

other met in mid-field and seemed desirous of engaging in battle before the real contestants appeared.

But now the two teams came in sight and were greeted by thunderous and inspiring cheers from every side.

Cradley, notwithstanding his disinclination to play, had his objections overruled, and was among their number. He had not heard from home in the meanwhile, and was in a most dejected mood in consequence. But he bit his lip, and started in to play with a dogged determination that meant danger to any one who opposed him.

After a little preliminary practice, the two teams were drawn up and time was called.

They proved to be pretty evenly matched. Tug and strain as they might, neither seemed to be able to gain the advantage of the other. Hammer and tongs at it they went. Now they would be all down in a heap in the centre of the field, then they would rush wildly towards the end in pursuit of the ball, only to follow it back again, propelled by the foot of some sturdy athlete who had been stationed there for that very purpose.

At last amid the most intense excitement the three-quarters of an hour came to a close, and the first half ended. Six to six the score stood. Each side had made a touchdown and kicked a goal.

After a short rest, to work they went again. Now this way, now that; the eye could scarcely follow the flying legs and swinging arms of the contending athletes. To and fro they shoved each other, and for a long time the outcome was doubtful, but finally the Pittston team amid the most tremendous hurraing succeeded in making a touchdown. No goal resulted.

But soon they were lined up again and as hard at it as at any time before. But five minutes of time yet remained. Would the Burkely team succeed in tying the score, or perhaps advancing it in their own favor?

Steadily they were pushing the Pittston boys backwards into their territory.

Suddenly Burkely's huge half-back was seen emerging from a scrimmage with the ball.

Cradley, who was back of his line, saw him come tearing down the field towards him with the ball snugly tucked under his arm.

His mind was still influenced by gloomy reflections.

"Let him go," was the first impulse that flashed through him; "do not try to stop him; you'll get hurt; somebody else will tackle him."

But no, that man must be stopped and nobody else is near him.

He dashes to the side to intercept him. Faster, faster, he can never intercept him. The goal posts loom up before him. But a few yards now intervene from the fated line. Can he ever ever make it? Ah, that spurt brings him close. He makes the spring. He has him; he can tell by his grip. Down they go with a thud just an infinitesimal distance, it seems to him, from the line. From that instant he knows no more.

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When he came to himself he was lying in his own comfortable bed. A dull ringing pain was in his head, and his limbs ached all over. Thurston, Hatley and others were about him.

"Glad to see you come around, old boy!" exclaimed Thurston, smilingly; "knocked senseless, you know, but with the exception of a sprained ankle and a general shaking up the doctor says you'll be about all right in a day or two. Yes, I know, you would inquire about the result of the game. You saved the day for us. Final score ten to six. They went home like a pack of whipped sheep."

It is rather probable that Thurston exaggerated this last statement in his enthusiasm, but Cradley had no time to ponder over it, for the others crowded around to congratulate him.