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# J. R. COHEN,

## MANAGER, SCRANTON, PA.

## A FOOT BALL STORY.

The ancient and honorable game of foot ball is an institution remarkable in many ways. It has been the cause of many sorrows, many joys and many extraordinary happenings. It has furnished beautiful food for thought and discussion to timid old gentlemen who warm themselves by the fire on brisk October days, nor has it put a stop to this beneficent practice with the recurring years. It has brought death to a few, and injuries, more or less serious, to thousands; it has made men out of an ungodly number. And foot ball it was that established in England the widely known and prosperous firm name of "Copeland & Rice, Bankers and Brokers."

Born to luxury and reared in the midst of wealth, Rice came to college from a home of happiness; Copeland, in all his life, had known naught but poverty. A tall, well-favored young fellow was Rice, and honest of speech; and a pleasant way of speaking to a fellow, together with a generous use of money, quickly won him popularity. But Copeland, handicapped as he was by a very homely, albeit very honest countenance, and by a manner cold rather than engaging, not to mention a lack of money, did not become immediately popular.

About a week after the opening of college there came the usual call for foot ball candidates. Now if there was one thing more than another that Rice had in view when he entered college, that thing was to play foot ball. So, recalling with pride his record on his Prep team, he stopped studies and the theater and went out on the field in a foot ball suit, determined that he would best content with nothing short of a place on theVarsity.

Copeland had come to college to study. He had never played foot ball—all his battles had been fought against poverty. And probably he never would have played foot ball, had not his gigantic muscular frame caught the eye of Lodge, the Varsity captain. "That man ought to be a foot ball player," thought Lodge; "I'll call on him tonight."

And so he did. He found Copeland sunk deep in an arm chair several sizes too small for him, his long legs crossed and his head almost buried between his broad shoulders. He was reading Demosthenes, evidently with great difficulty but with unflinching perseverance.

A brief word of greeting and self-introduction, and Lodge, with that energy that always marked his playing, had plunged into the midst of an earnest appeal to Copeland to come out and try for the team. Whether it was the eloquence of Lodge, or a sense of loyalty to college, or an inward longing for glory in contests in muscle and spirit that brought it about, I do not know, but when the captain said, "Copeland, will you be on the field tomorrow?" Copeland, after thinking a long while, with half-closed eyes, answered: "Yes."

So the next day Copeland appeared on the field in armor, the center of all eyes and the subject of many a critical remark by the undergraduates. He was pitted against Rice, who had now begun to be recognized as something of a player. And this is how a sophisticated describes it:

"Copeland? Why, man, he's a star. Rice isn't in the same class with him. You should have seen him make holes in the Varsity line. It was the best thing in the practice. That man will be at left guard on the Varsity before long; just see if he won't."

"That night when Copeland settled down in his arm chair, he remarked in his slow, thoughtful way: "Now that is sport; a fellow can study after exercise like that."

But Rice was gloomy that night, fearful of losing his place on the Varsity. His fears were soon to be realized. The third day that Copeland appeared on the field he was called into the Varsity squad. Rice went with the scrubs.

A practice game between the two teams followed as usual; and in the factory, later on, there were strange wiles going the rounds of how a certain guard who had been taken out of Varsity had engaged in "slugging" tactics with a certain other guard who had been put in his place.

Rice had not only lost his position; he had also lost his head. Two days later, the training game, the first important one of the season, was played. There was a surprise in store for the knowing one. Rice was put in at left guard. "That's because of his experience," they said. "They're afraid of Copeland."

In the first half Rawlins discovered a weak spot in the left side of their opponent's line, and by continually hammering away at the left guard, they at last carried the ball over the goal line. Landor was unable to score. In the second half, Copeland appeared in Rice's place. Landor made two touchdowns; the credit of the victory fell to Copeland.

That was just a month before the great game of the season—the Thanksgiving day game with Landor's old and bitter rival in all sports, the University of Littleton. Such was the character of this rivalry that when the day came for the Littleton-Landor foot ball match, every man in both colleges, however slight his interests in sports, was stirred to the pitch of enthusiasm. And on that day, too, every player played as he never played before. Such is the tradition in these ancient seats of learning.

To play in this game is to reach the highest pinnacle of college glory. Hence it was that poor Rice, who had given up everything for foot ball, was disappointed and discouraged as the line drew near for the great game, and his chances to play in it waned. But he did not give up. It was not in his blood. He came to the practice every day, and took the terrible pounding that Copeland gave him with never a murmur. "I'm not looking up at him; I'm looking at my own feet. There was still one chance left him—the chance that Copeland might be injured."

On a Monday afternoon three days before Thanksgiving day, Copeland came out of his room and started down the corridor. He had gone but a short distance when he saw before him what appeared to be a letter. He stopped and picked it up, and his attention was at once engaged by the words "Littleton Game" that caught his eye. Without stopping to think of what he was doing, he commenced reading.

"Well, I am out of the Littleton game. Another man has my place. I have but one chance, that is may be injured; and while I am not ready that this will take place, I am ready to go into the game if it does. I am getting pretty well disgusted with this place, and am thinking of leaving it."

As Copeland looked below at the signature of Milton J. Rice, he exclaimed: "Why, I must be the man he's talking about."

"Poor fellow," he thought and a certain smile softened the hard expression of his mouth. "He must take it hard. Too bad. I should have spoken to him. And such a good player, too. Well, perhaps he will get his chance. Yes, I am quite sure he will."

That night he went to see Rice in his rooming. He held out his hand, but the other would not take it. "Rice," he said in his slow way, "I want to be friends with you, and I think I shall be before long. I believe that you are a good fellow at heart, and I don't want this foot ball business to keep us apart."

"That's very easy for you to say," replied Rice sullenly; "You have the position and you are going to play in the Littleton game. But you have not treated me fairly, and I'll not shake hands."

Rice looked after him for a minute, as if to ask what he meant by this last remark; then turned in his chair and flung his feet moodily on the desk. Two months had wrought a great change in this once joyous son of a rich man.

The great day came at last—a brisk keen, foot ball day, with cloudless

heavens overhead. The largest, most enthusiastic crowd within the memory of the oldest graduates, came out to witness the most memorable battle the two colleges had ever fought.

It was, indeed, a struggle of giants, and every man fought as if on him depended the issue of the contest. So first Littleton made the signal, the field, and then weakened and was in turn pushed back. And thus they kept it up with never a score—except one. It was toward the end of the first half Landor had the ball forty-five yards from their opponent's goal. The quarter-back gave the signal, the two teams rushed together and the men jostled one on top of another in a struggling mass; the next moment a Littleton player was seen running swiftly down the field, with the ball under his arm, and the bright colors of his team, the cheeriest and the loudest in respect to independent prominence, waving over the heads of the multitude as though the enthusiasm of their owners had been imparted to them. The Landor players were almost too astounded to burst; the touchdown was made; but the attempt to kick goal failed, and the score at the end of the first half was Littleton, 5; Landor, 0.

The second half had begun; there was a scrimmage, and when the play had gotten up Copeland was seen lying on the ground, rolling his head from side to side and emitting an occasional groan. All eyes were turned to the spot, and, still unconscious, he was carried off the field. The Landor partisans rose and gave a cheer for Copeland; but their hearts were not in it; their hopes had gone with the man whom they were cheering.

The captain looked at the substitutes. Along the line every man of them eager to get into the game. The captain beckoned to Rice and Rice pulled off his sweater, and strapping a nose-guard around his head, took his place in the line.

"I have my chance," he murmured to himself. "I lost my nerve in that last game. Now I'll show them what I can do."

He crouched down low, his heart stout for the combat. In the very first play he broke through the opponent's line, and downed the Littleton back almost before he had started. And the Landor partisans rose as a man, and cheered for Rice.

I shall not attempt to describe the soul-stirring struggle for victory of the two teams in this ever-memorable half, nor the terrific plunges that Rice made through the Littleton line, all which are still a theme for talk among those who witnessed them. Nor shall I tell you of how in the very last of play, every valiant warrior was gasping for breath and suffering from some injury. Rice, with an effort almost beyond human endurance, carried the ball over the line for a touchdown. "That is all a part of the history of the college."

But there is something more, seldom spoken of, but which I think is the first thing of it all.

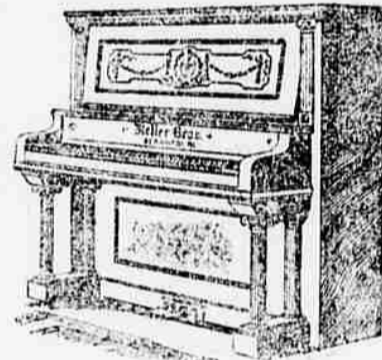
The scene was truly could it be bettered? Was there a man to kick the goal? For it was a most difficult one. The touchdown had been made far to the right from the goal posts. At such an angle, to send the ball between those posts, would require extraordinary precision and coolness.

Rice was seen in earnest conversation with Lodge, the captain. A moment later, Lodge signaled the quarter-back to bring the ball out. And as the other players trotted slowly down the field, there was Rice, plain before the eyes of all, calmly directing the little quarter-back how to hold the ball.

Now, it is one thing to take the ball in the moment of excitement, and with a thousand madmen urging you on with their shouts, to cut out your heart all the way down the field and across the goal line. It is another thing when, with four thousand pairs of eyes intent upon you, an unutterable silence all around you, your own honor, the fate of a game, the glory of Alma Mater dependent upon you, to keep your heart from beating like a trip-hammer, and at the shrill sound of the referee's whistle, send the leather ball before you, spinning between the goal posts. That is what Rice did.

A few minutes before eight o'clock on the evening of that day, Rice and

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Copeland came face to face in the lobby of the Grand theatre. The memory of their conversation of a few days before and the vision of Copeland, white and suffering, being carried off the field, brought generous thoughts to Rice's mind. He held out his hand, and—

"Copeland," he said, "I want to ask your forgiveness and friendship. I have acted very badly."

Copeland gravely took the outstretched hand, and looked amusedly into the other's eyes.

"I think I have a right," he remarked simply, "to say now that I told you so."

"Yes," laughed Rice, "you certainly have. But tell me, were you badly hurt?"

"Hurt? Just listen a minute, Rice, and I'll tell you a secret. That's the first piece of acting I ever did. I know you would make the most of your chance, so I'm glad I did it."

Such is a true account of how the extraordinary game of foot ball laid the foundation of the firm of "Copeland & Rice, Bankers and Brokers"—Hall 8, Luck, in Georgetown College Journal.

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