' money. Queer, but he actually liked to hear them sing, he realized he had come to listen for their saengerfests. Now that he had to leave college, for the first time he began to ponder on what he must leave. Not alone books and study, but--

As he stood there, an ache in his throat, and an awful sorrow overwhelming him, with the richly blended voices of the happy Juniors drifting across to him, chanting a song of old Ballard, big Thor murmured softly:

"What did little Theophilus say? What was it Shakespeare wrote? Oh, I have it:

"This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong--
To love that well, which thou must leave ere long."

CHAPTER X

THOR'S AWAKENING

"There's a hole in the bottom of the sea,
And we'll put Bannister in that hole!
In that hole--in--that--hole--
Oh, we'll put Bannister in that hole!"

"In the famous words of the late Mike Murphy," said T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., "the celebrated Yale and Penn track trainer, 'you can beat a team that can't be beat, but--you can't beat a team that won't be beat!' Latham must be in the latter class."

It was the Bannister-Latham game, and the first half had just ended. Captain Butch Brewster's followers had trailed dejectedly from Bannister Field to the Gym, where Head Coach Corridan was flaying them with a tongue as keen as the two-edged sword that drove Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. A cold, bleak November afternoon, a leaden sky lowered overhead, and a chill wind swept athwart the field; in the concrete stands, the loyal "rooters" of the Gold and Green, or of the Gold and Blue, shivered, stamped, and swung their arms, waiting for the excitement of the scrimmage again to warm them. Yet, the Bannister cohorts seemed silent and discouraged, while the Latham supporters went wild, singing, cheering, howling. A look at the score-board explained this:

END OF FIRST HALF: SCORE:

Bannister 0

Latham 3

The statement of T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., swathed in a gold and green blanket and humped on the Bannister bench, to shivering little Theophilus Opperdyke, the Phillyloo Bird, Shad Weatherby, and several more collegians who had joined him when the half ended, was singularly appropriate. In Latham's light, fast eleven, trained to the minute, coached to a shifty, tricky style of play with numberless deceptive fakes from which they worked the forward pass successfully, Bannister seemed to have encountered, as Mike Murphy phrased it, "A team that won't be beat!" According to the advance dope of the sporting writers, who, in football, are usually as good prophets as the Weather Bureau, Bannister was booked to come out the winner by at least five touchdowns to none. But here a half was gone, and Latham led by three points, scored on a rather lucky field-goal!

The psychology of football is inexplicable. Yale, beaten by Virginia, Brown, and Wash-Jeff, with the Blue's best gridiron star ineligible to play, a team that seemed at odds with itself and the 'Varsity, mismanaged, poorly coached, journeys to Princeton to battle with old Nassau; the Tiger, its tail as yet untwisted, presents its best eleven for several seasons, a great favorite in the odds, and yet the final score is Yale, 14; Princeton, 7! A strange fear of the Bulldog, bred of many bitter defeats, of similar occasions when a feeble Yale team aroused itself and trampled an invincible Orange and Black eleven, when the Blue fought old Nassau with a team that "wouldn't" be beat, gave victory to the poorer aggregation. So many things unforeseen often enter into a football contest, shifting the balance of power from the stronger to the weaker team. One eleven gets the jump on the other, the favorite weirdly goes to pieces--team dissension may exist, a dozen other causes--but, boiled down, Mike Murphy's statement was most appropriate now.

Latham simply *would not* be beat! The sporting pages had said: "Latham simply can't beat Bannister!" Here the team, that could not be beaten was being defeated, and the team that would not be defeated was, so far, the victor. Perhaps the threatened dropping of Thor from the Gold and Green squad shook somewhat Captain Butch's players; more likely, the Latham aggregation got the jump on Bannister, opening up a bewildering attack of criss-crosses, line plunges, cross-bucks, and tandems, from all of which the forward pass frequently developed; they literally overwhelmed a supposedly unbeatable team. And once they got the edge, it was hard for Bannister to regain poise and to smother the fast plays that swept through or around the bewildered eleven.

"We have *got* to beat 'em!" growled Shad, "Mike Murphy or not. Why, if little old Latham cleans us up, smash go our chances of the State Championship! Oh, look at Thor--the big mountain of muscle. Why doesn't he wake up, and go push that team off the field?"

Thor, the Prodigious Prodigy, his vast hulk unprotected from the cold wind by a football blanket, squatted on the ground, on the side-line, apparently

in a trance. Ever since the night before, when his father's letter had dealt such a knock-out blow to his hopes of fulfilling the promise to his dying mother, had rudely side-tracked him from the climb to his goal, the blond giant had maintained that dumb apathy. If anything, it seemed that the cruel blow of fate had only served to make Thor more stolid and impassive than ever, and Theophilus wondered if the Colossus had really grasped the import of the tragic letter as yet. The news had spread over the college and campus, and the students were sincerely sorry for Thor. But to offer him sympathy was about as difficult as consoling a Polar bear with the toothache.

Coach Corridan, carrying out his plot, had decided not to start Thor in the first half of the game. So the Norwegian Hercules, having received no orders to the contrary, however, donned togs and appeared on the side-line, where he had sat, paying not the slightest heed to the scrimmage and seemingly unaware that the Gold and Green was facing defeat and the loss of the Championship, for a game lost would put the team out of the running. All big John Thorwald knew was, in a few weeks he must leave old Bannister, must give up, for a time, his college course. Just when the grim battle was won, he must leave, to work. Not that the Viking cared about toil. It was the delay that chafed even his stolid self. He was stunned at having to wait, maybe two years, before starting again.

And yet, as he squatted on the side-line, oblivious to everything but his bitter reflections, the Theophilus-quoted words of Shakespeare persisted in intruding on his thoughts:

"This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong--
To love that well, which thou must leave ere long."

Try as he would, he could not fight away the keen realization that books and study were not all he would regret to leave. He was forced to acknowledge that his mind kept wandering to other things. He found himself pondering on the parting with Theophilus Opperdyke, with that crazy Hicks; he wondered if he, out in the world again, toiling his lonely way, would miss the glad fellowship of these care-free youths that he had watched, but never shared, if he would ever think of the weeks at old Bannister. Somehow, he felt that he would often vision the Quad at night, brightly lighted, dormitories' lights agleam, students crossing and recrossing, shouting at studious comrades. He would hear again the melodious banjo-twanging, the gleeful saengerfests, the happy skylarking of the boys. He had never entered into all this, and yet he knew he would miss it all; why, he would even miss the daily scrimmage on Bannister Field; the noisy shower-room, with its clouds of steam, and white forms flitting ghostlike. He would miss the classrooms; in brief, *everything*!

John Thorwald was awakening! Even had this blow not befallen him, the huge, slow-minded Norwegian, in time, with Theophilus Opperdyke's missionary work, would have gradually come to understand things better--at least, to know he was wrong in his ideas, which is the beginning of wisdom. Already, he had ceased to condemn all this as foolishness, to rail at the youths for wasting time and money. Already something stirred within him, and yet, stolid as he was, bashful among the collegians, he was apparently the same.

But the sudden shock Head Coach Corridan spoke of had come. His father's letter telling of his loss and that Thor must leave Bannister had awakened him to the startling knowledge that he did care for something more than study, that all the things that had puzzled him, that he had sneered at, meant something to his existence, that he dreaded leaving other things than his books.

"I--I don't understand things," thought Thorwald. "But--if I could only stay, I'd want to learn. I'd try to get this 'college' spirit! Oh, I've been all wrong, but if I could only stay--"

As if in answer to his unspoken thought, the big Freshman beheld marching toward him Theophilus Opperdyke, his spectacles off, and his face aglow, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., evidently in the throes of emotional insanity; a Senior whom he knew as Parson Palmetter; Registrar Worthington, and Doctor Alford, the kindly, beloved Prexy of old Bannister. The last named placed his hand on the puzzled behemoth's ponderous shoulder.

"Thorwald," he said kindly, "Hicks, Opperdyke and Brewster, last night, came to my study and acquainted me with your misfortune. They told me of your life-history, of your splendid purpose to gain knowledge, to make something of yourself, for your dying mother's sake. Old Bannister needs men like you, Thorwald. Perhaps you do not understand campus ways and tradition yet, perhaps you are not in sympathy with everything here; but once a love for your Alma Mater is awakened, you will be a power for good for your college.

"Now I at once took up the matter with Mr. Palmetter, President of The Students' Aid Bureau. This year, for the first time in our history, we have dispensed with janitors and sweeps in the dormitories, and with dining-hall waiters, so that needy and deserving students may work their way through Bannister. Owing to the fact that Mr. Deane, a Senior, has given up his dormitory, Creighton Hall, as he has funds for the year and needs the time to study, we can offer you board and tuition, in exchange for your work in the dormitory, and waiting on tables in the dining-hall. Since your first term bills, until January first, are paid, if you will start to work at once, we will credit any work done this term on books and incidentals for next term. By this means--"

"Why, you don't--you *can't* mean--" rumbled Thor, who had just dimly grasped the greatest point in Prexy's speech. "Why, then I won't have to leave Bannister--I won't have to quit my studies! Oh, thank you, sir; thank you! I will work *so* hard. I am not afraid of work; I love it--a chance to toil and earn my education, that's what I want! Thank you!"

"And in addition," said the Registrar, "Mr. Palmetter reports that he can secure you, downtown, a number of furnaces to tend this winter, which you can do early in the morning and at night; this will bring you an income for living expenses, and in the spring something else will offer itself. It means every moment of your time will be crowded, but Bannister needs workers--"

Something stirred in John Thorwald. His heart had been touched at last. He

thought of T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., Butch, and little Theophilus worried at his having to leave college, going to Doctor Alford; of Prexy, the Registrar, and Parson Palmetter, working to keep Thor at old Bannister. He recalled how sympathetic all the youths had been, how they admired his purpose and determination; and he had rewarded their friendliness with cold aloofness. He felt a thrill as he visioned himself working for his education, rising in the cold dawn, tending furnaces, working in the dorm., waiting on tables--studying. With what fierce joy he would assail his tasks, glad that he could stay! He knew the students would rejoice, that they would not look down on him; instead, they would respect and admire him, toiling to grow and develop, to attain his goal!

"Go to it, Thor!" urged T. Haviland Hicks, Jr. "We all want you to stay, old man; we'll give you a lift with your studies. Old Bannister *wants* you, *needs* you, so *stick*!"

"Stay, please!" quavered little Theophilus. "You don't want to leave your Alma Mater; stay, Thorwald, and--you'll understand things soon,"

"Report at the Registrar's office at seven tonight, Thorwald," said Prexy, and then, because he understood boys and campus problems, "and to show your gratitude, you might go out there and spank that team which is trying to lick old Bannister."

John Thorwald, when Doctor Alford and the Registrar had gone, arose and stood gazing across Bannister Field. He saw not the white-lined gridiron, the gaunt goal-posts, the concrete stands filled with spectators, or the gay banners and pennants. He saw the buildings and campus of old Bannister, the stately old elms bordering the walks; he beheld the Gym., the four dormitories--Bannister, Nordyke, Smithson, and Creighton--the white Chapel, the ivy-covered Library, the Administration and Recitation Halls; he glimpsed the Memorial Arch over the entrance driveway, and big Alumni Hall. All at once, like an inundating wave, the great realization flashed on Thor that he did not have to leave it all! Often again would he hear the skylarking youths, the gay songs, the banjo-strumming; often would he see the brightly lighted Quad., would gaze out on the campus! It was still his--the work, the study, and, if he tried, even the glad comradeship of the fellows, the bigger things of college life, which as yet he did not understand.

The big slow-minded youth could not awaken, at once, to a full knowledge and understanding of campus life and tradition, to a knowledge of college spirit; but, thanks to the belief that he had to leave it all, he had awakened to the startling fact that already he loved old Bannister. And now, joyous that he could stay, John Thorwald suddenly felt a strong desire to do something, not for himself, but for these splendid fellows who had worried for his sake, had worked to keep him at college. And just then he remembered the somewhat unclassical, yet well meant, words of dear old Doctor Alford, "And to show your gratitude, you might go out there and spank that team, which is trying to lick old Bannister."

John Thorwald for the first time looked at the score-board; he saw, in big white letters:

BANNISTER 0

LATHAM 3

From the Gym. the Gold and Green players--grim, determined, and yet worried by the team that "won't be beat!"--were jogging, followed by Head Coach Patrick Henry Corridan. The Latham eleven was on the field, the Gold and Blue rooters rioted in the stands. From the Bannister cohorts came a thunderous appeal:

"Hold 'em, boys--hold 'em, boys--hold--hold--*hold*!
Don't let 'em beat the Green and the Gold!"

A sudden fury swayed the Prodigious Prodigy; it was his college, his eleven, and those Blue and Gold youths were actually beating old Bannister! The Bannister boys had admired him, some of them had helped him in his studies, three had told Doctor Alford of him, had made it possible for him to stay, to keep on toward his goal. *They* would be sorrow-stricken if Latham won! A feeling of indignation came to Thor. How dare those fellows think they could beat old Bannister! Why, *he* would go out there and show them a few things!

Head Coach Corridan, let it be chronicled, was paralyzed when he ducked under the side-line rope--stretched to hold the spectators back--to collide with an immovable body, John Thorwald, and to behold an eager light on that behemoth's stolid face. Grasping the Slave-Driver in a grip that hurt, Thor boomed:

"Mr. Corridan, let me play, *please*! Send me out this half. We can win. We've *got* to win! I want to do something for old Bannister. Why, if we lose today, we lose the Championship! I don't understand things yet, but I do love the college. I want to fight for Bannister. *Please* let me play!"

The astonished coach and the equally dazed Gold and Green eleven, with the bewildered collegians who heard Thor's earnest appeal, were silent a few moments, unable to grasp the truth. Then Captain Brewster, his face aglow, seized the big Freshman's arm excitedly.

Sure you'll play, Thor!" he shouted. "Fullback, old man! Come on, team. Thor's awake! He wants to fight for his Alma Mater; he wants Bannister to win! Oh, watch us shove Latham off the field--everybody together now--the yell, for Thor!"

"Right here," grinned an excitedly happy T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., when the yell was given, "is where a team that won't be beat gets licked by a chap what can lick 'em!"

What took place when the blond Prodigious Prodigy lumbered on Bannister Field at the start of the last half of the Bannister-Latham game can be imagined by the final score-board figures:

BANNISTER 27

LATHAM 3

It can best be described with the aid of Scoop Sawyer's account in the next
</i>Bannister Weekly:</i>

--At the start of the second half, however, the Latham cohorts were given a shock when they beheld a colossal being almost as big as the entire Gold and Blue eleven, go in at fullback for Bannister. And the Latham eleven received a series of shocks when Thor began intruding that massive body of his into their territory. Tennyson's saying, "The old order changeth, yielding place to new" was aptly illustrated in the second half; for Bannister's bugler quit sounding "Retreat!" and blew "Charge!" Four touchdowns and three goals from touchdowns, in one half, is usually considered a fair day's work for an entire team. Even Yale or Harvard; but when one player corrals four touchdowns in a half--he is going some! Well, Thor went some! Most of the half he furnished free transportation for two-thirds of the Latham team, carrying them on his back, legs, and neck, as he strode down the field; a writ of habeas corpus could not have stopped the blond Colossus. Anyone would have stood more show to stop an Alpine avalanche than to slow up Thor, and the stretcher was constantly in evidence, for Latham knockouts.

[Illustration C: 'A writ of habeas corpus could not have stopped the blond Colossus']

The game turned into a Thor's Personally Conducted Tour. Thorwald, escorted by the Gold and Green team, made four quick tours to the Latham goal-line. It was simply a matter of giving the ball to the Prodigious Prodigy, then waving the linesmen to move down twenty yards or more toward Latham's line. Thor was simply unstoppable, and more beneficial even than his phenomenal playing was his encouragement to the team. He kept urging them to action, his foghorn growl of, "Come on, boys!" was a slogan of victory! Judging by Thor's awakening, and his work of the Latham game, Bannister's hopes of The State Intercollegiate Football Championship are as roseate as the blush on a maiden's cheek at her first kiss, and--

That night, in the cozy room of T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., John Thorwald, supremely happy yet withal as uncomfortable as a whale on the Sahara Desert, overflowed an easy-chair. The room was filled, or what space Thor left, with the Bannister eleven, second-team players, Coach Corridan, and several students; on the campus a riotous crowd of Bannister youths "raised merry Heck," as Hicks phrased it, and their cheer floated up to the windows:

"Rah! Rah! Rah! Thor! Thor! Thor! He's--all--right!"

"Come, fellows," spoke T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.

"Let's sing to the captain, good old Butch! Let 'er go!"

"Here's to good Butch Brewster! Drink it down!
Here's to good Butch Brewster! Drink It down!
Here's to good Butch Brewster--
He plays football like he <i>uster--</i>

Drink it down! Drink it down--down--down--down!"

A strange sound startled the joyous youths; it was a rumbling noise, like distant thunder, and at first they could not place it. Then, as it continued, they located the disturbance as coming from the prodigious body of Thor, and at last the wonderful phenomenon dawned on them.

"Thor is singing college songs!" quavered little Theophilus Opperdyke, so happy that his big-rimmed spectacles rode the end of his nose. "Oh, Hicks--Butch--Thor is awake at last! He is trying to get college spirit, to understand campus life--"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., suddenly realized that what he had so ardently longed for had come to pass; aided by Theophilus' missionary work and by the sudden shock of Thorwald, Sr.'s, letter. Thor was awakened, had come to know that he loved old Bannister. His awakening, as shown in the football game, had been splendid. How he had towered over the scrimmage, in every play, urging his team to fight, himself doing prodigies for old Bannister. Thor, who had been so silent and aloof! Then the sunny-souled youth remembered.

"Oh, I told you I'd awaken Thor, Butch!" he began, but that behemoth quelled him with an ominous look.

"You!" he growled, with pretended wrath, "you! It was Theophilus Opperdyke who did the most of it, and Thorwald's father did the rest! Don't you rob Theophilus of his glory, you feeble-imitation-of-some-thing-human!"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., grinned a la Cheshire cat. The happy-go-lucky Senior was vastly glad that Thor had awakened, that now he would try to grasp the real meaning of college existence. He felt that the young Hercules, from now on, would slowly and surely develop to a splendid college man, that he would do big things for his Alma Mater. And the generous Hicks gave Theophilus all the credit, and impressed on that happy Human Encyclopedia the fact that he had done a great deed for old Bannister. Just so, Thor was awakened.

"Oh, I say, Deke Radford, Coach, and Butch," Hicks chortled, getting the attention of that triumvirate as well as that of the others in the room, "remember up in Camp Bannister, in the sleep-shack, when Coach Corridan outlined a smashing full-back he wanted?"

"Sure!" smiled Deke. "What of it, Hicks?"

Then T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., that care-free, lovable, irrepressible youth, whose chance to swagger before this same trio had been postponed so long and seemingly lost forever, satiated his fun-loving soul and reaped his reward. Calling their attention to Thor, the Prodigious Prodigy, and asking them to remember his playing against Latham that day, the sunny Senior strutted before them vaingloriously.

"Oh, I told you just to leave it to Hicks!" he declared, grinning happily.

"I promised to round up an unstoppable fullback, a Gargantuan Hercules, and

I did! Just think of what he will do to Hamilton and Ballard in the big games! As I have often told you, *<i>always</i>--leave It to Hicks!"*

CHAPTER XI

"ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL"

"Oh, what we'll do to Ballard
Will surely be a shame!
We'll push their team clear off the field
And win the football game!"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., one night three days after the first big game, that with Hamilton, a week following Thor's great awakening in the Latham game, sat in his cozy room, having assumed his favorite position--chair tilted back at a perilous angle and feet thrust atop of the radiator. The versatile youth, having just composed a song with which to encourage Bannister elevens in the future, was reading it aloud, when his mind was torpedoed by a most startling thought.

"Land o' Goshen!" reflected the sunny-souled Senior, aghast. "I haven't twanged my ole banjo and held forth with a saengerfest for a coon's age! I surely can do so now without arousing Butch to wrath. Thor has awakened, Hamilton is walloped, and Bannister will surely win the Championship! Everything is happy, an' de goose hangs high, so here goes!"

Holding his banjo *</i>a la</i> troubadour, the blithesome Hicks, who as a Senior was harassed by no study-hours or inspections, strode from his room and out into the corridor, up and down which he majestically paced, like a sentinel on his beat, twanging his beloved banjo with abandon, and roaring in his foghorn, subterranean voice:*

"Oh, the way we walloped Hamilton
Surely was a shame!
And we're going to win the Championship--
For we'll do Ballard the same!

"And Bannister shall flaunt the flag
For at least three seasons more;
Because--no team can win a game
While the Gold and Green has Thor!"

On Bannister Field, three days before, the Gold and Green had crushed the strong team from "old Ham" to the tune of 20 to 0; Thor's magnificent ground-gaining, in which he smashed through the supposedly impregnable defense of the enemy, was a surprise to his comrades and a shock to Hamilton. Time and again, on the fourth down, the ball was given to

Thorwald, and the blond Colossus, with several of old Ham's players clinging to him, plunged ahead for big gains. So now with a monster mass-meeting in half an hour, the exultant Bannister youths pretended to study, but prepared to parade on the campus, cheer the eleven and Thor, and arouse excitement for the winning of the biggest game, a victory over Ballard, a week later.

From the rooms of would-be studious Seniors on both sides of the corridor, as Hicks patrolled it, came vociferous protests and classic criticisms, gathering in force and volume as the breezy youth's foghorn voice roared his song; that heedless collegian grinned as he heard:

"R-r-rotten! Give that Jersey calf more rope!"

"Hicks has had a relapse! Sing-Sing for yours, old man!"

"Arrest Hicks, under the Public Nuisance Act!"

"Woof! Woof! Shoot it quick! Don't let it suffer!"

Just as T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., strumming the banjo blithely and Carusoing with glee, reached the end of the corridor and executed a brisk 'bout-face, he heard a terrific commotion on the stairway, and, a moment later, Butch Brewster, Beef McNaughton, Deacon Radford and Monty Merriweather gained the top of the stairs. As they were now between the offending Hicks and his quarters, there seemed no chance for the sunny Senior to play his safety-first policy; so he waited, panic-stricken, as Butch and Beef lumbered heavily down the corridor.

"Help! Aid! Succor! Relief! Assistance!" shrieked Hicks, leaning his beloved banjo against the wall and throwing himself into what he fatuously believed was an intensely pugilistic pose. "I am a believer in preparedness. You have me cornered, so beware! I am a follower of Henry Ford, but even I will fight--at bay!"

"Well, you are at sea now!" growled Beef, tucking the splinter youth under one arm and striding down the corridor, followed by Butch with the banjo, and Monty with Deacon. "You desperado, you destroyer of peace and quietude, you one-cylinder gadabout! You're off again! We'll instruct you to annoy real students, you faint shadow of something human!"

"Them's harsh sentences, Beef!" chuckled T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., as that behemoth kicked open Hicks' door, bore the futilely squirming, kicking youth into the room, and hurled him on the davenport. "Watch my banjo, there, Butch; have a couple of cares! Say, what'smatter wid youse guys, anyhow? This is my first saengerfest for eons. Old Bannister has a clear track ahead at last, the Championship is won for sure, and Thor, that mighty engine of destruction to Ham's and Ballard's hopes, after much tinkering, is hitting on all twelve cylinders. Why, I prithee, deny me the pleasure of a little joyous song?"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., since the memorable Latham game, when Thor had awakened between halves, and the Prodigious Prodigy had shown himself

worthy of his title by winning the game after defeat leered at old Bannister, had suffered a relapse, and was again his old sunny, heedless, happy-go-lucky self. Now that John Thorwald had been startled into realizing that he loved his college and had been saved from having to leave, now that he played football for his Alma Mater, and Bannister's hopes of the Championship were roseate, the blithesome Hicks had abandoned himself to a golden existence of Beefsteak Busts downtown at Jerry's, entertaining jolly comrades in his cozy room, and pestering the campus with his banjo and ridiculous imitations of Sheerluck Holmes, the Dachshund Detective. Big Butch Brewster, lecturing him for his care-free ways, as futilely as he had done for three years past, gave up in despair.

"I might as well be showing moving-pictures to the inmates of a blind asylum," he growled on one occasion, "as to persuade you to quit acting like a lunatic! You, a Senior--acting like an escaped inhabitant of Matteawan! Bah!"

Big Butch Brewster, drawing a chair up to the davenport, assumed the manner of a physician toward a recalcitrant patient, while Beef carefully stowed the banjo in the closet and Deacon Radford, an interested spectator, sat on the bed. The happy-go-lucky Hicks, at a loss to account for the strange expressions of his comrades, tried to arise, but the football captain pinned him down with one hand.

"Seriously, Hicks," spoke Butch, "your saengerfest came at a lamentably inopportune time! I regret to inform you that old Bannister faces another problem, with regard to Thor, and unless it is solved, I fear--"

"Thor has balked again?" gasped the dazed Hicks, whom Butch now allowed to sit up, as he showed interest. "Has the engine of destruction stalled? Why, as fast as we get him lined up, off he slides at an angle! Well, you fellows did perfectly right to bring this baffling problem, whatever it is, to me. What is the trouble--won't Thor play football?"

The irrepressible Hicks was bewildered at hearing that a new problem regarding Thor had arisen, and, naturally, he at once connected it with football, since the big Freshman had twice balked in that respect. Since his awakening, effected by Theophilus' missionary work, his last appeal, and Thor's letter from his father, Thor had earnestly striven to grasp the true meaning of college life, to understand campus tradition. No longer did he hold aloof, boning always, in his lonely room. Instead, he mingled with his fellows, lingering with the team for the skylarking in the shower-room after scrimmage, turning out for the nightly mass-meeting. Often, as the youths practiced songs and yells on the campus, Thor's terrific rumble was heard--some had even dared to slap his massive back and say, "Hello, Thor, old man!" and the big Freshman had responded. It was evident to all that Thorwald was striving to become a collegian, and knowing his slow, bulldog nature, there was no doubt as to his ultimate success; hence T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., was vastly puzzled now.

"Oh, Thor hasn't backslid!" smiled Beef. "You see, Hicks, it's this way: Owing to Mr. Thorwald's losing the five thousand dollars, Thor, as you know, is working his way at Bannister. Well, with his hustling, his studies

and football scrimmage, he simply does not have a minute for the other phases of college life, for the comradeship with his fellows--"

"Here is his day's schedule," chimed in Deacon, referring to a paper: "Rise at four-thirty A. M. Hustle downtown to tend several furnaces until seven. Breakfast at seven. Till nine, make beds and sweep dormitory rooms. Nine till three-fifteen P. M., recitation periods and dormitory work, sandwiched. Then until supper, football practice, and nights study. Add to that waiting on tables for the three meals, and what time has Thor to broaden and develop, to take in all the big things of campus existence, to grow into an all-round college man?"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., wonderful to chronicle, was silent. He was reflecting on the irony of fate; as Deacon said, now that Thor had awakened, and earnestly wanted to be a collegian, he had no time to enter into campus life. Glad at being able to stay at old Bannister, to keep on with his studies, climbing steadily toward his goal, and finding a joy in his new relationship with the students, the ponderous Thorwald had flung himself into his hustling, as the youths called working one's way at college, with zeal. To the huge Freshman, toil was nothing, and since it meant that he could keep on with his study, he was content. The collegians vastly admired his grim determination; they aided all they could with his studies, and helped with his work, so he could have more time for scrimmage, and yet another phase of the problem came to Hicks.

It seemed unjust that John Thorwald, after his long years of hard physical toil, and his mental struggles, often after hours of grinding work, at the very time when the five thousand dollars from Henry B. Kingsley's heirs promised him a chance to study without a body tortured and exhausted, should be forced again to take up his stern fight for knowledge. And it was cruel that Thor, just awakening to the true meaning of college life, striving to grasp campus tradition, and eager to serve his Alma Mater in every way, should have so little time to mingle with his fellows. He should be with them on the campus, on the athletic field, in the dorms., the literary society halls, the Y. M. C. A. He should be realizing the golden years of college life, the glad comradeship of the campus. Instead, he must arise in the bitter cold, gray dawn, and from then until late night toil and study unceasingly.

"It's a howling shame!" declared the serious Hicks, a heart full of sympathy for Thor. "Just as he wakes up and is trying to understand things at old Bannister, bang! the *Norwhal* is blown up by a stray mine, and down goes his dad's money. Why didn't Mr. Thorwald get the five thousand transferred to the *Valkyrie*? Oh, if that money hadn't gone down to Davy Jones' locker, Thor would be awakened and have time for college life, too!"

Butch Brewster started to speak when the thunderous tread of John Thorwald sounded in the corridor. The Prodigious Prodigy seemed approaching at double-quick time, and the youths stared at each other. However, when Thor appeared in the doorway, a letter in hand, they gazed at him in bewilderment, for his face fairly glowed.

"Read it, fellows, read it!" he breathed, with what, for him, was almost

excitement. "It just came! Oh, isn't that good news? Read it out, Captain Butch. Won't we wallop Ballard now!"

Big Butch Brewster, mystified by Thor's happiness, and urged on by his equally puzzled comrades, drew out the letter, and a glad smile coming to his honest countenance, he read aloud:

"THE NEW YORK-CHRISTIANIA. STEAMSHIP LINE (New York Office)

"Nov. 18, 19--.

"MR. JOHN THORWALD, JR., Bannister College.

"DEAR SIR:

"We beg to state that your father, first mate on our liner, the *Valkyrie*, three days outbound from New York to Christiania, sent a message, *via* wireless, to our New York offices by the inbound Dutch Line's *Rotterdam*. The *Rotterdam* relayed the message to us, and we forward it herewith, *verbatim*:

"DEAR SON: Purser of my ship, the *Valkyrie*, informed me today that the purser of the ill-fated *Norwhal*, learning of my transfer to this liner, transferred my \$5,000 to the *Valkyrie* before he sailed to his fate. I am sending this *via* the *Rotterdam*, inbound, and our office will forward it to you. Will write on arriving at Christiania. Father.'

"We are sorry for the delay in forwarding this message, but through an accident, it was mislaid in our office for a few days.

"Yours truly,

"THE NEW YORK-CHRISTIANIA STEAMSHIP LINE,

"per J. L. G."

A moment of silence; outside on the campus the Bannister youths, preparing for the mass-meeting in the Auditorium, started cheering. Someone caught sight of Thor, standing now by the window of Hicks' room, on the third floor of Bannister Hall, and a few seconds later there sounded:

"Thor! Thor! Thor! Thor will bring the Championship to old Bannister! Rah! Rah! Rah!--Thor!"

"Oh," shouted T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., grinning happily, his arm across Thor's massive shoulders, "'All's well that ends well,' as Bill Shakespeare says. It's all right now, Thor. Fate dealt you a hard punch, but it served its purpose; for it made you realize how you would regret to leave college. Now you won't have to hustle and have all your time filled with toil and study; you can go after every phase of campus life, and serve old Bannister in so many ways."

John Thorwald stood, a contented look on his placid, impassive face, gazing down at the campus below and hearing the plaudits of the excited collegians. The stately old elms, gaunt and bare, tossed their limbs against a leaden sky; a cold, dreary wind sent clouds of dry leaves scurrying down the concrete walks. In the faint moonlight that struggled through the clouds, the towers and spires of old Bannister were limned against the sky-line. Across the campus, on Bannister Field, the goal-posts, skeleton-like, kept their lonely vigil. On that field, in less than a week, the Gold and Green must face the crucial test--against Ballard's championship eleven, in the Biggest Game; and now, almost on the eve of battle, the shackles had been knocked from him; he was free of the great burden, free to serve his Alma Mater, to fight for the Gold and Green, to grow and develop into an all-round, representative college man.

All of a sudden it dawned on the slow-thinking young Norwegian just how much this freedom to grow and expand meant to him, and he turned from the window. From below, the shouts of "Thor! Thor! Thor!" drifted, stirring his blood, as he looked at Hicks, Butch, Beef, Monty and Deacon.

"All's well that ends well,' you say. Hicks," he spoke slowly, his face joyous. "That's true; but I'm just starting, fellows. I'm just *beginning* to live my college years, not for myself, but for old Bannister, for my Alma Mater, for I am awake, and *free*!"

CHAPTER XII

THEOPHILUS BETRAYS HICKS

Big Butch Brewster, a life-sized picture of despair, roosted dejectedly on the Senior Fence, between the Gym and the Administration Building. It was quite cold, and also the beginning of the last study-period before Butch's final and most difficult recitation of the day, Chemistry. Yet instead of boning in his warm room, the behemoth Senior perched on the fence and stared gloomily into space.

As he sat, enveloped in a penumbra of gloom, the campus entrance door of Bannister Hall, the Senior dorm., opened suddenly, and T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., that happy-go-lucky youth, came out cautiously, after the fashion of a second-story artist, emerging from his crib with a bundle of swag, the last item being represented by a football tucked under Hicks' left arm. Beholding Butch Brewster on the Senior Fence, the sunny-souled Senior exhibited a perturbation of spirit seeming undecided whether to beat a retreat or to advance.

"Now what's ailin' *you*?" demanded Butch wrathily, believing the pestersome Hicks to be acting in that burglarious manner for effect. "Why

should <i>you</i> sneak out of a dorm., bearing a football like it was an auk's egg? Why, you resemble a nigger, making his get-away after robbing a hen-roost! Don't torment me, you accident-somewhere-on-its-way-to-happen. I feel about as joyous as a traveling salesman who has made a town and gotten nary a order!"

"It's <i>awful</i>!" soliloquized T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., perching beside the despondent Butch on the Senior Fence. "I am not a fatalist, old man, but it <i>does</i> seem that fate hasn't destined Thor to play football for old Bannister this season! Here, after he won the Ham game, and we expected him to waltz off with Ballard's scalp and the Championship, he has to tumble downstairs! Oh, it's tough luck!"

It was two days before the biggest game, with Ballard--the contest that would decide the State Intercollegiate Football Championship. Ballard, the present champions, discounting even Hamilton's stories of Thor's prowess, were coming to Bannister with an eleven more mighty than the one that had crushed the Gold and Green the year before, with a heavy, stonewall line, fast ends, and a powerful, shifty backfield. The Ballard team was confident of victory and the pennant. Bannister, building on the awakened Thorwald, superbly sure of his phenomenal strength and power, of his unstoppable rushes, serenely practiced the doctrine of preparedness, and awaited the day.

And then John Thorwald, the Prodigious Prodigy, whose gigantic frame seemed unbattered by the terrific daily scrimmage, whom it was impossible to hurt on the gridiron, the day before, going downstairs in Creighton Hall, hurrying to a class, had caught his heel on the top step, and crashed to the bottom! And now, with a broken ankle, the blond Colossus, heartbroken at not being able to win the Championship for old Bannister, hobbled about on crutches. Without Thor, the Gold and Green must meet the invincible Ballard team! It was a solar-plexus blow, both to the Bannister youths, confident in Thor's prowess, building on his Herculean bulk, and to the big Freshman. Thorwald, awakened, striving to grasp campus tradition, to understand college life, was eager to fling himself into the scrimmage, to give every ounce of his mighty power, to offer that splendid body, for his Alma Mater, and now he must hobble impotently on the side-line, watching his team fight a desperate battle.

"If Bannister only had a sure, accurate drop-kicker!" reflected Captain Butch hopelessly. "One who could be depended on to average eight out of ten trials, we'd have a fighting chance with Ballard. Deke Radford is a wonder. He can kick a forty-five-yard goal, but he's erratic! He might boot the pigskin over when a score is needed from the forty-yard line, and again he might miss from the twenty-yard mark. Oh, for a kicker who isn't brilliant and spectacular, but who can methodically drop 'em over from, say, the thirty-five-yard line! Hello, what's the row, Hicks?"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., started to speak, changed his mind, coughed, grew red and embarrassed, and acted in a most puzzling manner. At any other time, big Butch would have been bewildered; but with Thor's loss weighing on his mind, the Gold and Green captain gave his comrade only a cursory glance.

"I--I--Oh, nothing, Butch!" stammered Hicks, to whom, being "fussed," as Bannister termed embarrassment, was almost unknown. "I--I guess I'll take this football over to my locker in the Gym. I ought to glance at my Chemistry, too. So-long, Butch; see you later, old top!"

When the splinter-youth had drifted into the Gym., Butch Brewster, remembering his strange actions, actually managed to transfer his thoughts for a time from the eleven to the care-free T. Haviland Hicks, Jr. The behemoth Senior reflected that, to date, the pestiferous Hicks had not explained his baffling mystery he recalled the day when he had told the Gold and Green eleven of the loyal Hicks' ambition to please his dad by winning his B, when he had described the youth's intense college spirit and had suggested that if Hicks failed to corral his letter the Athletic Association award him one for his loyalty to old Bannister. And Butch saw again the bewildering sentences in the letter from Thomas Haviland Hicks, Sr., to his son.

"Evidently," meditated Butch, literally and figuratively "on the fence," "Hicks has failed to summon up enough self-confidence to explain his mystery; queer, too, for he usually is bubbling with faith in himself. He has acted like a bashful schoolgirl at frequent times--he starts to tell me something, then he gets embarrassed, back-fires, and stalls. He and Theophilus have been sneaking out in the early dawn, too. Wow! What did he sneak out of the dorm. that way, with a football, for? He looked like a yeggman working night shift. Why should *he* skulk out with a football? He has never explained his dad's letter, or told just what Mr. Hicks meant by calling him the "Class Kid" of Yale, '96, and saying those members of old Eli wanted him to star! Oh, he's a tantalizing wretch, and I'd like to solve his mystery, without his knowledge, so I could--"

At that instant, to the intense indignation and bewilderment of good Butch Brewster, little Theophilus Opperdyke, the timorous Human Encyclopedia of old Bannister, exited from Bannister Hall. The Senior boner gave a correct imitation of the offending Hicks, in that he skulked out, gazing around him nervously; but he portaged no pigskin, and, unlike the sunny youth, on periscoping Butch, he seemed relieved.

"Theophilus, *come here*!" thundered the wrathful football captain, shifting his tonnage on the Senior Fence. "What's the plot, anyhow? It's bad enough when T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., sneaks out, bearing a football, like an amateur cracksman making a getaway; but when you appear, imitating a Nihilist about to hurl a bomb--say, what's the answer to the puzzle, old man?"

Little Theophilus, his pathetically frail body trembling with suppressed excitement, his big-rimmed spectacles tumbling off with ridiculous regularity, and his solemn eyes peering owlshly at his behemoth classmate, stood before the startled Butch. It was evident that the 1919 grind labored under great stress. He was waging a terrific battle with himself, struggling to make some vast and all-important decision. He strove to speak, hesitated, choked, coughed apologetically, and acted as fussed as Hicks had done, until Butch was wild; then, as if resolved to cast the die

and cross the Rubicon, he decided, and plunged desperately ahead.

"It's--it's Hicks, Butch!" he quavered, torn cruelly by conflicting emotions. "Oh, I don't want to be a traitor--he trusted me with his secret, and I--I can't betray him, I just can't! But he didn't make me promise not to tell. He just told me not to. Oh, it's his very last chance, Butch, and with Thor hurt, old Bannister might need him in the Ballard game."

"What is it, Theophilus, old man?" Butch spoke kindly, for he saw the solemn little Senior was intensely excited. "Tell me--if our Alma Mater needs any fellow's services, you know, he should give them freely--since you did not promise not to tell about Hicks, if Bannister may be able to use Hicks against Ballard--though I can't, by any stretch of the imagination, figure how--then it is your duty to tell! I think I glimpse the dark secret--Hicks possesses some sort of football prowess, goodness knows what, and he lacks the confidence to tell Coach Corridan! Now, were it only drop-kicking--"

"It is drop-kicking!" Theophilus burst forth desperately. "Hicks is a drop-kicker, Butch, and a sure one--inside the thirty-yard line. He almost *never* misses a goal, and he kicks them from every angle, too. He isn't strong enough to kick past the thirty-yard line, but inside that he is wonderfully accurate. With Thor out of the Ballard game, a drop-kick may win for Bannister, and Deke Radford is so erratic! Oh, Hicks will be angry with me for telling; but he just won't tell about himself, after all his practice, because he fears the fellows will jeer. He is afraid he will fail in the supreme test. Oh, I've betrayed him, but--"

"T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., a drop-kicker!" exploded the dazed Butch, who could not have been more astounded had Theophilus announced that the sunny youth possessed powers of black magic. "Theophilus Opperdyke, Tantalus himself was never so tantalized as I have been of late. Tell me the whole story, old man--hurry. Spill it, old top!"

Butch Brewster, by questioning the excited Human Encyclopedia, like a police official giving the third degree, slowly extracted from Theophilus the startling story. A year before, just as the Gold and Green practiced for the Ham game, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., one afternoon, had arrayed his splinter-structure in a grotesque, nondescript athletic outfit, and had jogged out on Bannister Field. The gladsome youth's motive had been free from any torturesome purpose. He intended to round up the Phillyloo Bird, Shad Weatherby, and other non-athletic collegians, and with them boot the pigskin, for exercise. However, little Skeet Wigglesworth, beholding him as he donned the weird regalia of loud sweater, odd basket-ball stockings, tennis trousers, baseball shoes, and so on, misconstrued his plan, and believed Hicks intended to torment the squad. Hence, he hurried out, so that when Hicks appeared in the offing, the football squad and the spectators in the stands had jeered the happy-go-lucky Junior, and had good-natured sport at his expense.

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., after Jack Merritt had drop-kicked a forty-yard goal, made the excessively rash statement that it was easy. Captain Butch Brewster had indignantly challenged the heedless youth to show him, and

the results of Hicks' effort to propel the pigskin over the crossbar were hilarious, for he missed the oval by a foot, nearly dislocated his knee, and, slipping in the mud, he sat down violently with a thud. However, so the excited Theophilus now narrated, even as the convulsed students jeered Hicks, hurling whistles, shouts, cat-calls, songs and humorous remarks at the downfallen kicker, one of Hicks' celebrated inspirations had smitten the pestersome Junior, evidently jarred loose by his crashing to terra firma.

"Hicks figured this way, Butch," explained little Theophilus Opperdyke, eloquent in his comrade's behalf, "nature had built him like a mosquito, and endowed him with enough power to lift a pillow; hence he could never hope to play football on the 'Varsity; but he knew that many games are won by drop-kicks and by fellows especially trained and coached for that purpose, and they don't need weight and strength, but they must have the art, that peculiar knack which few possess. His inspiration was this: Perhaps he had that knack, perhaps he could practice faithfully, and develop into a sure drop-kicker. If he trained for a year, in his Senior season, he might be able to serve old Bannister, maybe to win a big game. So he set to work."

Theophilus hurriedly yet graphically narrated how T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., had made the loyal, hero-worshipping little Human Encyclopedia his sole confidant. He told the thrilled Butch how the sunny youth, from that day on, had watched and listened as Head Coach Corridan trained the drop-kickers, learning all the points he could gain. Vividly he described the mosquito-like Hicks, as he with a football bought from the Athletic Association began in secret to practice the fine art of drop-kicking! For a year, at old Bannister and at his dad's country home near Pittsburgh, Hicks had faithfully, doggedly kept at it. With no one but Theophilus knowing of his great ambition, he had gone out on Bannister Field, when he felt safe from observation; here, with his faithful comrade to keep watch, and to retrieve the pigskin, he had practiced the instructions and points gained from watching Coach Corridan train the booters of the squad. To his vast delight, and the joy of his little friend, Hicks had found that he did possess the knack, and from before the Ham game until Commencement he had kept his secret, practicing clandestinely at old Bannister; he had improved wonderfully, and when vacation started the cheery collegian had told his beloved dad, Mr. Thomas Haviland Hicks, Sr., of his hopes.

The ex-Yale football star, delighted at his son's ambition to serve old Bannister and joyous at discovering that Hicks actually possessed the peculiar knack of drop-kicking, coached the splinter-youth all summer at their country place near Pittsburgh. Under the instruction of Hicks, Sr., the youth developed rapidly, and when he returned to the campus for his final year, he was a sure, dependable drop-kicker, inside the thirty-yard line. As Theophilus stated, beyond that he lacked the power, but in that zone he could boot 'em over the cross-bar from any angle.

"He's been practicing all this season, in secret!" quavered the little Senior, "and he's a--a <i>fiend</i>, Butch, at drop-kicking. And yet, here it is time for the last game of his college years, and--he lacks confidence to tell you, or Coach Corridan. Oh, I'm afraid he will be angry with me for

betraying him, and yet--I just *can't* let him miss his splendid chance, now that Thor is out and old Bannister *needs* a drop-kicker!"

Big Butch was silent for a time. The football leader was deeply impressed and thrilled by Theophilus Opperdyke's story of T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.'s ambition. As he roosted on the Senior Fence, the behemoth gridiron star visioned the mosquito-like youth, whom nature had endowed with a splinter-structure, sneaking out on Bannister Field, at every chance, to practice clandestinely his drop-kicking. He could see the faithful Human Encyclopedia, vastly excited at his blithesome colleague's improvement, retrieving the pigskin for Hicks. He thrilled again as he thought of the bean-pole Hicks, who could never gain weight and strength enough to make the eleven, loyally training and perfecting himself in the drop-kick, trying to develop into a sure kicker, within a certain zone, hoping sometime, before he left college forever, to serve old Bannister. With Thor in the line-up at fullback, he would not have been needed, but now, with the Prodigious Prodigy out, it was T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.'s big chance!

And Butch Brewster understood why the usually confident Hicks, even with the knowledge of his drop-kicking power, hesitated to announce it to old Bannister. Until Butch had told the Gold and Green football team of Hicks' being in earnest in his ridiculous athletic attempts of the past three years, no one but himself and Hicks had dreamed that the sunny youth meant them, that he really strove to win his B and please his dad. The appearance of T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., on Bannister Field was always the cause of a small-sized riot among the squad and spectators. Hicks was jeered good-naturedly, and "butchered to make a Bannister holiday," as he blithely phrased it. Hence, the splinter-Senior was reluctant to announce that he could drop-kick. He knew that when tested he would be so in earnest, that so much would hang in the balance and the youths, unknowing how important it was, would jeer. Then, too, knowing his long list of athletic fiascos, ridiculous and otherwise, Hicks trembled at the thought of being sent into the biggest game to kick a goal. He feared he might fail!

"You are a *hero*, Theophilus!" said Butch, with deep feeling. "I can realize how hard it was for Hicks to tell us. He would have kept silent forever, even after his training in secret! And how you must have suffered, knowing he could drop-kick, and yet not desiring to betray him! But your love for old Bannister and for Hicks himself conquered. I'll take him out on the gridiron, before the fellows come from class, and see what he can do. Aha! There is the villain now. Hicks, ahoy! Come hither, you Kellar-Herman-Thurston. Your dark secret is out at last!"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., peering cautiously from the Gym. basement doorway, in quest of the tardy Theophilus, who was to have accompanied him on a clandestine journey to Bannister Field, obeyed the summons. Bewildered, and gradually guessing the explanation from the shivering little boner's alarmed expression, the gladsome youth approached the stern Butch Brewster, who was about to condemn him for his silence. "Don't be angry with me, Hicks, *please*!" pled Theophilus, pathetically fearful that he had offended his comrade, "I--I just *had* to tell, for it was positively your last chance, and--and old Bannister needs your sure drop-kicking! I never promised not to tell. You never made me give my word, so--"

"It was Theophilus' duty to tell!" spoke Butch, hiding a grin, for the grind was so frightened, "and yours, Hicks, knowing as you do how we need you, with Thor hurt! You graceless wretch, you aren't usually so like ye modest violet! Why didn't you inform us, then swagger and say, 'Oh, just leave it to Hicks, he'll win the game with a drop-kick?' Now, you come with me, and I'll look over your samples. If you've got the goods, it's highly probable you'll get your chance, in the Ballard game; and I'm <i>glad</i>, old man, for your sake. I know what it would mean, if you win it! But--now that the '<i>mystery</i>' is solved, what's that about your being a 'Class Kid,' of Yale, '96?"

"That's easy!" grinned T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., his arm across Theophilus' shoulders, "I was the first boy born to any member of Yale, '96; it is the custom of classes graduating at Yale to call such a baby the class kid! Naturally, the members of old Eli, Class of 1896, are vastly interested in me. Hence, my Dad wrote they'd be tickled if I won a big game for Bannister with a field-goal!"

A moment of silence, Theophilus Opperdyke, gathering from Hicks' arm, across his shoulders, that the cheery youth was not so awfully wrathful at his base betrayal, adjusted his big-rimmed spectacles, and stared owlishly at Hicks.

"Hicks, you--you are not angry?" he quavered. "You are not sorry. I--I told--"

"</i>Sorry</i>?" quoth T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., "Class Kid," of Yale, '96, with a Cheshire cat grin, "<i>sorry</i>? I should say <i>not</i>--I wanted it to be known to Butch, and Coach Corridan, but I got all shivery when I tried to confess, and I--couldn't! Nay, Theophilus, you faithful friend, I'm so <i>glad</i>, old man, that beside yours truly, the celebrated Pollyanna resembles Niobe, weeping for her lost children."

CHAPTER XIII

HICKS--CLASS KID--YALE '96

"Brekka-kek-kek--Co-Ax--Co-Ax!
Brekka-kek-kek--Co-Ax--Co-Ax!
Whoop-up! Parabaloo! Yale! Yale! Yale!
</i>Hicks! Hicks! Hicks</i>!"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., swathed in a cumbersome Gold and Green football blanket, and crouching on the side-line, like some historic Indian, felt a thrill shake his splinter-structure, as the yell of "old Eli" rolled from the stand, across Bannister Field. In the midst of the Gold and Green flags

and pennants, fluttering in the section assigned the Bannister cohorts, he gazed at a big banner of Blue, with white lettering:

YALE UNIVERSITY--CLASS OF 1896

"Oh, Butch," gasped Hicks, torn between fear and hope, "just listen to that. Think of all those Yale men in the stand with my Dad! Oh, suppose I do get sent in to try for a drop-kick!"

It was almost time for the biggest game to start, the contest with Ballard, the supreme test of the Gold and Green, the final struggle for The State Intercollegiate Football Championship! In a few minutes the referee's shrill whistle blast would sound, the vast crowd in the stands, on the side-lines, and in the parked automobiles, would suddenly still their clamor and breathlessly await the kick-off--then, seventy minutes of grim battling on the turf, and victory, or defeat, would perch on the banners of old Bannister.

It was a thrilling scene, a sight to stir the blood. Bannister Field, the arena where these gridiron gladiators would fly at each other's throats--or knees, spread out--barred with white chalk-marks, with the skeleton-like goal posts guarding at each end. On the turf the moleskin clad warriors, under the crisp commands of their Coaches, swiftly lined down, shifted to the formation called, and ran off plays. Nervous subs. stood in circles, passing the pigskin. Drop-kickers and punters, tuning up, sent spirals, or end-over-end drop-kicks, through the air. The referee, field-judge, and linesmen conferred. Team-attendants, equipped with buckets of water, sponges, and ominous black medicine-chests, with Red Cross bandages, ran hither and thither. On the substitutes' bench, or on the ground, crouched nervous second-string players; Ballard's on one side of the gridiron, and Bannister's directly across.

A glorious, sunshiny day in late November, with scarcely a breath of wind, the air crisp and bracing; the radiant sunlight fell athwart the white-barred field, and glinted from the gay pennants and banners in the stands! Here was a riot of color, the gold and green of old Bannister; in the next section, the orange and black of Ballard. The bright hues and tints of varicolored dresses, and the luster of the official flowers all contributed to a bewilderingly beautiful spectacle! Flower-venders, peddlers of pennants, sellers of miniature footballs with the college colors of one team and the other, hawked their wares, loudly calling above the tumult, "Get yer Ballard colors yere!" "This way fer the Bannister flags!" Ten thousand spectators, packed into the cheering sections of the two colleges, or in the general stands, or standing on the side-lines, impatiently awaited the kick-off. At the appearance of each football star, a tremendous cheer went up from the mass. Across the field from each other, the two bands played stirring strains. The confident Ballard cohorts cheered, sang, and yelled and those of Bannister, not *quite* so sure of victory, with Thor out, nevertheless, cheered, sang, and yelled as loudly, for the Gold and Green.

The sight of that vast Yale banner, so conspicuous, with its big white letters on a field of blue, amidst the fluttering pennants of gold and

green, excited comment among the Ballard followers. The Bannister students, however, knew what it meant; Mr. Thomas Haviland Hicks, Sr., and thirty members of Yale, '96, were in the stand, ready to cheer Captain Butch's eleven, and hoping for a chance to whoop it up for T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., if he got his big chance.

Two days before, when little Theophilus Opperdyke, after a terrible struggle with himself, divided between loyalty to Hicks and a love for his Alma Mater, had betrayed his toothpick class-mate to Captain. Butch Brewster, that behemoth Senior had rounded up Coach Corridan, and together they had dragged the shivering Hicks out to the football field. Here, while the rest of the student body, unsuspecting the important event in progress, made good use of the study-hour, or attended classes in Recitation Hall, the Gold and Green Coach, with the team-Captain, and the excited Human Encyclopedia, watched T. Haviland Hicks, Jr. show his samples of drop-kicks. And the success of that happy-go-lucky youth, after his nervous tension wore off, may be attested by the Slave-Driver's somewhat slangy remark, when the exhibition closed.

"Butch," said Head Coach Patrick Henry Corridan, impressively, "what it takes to drop-kick field-goals, from anywhere inside the thirty-yard line, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., is broke out with!"

The proficiency attained by the heedless Hicks in the difficult art of drop-kicking, gained by faithful practice for a year, aided by his Dad's valuable coaching, was wonderful. Of course, Hicks possessed naturally the needed knack, but he deserved praise for his sticking at it so loyally. He had no surety that he would ever be of use to his college, and, indeed, with the advent of Thor, his hopes grew dim, yet he plugged on, in case old Bannister might sometime need him--and yet, but for Theophilus, he would not have summoned the courage to tell! To the surprise and delight of the Coach and Captain, Hicks, after missing a few at first, methodically booted goals over the crossbar from the ten, twenty, and thirty-yard lines, and from the most difficult angles. There was nothing showy or spectacular in his work, it was the result of dogged training, but he was almost sure, when he kicked!

[Illustration D: He was almost sure, when he kicked!]

"Good!" ejaculated Coach Corridan, his arm across Hicks' shoulders, as they walked to the Gym. "Hicks, the chances are big that I'll send you in to try for a goal tomorrow, if Bannister gets blocked inside the thirty-yard line! Just keep your nerve, boy, and boot it over! Now--I'll post a notice for a brief mass-meeting at the end of the last class period, and Butch and I will tell the fellows about you, and how you may serve Bannister."

"That's the idea!" exulted Butch, joyous at his comrade's chance to get in the biggest game. "The fellows will understand, Hicks, old man, and they won't jeer when you come out this afternoon. They'll root for you! Oh, just wait until you hear them cheer you, and mean it--you'll astonish the natives, Hicks!"

Butch's prophecy was well fulfilled. In the scrimmage that same day, T.

Haviland Hicks, Jr., shivering with apprehensive dread, his heart in his shoes, sat on the side-line. In the stands, the entire student-body, informed in the mass-meeting of his ability, shrieked for "Hicks! Hicks! Hicks!" Near the end of the practice game, the hard-fighting scrubs fought their way to the 'Varsity's thirty-yard line, and another rush took it five yards more. Coach Corridan, halting the scrimmage, sent the right-half-back to the side-line, and a moment later, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr. hurried out on the field with the Bannister Band playing, the collegians yelling frenziedly, and excitement at fever height, the sunny youth took his position in the kick formation. Then a silence, a few seconds of suspense, as the pigskin whirled back to him, and then--a quick stepping forward, a rip of toe against the leather, and--above the heads of the 'Varsity players smashing through, the football shot over the cross-bar!

"Hicks! Hicks! Hicks!" was the shout, *"Hicks will beat Ballard!"*

That night, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., having crossed the Rubicon, and committed himself to Coach Corridan and Captain Brewster, had dispatched a telegraphic night-letter to his beloved Dad. He informed his distinguished parent that his drop-kicking powers were now known to old Bannister, and that the chances were fifty-fifty that he would be sent in to try for a field-goal in the biggest game. On the day before the game, Mr. Thomas Haviland Hicks, Sr., in a night-letter, had wired back:

Son Thomas:

Am on my way to New Haven for Yale-Harvard game. Will stop off at old Bannister--bringing thirty members of Yale '96. We hope our Class Kid will get his chance against Ballard.

Dad.

On the morning of the Bannister-Ballard game, Mr. Hicks' private car the *Vulcan*, with the Pittsburgh "Steel King," and thirty other members of Yale, '96, had reached town. They had ridden in state to College Hill in good old Dan Flannagan's jitney, where T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., proudly introduced his beloved Dad to the admiring collegians. All morning, Mr. Hicks had made friends of the hero-worshiping youths, who listened to his tales of athletic triumphs at Bannister and at old Yale breathlessly. The ex-Yale star had made a stirring speech to the eleven, sending them out on Bannister Field resolved to do or die!

"My Dad!" breathed T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., crouched on the side line; as he gazed at the Yale banner, he could see his father, with his athletic figure, his strong face that could be appallingly stern or wonderfully tender and kind. Like the sunny Senior, Mr. Hicks, despite his wealth, was thoroughly democratic and already the Bannister collegians were his comrades.

"Here we go, Hicks!" spoke Butch Brewster, as the referee raised his whistle to his lips. "Hold yourself ready, old man; a field-goal may win

for us, and I'll send you in just as soon as I find all hope of a touchdown is gone. If they hold us back of the thirty-yard line, I'll try Deke Radford, but inside it, you are far more sure."

The vast crowd, a moment before creating an almost inconceivable din, stilled with startling suddenness; a shrill blast from the referee's whistle cut the air. The gridiron cleared of substitutes, coaches, trainers, and rubbers-out, and in their places, the teams of Bannister and Ballard jogged out. Captain Brewster won the toss, and elected to receive the kick-off. The Gold and Green players, Butch, Beef, Roddy, Monty, Biff, Pudge, Bunch, Tug, Hefty, Buster, and Ichabod, spread out, fan-like, while across the center of the field the Ballard eleven, a straight line, prepared to advance as the full-back kicked off. There was a breathless stillness, as the big athlete poised the pigskin, tilted on end, then strode back to his position.

"All ready, Ballard?" The Referee's call brought an affirmative from the Orange and Black leader.

"Ready, Bannister?"

"Ready!" boomed big Butch Brewster, with a final shout of encouragement to his players.

The biggest game was starting! Before ten thousand wildly excited and partisan spectators, the Gold and Green and the Orange and Black would battle for Championship honors; with Thor out of the struggle, Ballard, three-time Champion, was the favorite. The visitors had brought the strongest team in their history, and were supremely confident of victory. Bannister, however, could not help remembering, twice fate had snatched the greatest glory from their grasp, in Butch's Sophomore year, when Jack Merritt's drop-kick struck the cross-bar, and a year later, when Butch himself, charging for the winning touchdown, crashed blindly into the upright. Old Bannister had not won the Championship for five years, and now--when the chances had seemed roseate, with Thor, the Prodigious Prodigy--smashing Hamilton out of the way, Fate had dealt the annual blow in advance, by crippling him.

"Oh, we've <i>got</i> to win!" shivered T. Haviland Hicks, Jr. "Oh, I hope I don't get sent in--I mean--I hope Bannister wins without me! But if I <i>do</i> have to kick--Oh, I hope I send it over that cross-bar--"

A second later the Ballard line advanced, the fullback's toe ripped into the pigskin, sending it whirling, high in air, far into Bannister's territory; the yellow oval fell into the outstretched arms of Captain Butch Brewster, on the Gold and Green's five-yard line, and--"We're off!" shrieked Hicks, excitedly. "Come on, Butch--run it back! Oh, we're off."

The biggest game had started!

CHAPTER XIV

THE GREATER GOAL

"Time out!"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., enshrouded in a gold and green blanket, and standing on the side-line, like a majestic Sioux Chief, gazed out on Bannister Field. There, on the twenty-yard line, the two lines of scrimmage had crashed together and Bannister's backfield had smashed into Ballard's stonewall defense with terrific impact, to be hurled back for a five-yard loss. The mass of humanity slowly untangled, the moleskin clad players rose from the turf, all but one. He, wearing the gold and green, lay still, white-faced, and silent.

"It's Biff Pemberton!" chattered Hicks, shivering as with a chill. "Oh, the game is lost, the Championship is gone. Biff is out, and the last quarter is nearly ended. Coach Corridan has got to send me in to kick. It's our very last chance to tie the score, and save old Bannister from defeat!"

The time keeper, to whom the referee had megaphoned for time out, stopped the game, while Captain Butch Brewster, the campus Doctor, and several players worked over the senseless Biff. In the stands, the exultant Ballard cohorts, confident that victory was booked to perch on their banners, arose *en masse*, and their thunderous chorus drifted across Bannister Field:

"There's a hole in the bottom of the sea,
And we'll put Bannister in that hole!
In that hole--in--that--hole--
Oh, we'll put Bannister in that hole!"

From the Bannister section, the Gold and Green undergraduates, alumni, and supporters, feeling a dread of approaching defeat grip their hearts, yet determined to the last, came the famous old slogan of encouragement to elevens battling on the gridiron:

"Smash 'em, boys, run the ends--hold, boys, *hold*--
Don't let 'em beat the Green and the Gold!
Touchdown! Touchdown! Hold, boys, *hold*,
Don't let 'em win from the Green and the Gold!"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., with a groan of despair, sat down on the deserted subs. bench. With a feeling that all was lost, the splinter-like Senior gazed at the big score-board, announcing, in huge, white letters and figures:

4TH QUARTER; TIME TO PLAY--2 MIN.; BANNISTER'S BALL ON BALLARD'S 22-YD. LINE; 4TH DOWN--8 YDS. TO GAIN; SCORE: BALLARD--6; BANNISTER--3.

It had been a terrific contest, a biggest game never to be forgotten by

the ten thousand thrilled spectators! Each eleven had been trained to the second for this decisive Championship fight, and with the coveted gonfalon of glory before them, the Bannister players battled desperately, while Ballard's fighters struggled as grimly for their Alma Mater. For six years, the Gold and Green had failed to annex the Championship, and for the past three, the invincible Ballard machine had rushed like a car of Juggernaut over all other State elevens; one team was determined to wrest the banner from its rival's grasp, and the other fully as resolved to retain possession, hence a memorable gridiron contest, to which even the alumni could find none in past history to compare, was the result.

Weakened by the loss of Thor, whose colossal bulk and Gargantuan strength would have made victory a moral certainty, presenting practically the same eleven that had faced Ballard the past season and had been defeated by a scant margin, old Bannister had started the first quarter with a furious rush that swept the enemy to midfield without the loss of a first down. Then Ballard had rallied, stopping that triumphal march, on its own thirty-five yard line, but unable to check Quarterback Deacon Radford, who booted a forty-three-yard goal from a drop-kick, with the score 3-0 in Bannister's favor, and Deacon, a brilliant but erratic kicker, apparently in fine trim, the Gold Green rooters went wild.

In the second half, however, came the break of the game, as sporting writers term it. The strong Ballard eleven found itself, and with a series of body-smashing, bone-crushing rushes, battering at the Bannister lines like the Germans before Verdun, they steadily fought their way, trench by trench, line by line, down the field. Without a fumble, or the loss of a single yard, the terrific, catapulting charges forced back old Bannister, until the enemy's fullback, who ran like the famous Johnny Maulbetsch, of Michigan, shot headlong over the goal line! The attempt for goal from touchdown failed, leaving the score, at the end of the third quarter, Ballard--6; Bannister--3.

And Deacon Radford, whose first effort at drop-kicking had been so brilliant, failed utterly. Three times, taking a desperate chance, the Bannister quarter booted the pigskin, but the oval flew wide of the goal posts, even from the thirty-yard line. With his mighty toe not to be depended on, with the Gold and Green line worn to a frazzle by Ballard's battering rushes, unable to beat back the victorious enemy, the Bannister cohorts, dismayed, saw the start of the fourth and final quarter, their last hope. The forward pass had been futile, for the visitors were trained especially for this aerial attack, and with ease they broke up every attempt. And then, with the ball in Ballard's possession on Bannister's twenty-yard line, came a fumble--like a leaping tiger, Monty Merriweather had flung himself on the elusively bounding ball, rolled over to his feet, and was off down the field.

"Touchdown! Touchdown! Touchdown!" shrieked old Bannister's madly excited students, as Monty sprinted. "Go it, Monty--<i>touchdown</i>! Sprint, old man, <i>sprint</i>!"

But Cupid Colfax, Ballard's famous sprinter, playing quarterback, was off on Monty's trail almost instantly, and his phenomenal speed cut down the

Ballard end's advantage; still, by dint of exerting every ounce of energy, it was on Ballard's forty-yard line that Monty Merriweather, hugging the pigskin grimly, finally crashed to earth.

"Come on, Bannister!" shouted Captain Butch Brewster, as the two teams lined down. "Right across the goal-line, then kick the goal, and we win! Play the game--<i>fight</i>--Oh, we can win the Championship right now."

Then ensued a session of football spectacular in the extreme, replete with thrilling plays, with sensational tackles, and blood-stirring scrimmage. The Bannister players, nerved by Captain Brewster's exhortation, by sheer will-power drove their battered bodies into the scrimmage. End runs, line-smashing tandem plays, forward passes, followed in bewildering succession, until the ball rested on Ballard's twenty-yard line, and a touchdown meant victory and the Championship for old Bannister. Another rush, and five yards gained, then, Ballard, fighting at the last ditch, made a stand every bit as heroic and thrilling as that sensational march in the first half. The Gold and Green's tigerish rushes were hurled back--three times Captain Butch threw his backfield against the line, and three times not an inch was gained. On the third down, Monty Merriweather was forced back for a loss, so now, with two minutes to play and the ball in Bannister's possession, with eight yards to gain, the play was on Ballard's twenty-two-yard line!

And the biggest game had produced a new hero of the gridiron. Biff Pemberton, left half-back, imbued with savage energy, had borne the brunt of that spectacular advance; and now, he stretched on the turf, white and still.

"Hicks, old man," T. Haviland Hicks, Jr. turned as a hand rested grippingly on his shoulder. Head Coach Patrick Henry Corridan, his face grim, had come to him, and in quick, terse sentences, he outlined his plan.

"It's Bannister's last chance--" he said, tensely. "We <i>can't</i> make the first down, the way Ballard is fighting, unless we take desperate odds. Now, Hicks, it's <i>up to you</i>. On <i>you</i> depend old Bannister's hopes."

A great, chilling fear swept over T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., leaving him weak and shaken. It had come at last--the moment for which he had trained and practiced drop-kicking, for a year, in secret, that moment he had hoped would come, sometime, and yet had dreaded, as in a nightmare. Before that vast, howling crowd of ten thousand madly partisan spectators, <i>he</i> must go out on Bannister Field, to try and boot a drop-kick from the twenty-eight-yard-line, to save the Gold and Green from defeat. And he thought of the great glory that would be his, if he succeeded--he would be a campus hero, the idol of old Bannister, the youth who saved his Alma Mater from defeat, in the biggest game! Then he remembered his Dad, inspiring the eleven, between the halves, by a ringing speech; he heard again his sentences:

--"And to serve old Bannister, to bring glory and honor to our dear Alma Mater, is our greater goal! Go back into the game, throw yourselves into the scrimmage, with no thought of personal glory, of the plaudits of the

crowd--it is a fine thing, a splendid goal, to play the game and be a hero; it is a far more noble act to strive for the greater goal, one's Alma Mater!"

"Now listen carefully," Coach Corridan rushed on, "Biff is knocked out. They'll start again soon, we are going to take a desperate chance; your Dad advises it! A tie score means the Championship stays with Ballard. To win it, we must <i>win</i> this game--and on <i>you</i> everything depends."

"But--how--" stammered Hicks, dazed--the only way to <i>tie</i> the score was by a drop-kick; the only way to win, by a touchdown--did the Coach mean he was <i>not</i> to realize his great ambition to save old Bannister by a goal, the reward of his long training?

"You jog out," whispered Coach Corridan, hurriedly, for a stretcher was being rushed to Biff Pemberton, "report to the Referee, and whisper to Butch to try Formation Z; 23-45-6-A! Now, here is the dope: our only chance is to fool Ballard completely. When you go out, the Bannister rooters, and your Yale friends, will believe it is to try a drop-kick and tie the score. I am sure that the Ballard team will think this, too, because of your slender build. You act as though you intend to try for a goal, and have Captain Butch make our fellows act that way. Then--it is a fake-kick; the backfield lines up in the kick formation, but the ball is passed to Butch, at your right. He either tries for a forward pass to the right end, or if the end is blocked, rushes it himself! Hurry--the referee's whistle is blowing; remember, Hicks, my boy, it's the greater goal, it's for your Alma Mater."

In a trance, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., flung off the gold and green blanket, and dashed out on Bannister Field. How often, in the past year, had he visioned this scene, only--he pictured himself saving the game by a drop-kick, and now Coach Corridan ordered him to sacrifice this glory! From the stands came the thunderous cheer of the excited Bannister cohorts, firmly believing that the slender youth, so ludicrously fragile, among those young Colossi, was to try for a goal.

"Rah! Rah! Rah! Rah! Rah! Hicks! Kick the goal--Hicks!"

And from the Yale grads., among them his Dad, came a shout, as he jogged across the turf:

"Breka-kek-kek--co-ax--Yale! Hicks-Hicks-Hicks!"

But the Bannister Senior did not thrill. Now, instead, a feeling of growing resentment filled his soul; even this intensely loyal youth, with all his love for old Bannister, was vastly human, and he felt cheated of his just rights. How the students were cheering him, how those Yale men called his name, and he was not to have his big chance! That for which he had trained and practiced; the opportunity to serve his Alma Mater, by kicking a goal at the crucial moment, and saving Bannister from defeat, was never to be his. Now, in his last game at college, he was to act as a decoy, as a foil. Like a dummy he must stand, while the other Gold and Green athletes ran off the play! Instead of everything, a tie game, or a defeat, depending on his

kicking, defeat or victory hung on that fake play, on Butch Brewster and Monty Merriweather! So--the ear-splitting plaudits of the crowd for "Hicks!" meant nothing to him; they were dead sea fruit, tasteless as ashes--as the ashes of ambition. And then--

--And to serve old Bannister, to bring glory and honor to our dear Alma Mater, is our greater goal--no thought of personal glory--a splendid goal, to play the game and be a hero; It is a far more noble act to strive for the greater goal--one's Alma Mater--"

"I was nearly a *traitor*" gasped T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., his Dad's words echoing in his memory, and a vision of that staunch, manly Bannister ex-athlete before him. "Oh, I was betraying my Alma Mater. Instead of rejoicing to make *any* sacrifice, however big, for Bannister, I thought only of myself, of my glory! I'll do it, Dad, I'll strive for the greater goal, and--we just can't fail."

Reaching the scrimmage, Hicks, whose nervous dread had left him, when he fought down selfish ambition, and thirst for glory, reported to the Referee, and hurriedly transferred Coach Corridan's orders to Captain Butch Brewster; half a minute of precious time was spent in outlining the desperate play to the eleven, for "time!" had been called, and then--

"Z-23-45-6-A!" shouted Quarterback Deacon Radford. "Come on, line--hold! Right over the cross-bar with it, Hicks--tie the score, and save Bannister from defeat--"

The Gold and Green backfield shifted to the kick formation. Ten yards back of the center, on the thirty-two-yard line of Ballard, stood T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.; the vast crowd was hushed, all eyes stared at that slender figure, standing there, with Captain Butch Brewster at his right, and Beef McNaughton on his left hand--the spectators believed the frail-looking youth had been sent in to try a drop-kick. The Ballard rooters thought it, and--the Ballard eleven were *sure* of their enemy's plan--Hicks' mosquito-like build, his nervous swinging of that right leg, deluded them, and helped Coach Corridan's plot.

It was the only play, if Bannister wanted the Championship enough to try a desperate chance; better a fighting hope for that glory, with a try for a touchdown, than a field-goal, and a tie-score! The lines of scrimmage tensed. The linesmen dug their cleats in the sod, those of Ballard tigerish to break through and block; old Bannister's determined to *hold*. Back of Ballard's line, the backfield swayed on tip-toe, every muscle nerved, ready to crash through; the ends prepared to knock Roddy and Monty aside, the backs would charge madly ahead, in a berserk rush, to crash into that slim figure.

"Boot it, Hicks!" shrieked Deke Radford, and as he shouted, the pigskin shot from the Bannister center's hands; the Gold and Green line held nobly, but not so the ends. Monty Merriweather, making a bluff at blocking the left end, let him crash past, while he sprinted ahead--Captain Butch Brewster, to whom the pass had been made, ran forward, until he saw he was blocked, and then, seeing Monty dear, he hurled a beautiful forward pass.

Into the arms of the waiting Monty it fell, and that Gold and Green star, absolutely free of tacklers, sprinted twelve yards to the goal-line, falling on the pigskin behind it! Coach Corridan's "100 to 1" chance, suggested by Mr. Thomas Haviland Hicks, Sr., had succeeded, and--the Biggest Game and the Championship had come to old Bannister at last!

Followed a scene pauperizing description! For many long years old Bannister had waited for this glory; years of bitter disappointment, seasons when the Championship had been missed by a scant margin, a drop-kick striking the cross-bar, Butch Brewster blindly crashing into an upright. But now, all their pent-up joy flowed forth in a mighty torrent! Singing, yelling, dancing, howling, the Bannister Band leading them, the Gold and Green students, alumni, Faculty, and supporters, snake-danced around Bannister Field. A vast, writhing, sinuous line, it wound around the gridiron, everyone who possessed a hat flinging it over the cross-bars. The victorious eleven, were borne by the maddened youths--Captain Butch, Pudge, Beef, Monty, Roddy, Ichabod, Tug, Hefty, Buster, Bunch, and--T. Haviland Hicks, Jr. Ballard, firmly believing Hicks would try a field-goal, had been taken completely off guard. Surprised by the daring attempt, it had succeeded with ease, and the final score was Bannister--10; Ballard--6!

"At last! At last!" boomed Butch Brewster, to whom this was the happiest day of his life. "The Championship at last. My great ambition is realized. Old Bannister has won the Championship, and I was the Team Captain!"

After a time, when "the shouting and the tumult died," or at least quieted somewhat, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., felt a hand on his arm, and looking down from the shoulders on which he perched, he saw his Dad. Mr. Hicks' strong face was aglow with pride and a vast joy, and he shook his son's hand again and again.

"I understand, Thomas!" he said, and his words were reward enough for the youth. "It was a *big* sacrifice, but you made it gladly--I know! You gave up personal glory for the greater goal, and--old Bannister won the Championship! You helped win, for the winning play turned on *you*. It was splendid, my son, and I am proud of you! No matter if your sacrifice is never known to the fellows, *I* understand."

A moment of silence on Hicks' part; then the sunny youth grinned at his beloved Dad, as he responded blithesomely: "I'm Pollyanna, that old Bannister and *I* won out, Dad!"

CHAPTER XV

HICKS HAS A "HUNCH"

"Ladies and gentlemen, Seniors, Juniors, Sophomores, human beings, and--</i>Freshmen</i>! Mr. Thomas Haviland Hicks, Jr., the Olympic High-Jump Champion, holder of the World's record, and winner at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition National Championships, in his event, is about to high jump! The bar is at five feet, ten inches. Mr. Hicks is the Herculean athlete in the crazy-looking bathrobe."

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., his splinter-structure enshrouded in that flamboyant bathrobe of vast proportions and insane colors, that inevitably attended his athletic efforts, shaming Joseph's coat-of-many-colors, gazed despairingly at his good friend, Butch Brewster, and Track-Coach Brannigan, with a Cheshire cat grin on his cherubic countenance.

"It's no use, Butch, it's no use!" quoth he, with ludicrous indignation, as big Tug Cardiff, the behemoth shot-putter, through a huge megaphone imitated a Ballyhoo Bill, and roared his absurd announcement to the hilarious crowd of collegians in the stand. "Old Bannister will <i>never</i> take my athletic endeavors seriously. Here I have won two second places, and a third, in the high-jump this season, and have a splendid show to annex <i>first</i> place and my track B in the Intercollegiates, but--hear them!"

It was a balmy, sunshiny afternoon in late May. The sunny-souled, happy-go-lucky T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., had trained indefatigably for the high jump, with the result that he had won several points for his team--however, he had not realized his great ambition of first place, and his track letter.

As Hicks now exclaimed to his team-mate and Coach Brannigan, no matter, to the howling Bannister youths, if he <i>had</i> won three places in the high jump, in regularly scheduled meets; his comrades had been jeering at his athletic fiascos for nearly four years, and even had Hicks suddenly blossomed out as a star athlete, they would not have abandoned their joyous habit. Still, those football 'Varsity players to whom good Butch had read Hicks, Sr.'s, letters, and explained the sunny youth's persistence, despite his ridiculous failures, though they kept on hailing his appearance on Bannister Field with exaggerated joy, understood the care-free collegian, and loved him for his ambition to please his Dad. Since Hicks had absolutely refused to accept his B, for any sport, unless he won it according to Athletic Association eligibility rules, the eleven had kept secret the contents of the letters Butch Brewster had read to them, for Hicks requested it.

The Bannister College track squad, under Track Coach Brannigan and Captain Spike Robertson, had been training most strenuously for that annual cinder-path classic, the State Intercollegiate Track and Field Championships. The sprinters had been tearing down the two-twenty straightaway like suburban commuters catching the 7.20 A.M. for the city. Hammer-throwers and shot-putters--the weight men--heaved the sixteen-pound shot, or hurled the hammer, with reckless abandon, like the Strong Man of the circus. Pole-vaulters seemed ambitious to break the altitude records, and in so doing, threatened to break their necks; hurdlers skimmed over the standard as lightly as swallows, though no one ever beheld swallows

hurdling. The distance runners plodded determinedly around the quarter-mile track, broad-jumpers tried to jump the length of the landing-pit. And T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., vainly essayed to clear five-ten In the high-jump!

It was the last-named event that "broke up the show," as the Phillyloo Bird quaintly stated, somewhat wrongly, since the appearance of that blithesome youth in the offing, his flamboyant bathrobe concealing his shadow-like frame, had <i>started</i> the show, causing the track squad, as well as a hundred spectator-students, to rush for seats in the stand. The arrival of T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., to train for form and height in the high-jump, though a daily occurrence, was always the signal for a Saturnalia of sport at his expense, because--

"You can't live down your athletic past, Hicks!" smiled good-hearted Butch Brewster. "Your making a touchdown for the other eleven, by running the wrong way with the pigskin, your hilarious fiascos in every sport, your home-run with the bases full, on a strike-out-are specters to haunt you. Even now that you have a chance to win your B, just listen to the fellows."

The track squad's "heavy weight--white hope" section, composed of hammer-heavers and shot-putters--Tug Cardiff, Beef McNaughton, Pudge Langdon, Buster Brown, Biff Pemberton, Hefty Hollingsworth, and Bunch Bingham, equipped with megaphones, and with the <i>basso profundo</i> voices nature gave them, lined up on both sides of the jumping-standards, and chanted loudly:

"All hail to T. Haviland Hicks!
He runs like a carload of bricks;
When to high jump he tries
From the ground he can't rise--
For he's built on a pair of toothpicks!"

This saengerfest was greeted with vociferous cheers from the vastly amused youths in the stands, who hailed the grinning Hicks with jeers, cat-calls, whistles, and humorous (so they believed) remarks:

"Say, Hicks, you won't <i>never</i> be able to jump anything but your board-bill!"

"You're built like a grass-hopper, Hicks, but you've done lost the hop!"

"If you keep on improving as you've done lately, you'll make a high-jumper in a hundred more years, old top!"

"You may rise in the world, Hicks, but never in the high jump!"

"Don't mind them, Hicks!" spoke Coach Brannigan, his hands on the happy-go-lucky youth's shoulders. "Listen to me; the Intercollegiates will be the last track meet of your college years, and unless you take first place in your event, you won't win your track B. Second, McQuade, of Hamilton, will do five-eight, and likely an inch higher, so to take first place, you, must do five-ten. You have trained and practiced faithfully this season, but no matter what I do, I <i>can't</i> give you that needed two

inches, and--"

"I know it, Coach!" responded the chastened Hicks, throwing aside his lurid bathrobe determinedly, and exposing to the jeering students his splinter-frame. "Leave it to Hicks, I'll clear it this time, or--"

"Not!" fleted Butch, whom Hicks' easy self-confidence never failed to arouse. "Hicks, listen to me, *I* can tell you why you can't get two inches higher. The whole trouble with you is this; for almost four years you have led an indolent, butterfly, care-free existence, and now, when you must call on yourself for a special effort, you are too lazy! You can dear five-ten; you ought to do it, but you can't summon up the energy. I've lectured you all this time, for your heedless, easy-going ways, and now--you pay for your idle years!"

"You said an encyclopedia, Butch!" agreed the Coach, with vigor. "If only something would just *make* Hicks jump that high, if only he could do it once, and know it is in his power, he could do it in the Intercollegiates, aided by excitement and competition! Let something *scare* him so that he will sail over five-ten, and--he will win his B. He has the energy, the build, the spring, and the form, but as you say, he is so easy-going and lazy, that his natural grass-hopper frame avails him naught."

"Here I go!" announced Hicks, who, to an accompaniment of loud cheers from the stand, had been jogging up and down in that warming-up process known to athletes as the in place run, consisting of trying to dislocate one's jaw by bringing the knees, alternately, up against the chin. "Up and over--that's my slogan. Just watch Hicks."

Starting at a distance of twenty yards from the high-jump standards, on which the cross-bar rested at five feet, ten inches, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., who vastly resembled a grass-hopper, crept toward the jumping-pit, on his toe-spikes, as though hoping to catch the cross-bar off its guard. Advancing ten yards, he learned apparently that his design was discovered, so he started a loping gallop, turning to a quick, mad sprint, as though he attempted to jump over the bar before it had time to rise higher. With a beautiful take-off, a splendid spring--a quick, writhing twist in air, and two spasmodic kicks, the whole being known as the scissors form of high jump, the mosquito-like youth made a strenuous effort to clear the needed height, but--one foot kicked the cross-bar, and as Hicks fell flat on his back, in the soft landing-pit, the wooden rod, in derision, clattered down upon his anatomy.

"Foiled again!" hissed Hicks, after the fashion of a "Ten-Twent'-Thirt'" melodrama-villain, while from the exuberant youths in the grandstand, who really wanted Hicks to clear the bar, but who jeered at his failure, nevertheless, sounded:

"Hire a derrick, Hicks, and hoist yourself over the bar!"

"Your *head* is light enough--your feet weigh you down!"

"Crossing the Bar"--rendered by T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.!"

"Going up! Go play checkers, Hicks, you ain't no athlete!"

While the grinning, albeit chagrined T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., reposed gracefully on his back, staring up at the cross-bar, which someone kindly replaced on the pegs, big Butch Brewster, who seemed suddenly to have gone crazy, tried to attract Coach Brannigan's attention. Succeeding, Butch--usually a grave, serious Senior, winked, contorted his visage hideously, pointed at Hicks, and sibilated, "*Now*, Coach--now is your chance! Tell Hicks--"

Tug Cardiff, Biff Pemberton, Hefty Hollingsworth, Bunch Bingham, Buster Brown, Beef McNaughton, and Pudge Langdon, who had been attacked in a fashion similar to Butch's spasm, concealed grins of delight, and made strenuous efforts to appear guileless, as Track-Coach Brannigan approached T. Haviland Hicks, Jr. To that cheery youth, who was brushing the dirt from his immaculate track togs, and bowing to the cheering youths in the stand, the Coach spoke:

"Hicks," he said sternly, "you need a cross-country jog, to get more strength and power in your limbs! Now, I am going to send the Heavy-Weight-White-Hope Brigade for a four-mile run, and you go with them. Oh, don't protest; they are all shot-putters and hammer-throwers, but Butch, and they can't run fast enough to give a tortoise a fast heat. Take 'em out two miles and back, Butch, and jog all the way; don't let 'em loaf! Off with you,"

The unsuspecting Hicks might have detected the nigger in the woodpile, had he not been so anxious to make five-ten in the high-jump. However, willing to jog with these behemoths, with whom even he could keep pace, so as to develop more jumping power, the blithesome youth cast aside his garish bathrobe, pranced about in what he fatuously believed was Ted Meredith's style, and howled:

"Follow Hicks! All out for the Marathon--we're off! One--two--three--*go*!"

With the excited, track squad, non-athletes, and the baseball crowd, which had ceased the game to watch the start, yelling, cheering, howling, and whistling, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., drawing his knees up in exaggerated style at every stride, started to lead the Heavy-Weight-White-Hope-Brigade on its cross-country run. Without wondering why Coach Brannigan had suddenly elected to send *him* along with the hammer-throwers and shot-putters, on the jog, and not having seen the insane facial contortions of the Brigade, before the Coach gave orders, the gladsome Senior started forth in good spirits, resembling a tugboat conveying a fleet of battleships.

"Yo! Ho! Yo! Ho! And over the country we go!" warbled Hicks, as the squad left Bannister Field, and jogged across a green meadow. "--O'er hill and dale, through valley and vale, Yo! Ho! Yo! Ho! Yo! Ho!"

"Save your wind, you insect!" growled Butch Brewster, with sinister significance that escaped the heedless Hicks, as the behemoth Butch, a

two-miler, swung into the lead. "You'll *need* it, you fish, before we get back to the campus! Not *too* fast, you flock of human tortoises. You'll be crawling on hands and knees, if you keep that pace up long!"

A mile and a half passed. Butch, at an easy jog, had led his squad over green pastures, up gentle slopes, and across a plowed field, by way of variety. At length, he left the road on which the pachydermic aggregation had lumbered for some distance, and turned up a long lane, leading to a farm-house. Back of it they periscoped an orchard, with cherry-trees, laden with red and white fruit, predominating. Also, floating toward the collegians on the balmy May air came an ominous sound:

"Woof! Woof! Woof! Bow-wow-wow! Woof!"

"Come on, fellows!" urged Butch Brewster. "We'll jog across old Bildad's orchard and seize some cherries--the old pirate can't catch us, for we are attired for sprinting. Don't they look good?"

"Nothing stirring!" declared Hicks, slangily, but vehemently, as he stopped short in his stride. "Old Bildad has got a bulldog what am as big as the New York City Hall. He had it on the campus last month, you know! Not for mine! I don't go near that house, or swipe no cherries from his trees. If you wish to shuffle off this mortal coil, drive right ahead, but *I* will await your return here."

T, Haviland Hicks, Jr.'s, dread of dogs, of all sizes, shapes, pedigrees, and breeds, was well known to old Bannister; hence, the Heavy-weights now jeered him unmercifully. Old "Bildad," as the taciturn recluse was called, who lived like a hermit and owned a rich farm, did own a massive bulldog, and a sight of his cruel jaws was a "No Trespass" sign. With great forethought, when cherries began to ripen, the farmer had brought Caesar Napoleon to the campus, exhibited him to the awed youths, and said, "My cherries be for *sale*, not to be *stole*!" which object lesson, brief as it was, to date, had seemed to have the desired effect. Yet--here was Butch proposing that they literally thrust their heads, or other portions of their anatomies, into the jaws of death!

"Well," said Bunch Bingham at last, "I tell you what; we'll jog up to the house and ask old Bildad to *sell* us some cherries; we can pay him when he comes to the campus with eggs to sell, Come along. Hicks, I'll beard the bulldog in his kennel."

So, dragged along by the bulky hammer-throwers and shot-putters, the protesting T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., in mortal terror of Caesar Napoleon, and the other canine guardians of old Bildad's property, progressed up the lane toward the house.

"I got a hunch," said the reluctant Hicks, sadly, "that things ain't a-comin' out right! In the words of the immortal Somebody-Or-Other, 'This 'ere ain't none o' *my* doin'; it's a-bein' thrust on me!' All right, my comrades, I'll be the innocent bystander, but heed me--look out for the bulldog!"

CHAPTER XVI

THANKS TO CAESAR NAPOLEON

The Heavy-Weight-White-Hope-Brigade, towing the mosquito-like T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., advanced on the stronghold of old Bildad, so named because he was a pessimistic Job's comforter, like Bildad, the Shuhite, of old--like a flock of German spies reconnoitering Allied trenches. Hearing the house, with Butch and Beef holding the helpless, but loudly protesting Hicks, who would fain have executed what may mildly be termed a strategic retreat, big Tug Cardiff boldly marched, in close formation, toward the door, when the portal suddenly flew open.

"Woof! Woof! Bow! Wow! Woof! Let go, Butch--there's the dog!"

Amid ferocious howls from Caesar Napoleon, and alarmed protests from the paralyzed Hicks, who could not have run, with his wobbly knees, had he been set free by his captors, old Bildad, towed from the house by Caesar Napoleon, who strained savagely at the leash until his face bulged, burst upon the scene with impressive dramatic effect! It was difficult to decide, without due consideration, which was the more interesting. Bildad, a huge, gnarled old Viking, with matted gray hair, bushy eyebrows, a flowing beard, and leathery face, a fierce-looking giant, was appalling to behold, but so was Caesar Napoleon, an immense bulldog, cruel, bloodthirsty, his massive jaws working convulsively, his ugly fangs gleaming, as he set his great body against the leash, and gave evidence of a sincere desire to make free lunch of the Bannister youths. As Buster Brown afterward stated, "Neither one would take the booby prize at a beauty show, but at that, the bulldog had a better chance than Bildad!" T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., let it be recorded, could not have qualified as a judge, since his undivided attention was awarded to Caesar Napoleon!

"What d'ye want round here, ye rascalions?" demanded Bildad, courteously, holding the savage bulldog with one hand, and constructing a ponderous fist with the other, "<i>Hike</i>--git off'n my land, y'hear? <i>Git</i>, er Caesar Napoleon'll git holt o' them scanty duds ye got on!"

"We want to--to buy some cherries, Mr.--Mr. Bildad!" explained Bunch Bingham, edging away nervously. "We won't steal any, honest, sir. Well pay you for them the very next time you come to the campus with milk and eggs."

"Ho! Ho!" roared old Bildad, piratically, his colossal body shaking, "A likely tale, lads--an' when I come for my money, ye'll jeer me off the campus, an' tell me to whistle for it! Off my land--<i>git,</i> an' don't let me cotch ye on it inside o' two minutes, or I'll let Caesar Napoleon make a meal off'n yer bones--<i>git</i>!"

To express it briefly, they got. T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., not standing on the order of his going, set off at a sprint that, while it might have caused Ted Meredith to lose sleep, also aroused in Caesar Napoleon an overwhelming desire to take out after the fugitive youth, so that Mr. Bildad was forced to exert his vast strength to hold the massive bulldog. Butch, Beef, Hefty, Tug, Buster, Bunch, Pudge, and Biff, a pachydermic crew, awed by Caesar Napoleon's bloodthirsty actions, jogged off in the wake of Hicks, who confidently expected to hear the bulldog giving tongue, on his trail, at every second.

Another lane, making in from a road making a cross-roads with the one from which they came to Bildad's house, ran alongside the orchard for two hundred yards, inside the fence; at its end was a high roadgate. At what they decided was a safe distance from the "war zone," the Heavy-Weight-White-Hope-Brigade, and T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., the latter forcibly restrained from widening the margin between him and peril, held a council on preparedness.

"The old pirate!" stormed Butch Brewster, gazing back to where the vast figure of old Bildad, striding toward the house, towered. "We can't let him get away with that, fellows. I'll have some of his cherries now, or--"

"No, no--<i>don't</i>, Butch!" chattered Hicks, whose dread of dogs amounted to an obsession. "He can still see us, and if you leave the lane, he will send Caesar Napoleon after us! Oh, <i>don't</i>--"

But Butch Brewster, evidently wrathful at being balked, strode from the path, or lane, of virtue, toward a cherry-tree, whose red fruit hung temptingly low, and his example was followed by every one of the Brigade, leaving the terrified Hicks to wait in the lane, where, because of his alarm, he had no time to wonder at the bravado of his behemoth comrades. However, finding that Bildad had disappeared, and believing he had taken Caesar Napoleon into the house, the sunny Hicks, who was far from a coward otherwise, but who had an unreasonable dread of dogs, little or big, was about to wax courageous, and join his team-mates, when a wild shout burst from Pudge Langdon:

"Run, fellows--<i>run</i>! Bildad's put the bulldog on us! Here comes--Caesar Napoleon--!"

With a blood-chilling <i>"Woof! Woof!"</i> steadily sounding louder, nearer, a streak of color shot across the orchard, from the house, toward the affrighted Brigade, while old Bildad's hoarse growl shattered the echoes with "Take 'em out o' here, Nap--chaw 'em up, boy!" For a startled second, the youths stared at the on-rushing body, shooting toward them through the orchard-grass at terrific speed, and then:

"Run!" howled T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., terror providing him with wings, as per proverb. Down the lane, at a pace that would have done credit to Barney Oldfield in his Blitzen Benz, the mosquito-like youth sprinted madly, and ever, closer, closer on his trail, sounded that awful "Woof! Woof!" from Caesar Napoleon, who, as Hicks well knew, was acting with full authority from Bildad! He heard, as he fled frantically, the excited shouts of his

comrades.

"Beat it, Hicks--he's right after you--run! Run!"

"Jump the fence--he can't get you then--jump!"

"He's right on your trail, Hicks--*sprint*, old man!"

"Make the fence, old man--*jump* it--and you're *safe*!"

The terrible truth dawned on the frightened youth, as he desperately sprinted: the innocent bystander always gets hurt. He had protested against the theft of Bildad's cherries, and naturally, the bulldog had kept after *him*! But it was too late to stop, for the old adage was extremely appropriate, "He who hesitates is lost." He must *make* that road-gate, and tumble over it, in some fashion, or be torn to shreds by Caesar Napoleon, the savage dog that the cruel Bildad had sent after the youths.

Nearer loomed the road-gate, appallingly high. Closer sounded the panting breath of the ferocious Caesar Napoleon, and his incessant "Woof-woof!" became louder. It seemed to the desperate Hicks that the bulldog was at his heels, and every instant he expected to feel those sharp teeth take hold of his anatomy! Once, the despairing youth imitated Lot's wife and turned his head. He saw a body streaking after him, gaining at every jump, also he lost speed; so thereafter, he conscientiously devoted his every energy to the task in hand, that of making the gate, and getting over it, before Caesar Napoleon caught his quarry!

At last, the road-gate, at least ten feet high, to Hicks' fevered imagination, came so close that a quick decision was necessary, for Caesar Napoleon, also, was in the same zone, and in a few seconds he would overhaul the fugitive. T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., realizing that a second lost, perhaps, might prove fatal to his peace of mind, desperately resolved to dash at the gate, and jump; if he succeeded even in striking somewhere near the top, and falling over, he would not care, for the bulldog would not follow him off Bildad's land. From his comrades, far in the rear, came the chorus:

"Jump, Hicks! He's right on your heels!"

Like the immortal Light Brigade, Hicks had no time to reason about anything. His but to jump or be bitten summed up the situation. So, with a last desperate sprint, a quick dash, he left the ground--luckily, the earth was hard, giving him a solid take-off, and he got a splendid spring. As he arose in air, all the training and practicing for form stayed with him, and instinctively he turned, writhed, and kicked--

For a fleeting second, he saw the top of the gate beneath his body, and he felt a thrill as he beheld twisted strands of barbed wire, cruel and jagged, across it; then, with a great sensation of joy, he knew that he had cleared the top, and a second later, he landed on the ground, in the country road, in a heap.

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., that sunny-souled, happy-go-lucky, indolent youth, for once in his care-free campus career aroused to strenuous action, scrambled wildly to his feet, and forcibly realized the truth of Longfellow's, "And things are not-what they seem!" Instead of the ferocious, bloodthirsty bulldog, Caesar Napoleon, a huge, half-grown St. Bernard pup gamboled inside the gate, frisking about gleefully, and exhibiting, even so that Hicks, with all his innate dread of dogs, could understand it, a vast friendliness. In fact, he seemed trying to say, "That's fun. Come on and play with me some more!"

"Hey, fellows," shrieked the relieved Hicks, "that ain't Caesar Napoleon! Why, he just wanted to play."

Bewildered, the members of the Heavy-Weight-White-Hope-Brigade of the Bannister College track squad rushed on the scene. To their surprise, they found not a savage bulldog, but a clumsy, good-natured St. Bernard puppy, who frisked wildly about them, groveled at their feet, and put his huge paws on them, with the playfulness of a juvenile elephant.

"Why, it *isn't* Nappie, for a fact!" gasped Butch. "Oh, I am so glad that old Bildad wasn't mean enough to put the bulldog after us, for he is dangerous. He scared us, though, and put this pup on our trail. He wanted to play, and he thought it all a game, when Hicks fled. Oho! What a joke on Hicks."

"I don't care!" grinned Hicks, thus siding with the famous Eva Tanguay. "You fellows were fooled, too! You were too *scared* to run, and if it had been Caesar Napoleon, I'd have saved your worthless lives by getting him after me! I'll bet Bildad is snickering now, the old reprobate! Why, Tug, are you *crazy*?"

Tug Cardiff, indeed, gave indications of lunacy. He marched up to the road-gate, and stood close to it, so that the barbed wire top was even with his hair; then he backed off, and gazed first at the gate, then at the bewildered Hicks, while he grinned at the dazed squad in a Cheshire cat style.

"Measure it, someone!" he shouted. "I am nearly six feet tall, and it comes even with the top of my dome! Can't you see, you brainless imbeciles, Hicks cleared it."

"Wait for me here!" howled big Butch Brewster, climbing the fence and starting down the road at a pace that did credit even to that fast two-miler. The Brigade, in the absence of their leader, tried to estimate the height of the gate, and Hicks, gazing at its barbed-wire top, shuddered. The St. Bernard pup, having caused T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., for once in his indolent life to exert every possible ounce of energy in his splinter-frame, groveled at his feet, and strove to express his boundless joy at their presence.

Butch Brewster, in fifteen minutes, returned, panting and perspiring, bearing a tape-measure, borrowed at the next farm-house. With all the solemnity of a sacred rite being performed, the youths waited, as Butch and

Tug, holding the tape taut, carefully measured from the ground to the top of the barbed wire on the gate. Three times they did this, and then, with an expression of gladness on his honest countenance, Butch hugged the dazed T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., while Tug Cardiff howled, "Now for the Intercollegiates and your track B, Hicks! You *can* do five-ten in the meet, for Coach Brannigan said you could clear it, if only you did it *once*."

"Why--what do you mean, Tug?" quavered Hicks, not daring to allow himself to believe the truth. "You--you surely don't mean--"

"I mean, that now you *know* you can jump that high," boomed Tug, executing a weird dance of exultation, in which, the Brigade joined, until it resembled a herd of elephants gone insane, "for you have done it--allowing for the sag, and everything, that gate is just five feet, ten inches high, and--*you cleared it!*"

"Ladies and gentlemen--Hicks, of Bannister, is about to high jump! Hicks and McQuade, of Hamilton, are tied for first place at five feet eight inches! McQuade has failed three times at five-ten! Hicks' third and last trial! Height of bar--five feet ten inches!"

This time, however, it was not big Tug Cardiff, imitating a Ballyhoo Bill, and inciting the Bannister youths to hilarity at the expense of the sunny-souled T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.; it was the Official Announcer at the Annual State Intercollegiate Field and Track Championships, on Bannister Field, and his announcement aroused a tumult of excitement in the Bannister section of the stands, as well as among the Gold and Green cinder-path stars.

"Come on, Hicks, old man!" urged Butch Brewster, who, with a dozen fully as excited comrades of the cheery Hicks, surrounded that splinter-athlete. "It's positively your last chance to win your track B, or your letter in any sport, and please your Dad! If they lower the bar, and you two jump off the tie, McQuade's endurance will bring him out the winner."

"You *can* clear five-ten!" encouraged Bunch Bingham. "You did it once, when you believed Caesar Napoleon was after you. Just summon up that much energy now, and clear that bar! Once over, the event and your letter are won! Oh, if we only had that bulldog here, to sick on you."

Sad to chronicle, the score-board of the Intercollegiates recorded the results of the events, so far, thus:

HAMILTON35 BALLARD20 BANNISTER28

It was the last event, and even did Hicks win the high-jump, McQuade's second place would easily give old Ham. the Championship. Hence, knowing that victory was not booked for an appearance on the Gold and Green banners, the Bannister youths, wild for the lovable, popular Hicks to win his Bs vociferously pulled for him:

"Come on, Hicks--up and over, old man--it's *easy*!"

"Jump, you Human Grass-Hopper--you can do it!"

"Now or never, Hicks! One big jump does the work!"

"Sick Caesar Napoleon on him, Coach; he'll clear it then!"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., casting aside that flamboyant bathrobe, for what he believed was the last athletic event of his campus career, stood gazing at the cross-bar. One superhuman effort, a great explosion of all his energy, such as he had executed when he cleared the gate, thinking Caesar Napoleon was after him, and the event was won! He *had* cleared that height, it was within his power. If he failed, as Butch said, the bar would be lowered, and then raised until one or the other missed once. McQuade, with his superior strength and endurance, must inevitably win, but as he had just missed on his third trial at five-ten, if Hicks cleared that height on *his* final chance, the first place was his.

"And my B!" murmured Hicks, tensing his muscles. "Oh, won't my Dad be happy? It will help him to realize some of his ambition, when I show him my track letter! It is positively my last chance, and I *must* clear it."

With a vast wave of determined confidence inundating his very being, Hicks started for the bar; after those first, peculiar, creeping steps, he had just started his gallop, when he heard Tug Cardiff's *basso*, magnified by a megaphone, roared:

"All together, fellows--*let 'er go*--"

Then, just as Hicks dug his spikes into the earth, in that short, mad sprint that gives the jumper his spring, just as he reached the take-off, a perfect explosion of noise startled him, and he caught a sound that frightened him, tensed as he was:

"Woof! Woof! Bow! Wow! Woof! Woof! Woof! Look out, Hicks, Caesar Napoleon is after you!"

Psychology is inexplicable. Ever afterward, Hicks' comrades of that cross-country run averred strenuously that their roaring through megaphones, in concert, imitating Caesar Napoleon's savage bark at the psychological moment, flung the mosquito-like youth clear of the cross-bar and won him the event and his B. Hicks, however, as fervidly denied this statement, declaring that he would have won, anyhow, because he had summoned up the determination to do it! So it can not be stated just what bearing on his jump the plot of Butch Brewster really had. In truth, that behemoth had entertained a wild idea of actually hiring old Bildad and Caesar Napoleon to appear at the moment Hicks started for his last trial, but this weird scheme was abandoned!

Fifteen minutes later, when T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., had escaped from the riotous Bannister students, delirious with joy at the victory of the beloved youth, the Heavy-Weight-White-Hope Brigade, capturing the grass-hopper Senior, gave him a shock second only to that which he had

experienced when first he believed Caesar Napoleon was on his trail.

"Perhaps our barking didn't make you jump it!" said Beef McNaughton, when Hicks indignantly denied that he had been scared over the cross-bar, "but indirectly, old man, we helped you to win! If we had not put up a hoax on you--"

"A *hoax*?" queried the surprised Hicks. "What do you mean--hoax?"

"It was all a frame-up!" grinned Butch Brewster, triumphantly. "We paid old Bildad five dollars to play his part, and as an actor, he has Booth and Barrymore backed off the stage! We got Coach Brannigan to send you along with us on the cross-country jog, and your absurd dread of dogs, Hicks, made it easy! Bildad, per instructions, produced Caesar Napoleon, and scared you. Then, with a telescope, he watched us, and when I gave the signal, he let loose Bob, the harmless St. Bernard pup, on our trail.

"The pup, as he always does, chased after strangers, ready to play. We yelled for you to run, and you were so *scared*, you insect, you didn't wait to see the dog. Even when you looked back, in your alarm, you didn't know it was not Caesar Napoleon, for his grim visage was seared on your brain--I mean, where your brain ought to be! And even had you seen it wasn't the bulldog, you would have been frightened, all the same. But I confess, Hicks, when you sailed over that high gate, it was one on *us*."

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., drew a deep breath, and then a Cheshire cat grin came to his cherubic countenance. So, after all, it had been a hoax; there had not been any peril. No wonder these behemoths had so courageously taken the cherries! But, beyond a doubt, the joke *had* helped him to win his B. It had shown him he could clear five feet, ten inches, for he had done it--and, in the meet, when the crucial moment came, the knowledge that he *had* jumped that high, and, therefore, could do it, helped--where the thought that he never had cleared it would have dragged him down. He had at last won his B, a part of his beloved Dad's great ambition was realized, and--

"Oh, just leave it to Hicks!" quoth that sunny-souled, irrepressible youth, swaggering a trifle, "It was my mighty will-power, my terrific determination, that took me over the cross-bar, and not--*not* your imitation of--"

"Woof! Woof! Woof!" roared the "Heavy-Weight-White-Hope-Brigade" in thunderous chorus. "Sick him--Caesar Napoleon--!"

CHAPTER XVII

HICKS MAKES A RASH PROPHECY

"Come on, Butch! Atta boy--some fin, old top! Say, you Beef--you're asleep at the switch. What time do you want to be called? More pep there, Monty--bust that little old bulb, Roddy! Aw, rotten! </i>Say</i>, Ballard, your playing will bring the Board of Health down on you--why don't you bring your first team out? Umpire? What--do you call that an umpire? Why, he's a highway robber, a bandit. Put a 'Please Help the Blind' sign on that hold-up artist!"

Big Butch Brewster, captain of the Bannister College baseball squad, navigating down the third-floor corridor of Bannister Hall, the Senior dormitory, laden with suitcases, bat-bags, and other impedimenta, as Mr. Julius Caesar says, and vastly resembling a bell-hop in action, paused in sheer bewilderment on the threshold of T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.'s, cozy room.

"Hicks!" stormed the bewildered Butch, wrathfully, "what in the name of Sam Hill <i>are</i> you doing? Are you crazy, you absolutely insane lunatic? This is a study-hour, and even if <i>you</i> don't possess an intellect, some of the fellows want to exercise their brains an hour or so! Stop that ridiculous action."

The spectacle Butch Brewster beheld was indeed one to paralyze that pachydermic collegian, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., the sunny-souled, irrepressible Senior, danced madly about on the tiger-skin rug in midfloor, evidently laboring under the delusion that he was a lunatical Hottentot at a tribal dance; he waved his arms wildly, like a signaling brakeman, or howled through a big megaphone, and about his toothpick structure was strung his beloved banjo, on which the blithesome youth twanged at times an accompaniment to his jargon:

"Come on, Skeet, take a lead (<i>plunkety-plunk</i>!) Say, d'ye wanta marry first base--divorce yourself from that sack! (<i>plunk-plunk</i>!) </i>Oh</i>, you bonehead--steal--you won't get arrested for it! Hi! Yi! </i>Ouch</i>, Butch! Oh, I'll be good--"

At this moment, the indignant Butch abruptly terminated T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.'s, noisy monologue by seizing that splinter-youth firmly by the scruff of the neck and forcibly hurling him on the davenport. Seeing his loyal class-mate's resemblance to a Grand Central Station baggage-smasher, the irrepressible Senior forthwith imitated a hotel-clerk:

"Front!" howled the grinning Hicks, to an imaginary bellboy, "Show this gentleman to Number 2323! Are you alone, sir, or just by yourself? I think you will like the room--it faces on the coal-chute, and has hot and cold folding-doors, and running water when the roof leaks! The bed is made once a week, regularly, and--"

"Hicks, you Infinitesimal Atom of Nothing!" growled big Butch, ominously. "What were you doing, creating all that riot, as I came down the corridor? What's the main idea, anyway, of--"

"Heed, friend of my campus days," chortled the graceless Hicks, keeping a safe distance from his behemoth comrade, "tomorrow--your baseball

aggregation plays Ballard College, at that knowledge-factory, for the Championship of the State. Because nature hath endowed me with the Herculean structure of a Jersey mosquito, I am developing a 56-lung-power voice, and I need practice, as *I* am to be the only student-rooter at the game tomorrow! Q.E.D.! And as for any Bannister student, except perhaps Theophilus Opperdyke and Thor, desiring to investigate the interiors of their lexicons tonight, I prithee, just periscope the campus."

"I guess you are right, Hicks!" grinned Butch Brewster, as he looked from the window, down on an indescribably noisy scene. "For once, your riotous tumult went unheard. Say, get your traveling-bag ready, and leave that pestersome banjo behind, if you want to go with the nine!"

Several members of the Gold and Green nine, embryo American and National League stars, roosted on the Senior Fence between the Gymnasium and the Administration Building, with, suitcases and bat-bags on the grass. In a few minutes old Dan Flannagan's celebrated jitney-bus would appear in the offing, coming to transport the Bannister athletes downtown to the station, for the 9 P.M. express to Philadelphia. Incited by Cheer-Leaders Skeezicks McCracken and Snake Fisher, several hundred youths encouraged the nine, since, because of approaching final exams., they were barred by Faculty order from accompanying the team to Ballard. In thunderous chorus they chanted:

"One more Job for the undertaker!
More work for the tombstone maker!
In the local cemetery, they are very--very--*very*
Busy on a brand-new grave for--Ballard!"

As the lovable Hicks expressed it, "Coming events cast their shadows before.' Commencement overshadows our joyous campus existence!" However, no Bannister acquaintance of T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., could detect wherein the swiftly approaching final separation from his Alma Mater had affected in the least that happy-go-lucky, care-free, irrepressible youth. If anything, it seemed that Hicks strove to fight off thoughts of the end of his golden campus years, using as weapons his torturous saengerfests, his Beefsteak Busts down at Jerry's, and various other pastimes, to the vast indignation of his good friend and class-mate, Butch Brewster, who tried futilely to lecture him into the proper serious mood with which Seniors must sail through Commencement!

"You are a Senior, Hicks, a Senior!" Butch would explain wrathfully. "You are popularly supposed to be dignified, and here you persist in acting like a comedian in a vaudeville show! I suppose you intend to appear on the stage, and, when handed your sheepskin, respond by twanging your banjo and roaring a silly ballad."

Yet, the cheery Hicks had been very busy, since that memorable day when, thanks to Caesar Napoleon and the hoax of the Heavy-Weight-White-Hope-Brigade of the track squad, he had cleared the cross-bar at five-ten, and won the event and his white B! Mr. T. Haviland Hicks, Sr., overjoyed at his son's achievement, had sent him a generous check, which the youth much needed, and had promised to be present at the annual Athletic

Association Meeting, at Commencement, when the B's were awarded deserving athletes, which caused Hicks as much joy as the pink slip. With his final study sprint for the Senior Finals, his duties as team-manager of the baseball nine, his preparations for Commencement, his social duties at the Junior Prom., and multifarious other details coincident to graduation, the heedless Hicks had not found time to be sorrowful at the knowledge that it soon would end, forever, that he must say "Farewell, Alma Mater," and leave the campus and corridors of old Bannister; yet soon even Hicks' ebullient spirits must fail, for Commencement was a trifle over a week off.

"Hicks, you lovable, heedless, irrepressible wretch," said Big Butch, affectionately, as the two class-mates thrilled at the scene. "Does it penetrate that shrapnel-proof concrete dome of yours that the Ballard game tomorrow is the final athletic contest of my, and likewise your, campus career at old Bannister?"

"Similar thoughts has smote my colossal intellect, Butch!" responded the bean-pole Hicks, gladsomely. "But--why seek to overshadow this joyous scene with somber reflections? You-should-worry. You have annexed sufficient B's, were they different, to make up an alphabet. You've won your letter on gridiron, track, and baseball field, and you've been team-captain of everything twice! Why, therefore, sheddest thou them crocodile tears?"

"Not for myself, thou sunny-souled idler!" announced Butch, generously, "But for <i>thee</i>! I prithee, since you pritheed me a few moments hence, let that so-called colossal intellect of yours stride back along the corridors of Time, until it reaches a certain day toward the close of our Freshman year. Remember, you had made a hilarious failure of every athletic event you tried-football, basketball, track, and baseball; you had just made a tremendous farce of the Freshman-Sophomore track meet, and to me, your loyal comrade, you uttered these rash words, 'Before I graduate from old Bannister, I shall have won my B in three branches of sport!'

"I reiterate and repeat, tomorrow's game with Ballard is the last chance you will have. There is no possibility that you, with your well-known lack of baseball ability, will get in the game, and--your track B, won in the high-jump, is the only B you have won! Now, do you still maintain that you will make good that rash vow?"

"'Where there's a will, there's a way.' 'Never say die.' 'While there's life, there's hope.' 'Don't give up the ship.' 'Fight to the last ditch.' 'In the bright lexicon of youth there is no such word as <i>fail</i>,'" quoth the irrepressible Hicks, all in a breath. "As long as there is an infinitesimal fraction of a chance left, I repeat, just leave it to Hicks!"

"You haven't got a chance in the world!" Butch assured him, consolingly. "You did manage to get into one football game, for a minute, and you were a 'Varsity player that long. By sticking to it, you have won your track B in the high-jump, thanks to your grass-hopper build, and we rejoice at your reward! Your Dad is happy that you've won a B, so why not be sensible, and cease this ridiculous talk of winning your B in <i>three</i> sports, when you can see it is preposterously out of the question, absolutely impossible--"

It was not that Butch. Brewster did not <i>want</i> his sunny classmate to win his B in three sports, or that he would have failed to rejoice at Hicks' winning the triple honor. Had such a thing seemed within the bounds of possibility, Butch, big-hearted and loyal, would have been as happy as Hicks, or his Dad. But what the behemoth athlete became wrathful at was the obviously lunatical way in which the cheery Hicks, now that his college years were almost ended, parrot-like repeated, "Oh, just leave it to Hicks!" when he must know all hope was dead. In truth, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., in pretending to maintain still that he would make good the rash vow of his Freshman year, had no purpose but to arouse his comrade's indignation; but Butch, serious of nature, believed there really lurked in Hicks' system some germs of hope.

"We never know, old top!" chuckled Hicks, though he was <i>sure</i> he could never fulfill that promise, as he had not played three-fourths of a season on both the football and the baseball teams, "Something may show up at the last minute, and--"

At that moment, something evidently did show up, on the campus below, for the enthusiastic students howled in: thunderous chorus, as the "Honk! Honk!" of a Claxon was heard, "Here he comes! All together, fellows--the Bannister yell for the nine--then for good old Dan Flannagan!"

As Hicks and Butch watched from the window, old Dan Flannagan's jitney-bus, to the discordant blaring of a horn, progressed up the driveway, even as it had done on that night in September, when it transported to the campus T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., and Thor, the Prodigious Prodigy. Amid salvos of applause from the Bannister youths, and blasts of the Claxon, old Dan brought "The Dove" to a stop before the Senior Fence, and bowed to the nine, grinning genially the while.

"The car waits at the door, sir!" spoke T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., touching his cap after the fashion of an English butler, before seizing a bat-bag, and his suit-case. "As team manager, I must attempt to force into Skeet Wigglesworth's dome how he and the five subs, are to travel on the C. N. & Q., to Eastminster, from Baltimore. Come on, Butch, we're off--"

"You are always off!" commented Butch, good-humoredly, as he seized his baggage and followed the mosquito-like Hicks from the room, downstairs, and out on the campus. Here the assembled youths, with yells, cheers, and songs sandwiched between humorous remarks to Dan Flannagan, watched the thrilling spectacle of the Gold and Green nine, with the Team Manager and five substitutes, fifteen in all, squeeze into and atop of Dan Flannagan's jitney-Ford.

"Let me check you fellows off," said Hicks, importantly, peering into the jitney, for he, as Team Manager, had to handle the traveling expenses. "Monty Merriweather, Roddy Perkins, Biff Pemberton. Butch Brewster, Skeet Wigglesworth, Beef McNaughton, Cherub Challoner, Ichabod Crane, Don Carterson; that is the regular nine, and are you five subs, present? O. K. Skeet, climb out here a second."

Little Skeet Wigglesworth, the brilliant short-stop, climbed out with exceeding difficulty, and facing T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., he saluted in military fashion. The team manager, consulting a timetable of the C. N. & Q. railroad, fixed him with a stern look.

"Skeet," he spoke distinctly, "now, *get this*--myself and eight regulars, *nine* in all, will take the 9 P. M. express for Philadelphia, and stay there all night. Tomorrow, at 8 A. M., we leave Broad Street Station for Eastminster, arriving at 11 A. M. *Now* I have a lot of unused mileage on the C. N. & Q., and I want to use it up before Commencement. So, heed: you want to go *via* Baltimore, to see your parents. You take the 9.20 P. M. express tonight, to Baltimore, and go from that city in the morning, to Eastminster, on the C. N. & Q.--it's the only road. And take the five subs with you, to devour the mileage. Now, has that penetrated thy bomb-proof dome?"

"*Sure*; you don't have to deliver a Chautauqua lecture, Hicks!" grinned Skeet. "Say, what time does my train leave Baltimore, in the A.M., for Eastminster?"

"Let's see." T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., handing the mileage-books to the shortstop, focused his intellect on the C. N. & Q. timetable. "Oh, yes--you leave Union Station, Baltimore, at 7:30 A.M., arriving at Eastminster at noon; *it is the only train, you can get,* to make it in time for the game, so remember the hour--7.30 A.M.! Here, stuff the timetable in your pocket."

In a few moments, the team and substitutes had been jammed into old Dan Flannagan's jitney, and the Bannister youths on the campus concentrated their interest on the sunny Hicks, who, grinning *a* Cheshire cat, climbed atop of "The Dove," which old Dan was having as much trouble to start as he had experienced for over twenty years with the late Lord Nelson, his defunct quadruped. Seeing Hicks abstract a Louisville Slugger from the bat-bag, the students roared facetious remarks at the irrepressible youth:

"Home-run Hicks--he made a home-run--*on a strike-out!*"--"Put Hicks in the game, Captain Butch--he will win it."--"Watch Hicks--he'll pull some *bonehead* play!"--"Bring home the Championship, but--lose Hicks somewhere!"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., as the battered engine of the jit. yielded to old Dan's cranking, and kindly consented to start, surveyed the yelling students, seized a bat, and struck an attitude which he fatuously believed was that of Ty Cobb, about to make a hit; taking advantage of a lull in the tumult, the lovable youth howled at the hilarious crowd:

"Just leave it to Hicks! I will win the game and the *Championship*, for my Alma Mater, and--I'll do it by my headwork!"

CHAPTER XVIII

T. HAVILAND HICKS, JR.'S. HEADWORK

"Play Ball! Say, Bannister, are you *afraid* to play?"

"Call the game, Mr. Ump.--make 'em play ball!"

"Batter up! Forfeit the game to Ballard, Umpire!"

"Lend 'em Ballard's bat-boy-to make a full nine!"

Captain Butch Brewster, his honest countenance, as a moving-picture director would express it, "registering wrathful dismay," lumbered toward the Ballard Field concrete dug-out, in which the Gold and Green players had entrenched themselves, while from the stands, the Ballard cohorts vociferated their intense impatience at the inexplicable delay.

"We have *got* to play," he raged, striding up and down before the bench.

"The game is ten minutes late now, and the crowd is restless! And here we have only *eight* 'Varsity players, and no one to make the ninth--not even a sub.! Oh, I could--"

"That brainless Skeet Wigglesworth!" ejaculated T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., who, arrayed like a lily of the field, reposed his splinter-structure on the bench with his comrades. "In some way, he managed to *miss* that train from Baltimore! They didn't come on the noon C, N. & Q. train, and there isn't another one until night. My directions were as plain as a German war-map, and it beats me how Skeet got befuddled!"

Gloom, as thick and abysmal as a London fog, hovered over the Bannister dug-out. On the concrete bench, the seven Gold and Green athletes, Beef, Monty, Roddy, Biff, Ichabod, Don, and Cherub, with Team Manager T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., stared silently at Captain Butch Brewster, who seemed in imminent peril of exploding. Something probably never before heard of in the annals of athletic history had happened. Bannister College, about to play Ballard the big game for the State Championship, had lost a short-stop and five substitutes, in some unfathomable manner, and it was impossible to round up one other member of the Gold and Green baseball squad. True, a hundred loyal alumni were in the stands, but only *bona fide* students, of course, were eligible to play the game, and--the Faculty ruling had kept them at old Bannister!

"Here comes Ballard's Manager," spoke Beef McNaughton, as a brisk, clean-cut youth advanced, a yellow envelope in hand. "Why, he has a telegram. Do you suppose Skeet actually had *brains* enough to wire an explanation?"

"Telegram for Captain Brewster!" announced the Ballard collegian, giving the message to that surprised behemoth. "It was sent in my care--collect, and the sender, name of Wigglesworth, fired one to me personally, telling

me to deliver this one to Captain Butch Brewster, and collect from Team Manager Hicks--he surely didn't bother to save money! I've been out of town, and just got back to the campus; of course, the telegrams could not be delivered to anyone but me, hence the delay."

Big Butch, thanking the Ballard Team Manager, and assuring him that the charges he had paid would be advanced to him after the game, ripped open the yellow envelope, and drew out the message. Like a thunder-storm gathering on the horizon, a dark expression came to good Butch's countenance, and when he had perused the lengthy telegram, he transfixed the startled and bewildered T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., with an angry glare:

"Bonehead!" he raged, apparently controlling himself with a superhuman effort. "Oh, you lunatic, you wretch, villain--you--you--"

To the supreme amazement and dismay of the puzzled Hicks, Beef, next in line, after he had scanned Skeet's telegram, followed Butch's example, for he glowered at the perturbed youth, and heaped condemnations on his devoted head. And so on down the line on the bench, until Monty, Roddy, Biff, Ichabod, Don, and Cherub, reading the message, joined in gazing indignantly at their gladsome Team Manager, who, as the eight arose en masse and advanced on him, sought to flee the wrath to come.

"Safety first!" quoth T, Haviland Hicks, Jr. "'Mine not to reason why, mine but to haste and fly,' or--be crushed! Ouch! Beef, Monty--have a heart!"

Captured by Beef and Monty Merriweather, as he frantically scrambled up the steps of the concrete dug-out, the grinning Hicks was held in the firm grasp of that behemoth, Butch Brewster, aided by the skyscraper Ichabod, while Cherub Challoner thrust the telegram before his eyes. In words of fire that burned themselves into his brain--something his colleagues denied he possessed--T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., saw the explanation of Skeet Wigglesworth's missing the train from Baltimore that A. M. Dazed, the sunny youth read the message on which over-charges must be paid:

"Hicks--you bonehead! The time-table of the C.N. & Q. you gave me was an old one--schedule revised two weeks ago! Train now leaves Balto. at 6.55 A.M.! When we got to station at 7.05 A.M. she had went! No train to Ballard till night! I and subs, had to wire Bannister for money to get back on! You mis-manager--the head-work you boasted of is boneheadwork! Pay the charges on this, you brainless insect! I'll send it to Butch, for you'd never show it to him if I sent it to you! Indignantly--"

"SKEET."

"Mis-manager is right!" seethed Captain Butch, for once in his campus career really wrathful at the lovable Hicks. "We are in a fix--eight players, and the crowd howling for the game to start. Oh, I could jump overboard, and drag you with me!"

"Bonehead! Bonehead!" chorused the Gold and Green players, indignantly.

"Gave Skeet an out-of-date time-table--never looked at the date! Let's drag him out before the crowd, and announce to them his brilliant headwork!"

Captain Butch, "up against it," to employ a slightly slang expression, gazed across Ballard Field. In the stands, the students responding thunderously to their cheer-leaders' megaphoned requests, roared, "Play ball! Play ball! Play ball!" Gay pennants and banners fluttered in the glorious sunshine of the June day. It was a bright scene, but its glory awakened no happiness in the heart of the Bannister leader, as his gaze wandered to the somewhat flabbergasted expression on the cheery Hicks' face. That inevitably sunny youth, however, managed to conjure up a faint resemblance of his Cheshire cat grin, and following his usual habit of letting nothing daunt his gladsome spirit, he croaked feebly: "Oh, just leave it to Hicks! I will--"

"Play the game!" thundered Butch, inspired. "Beef, see the umpire and say we'll be ready as soon as we get Hicks into togs--show him the telegram, and explain our delay! I'll shift Monty from the outfield to Skeet's job at short, and put this diluted imitation of something human in the field, to do his worst. Come to the field-house, you poor fish--"

"Oh, Butch, I can't--I just <i>can't</i>!" protested the alarmed Hicks, helpless, as the big athlete towed him from the trench, "I--I can't play ball, and I don't want to be shown up before all that mob! It's all right at Bannister, in class-games, but--Oh, can't you play the game with <i>eight</i> fellows?"

"That is just what we intend to do!" said Butch, with grim humor.

"But--we'll have a dummy in the ninth position, to make the people believe we have a full nine! Cheer up, Hicks--'In the bright lexicon of youth there ain't no such word as fail,' you say! As for your making a fool of yourself, you haven't brains enough to be classed as one! Now--you'll pay dearly for your bonehead play."

Ten minutes later, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., as agitated as a <i>prima donna</i> making her debut with the Metropolitan Opera Company, decorated the Bannister bench, arrayed in one of the substitutes' baseball suits. It was too large for his splinter-structure, so that it flapped grotesquely, giving him a startling resemblance to a scarecrow escaped from a cornfield. With the thermometer of his spirits registering zero, the dismayed youth, whose punishment was surely fitting the crime, heard the Umpire bellow:

"Play ball! Batter up! Bannister at bat--Ballard in the field!"

Hicks, that sunny-souled youth, had often daydreamed of himself in a big game of baseball, for his college. He had vividly imagined a ninth inning crisis, three of the enemy on base, two out, and a long fly, good for a home-run, soaring over his head. How he had sprinted--back--back--and at the last second, reached high in the air, grabbing the soaring spheroid, and saving the game for his Alma Mater! Often, too, he had stepped up to bat in the final frame, with two out, one on base, and Bannister a run behind. With the vast crowd silent and breathless, he had walloped the ball, over the left-field fence, and jogged around the bases, thrilling to

the thunderous cheers of his comrades. But now--

"Oooo!" shivered Hicks, as though he had just stepped beneath an icy shower-bath. "I wish I could run away. I just *know* they'll knock every ball to me, and I couldn't catch one with a sheriff and posse!"

However, since, despite the blithesome Hicks' lack of confidence, it was that sunny Senior, after all, whom fate--or fortune, accordingly as each nine viewed it--destined to be the hero of the Bannister-Ballard Championship baseball contest, the game itself is shoved into such insignificance that it can be briefly chronicled by recording the events that led up to T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.'s, self-prophesied "head-work."

Without Skeet Wigglesworth at shortstop, with the futile Hicks in right-field, and the confidence of the nine shaken, Captain Butch Brewster and the Gold and Green players went into the big game, unable to shake off the feeling that they would be defeated. And when Pitcher Don Carterson, in his half of the frame, passed the first two Ballard batters, the belief deepened to conviction. However, a fast double play and a long fly ended the inning without damage, and Bannister, likewise, had failed to make an impression on the score-board. In the second, Don promptly showed that he was striving to rival the late Cy Morgan, of the Athletics, for he promptly hit two batters and passed the third, whereupon, as sporting-writers express it, he was "derricked" by Captain Butch.

Placing the deposed twirler in left field, Captain Brewster, as a last resort, believing the game hopelessly lost, with his star pitcher having failed, and his relief slabmen, thanks to Hicks, mislaid *en route*, sent out to the box one Ichabod Crane, brought in from the position given to Don Carterson. This cadaverous, skyscraper Senior, who always announced, himself as originating, "Back at Bedwell Center, Pa., where I come from--" was well known to fame as the "Champion Horse-Shoe Pitcher of Bucks County," but his baseball pitching was rather uncertain; like the girl in the nursery jingle, Ichabod, as a twirler, "When he was good, he was very, very good, and when he was wild, he was *horrid*!" Like Christy Mathewson, after he had pitched a few balls, he knew whether or not he was in shape for the game, and so did the spectators. With terrific speed and bewildering curves, Ichabod would have made a star, but his wildness prevented, and only on very rare days could he control the ball.

Luckily for old Bannister's chances of victory and the Championship, this was one of the elongated Ichabod's rare days. He ambled into the box, with the bases full, and promptly struck out a batter. The next rolled to first, forcing out the runner at home, while the third hitter under Ichabod's regime drove out a long fly to center-field. Thus the game settled to one of the most memorable contests that Ballard Field had ever witnessed, a pitchers' battle between the awkward, bean-pole youth from "Bedwell Center, Pa.," and Bob Forsythe, the crack Ballard twirler. It was a fight long to be remembered, with hits as scarce as auks' eggs, and runs out of the reckoning, for six innings.

At the start of the seventh, with the Ballard rooters standing and thundering, "The lucky seventh! Ballard--win the game in the lucky

seventh!" the score was 0-0. Only two hits had been made off Forsythe, of Ballard, whose change of pace had the Bannister nine at his mercy, and but three off Ichabod, who had superb control of his dazzling speed. T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., cavorting in right field, had made the only error of the contest, dropping an easy fly that fell into his hands after he had run bewilderedly in circles, when any good fielder could have stood still and captured it; however, since he got the ball to second in time to hold the runner at third, no harm resulted.

"Hold 'em, Bannister, *hold* 'em!" entreated Butch Brewster, as they went to the field at their end of the lucky seventh, not having scored. "Do your best, Hicks, old man--never mind their Jokes. If you can't *catch* the ball, just get it to second, or first, without delay! Pitch ball, Ichabod--three innings to hold 'em!"

But it was destined to be the lucky seventh for Ballard. An error on a hard chance, for Roddy Perkins, at third, placed a runner on first. Ichabod struck out a hitter, and the runner stole second, aided somewhat by the umpire. The next player flew out, sacrificing the runner to third; then--an easy fly traveled toward the paralyzed T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., one that anybody with the most infinitesimal baseball ability could have corralled, as Butch said, "with his eyes blindfolded, and his hands tied behind him!" But Hicks, who possessed absolutely *no* baseball talent, though he made a desperate try, succeeded in doing an European juggling act for five heartbreaking seconds, after which he let the law of gravity act on the sphere, so that it descended to terra firma. Hence, the "Lucky Seventh" ended with the score: Ballard, 1; Bannister, 0; and the Ballard cohorts in a state bordering on lunacy!

"Oh, I've done it now--I've lost the game and the Championship!" groaned the crushed Hicks, as he stumbled toward the Bannister bench. "First I made that bonehead play, giving Skeet an old time-table I had on hand, and not telling him to get one at the station. How was *I* to know the old railroad would change the schedule, within two weeks of this game? And now--I've made the error that gives Ballard the Championship. If I hadn't pulled that boner, Skeet would be here, and the regular right-fielder would have had that fly. What a glorious climax to my athletic career at old Bannister!"

Hicks' comrades were too generous, or heartbroken, to condemn the sorrowful youth, as he trailed to the dug-out, but the Ballard rooters had absolutely no mercy, and they panned him in regulation style. In fact, all through the game, Hicks expressed himself as being butchered by the fans to make a Ballard holiday, for he struck out with unfailing regularity at bat, and dropped everything in the field, so that the rooters jeered him, whenever he stepped to the plate, and--it was quite different from the good-natured ridicule of his comrades, back at old Bannister.

"Never mind, Hicks," said good Butch Brewster, brokenly, seeing how sorrow-stricken his sunny classmate was, "We'll beat 'em--yet! We bat this inning, and in the ninth maybe someone will knock a home-run for us, and tie the score."

The eighth Inning was the lucky one for the Gold and Green. Monty

Merriweather opened with a clean two-base hit to left, and advanced to third on Biff Pemberton's sacrifice to short. Butch, trying to knock a home-run, struck out-> a la-> "Cactus" Cravath in the World's Series; but the lanky Ichabod, endeavoring to bunt, dropped a Texas-Leaguer over second, and the score was tied, though the sky-scraper twirler was caught off base a moment later. And, though Ballard fought hard in the last of the eighth, Ichabod displayed big-league speed, and retired two hitters by the strike-out route, while the third popped out to first.

"The <i>ninth</i> Inning!" breathed Beef McNaughton, picking up his Louisville Slugger, as he strode to the plate. "Come on, boys--we will win the Championship <i>right now</i>. Get one run, and Ichabod will hold Ballard one more time!"

Perhaps the pachydermic Beef's grim attitude unnerved the wonderful Bob Forsythe, for he passed that elephantine youth. However, he regained his splendid control, and struck out Cherub Challoner on three pitched balls. After this, it was a shame to behold the Ballard first-baseman drop the ball, when Don Carterson grounded to third, and would have been thrown out with ease--with two on base, and one out, Roddy Perkins made a sharp single, on which the two runners advanced a base. Now, with the sacks filled, and with only one out--

"It's all over!" mourned Captain Butch Brewster, rocking back and forth on the bench. "Hicks--is--at--bat!"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., his bat wobbling, and his knees acting in a similar fashion, refusing to support even that fragile frame, staggered toward the plate, like a martyr. A tremendous howl of unearthly joy went up from the stands, for Hicks had struck out every time yet.

"Three pitched balls, Bob!" was the cry. "Strike him out! It's all over but the shouting! He's scared to death, Forsythe--he can't hit a barn-door with a scatter-gun! One--two--three--out! Here's where Ballard wins the Championship."

Twice the grinning Bob Forsythe cut loose with blinding speed--twice the extremely alarmed Hicks dodged back, and waved a feeble Chautauqua salute at the ball he never even saw! Then--trying to "cut the inside corner" with a fast inshoot, Forsythe's control wavered a trifle, and T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., saw the ball streaking toward him! The paralyzed youth felt like a man about to be shot by a burglar. He could feel the bail thud against him, feel the terrific shock; and yet--a thought instinctively flashed on him, he remembered, in a flash, what a tortured Monty Merriweather had shouted, as he wobbled to bat:

"Get a base on balls, or--if you can't <i>make</i> a hit--<i>get hit</i>!"

If he got hit--it meant a run forced in, as the bases were full! That, in all probability, would give old Bannister the Championship, for Ichabod was invincible. It is not likely that the dazed Hicks thought all this out, and weighed it against the agony of getting hit by Forsythe's speed. The truth is, the paralyzed youth was too petrified by fear to dodge, and that before

he could avoid it, the speeding spheroid crashed against his noble brow with a sickening impact.

All went black before him, T, Haviland Hicks, Jr., pale and limp, crumpled, and slid to the ground, senseless; therefore, he failed to hear the roar from the Bannister bench, from the loyal Gold and Green rooters in the stands, as big Beef lumbered across the plate with what proved later to be the winning run. He did not hear the Umpire shout: "Take your base!"

"What's the matter with our Hicks--he's all right!
What's the matter with our Hicks--he's all right!
He was never a star in the baseball game,
But he won the Championship just the same--
What's the matter with our Hicks--he's all right!"

"Honk! Honk!" Old Dan Flannagan's jitney-bus, rattling up the driveway, bearing back to the Bannister campus the victorious Gold and Green nine, and the State Intercollegiate Baseball Championship, though the hour was midnight, found every student on the grass before the Senior Fence! Over three hundred leather-lunged youths, aided by the Bannister Band, and every known noise-making device, hailed "The Dove," as that unseaworthy craft halted before them, with the baseball nine inside, and on top. However, the terrific tumult stilled, as the bewildered collegians caught the refrain from the exuberant players:

"He was never a star in the baseball game--
But he won the Championship just the same--
What's the matter with our Hicks--he's all right!"

"Hicks did what?" shrieked Skeezicks McCracken, voicing through a megaphone the sentiment of the crowd. Captain Butch had simply telegraphed the final score, so old Bannister was puzzled to hear the team lauding T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., who, still white and weak, with a bandage around his classic forehead, maintained a phenomenal quiet, atop of "The Dove," leaning against Butch Brewster.

"Fellows," shouted Butch, despite Hicks' protest, rising to his feet on the roof of the "jit."--"T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., today won the game and the Championship! Listen--"

The vast crowd of erstwhile clamorous youths stood spellbound, as Captain Butch Brewster, in graphic sentences, described the game--Don Carterson's failure, Ichabod's sensational pitching, Hicks' errors, and--the wonderful manner in which the futile youth had won the Championship! As little Skeet Wigglesworth and the five substitutes, who had returned that afternoon, had spread the story of Hicks' bonehead play, old Bannister had turned out to ridicule and jeer good-naturedly the sunny youth, but now they learned that Hicks had been forced by his own mistake into the Big Game, and had won it! Of course, his comrades knew it had been through no ability of his, but the knowledge that he had been knocked senseless by Forsythe's great speed, and had suffered so that his college might score, thrilled them.

"What's the matter with Hicks?" thundered Thor, he who at one time would

have called this riot foolishness, and forgetting that the nine had just chanted the response to this query.

"He's all right!" chorused the collegians, in ecstasy.

"Who's all right?" demanded John Thorwald, his blond head towering over those of his comrades. To him, now, there was nothing silly about this performance!

"Hicks! Hicks! Hicks!" came the shout, and the band fanfared, while the exultant collegians shouted, sang, whistled, and created an indescribable tumult with their noise-making devices. For five minutes the ear-splitting din continued, a wonderful tribute to the lovable, popular youth, and then it stilled so suddenly that the result was startling, for--T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., swaying on his feet arose, and stood on the roof of the "jit."

With that heart-warming Cheshire cat grin on his cherubic countenance, the irrepressible Hicks seized a Louisville Slugger, assumed a Home-Run Baker batting pose, and shouted to his breathlessly waiting comrades:

"Fellows, I vowed I would win that baseball game and the Championship for my Alma Mater by my headwork! With the bases full, and the score a tie, the Ballard pitcher hit me in the head with the ball, forcing in the run that won for old Ballard--now, if that wasn't *headwork*--"

CHAPTER XIX

BANNISTER GIVES HICKS A SURPRISE PARTY

"We have come to the close of our college days.
Golden campus years soon must end;
From Bannister we shall go our ways--
And friend shall part from friend!
On our Alma Mater now we gaze,
And our eyes are filled with tears;
For we've come to the close of our college days,
And the end of our campus years!"

Mr. Thomas Haviland Hicks, Sr., Bannister, '92; Yale, '96, and Pittsburgh millionaire "Steel King," stood at the window of Thomas Haviland Hicks, Jr.'s, room, his arm across the shoulders of that sunny-souled Senior, his only son and heir. Father and son stood, gazing down at the campus. On the Gym steps was a group of Seniors, singing songs of old Bannister, songs tinged with sadness. Up to Hicks' windows, on the warm June: night, drifted the 1916 Class Ode, to the beautiful tune, "A Perfect Day." Over before the Science Hall, a crowd of joyous alumni laughed over narratives of their campus escapades. Happy undergraduates, skylarking on the campus,

celebrated the end of study, and gazed with some awe at the Seniors, in cap and gown, suddenly transformed into strange beings, instead of old comrades and college-mates.

"The close of our college days, and the end of our campus years--!" quoted Mr. Hicks, a mist before his eyes as he gazed at the scene. "In a few days, Thomas, comes the final parting from old Bannister--I know it will be hard, for I had to leave the dear old college, and also Yale. But you have made a splendid record in your studies, you have been one of the most popular fellows here, and--you have vastly pleased your Dad, by winning your B in the high-jump."

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.'s, last study-sprint was at an end, the final Exams. of his Senior year had been passed with what is usually termed flying colors; and to the whole-souled delight of the lovable youth, he and little Theophilus Opperdyke, the Human Encyclopedia, had, as Hicks chastely phrased it, "run a dead heat for the Valedictory!" So close had their final averages been that the Faculty, after much consideration, decided to announce at the Commencement exercises that the two Seniors had tied for the highest collegiate honors, and everyone was satisfied with the verdict. So, now it was all ended; the four years of study, athletics, campus escapades, dormitory skylarking--the golden years of college life, were about to end for 1919. Commencement would officially start on the morrow, but tonight, in the Auditorium, would be held the annual Athletic Association meeting, when those happy athletes who had won their B during the year would have it presented, before the assembled collegians, by one-time gridiron, track, and diamond heroes of old Bannister.

And--the ecstatic Hicks would have his track B, his white letter, won in the high-jump, thanks to Caesar Napoleon's assistance, awarded him by his beloved Dad, the greatest all-round athlete that ever wore the Gold and Green! Mr. Thomas Haviland Hicks, Sr., en route to New Haven and Yale in his private car, "Vulcan," had reached town that day, together with other members of Bannister College, Class of '92. They, as did all the old grads., promptly renewed past memories and associations by riding up to College Hill in Dan Flannagan's jitney-bus--a youthful, hilarious crowd of alumni. Former students, alumni, parents of graduating Seniors, friends, sweethearts--every train would bring its quota. The campus would again throb and pulsate with that perennial quickening--Commencement. Three days of reunions, Class Day exercises, banquets, and other events, then the final exercises, and--T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., would be an alumnus!

"It's like Theophilus told Thor, last fall, Dad," said the serious Hicks. "You know what Shakespeare said: 'This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong; To love that well which thou must leave ere long.' Now that I soon shall leave old Bannister, I--I wish I had studied more, had done bigger things for my Alma Mater! And for you, Dad, too; I've won a B, but perhaps, had I trained and exercised more, I might have annexed another letter--still; hello, what's Butch hollering--?"

Big Butch Brewster, his pachydermic frame draped in his gown, and his mortar-board cap on his head, for the Seniors were required to wear their regalia during Commencement week, was bellowing through a megaphone, as he

stood on the steps of Bannister Hall, and Mr. Hicks, with his cheerful son, listened:

"Everybody--Seniors, Undergrads., Alumni--in the Auditorium at eight sharp! We are going to give Mr. Hicks and T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., a surprise party--don't miss the fun!"

"Now, just what does Butch mean, Dad?" queried the bewildered Senior. "Something is in the wind. For two days, the fellows have had a secret from me--they whisper and plot, and when *I* approach, loudly talk of athletics, or Commencement! Say, Butch--*Butch*--I ain't a-comin' tonight, unless you explain the mystery."

"Oh, yes, you be, old sport!" roared Butch, from the campus, employing the megaphone, "or you don't get your letter! Say, Hicks, one sweetly solemn thought attacks me--old Bannister is puzzling *you* with a mystery, instead of vice versa, as is usually the case."

"Well, Thomas," said Mr. Hicks, his face lighted by a humorous, kindly smile, as he heard the storm of good-natured jeers at Hicks, Jr., that greeted Butch Brewster's fling, "I'll stroll downtown, and see if any of my old comrades came on the night express. I'll see you at the Athletic Association meeting, for I believe I am to hand you the B. I can't imagine what this 'surprise party' is, but I don't suppose it will harm us. It will surely be a happy moment, son, when I present you with the athletic letter you worked so hard to win."

When T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.'s, beloved Dad had gone, his firm stride echoing down the corridor, that blithesome, irrepressible collegian, whom old Bannister had come to love as a generous, sunny-souled youth, stood again by the window, gazing out at the campus. Now, for the first time, he fully realized what a sad occasion a college Commencement really is--to those who must go forth from their Alma Mater forever. With almost the force of a staggering blow, Hicks suddenly saw how it would hurt to leave the well-loved campus and halls of old Bannister, to go from those comrades of his golden years. In a day or so, he must part from good Butch, Pudge, Beef, Ichabod, Monty, Roddy, Cherub, loyal little Theophilus and all his classmates of '19, as well as from his firm friends of the undergraduates. It would be the parting from the youths of his class that would cost him the greatest regret. Four years they had lived together the care-free campus life. From Freshmen to Seniors they had grown and developed together, and had striven for 1919 and old Bannister, while a love for their Alma Mater had steadily possessed their hearts. And now soon they must sing, "Vale, Alma Mater!" and go from the campus and corridors, as Jack Merritt, Heavy Hughes, Biff McCabe, and many others had done before them.

Of course, they would return to old Bannister. There would be alumni banquets at mid-year and Commencement, with glad class reunions each year. They would come back for the big games of the football or baseball season. But it would never be the same. The glad, care-free, golden years of college life come but once, and they could never live them, as of old.

"Caesar's Ghost!" ejaculated T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., making a dive for his beloved banjo, as he awakened to the startling fact that for some time he had been intensely serious. "This will never, never do. I must maintain my blithesome buoyancy to the end, and entertain old Bannister with my musical ability. Here goes."

Assuming a striking pose, *la* troubadour, at the open window, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., a somewhat paradoxical figure, his splinter-structure enshrouded in the gown, the cap on his classic head, this regalia symbolic of dignity, and the torturesome banjo in his grasp, twanged a ragtime accompaniment, and to the bewilderment of the old Grads on the campus, as well as the wrath of 1919, he roared in his fog-horn voice:

"Oh, I love for to live in the country!
And I love for to live on the farm!
I love for to wander in the grass-green fields--
Oh, a country life has the charm!
I love for to wander in the garden--
Down by the old haystack;
Where the pretty little chickens go 'Kick-Kack-Kackle!'
And the little docks go 'Quack! Quack!'"

From the Seniors on the Gym steps, their dignified song rudely shattered by this rollicking saenger-fest, came a storm of protests; to the unbounded delight of the alumni, watching the scene with interest, shouts, jeers, whistles, and cat-calls greeted Hicks' minstrelsy:

"Tear off his cap and gown--he's a disgrace to '19!"

"Shades of Schumann-Heink--give that calf more rope!"

"Ye gods--how long must we endure--that?"

"Hicks, a Senior--nobody home--can that noise!"

"Shoot him at sunrise! Where's his Senior dignity?"

Big Butch Brewster, referring to his watch, bellowed through the megaphone that it was nearly eight o'clock, and loudly suggested that they forcibly terminate Hicks' saengerfest, and spare the town police force a riot call to the campus, by transporting the pestiferous youth to the Auditorium, for his "surprise party." His idea finding favor, he, with Beef and Pudge, somewhat hampered by their gowns, lumbered up the stairway of Bannister, and down the third-floor corridor to the offending Hicks' boudoir, followed by a yelling, surging crowd of Seniors and underclassmen. They invaded the graceless youth's room, much to the pretended alarm of that torturesome collegian, who believed that the entire student-body of old Bannister had foregathered to wreak vengeance on his devoted head.

"*Mercy*! Have a heart, fellows!" plead T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., helpless in the clutches of Butch, Beef, and Pudge, "I won't never do it no more, no time! Say, this is too much--much too much--too much much too much--I, Oh--*help--aid--succor--relief--assistance--*"

"To the Auditorium with the wretch!" boomed Butch; and the splinter-youth was borne aloft, on his broad shoulders, assisted by Beef McNaughton. They transported the grinning Hicks down the corridor, while fifty noisy youths, howling, "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow!" tramped after them. Downstairs and across the campus the hilarious procession marched, and into the Auditorium, where the students and alumni were gathering for the awarding of the athletic B. A thunderous shout went up, as T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., was carried to the stage and deposited in a chair.

"Hicks! Hicks! Hicks! We've got a surprise for--Hicks!"

"Now, just what have I did to deserve all these?" grinned that happy-go-lucky youth, puzzled, nevertheless. "Well, time will tell, so all I can do is to possess my soul with impatience; old Bannister has a mystery for me, this trip!"

In fifteen minutes, the Athletic Association meeting opened. On the stage, beside its officers, were those athletes, including T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., who were to receive that coveted reward--their B, together with a number of one-time famous Bannister gridiron, track, basketball, and diamond stars. Each youth was to receive his monogram from some ex-athlete who once wore the Gold and Green, and Hicks' beloved Dad--Bannister's greatest hero--was to present his son with the letter.

There were speeches; the Athletic Association's President explained the annual meeting, former Bannister students and athletic idols told of past triumphs on Bannister Field; the football Championship banner, and the baseball pennant were flaunted proudly, and each team-captain of the year was called upon to talk. Mr. Thomas Haviland Hicks, Sr., a great favorite on the campus, delivered a ringing speech, an appeal to the undergraduates for clean living, and honorable sportsmanship, and then:

"We now come to the awarding of the athletic B," stated the President. "The Secretary will call first the name of the athlete, and then the alumnus who will present him with the letter. In the name of the Athletic Association of old Bannister, I congratulate those fellows who are now to be rewarded for their loyalty to their Alma Mater!"

Thrilled, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., watched his comrades, as they responded to their names, and had the greatest glory, the B, placed in their hands by past Bannister athletic heroes. Butch, Beef, Roddy, Monty, Ichabod, Biff, Hefty, Tug, Buster, Deacon Radford, Cherub, Don, Skeet, Thor, who had won the hammer-throw. These, and many others, having earned the award by playing in three-fourths of a season's games on the eleven or the nine, or by winning a first place in some track event, stepped forward, and were rewarded. Some, as good Butch, had gained their B many times, but the fact that this was their last letter, made the occasion a sad one. Every name was called but that of T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., and that perturbed youth wondered at the omission, when the President spoke:

"The last name," he said, smiling, "is that of Thomas Haviland Hicks, Jr., and we are glad to have his father present the letter to his son, as Mr.

Thomas Haviland Hicks, Sr., is with us. However, we Bannister fellows have prepared a surprise party for our lovable comrade, and I beg your patience awhile, as I explain."

Graphically, Dad Pendleton described the wonderful all-round athletic record made by Mr. Thomas Haviland Hicks, Sr., while at old Bannister, and sketched briefly but vividly his phenomenal record at Yale; he told of Mr. Hicks' great ambition, for his only son, Thomas, to follow in his footsteps--to be a star athlete, and shatter the marks made by his Dad. Then he reminded the Bannister students of T. Haviland Hicks, Jr.'s, athletic fiascos, hilarious and otherwise, of three years. He explained how that cheery youth, grinning good-humoredly at his comrades' jeers, had been in earnest, striving to realize his father's ambition. As the spellbound collegians and grads. listened, Dad chronicled Hicks' dogged persistence, and how he finally, in his Senior year, won his track B in the high-jump. Then he described the biggest game of the past football season, the contest that brought the Championship to old Bannister. The youths and alumni heard how T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., made a great sacrifice, for the greater goal; how, after training faithfully in secret for a year, hoping sometime to win a game for his Alma Mater, he cheerfully sacrificed his chance to tie the score by a drop-kick, and became the pivotal part of a fake-kick play that won for the Gold and Green.

"I have left Hicks' name until last," said Dad, with a smile, "because tonight we have a surprise party for our sunny comrade, and for his Dad. In the past, the eligibility rule, as regards the football and baseball B, has been--an athlete must play on the 'Varsity in three-fourths of the season's games. But, just before the Hamilton game, last fall, the Advisory Board of the Athletic Association amended this rule.

"We decided to submit to the required two-thirds majority vote of the students this plan, inasmuch as many athletes, toiling and sacrificing all season for their college, never get to win their letter, yet deserve that reward for their loyalty, we suggested that Bannister imitate the universities. Anyone sent into the Yale-Harvard game, you know, wins his H or Y. If one team is safely ahead, a lot of scrubs are run into the scrimmage, to give them their letter. Therefore, we--the Advisory Board--made this rule: 'Any athlete taking part, for any period of time whatsoever, in the Ballard football or baseball game as a regular member of the first team shall be eligible for his Gold or Green B. This rule, upon approval of the students, to be effective from September 25!'

"Now," continued the Athletic Association President, "we decided to keep this new ruling a secret until the present, for this reason: Many good football and baseball players, not making the first teams, lack the loyalty to stick on the scrubs, and others, not as brilliant, but with more college spirit, give their best until the season's end. We knew that if we announced this rule last fall, several slackers, who had quit the squad, would come out again, just on the hope of getting sent into the Ballard game, for their B. This would not be fair to those who loyally stuck to the scrubs. So we did not announce the rule until the year closed, and then a practically unanimous vote of the students made the rule effective from September 25. So--all athletes who took part in the Ballard football game,

last fall, for any period of time whatsoever, are eligible for the gold B, and the same, as regards the green letter, applies to the Ballard baseball game this spring."

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., gasped. Slowly, the glorious truth dawned on the happy-go-lucky Senior--he had been sent into the Bannister-Ballard football game; the crucial and deciding play had turned on him, hence he had won his gold letter! And thanks to his brilliant "mismanaging" of the nine, losing shortstop Skeet Wigglesworth and the substitutes, he had played the entire nine innings of the Ballard-Bannister baseball contest, and, therefore, was eligible for his green B. In a dazed condition, he heard Dad Pendleton saying:

"You remember how T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., was sent into the Ballard game, and how the fake-play fooled Ballard, who believed he would try a drop-kick? Well, knowing Hicks to be eligible for his football B, we planned a surprise party. The Advisory Board kept the new rule a secret, and not until this week was it voted on. Then, the required two-thirds majority made it effective from last September--we managed to have Hicks absent from the voting, and the fellows helped us with our surprise! So instead of Mr. Thomas Haviland Hicks, Sr., presenting his son with one B, that for track work, we are glad to hand him *<i>three</i>* letters, one for football, one for baseball, and one for track, to give our own T. Haviland Hicks, Jr. And, let me add, he can accept them with a clear conscience, for when the rule was made by the Advisory Board, we had no idea that Hicks would ever be eligible in football or baseball,"

A moment of silence, and then undergraduates and alumni, thrilled at Dad Pendleton's announcement, arose in a body, and howled for T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., and his beloved Dad. Mr. Hicks, unable to speak, silently placed the three monograms, gold, green, and white, in his son's hands, and placed his own on the shoulders of that sunny-souled Senior, who for once in his heedless career could not say a word!

"What's the matter with Hicks?" Big Butch Brewster roared, and a terrific response sounded:

"He's all right! Hicks! Hicks! Hicks!"

For ten minutes pandemonium reigned. Then, regardless of the fact that, in order to surprise Mr. Hicks and his son, other athletes, eligible under the new rule, had yet to be presented with their B, the howling youths swarmed on the stage, hoisted the grinning T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., and his happy Dad to their shoulders, and started a wild parade around the campus and the Quadrangle, singing:

"Here's to our own Hicks--drink it down! Drink it down! Here's to our own Hicks--drink it down! Drink it down! Here's to our own Hicks--When he starts a thing, he sticks--Drink it down--drink it down--down! Down! Down!"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., aloft on the shoulders of his behemoth class-mate, Butch Brewster, was deliriously happy. The surprise party of his campus

comrades was a wonderful one, and he could scarcely realize that he had actually, by the Athletic Association ruling, won his three B's! How glad his beloved Dad, was, too. He had not expected this bewildering happiness. He had been so joyous, when his sort earned the track letter, but to have him leave old Bannister, with a B for three sports--it was almost unbelievable! And, as Dad had said--there had been no thought of Hicks when the Advisory Board made the rule, so Hicks had no reason to suppose it was done just to award him his letter.

Then, Hicks remembered that rash vow, made at the end of his Freshman year, a vow uttered with absolutely no other thought than a desire to torment Butch Brewster, "Before I graduate from old Bannister, I shall have won my B in three branches of sport!" Never, not even for a moment, had the happy-go-lucky youth believed that his wild prophecy would be fulfilled, though he had pretended to be confident to tease his loyal comrades; but now, at the very end of his campus days, just before he graduated, his prediction had come true! So the sunny Senior, who four years before had made his rash vow, saw its realization, and suddenly thrilled with the knowledge that he had a golden opportunity to make Butch indignant.

"Oh, I say, Butch," he drawled, nonchalantly, leaning down to talk in Butch's ear, "do you recall that day, at the close of our Freshman year, when I vowed to win my B in three branches of sport, ere I bade farewell to old Bannister?"

"No, you don't get away with that!" exploded Butch Brewster, indignantly, lowering his tantalizing classmate to terra firma. "Here, Beef, Pudge, catch this wretch; he intends to swagger and say--"

But he was too late, for T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., dodging from his grasp, imitated the celebrated Charley Chaplin strut, and satiated his fun-loving soul. After waiting for three years, the irrepressible youth realized an ambition he had never imagined would be fulfilled.

"Oh, just leave it to Hicks!" quoth he, gladsomely. "I told you I'd win my three B's, Butch, old top, and--<i>ow</i>!--unhand me, you villain, you <i>hurt</i>!"

CHAPTER XX

"VALE, ALMA MATER!"

"Oh, it was '*Ave*, Alma Mater--'
We sang as Freshmen gay;
But it's '*Vale*, Alma Mater' now
As our last farewells we say!"

"Honk-Honk! Br-r-rr-r-Bang! Honk-Monk! Br-rr-rr--"

T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., big Butch Brewster, Beef McNaughton, Pudge Langdon, Scoop Sawyer, and little Theophilus Opperdyke--late Seniors of old Bannister--roosted atop of good old Dan Flannagan's famous jitney-bus before Bannister Hall. It was nearly time for the 9.30 A. M. express, but the "peace-ship" had inconsiderately stalled, and the choking, wheezing, and snorting of the engine, as old Dan frenziedly cranked, together with the Claxon, operated by Skeet Wigglesworth, rudely interrupted the Seniors' chant. A vociferous protest arose above the tumult:

"Oh, the little old Ford--rambled right along--like heck!"

"Can that noise-we want to sing a last song, boys!"

"Chuck that engine, Dan, and put in an alarm clock spring!"

"Christmas is coming, Dan-u-el--we've graduated you know!"

"The Dove' doesn't want us to leave old Bannister, fellows!"

Commencement was ended. The night before, on the stage of Alumni Hall, before a vast audience of old Bannister grads, undergraduates, friends, and relatives of the Seniors, the Class of 1919 had received its sheepskins, and the "Go forth, my children, and live!" of its Alma Mater. T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., and timorous little Theophilus had jointly delivered the Valedictory, eight other Seniors, including Butch, Scoop, and the lengthy Ichabod, had swayed the crowd with oratory. Kindly old Prexy, his voice tremulous, had talked to them, as students, for the last time. The Class Ode had been sung, the Class Shield unveiled, and then--Hicks and his comrades of '19 were alumni!

It had been a busy, thrilling time, Commencement Week. There had been scarcely any spare moments to ponder on the parting so soon to come; after the memorable Athletic Association meeting, when T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., and his beloved Dad had been given a wonderful "surprise party" by the collegians, and Hicks had corralled his three B's, time had "sprinted with spiked shoes," as the sunny Hicks stated. Event had followed event in bewildering fashion. The Seniors, dignified in cap and gown, had been feted and banqueted, the cynosure of all eyes. Campus and town were filled with visitors. Old Bannister pulsated with renewed life, with the glad reunions of former students. There had been the Alumni Banquet, the annual baseball game between the 'Varsity and old-time Gold and Green diamond stars, Class Night exercises, the Literary Society Oratorical Contests, and the last Class Supper; and, Commencement had come.

It was all ended now--the four happy, golden years of campus life, of glad fellowship with each other; like those who had gone before, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., and his comrades of 1919 had come to the final parting. The sunny-souled youth's Dad had gone to New Haven, to Yale's Commencement. Alumni and visitors had left town; the night before had witnessed farewells with Monty, Roddy, Biff, Hefty, and the underclassmen, with that awakened Colossus, John Thorwald. All the collegians had gone, except the few

Seniors now leaving, and they had remained to enjoy Hicks' final Beefsteak Bust downtown at Jerry's.

The campus was silent and deserted. No footsteps or voices echoed in the dormitories, and a shadow of sadness hovered over all. The youths who were leaving old Bannister forever felt an ache in their throats, and little Theophilus Opperdyke's big-rimmed spectacles were fogged with tears. Three times, in the past, they had left the campus, but this was forever, as collegians!

"I don't care if we miss the old train!" declared Scoop Sawyer, as the jitney-Ford's engine wheezed, gasped, and was silent, for all of Dan's cranking. "Just think, fellows, it's all over now--'We have come to the end of our college days-golden campus years are at an end--!' Say, Hicks, old man, what's your Idea. What future have you blue-printed?"

"Journalism!" announced T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., sticking a fountain pen behind his ear, and fatuously supposing he resembled a City Editor, "In me you behold an embryo Richard Harding Davis, or Ty--no, I mean Irvin Cobb. I shall first serve my apprenticeship as a 'cub,' but ere many years, I shall sit at a desk, run a newspaper, and tell the world where to get off."

"That is--If Dad says so!" chuckled Butch Brewster. "You know, Hicks, it's the same old story--your father wants you to learn how to own steel and iron mills, and when it comes to a showdown, you must convince Mr. Thomas Haviland Hicks, Sr., that you'd make a better journalist than Steel King!"

"Nay, nay-say not so!" responded the happy-go-lucky alumnus of old Bannister, as the perspiring Dan Flannagan cranked away futilely. "My Dad has a broader vision, fellows, than most men. He and I talked it over last night, and he would never try to make me take up anything but a work that appeals to me. While, as Butch says, he'd like to train me to follow in his footsteps, he understands my ambition so thoroughly that he is trying to get me started--read this:"

The lovable youth produced a letter, the envelope bearing the heading: "THE BALTIMORE CHRONICLE;" Butch Brewster, to whom he extended it, read aloud:

"Baltimore, Maryland,

"June 12, 1919.

"DEAR OLD CLASSMATE:

"I'd sure like to be with you, back at old Yale, next week, but I can't leave the wheel of this ship, the </i>Chronicle</i>, for even a day. Give my regards to all of old Eli, '96, old man.

"As regards a berth for your son, Thomas. The </i>Chronicle</i> usually takes on a few college men during the summer, when our staff is off on vacations. We always use undergraduates, and often, in two or three summers, we develop them into star reporters. However, for old time's

sake, I'll be glad to give your son a chance, and if he means business, let him report for duty next Friday, at 1 P.M., to my office. Understand, Hicks, he must come here and fight his own way, without any favor or special help from me. Were he the son of our nation's President, I'd not treat him a whit better than the rest of the Staff, so let him know that in advance. On the other hand, I'll develop him all I can, and if he has the ability, the *Chronicle* long-room is the place for him.

"Yours for old Yale,

"Doc' Whalen, Yale, '96,

"City Editor--*THE CHRONICLE*."

"Here's my Dad's ultimatum," grinned Hicks, when Butch finished the letter. "I am to take a summer as a cub on the *Baltimore Chronicle*, making my own way, and living on my weekly salary, without financial aid from anyone. If, at the end of the summer, City Editor Whalen reports that I've made good enough to be retained as a regular, then--Yours truly for the Fourth Estate. If I fail, then I follow a course charted out by Mr. Thomas Haviland Hicks, Sr.! So, it is up to me to make good--"

"You--you will make good, Hicks," quavered Theophilus, whose faith in the shadow-like youth was prodigious. "Oh, that will be splendid, for I am going to take a course at a business college in Baltimore. I want to become an expert stenographer, and we'll be together,"

"It's work now, fellows!" sighed Beef McNaughton, shifting his huge bulk atop of the jitney. "College years are ended, we're chucked into the world, to make good, or fail! Butch and I have not decided on our work yet. We may accept jobs as bank or railroad presidents, or maybe run for President of the U.S.A., provided John McGraw or Connie Mack do not sign us up. However--"

At that moment, the engine of old Dan Flannagan's battered "Dove" consented to hit on two cylinders, and the genial Irishman, who was to transport Hicks and his comrades, as collegians, for the last time, yelled, "*All aboard!*" loudly, to conceal his emotion at the sad scene.

"We're off!" shrieked Skeet Wigglesworth, stowed away below, as the jitney-bus moved down the driveway. "Farewell, dear old Bannister! Run slow, Dan, we want to gaze on the campus as long as we can."

The youths were silent, as the 'bus rolled slowly down the driveway and under the Memorial Arch, old Dan, sympathizing with them, and finding he could make the express by a safe margin, allowing the jitney to flutter along at reduced speed. From its top, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., his vision blurred with tears, gazed back with his class-mates. He saw the campus, its grass green, with stately old elms bordering the walks, and the golden June sunshine bathing everything in a soft radiance. He beheld the college buildings--the Gym., the Science Hall, the Administration Building,

Recitation Hall, the ivy-covered Library; the white Chapel, and the four dorms., Creighton, Smithson, Nordyke, Bannister. One year he had spent in each, and every year had been one of happiness, of glad comradeship. He could see Bannister Field, the scene of his many hilarious athletic fiascos.

And now he was leaving it all--had come to the end of his college course, and before him lay Life, with its stern realities, its grim obstacles, and hard struggles; ended were the golden campus days, the gay skylarking in the dorms. Gone forever were the joyous nights of entertaining his comrades, of Beefsteak Busts down at Jerry's. Silenced was his beloved banjo, and no more would his saengerfests bother old Bannister.

A turn in the street, and the campus could not be seen. As the last vision of their Alma Mater vanished, T. Haviland Hicks, Jr., smiling sunnily through his tear-blurred eyes, gazed at his comrades of old '19--

"Say, fellows--" he grinned, though his voice was shaky, "let's--let's start in next September, and--do it all over again!"

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