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'VARSITY VERSUS MCGILL

IT is a glorious autumn day. The smoky air with just a nip of the coming frost in it hangs still over the trees, through whose bare tops and interlacing boughs the genial sunlight falls in a golden glory upon the grass below. The nip in the air, the golden light, the thrilling uncertainty of the coming match, the magnitude of the issue at stake, combine to raise the ardour of football enthusiasts to the highest pitch.

The record of each team is unique. Each has gone through the championship series without a single reverse. Perhaps never in their history have both universities been more worthily represented than by the teams that are to contest to-day the championship of the Dominion.

The McGill men are the first to appear on the campus, and are welcomed with loud and generous cheers, which are, however, redoubled upon the appearance of the 'Varsity champions.

Many eyes are turned upon the Fairbanks carriage. The young ladies are well known in University circles; but the quaint old lady, looking so handsome in spite of her plain black bonnet, awakens the curiosity of the crowd, which only increases when it becomes known that she is Shock's mother.

"Do you see Hamish, my dear?" inquires the old

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lady. "They are so much alike I cannot distinguish him."

"Go and bring him," cries Betty, and Lloyd returns in a moment with Shock and little Brown.

"Mother! mother! This is awful. You won't like it a bit. You'll think I'm getting killed many a time."

But the old lady only smiles placidly. "Indeed, and I'm not afraid for you. Run away, Hamish, and be careful of the laddies."

"Don't tell him that, Mrs. Maegregor," pleads Brown. "He's far too gentle as it is."

Some few minutes are spent in arranging for the kick-off.

"Oh, I do wish they would start," exclaims Betty, standing up in the carriage. "If they would only start!" she repeats. "I want to have a chance to shriek."

"There they go!" exclaims Lloyd.

It is McGill's kick. Huntingdon, the big captain and centre forward, takes it magnificently, following up hard with his whole team. Pepper, the 'Varsity full back, however, is at the spot and returns into touch. In the throw-in McGill secures the ball, and by a swift rush makes fifteen or twenty feet, when, amid the cheers of the spectators, both teams settle down into their first scrimmage.

These are the days of close scrimmage play, when nine men on each side put their heads down with the ball between them, and shove for dear life. Picking out, heeling out, or kicking out is strictly forbidden and promptly penalised.

The first scrimmage results in a dead ball. Once more a scrimmage is formed, but again the result is a dead ball. Over and over again this play is repeated with very little gain on either side. It gradually becomes apparent, however, that McGill in a scrimmage is slightly heavier. Foot by foot they work their way toward the 'Varsity goal.

The cries of "Hold them, 'Varsity! Hold them, 'Varsity!" and, "You've got 'em, McGill! You've got 'em!" indicate the judgment of the spectators.

"Ay," says the old lady, "they are a bit heavy for them, I doubt."

"Who!" inquires Betty, much amused.

"The Montreal lads. But we will be waiting a meenute."

It is a very slow game for the crowds that line every side of the field. Neither team will let the ball out. Again and again the quarters nip up the ball and pass, but the tackling is so hard and swift that the halves cannot get away, and by passing ground is almost always lost.

"Keep it in!" is the word. Inch by inch towards the 'Varsity goal the McGill forwards fight their way.

Suddenly the McGill scrimmage weakens and breaks up. Their quarter seizes the ball, passes it low and swift to Bunch, who is off like the wind across the field, dodges through the quarters, knocks off Martin and Bate, and with The Don coming hard upon his flank, sets off for the 'Varsity line with only Pepper between him and a touch-down.

But Pepper is waiting for him, cool and steady. As Bunch nears him he crouches like a cat, creeping slowly to meet his coming foe. Ten feet from the line straight at the full back goes Bunch. At two paces distance he changes his mind and swerves to the left with the hope of dodging past.

But he has ventured too far. Pepper takes two short steps, and like a tiger springs at his foe, winds his arms round his hips and drags him down, while The Don from the side leaps fiercely on him and holds the ball safe, five feet from the line.

'Varsity goes wild with relief.

"Pepper! Pepper! Red hot Pepper!" they chant rapturously in enthusiastic groups here and there, as Pepper's red head emerges from the crowd piled upon him and the prostrate Bunch. Again and again rises the chant, as the full back returns at a slow trot to his place behind the line.

"Indeed, it is Pepper is the grand laddie," says the old lady approvingly. "Many's the game he has saved, Hamish will be telling me."

"Now, McGill!" calls out a Montreal man, leading his fellows. "Stone wall! Stone wall! Shove 'em in! Shove 'em in!"

But the 'Varsity captain is alive to his danger, and getting his men low down he determines to hold the enemy fast till the fury of their attack be somewhat spent, or till fortune shall bring him aid.

"Get up! Get up there, 'Varsity!" yells the McGill contingent.

"Look at 'em saying their prayers!" shouts a boy.

"They need to," answers another.

"Get up, 'Varsity! Get up! Don't be afraid!" they yell derisively.

"Make 'em stand up, referee," a Montreal man insists.

Again and again the McGill captain appeals to the referee, who remonstrates, urges, and finally orders the 'Varsity to get up or be penalised.

Campbell perceives that something must be done. He moves Shock from the centre to the left wing of the scrimmage and calls in Martin and Bate from half.

By this time every 'Varsity man is on his feet, for he knows that Shock is about to lead the "screw" and before the scrimmage is well formed the McGill stone wall is broken, and Campbell is boring through it with the ball, gaining a good ten feet and by a quick re-form ten more.

"Man, man, take heed. Yon's a dangerous game, I'm thinking," murmurs Shock's mother anxiously, to the amazed amusement of Lloyd, who replies, "Why, Mrs. Macgregor, you seem to know the game as well as the rest of us."

"Ay, Hamish has often showed me the working of the screw, and it is not to be depended upon in a place like yon."

The 'Varsity team breathe freely again and go in with new vim, while McGill settles down on the ball to recover steadiness.

But the 'Varsity captain has seen the screw work and resolves to try it again. Once more he moves

Shock to the wing, signals to the quarters, and again the Montreal stone wall is demoralised. But instead of Campbell boring over the prostrate form of his big centre with the ball the McGill captain, securing it, passes to Carroll, his quarter, who dashing off as a feint to the right, passes far across the field to Bunch on the left.

Bunch as usual is in his place, catches beautifully and is off down the field like a whirlwind, dodging one, knocking off another, running round a third, till between him and the goal line he has only the half back, Martin, and the full.

The McGill people go wild again. "Bunch! Bunch!" they yell frantically, crowding down the line after him. "He's in! He's in!"

But not yet. Red Pepper is swiftly bearing down upon him, and as he comes within reach springs at him. But the wily Bunch has learned to measure that long reach, and dodging back sharply, he slips round Pepper and makes for the line ten yards away.

A long groan goes up from the 'Varsity support, while from a hundred McGill throats rises the cry again—"He's in! He's in! A touch! A touch!"

But close upon him, and gaining at every foot, is The Don, the fleetest man in the 'Varsity team. For half a second it looks as if Bunch must make the line, but within three yards of the goal, and just as he is about to throw himself toward it, Balfour shoots out his arm, grasps his enemy by the back of the neck, and turning round, hurls him back with terrific

force to the ground and clammers on top of him. It is a fierce tackle, giving great satisfaction to all the 'Varsity supporters, but to none more than to Mrs. Macgregor, who, as she sees the unfortunate Bunch hurled to earth, exclaims with quiet satisfaction, "That will be doing for ye, I'm thinking."

"Isn't she a great old warrior?" says Lloyd aside, to the young ladies.

"The Don! The Don!" cry the 'Varsity contingent. "We—like—Don! We—like—Don!" they chant, surging across the corner of the field in the wildest enthusiasm.

"Keep back! Keep back! Give him air." The referee, and the captains with their teams, push the crowd back, for Bunch is lying motionless upon the ground.

"It's simply a case of wind," says little Carroll, the McGill quarter, lightly.

"The want of it, you mean," says big Mooney, hauling Carroll back by the neck.

In a few minutes, however, the plucky McGill half back is up again, and once more the scrimmage is formed.

Gradually it grows more evident that McGill is heavier in the scrimmage, but this advantage is offset by the remarkable boring quality of the 'Varsity captain, who, upon the break up of a scrimmage, generally succeeds in making a few feet, frequently over Shock's huge body. As for Shock, he apparently enjoys being walked upon by his captain, and emerges from each successive scrimmage with his yel-

low hair fiercely erect, his face covered with blood, and always wreathed in smiles. No amount of hacking and scragging in a scrimmage can damp his ardour or ruffle the serenity of his temper.

"Isn't he ghastly?" exclaims Lloyd to the young ladies at his side.

"Perfectly lovely!" cries Betty in return.

"Ah, the old story of the bloodthirsty sex," replies Lloyd. "Hello, there goes half time," he adds, "and no score yet. This is truly a great game." Eagerly the men are taken charge of by their respective attendants, stripped, rubbed, slapped, and sponged.

Up come Shock and Brown. The blood on Shock's face gives him a terrifying appearance.

"Oh!" cries Helen anxiously, "you are hurt."

"Not a bit," he replies cheerily, glancing in surprise at her.

"How do you like it, Mrs Macgregor?" inquires Brown.

"Man, laddie, they are a grand team, and it will be no easy matter to wheep them."

"Don't you think now that Shock is a little too gentle with them?" asks Brown wickedly.

"Well, it will not do to allow them to have their own way altogether," she replies cautiously. "But run away, Hamish, and get yourself put right. There is much before you yet."

"Say, old man," says Brown as they trot off, "it's no credit to you to be a great centre. You'd disgrace your blood if you were anything else."

Into the 'Varsity dressing room strolls old Black,

the greatest captain of the greatest team 'Varsity has ever seen.

"Well, old chap," he calls out cheerfully to Campbell, "how goes it?"

"All right," says Campbell. "They are a great team, but I think we are holding them."

"They are the greatest team McGill ever sent here," replies Black.

"Oh, thanks, awfully," says Campbell, "but they are hardly up to the team of four years ago."

"Quite, I assure you, and you are holding them down."

"Do you think so?" There was no anxiety in the captain's tone, but there was a serious earnestness that somehow caught the ear of all the men in the room.

Black noticed it.

"Yes, you are holding them so far, without a doubt. Their weight tells in the scrimmage, and of course we do not know their back play yet, and that fellow Bunch Cameron is a wonder."

"That's what!" sings out little Brown. "But what's the matter with The Don?"

Immediately the roar comes back, "He's—all—right!"

"Yes," replies Black quietly, "Balfour is swifter, and harder in tackle."

"Have you anything to suggest?" asks Campbell, with a reverence which a man in the struggle feels for one who has achieved. The men are all quiet, listening. But Black knows his place.

"Not in the least. You have a great team, and you are handling them perfectly."

"Hear that now, will you?" cries little Brown. "We're It!"

"Do you think we had better open up a little?" But Black is a gentleman and knows better than to offer advice.

"I really cannot offer an opinion. You know your men better than I. Besides, it is better to find out your enemy's tactics than to be too stuck on your own. Remember, those fellows are doing some thinking at this blessed minute. Of course," he went on hesitatingly, "if they keep playing the same close game—well—you might try—that is—you have got a great defence, you know, and The Don can run away from any of them."

"All right," said the captain. "We'll feel 'em first, boys. Keep at the old game. Close and steady till we get inside their heads. Watch their quarters. They're lightning in a pass."

It turns out that old Black is right. The McGills have been doing some thinking. From the kick-off they abandon the close scrimmage for a time, playing an open, dribbling, punting game, and they are playing it superbly. While they are sure in their catching and fierce in their tackle, their specialty is punting and following up. In this they are exceedingly dangerous. For the first ten minutes the 'Varsity men are forced within their own twenty-five yard line and are put upon their defence. The quarters and forwards begin to "back," a sure sign of coming doom.

"What in thunder are you doing back here!" roars Martin to little Brown. "Do you see anything wrong with this line?"

Nothing so maddens a half back as to see the forward line fall back into defence. Little Brown, accepting his rebuke with extraordinary meekness, abandons the defence and with the other quarters and forwards, who had been falling back, goes up where Campbell and Shock are doing their best to break the punting game and are waiting their chance for a run.

Every moment is dangerous; for the McGills have the spirit of victory strong upon them, and from their supporters on the side lines the triumphant and exasperating refrain is rising:

"Got 'em going, going, going,
Got 'em going home."

And indeed for a few minutes it looks like it. Again and again the McGill forward line, fed carefully and judiciously by their defence, rush to the attack, and it is all Campbell can do to hold his men in place. Seizing the opportunity of a throw-in for 'Varsity, he passes the word to his halves and quarters, "Don't give away the ball. Hold and run. Don't pass," and soon he has the team steady again and ready for aggressive work. Before long, by resolutely refusing to kick or pass and by close, hard tackling, 'Varsity forces McGill to abandon open play, and once more the game settles down into the old, terrible, grinding scrimmage.

"Oh, why don't they let The Don have it?" exclaims Betty. "I am sure he could get through."

The crowd seem to hold the same opinion, for they begin to call out, "Let it out, Alec. Let The Don have it."

But Campbell still plays cautiously a close game. His men are staying well, and he is conscious of a reserve in his back line that he can call upon at the fitting moment. For that moment, however, he waits anxiously, for while his scrim is playing with bulldog grit it is losing snap. True, Shock comes out of every tussle bloody, serene, and smiling as usual, but the other men are showing the punishment of the last hour's terrible scrimmage. The extra weight of the McGill line is beginning surely to tell.

It is an anxious moment for the 'Varsity captain, for any serious weakening of the scrimmage line is disastrous to the morals of a team.

"You are holding them all right, old chap," says old Black, taking advantage of a pause in the play while little Brown's leg is being rubbed into suppleness.

"I'd like to open out, but I'm afraid to do it," replies Campbell.

"Well, I think your back line is safe enough. Their scrimmage is gaining on you. I almost think you might venture to try a pass game."

It is upon the passing of his back line that Campbell has in previous matches depended for winning, and with ordinary opponents he would have adopted long ago this style of play, but these McGill men are

so hard upon the ball, so deadly in tackling, and so sure in their catch that he hesitates to give them the opportunities that open play affords. But he has every confidence in The Don, his great half back; he has never played him in any match where he has not proved himself superior to everything in the field, and he resolves to give him a chance.

At this moment something happens, no one knows how. A high punt from behind sends the ball far up into the 'Varsity territory, and far before all others Bunch, who seems to have a kind of uncanny instinct for what is going to happen, catches the ball on the bound and makes for the 'Varsity line with a comparatively open field before him. Fifteen yards from the line he is tackled by Martin, but ere he falls passes to Huntingdon, his captain, who, catching neatly and dodging between Campbell and another 'Varsity man, hurls his huge weight upon Pepper, who is waiting for him, crouched low after his usual style.

The full back catches him fairly and throws him over his shoulder. As both come heavily to the ground there is a sickening crack heard over the field. The McGill captain, with Pepper hanging desperately to his hips, drags himself over the line and secures a touchdown for McGill.

At once there rises a wild tumult of triumph from the McGill contingent, but after a minute or two the noise is followed by an anxious hush, and when the crowd about the prostrate players is dispersed Pepper is seen lying on his face tearing up the grass. Two or three doctors rush in from the crowd, and before

long Pepper is carried off the field. His leg is broken.

A number of people begin to leave the field.

"Oh, isn't it horrible," groans Betty, turning very pale. "Shall we go home, Mrs. Macgregor?"

Helen looks at the old lady anxiously.

"Here is Hamish," she replies quickly. "We will wait."

Shock runs up, much disturbed.

"Awful, is it not?" he says to Helen, who is the first to meet him. "I am sorry, mother, you are here."

"Will they be stopping, think you, Hamish?" asks his mother. There is a shade of anxiety in her voice.

"No, mother, we must play it out."

"Then I will just be waiting for the end," says the old lady calmly. "Poor laddie—but he was bravely defending his post. And you must just be going, Hamish man."

As Shock moved off the young ladies and Lloyd looked at her in amazement. It was in some such spirit that she had sent her husband to his last fight twenty years ago.

A cloud of grief and foreboding settles down upon the 'Varsity team, for Pepper is not only a great favourite with them, but as a full back they have learned to depend upon him. Huntingdon is full of regrets, and at once offers Campbell and the referee to forego the touchdown, and to scrimmage at the point of tackle.

"He would have held me, I know, bar the accident," he says.

The referee is willing, but Campbell will not hear of it.

"Put off a man," he says shortly, "and go on with the game."

Bate is moved from half to full, a man is taken from the scrimmage to supply his place, McGill makes a similar shift, and the game proceeds.

Huntingdon fails to convert the touchdown into a goal. Bate kicks back into touch, and with desperate determination 'Varsity goes in to even the score.

Campbell resolves now to abandon the close game. He has everything to win, and to lose by four points is as much a loss as by a dozen.

"Play to your halves every time," he orders the quarters, and no sooner is play begun than the wisdom of the plan is seen. With a brilliant series of passes the 'Varsity quarters and halves work the ball through the McGill twenty-five line, and by following hard a high punt, force the enemy to a safety touch. No sooner has the McGill captain kicked off than the ball is returned and again McGill is forced to *rouge*.

The score now stands four to two in favour of McGill, but the 'Varsity men have come to their strongest and are playing with an aggressiveness that cannot be denied. Again and again they press their opponents behind their twenty-five line.

"Oh," exclaims Betty, "if there is only time they can win yet. Do find out," she says to Lloyd, "what

time there is left." And Lloyd comes back to announce that there are only six minutes to play.

"Hamish will be telling me that a game is often won in the last minute," remarks the old lady encouragingly.

As Campbell perceives his desperate case, he begins to swear low, fierce oaths at his quarters. In all their experience of their captain the 'Varsity men have never heard him swear, and they awake to the fact that they are face to face with a situation entirely unparalleled in their history as a team. They are being defeated, and about to lose their one chance of the proud distinction of holding the championship of Canada.

From man to man Campbell goes as he finds opportunity, his face white, his eyes ablaze, adjuring, urging, entreating, commanding, in a way quite unusual with him.

A new spirit seizes the men. Savagely they press the enemy. They are never off the ball, but follow it as hounds a hare, and they fling themselves so fiercely at their foe that in every tackle a McGill man goes down to earth.

But try as they may it seems impossible to get the ball to The Don. The McGill men have realised their danger and have men specially detailed to block the great 'Varsity half. Again and again The Don receives the ball, but before he can get away these men are upon him.

At length, however, the opportunity comes. By a low, swift pass from Brown, Martin receives the ball