



The Pomfret High School Bull Fight.

"Old Wiegant's closed up the lower meadows, and we can't cross any more to the Neck!"

Will Comfort, right tackle of the Pomfret high school football team, made the announcement with disgust in his voice. The meadows had been a sore point between the high school boys and Mr. Wiegant, who lived a solitary life up in the old farm house back of the Neck. The Neck was town property, and the boys made it a playground after school hours, but unfortunately for them, they had to cross the meadows to reach it, or walk nearly three miles out of their course around the bend in the river.

"What's he closed it up with?" demanded Wilson, the heavy center-rush of the team. When the young right-tackle said, "With a new board fence," Wilson laughed and added: "I'd like to see the board fence that could keep me out."

There was general approval of this remark, and several shouted: "Let's go down now and rush it! Bet it won't stand five minutes!"

It was half a mile to the meadows, but the football eleven made it seem less than a quarter. With the fleetness of unleashed hunting dogs they rushed down the road, shouting in chorus an impromptu doggerel, which sounded like:

"Wiegant! Wiegant! Wiegant! O, you can't! O, you can't—can't! Keep us out!"

There was the brand-new board fence obstructing their way, fully six feet high. The captain of the team stopped ten yards away, dropped his football, and with a powerful kick sent it flying straight up into the air. It sailed beautifully heavenward and then disappeared over the fence.

"Now then! After it, every man!" he shouted.

Every member of the team made a wild rush forward, forming a close rush line, and landed plump against the boards. Eleven boys, weighing on an average 120-pounds each, made an impact of nearly three-quarters of a ton. This weight hurled against a board fence is bound to make posts and pickets shake and quake.

The fence bent forward, yielded several inches, with a groan, and then snapped two of the upright posts short off, precipitating the whole thing on the ground inside of the meadows. Six of the football players tumbled over with the fence and nearly landed on the head of Mr. Wiegant, who had been standing on the other side.

For a few moments there was a wild scramble. Those who could picked themselves up and ran after the football. The others untangled themselves and retreated to the road. Mr. Wiegant collared two of the boys and threatened them with dire punishment. After extreme trouble they wriggled loose and joined their comrades in the road.

"Wiegant! Wiegant! Wiegant! O, you can't! O, you can't—can't! Keep us out!"

The chorus drowned the old man's threats and protestations. Vainly he tried to speak, explain and condemn. The boys heard nothing of what he said.

This episode was the culmination of a long series of hostilities which had made bitter enemies between the two. It was the fault of both. Mr. Wiegant entertained a natural antipathy to boys, and he was unkind and uncharitable toward them, resenting the smallest trespass upon his premises. The boys on their side accepted the old man as a cross, grumpy and unjust neighbor, ever ready to find fault with and threaten them with punishment.

There were memories of midnight marauding expeditions, when apple orchards and melon patches suffered; but these were offset by exasperating little attacks upon the boys' plans for outdoor sports whenever they approached the old man's premises.

The climax of the petty grievances seemed to be reached when Mr. Wiegant refused them permission to cross the meadows to reach the neck where they were practicing hard for the next football season.

Not one of the eleven believed for an instant that the breaking down of the fence would settle the matter. They understood too well the stubborn nature of the man. So several

days later they were prepared to find the fence patched up again.

"We won't rush it this time," remarked the captain of the team, "but we'll see who can get under or over it first."

Once more the ball was kicked in a curve over the topmost rail, and the eleven boys made a mad rush for it. They climbed over and under the fence, and wriggled through holes and between pickets that seemed too small to accommodate a lad of five.

The whole eleven were in the meadows and racing for the ball, when suddenly Will Comfort's loud voice shouted warning:

"Get back to your line! Get back to your line!"

They were so accustomed to obeying this order that, like trained soldiers, they made a simultaneous rush for the fence, without understanding the meaning of the warning. It was well that they did, for suddenly there rushed down upon them an enormous black bull, with fire of fury in his eyes.

They were over the fence none too soon. One of the last over was helped by the horns of the ugly beast, which scraped his legs in an angry flourish, and then butted heavily against the board fence.

There were eleven frightened football players when they finally faced their enemy, with a six-foot board fence between them. The bull, disapproving of the condition of his temper better than words could.

"Whew! That was a good rush!" said Wilson, the heavy center. "I'd like to have that bull on our tackle line when we play Beardsley school team. Wouldn't we make it hot for them?"

Nobody laughed at this, for all were too much excited over their narrow escape to see the humorous side of it.

"That's a dirty trick of old Wiegant's," said one of the players.

"A beastly trick, you mean," chimed in Wilson. "Yes, 'tis a beastly trick."

"We'll pay old Wiegant back for this. Some of us might have been killed. That bull should—"

Somebody interrupted by starting the chorus:

"Wiegant! Wiegant! Wiegant! O, you can't! O, you can't—can't!"

Then the ludicrousness of the song seemed to strike the singers and they did not finish. It was Wilson who added with a laugh:

"I guess he can keep us out as long as that bull is there."

Nobody attempted to deny that, but a council of war was held immediately on the fence, in the very face of the bellowing, pawing enemy. To emphasize their feelings the young warriors occasionally hurled stones and sticks at the angry bull, which did not pacify him in the least.

For a full hour they considered the situation and then adjourned the meeting until another time. For a week the bull problem occupied so much of the attention of the team that little practice was had. No scheme appeared satisfactory and the bull, with Mr. Wiegant in the back ground, held the camp.

Every time they passed the fence they spent some time in worrying the bull, throwing stones at him, and shooting arrows from a bowgun at his tough hide. But the bull on such occasions withdrew to a safe distance, and waited for the boys to climb over the fence. They never yielded to this temptation, except to show the animal that they could get over and back again before he could reach their sides.

Tormenting the bull and singing college songs, in which Mr. Wiegant's name was strangely and peculiarly mixed, became monotonous after a week, and gradually the matter lost its interest. The boys diligently walked the three miles around the bend of the river and played their football on the Neck without interference.

One day they were coming home as usual, tired with the day's practice, and a little out of sorts at the prospect of a three-mile walk when by crossing the meadows they could shorten it by more than two-thirds. "I wish old Wiegant's bull would

turn on him and give him a taste of his horns," one of the boys remarked, as they approached the board fence.

"Yes, 'twould serve him right," grumbled another. "There's the old man now in the meadows."

The boys peered between the lower boards. Mr. Wiegant had stopped to pick up something, and while his back was turned to them the bull had grown suddenly alert and active. With head down the animal made a rush for the stooping man.

Though only a few minutes before several had expressed a wish that the bull would attack its owner, every boy was now climbing on the fence, and shouting frantically:

"Look out! Look out! The bull! Mr. Wiegant, the bull!"

The cry startled the angry bull so that his speed was reduced somewhat but when the man turned to face him he renewed the charge. Mr. Wiegant saw the animal, and tried to run, but the bull struck him and flung him into the air. He rose six feet, and then fell heavily upon his back. The bull, thoroughly enraged now, bellowed aloud, and made another charge. The man attempted again to avoid the horns, but they caught him in the legs and turned him over and over.

The boys had stood almost paralyzed. But as the bull made ready for another charge, Wilson dropped over the fence and landed in the meadows. The others followed him almost instinctively, and when he shouted they obeyed.

"Form in line, fellows, and get ready to tackle the bull!" he shouted. "Keep away from his horns, but worry him until Mr. Wiegant can get away. Scatter now, and look sharp!"

Like Indians they rushed across the meadows, shouting, yelling, singing and whistling. The outbreak made the bull stop and look up. He watched this demonstration with dazzled eyes, and pawed the ground angrier than ever. On came the football team, but the bull, apparently arguing that a bird in the hand is worth eleven in the bush, determined to give his victim one more toss before attacking the new enemy.

With a sudden inspiration Wilson dropped his football and kicked it straight at the animal. It curved upward and landed right on the nose of the creature. The bull swerved around and glared at the boys.

Then, with tail in the air and nose rubbing the ground, he waited for the new enemy to approach nearer. This was Mr. Wiegant's opportunity and he crawled heavily toward the fence. For a moment the bull failed to see him, and then he swung around and started for him again.

It would have gone hard with him had the animal caught him, but before the bull had taken a dozen paces a thick cloth landed on his horns and hung down over his eyes. He flung his head up angrily, and Wilson, now coatless and hatless, jumped to one side.

The bull tossed and pulled at the coat until it was in shreds. Then it renewed the attack, choosing Will Comfort, who happened to be the nearest. Will was an expert runner and dodger, but he had met more than his match. The bull soon overtook him, but this time three coats and as many hats were flung straight at the hanging head. These decorated his horns in such a fanciful way that the animal could see nothing.

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Turning to his obedient crowd of players, Wilson shouted:

"Now, rush for the fence! Quick!" There was a wild scramble for the big fence, and while the bull was tearing the coats and hats to pieces and trampling them, the boys reached a place of safety. Mr. Wiegant had already climbed the first rail and the boys hurried him over the others faster than he had ever gone before.

The next moment the bull charged up to the fence and stopped within a foot of it, bellowing and roaring loudly and digging the dirt and sod up with his front paws as if it was snow. An angrier creature never faced an enemy, and the boys quaked at the bloodshot eyes and inwardly felt thankful that a stout fence stood between them.

"Shall we help you up to the house?" asked Wilson, noticing the white, bloodless face of Mr. Wiegant.

"No, no; I can walk it," the old man replied. "I'll walk it."

He hobbled away, the boys watching him until he rounded the hill.

"Well!" was all they said.

Then they fell to recounting their deeds of valor and expatiating upon the feelings which possessed them when facing the angry bull. For several days the experience with the bull was a constant subject of thought. The team even had to go down to the meadows to prove some disputed points.

When they reached the objective point Wilson exclaimed:

"Hello! The old fence is gone! What's up?"

The fence had indeed been removed, and there was no sign of a bull in the vicinity, but on a tree near by was a new sign which read:

"THIS IS A PUBLIC THOROUGHFARE."

ALL BOYS HAVE THE RIGHT TO PASS HERE TO THE NECK. W. P. WIEGRANT.

"Well, that's a stunner!" exclaimed somebody. "That's Wiegant's way of thanking us. He's afraid we might make fun of him. Suppose we go up and ask after his health and thank him?"

There was no division of sentiment and the whole team immediately walked up the hill and approached the old farm house. They had never been there before, and they felt a little strange and nervous. They were not exactly sure of their reception.

"I'd rather charge that bull again than do this," laughed Wilson, who had recovered his humor.

But they were not left in doubt long. Mr. Wiegant hobbled out to meet them, and there was no mistaking the expression in his eyes.

The man shook hands with all of them and said:

"You've read that sign, boys. I suppose? Well, I'll go further than that, and say my whole farm is a thoroughfare for you. Go and come where you please on it, and I'll never say a word. The bull is gone; I sold him today, and he will not disturb you. Neither will I."

When the team finally left they had mutually agreed to show their old enemy that they could respect his rights and their privileges, and never once thereafter did Mr. Wiegant have reason to regret his bargain. A little mutual concession had opened the way for a complete understanding which made friends of all.

Marconigrams on the Lake.

Toronto, June 7.—The marvellous success of the Marconi system of wireless telegraphy on ocean liners has prompted a local steamboat man to place it on his steamers. Mr. Jno. Foy, manager of the Niagara river line, has been considering the matter for some time, and has arranged to have Mr. Marconi's representative in this district place instruments on the steamers Corona and Chippewa next week. The experiment will take place on the steamer Chippewa when she makes her inaugural trip of the season on June 14 to Niagara-on-the-Lake and Queenston, and a temporary station will be erected at some suitable point along the waterfront to receive the messages from the steamer on her way across the lake.

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And Tells of His Since Reaching Country.

The following letter from First Mate Jim O'Flaherty, explains itself

Bettles, Nowhere, Don't know who Don't g

Jas. O'Neill, Dawson.

Dear Jim,—Forgive me for writing again. Send me a sealed bottle. I'm ashamed to ask you to rest assure for they, too, just like this country had be

Yours—in Mosey BILLY

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