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"MARTY BROWN, MASCOT."

"Marty Brown, Mascot," is the title of a thrilling baseball story in the September St. Nicholas, by Ralph Henry Barbour. Marty was a small shub-nosed, freckle-faced youth who had been adopted as mascot by the Summerville Baseball Club, and whose chief duty was to care for the bats. After many victories, there came a day of disaster for the nine, with an injured left fielder, and no one to put in his place.

Bob Ayer meanwhile had searched unsuccessfully for a player to take the injured Webster's place, and had just concluded to apply to Vulcan's captain for one of his substitutes, when he turned to find Marty at his

"Are yer looking fer a feller to play left Yield?"

"Yes," answered Bob, cagerly. "Do you know of any one?" Marty nodded.

"Who?" "Mc."

Bob stared in surprise, but Marty looked back without flinching. can play, Bob; not like you, of course, but pretty well. And, besides, there ain't no one else, is there? Give me a show, will yer?"

Bob's surprise had given place to deep thought "Why not?" he asked himself. Of course Marty could play ball; what Summerville boy couldn't to some extent? He turned and strode to the bench, and Marty eagerly watched him conferring with the others. In a moment he turned and nodded. The last half of the last inning began with the score 12 to 9 in favor of Vulcan.

"Play carefully, fellows," shouted Vulcan's captain, as Hamilton went to bat. "We've got to shut them out."

"If youse can," muttered Marty, seated on the bench between Bob and Wolcott.

It looked as though they could. Bob groaned as Hamilton popped a short fly into the second-baseman's hands, and the rest of the fellows echoed the mournful sound.

"Lift it, Will, lift it!" implored liob as Pickering strode to the plate. And lift it he did. Unfortunately. however, when it descended it went plump into the hands of right field. In the stand half the throng was on its feet. Bob looked hopelessly at

Warner as the pitcher selected a bat. "Cheer up, Bob," said the latter, "I'm going to crack that ball or know the reason why?"

The Vulcan pitcher was slow and careful. They had taken the wearled Baker out and put in a new twirler. Warner let his first effort pass unnoticed, and looked surprised when the umpire called it a strike. But he received the next one with a hearty welcome, and sent it speeding away for a safe hit, taking first base amid

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blue-and-white-decked watchers, Hamllton hurried across to coach the runner, and Bob stepped to the plate. Ilis contribution was a swift liner that was too hot for the pitcher, one that placed Warner on second and himself on first. Then, with Hamilton and Sleeper both coaching at the top of their lungs, the Vulcan catcher fumbled a ball at which Howe had struck, and the two runners moved up The restive audience had overflowed on to the field now, and excitement reigned supreme Another strike was called on Howe, and for a moment Summerville's chances ap-

heel into the ground. "Wobster at bat!" called the scor-

peared to be hopeless. But a minute

later the batter was limping to first,

having been struck with the ball, and

the pitcher was angrily grinding his

"That's you, Marty," said Wolcott. "If you never do another thing, my boy, swat that ball."

Marty picked out a bat and strode courageously to the plate. A roar of laughter greeted his appearance.

"Got on to Blue Jeans!" "Give us a home run, kidl" "Say, now, sonny, don't fall over your pants!"

It needed just that ridicule to dispel Marty's nervousness. He was angry. How could be belp his "pants" being long? he asked himself, indignantly. He'd show those dudes that "pants" hadn't anything to do with hitting a baseball! He shut his teeth hard, gripped the bat tightl., and faced the pitcher. The latter smiled at his adversary, but was not willing to take any chances, with the bases full And so, heedless of the requests to "Toss him an easy one, Joe!" he delivered a swift, straight drop over the plate.

"Strike!" droned the little umpire, skipping aside.

Marty frowned, but gave no other sign of the chill of disappoinement that travelled down his spine. On the bench Wolcott turned to his next neighbor, and said, as he shook his bead sorrowfully:

"Hard luck! If it had only been some one else's turn now, we might have scored. I guess little Marty's not up to curves."

Marty watched the next delivery carefully-and let it pass. "Ball!" called the umpire.

Again be held himself in, although it was all be could do to keep from swinging at the dirt; white globe as it sped by him. "Two balist"

"That's right, Marty; walt for a good one," yelled Wolcott, hoping against hope that Marty might ge to first on balls. Marty made no answer, but stood there, pale of face, but cool, while the ball sped around the bases, and at last went back to the pitcher. Again the sphere sped forward. Now was uls time! With all his strength he swurg his batand twirled around on his beel! A roar of laughter awept across the diamond.

"Strike two!" cried the umpire. But Marty, surprised at his failure, yet undaunted, heard nothing save the umpire's unmoved voice. Forward flow the ball again, this times unmistakably wide of the plate, and the little man in the snuff-colored alpaca motioned to the right. "Three balls!"

Bob, restlessly lifting his feet to be off and away on his dash to third, waited with despairing heart. Victory or defeat depended upon the next pitch. A three-bagger would tie the score, a safe bit would bring Sleeper to the bat But as he looked at the pale-faced, odd-looking figure beside the plate he realized how bopeless it all was. The pitcher, thinking much the same thought, prepared for his last effort. Plainly the queer little ragamumn was no batsman, and a straight ball over the plate would bring the agony to an end. Up went his hand, and straight and sure sped the globe.

Now, there was one kind of ball that Marty knew all about, and that was a nice, clean, straight one, guiltless of curve or drop or rise, the kind that "Whitey" Peters pitched in the vacant lot back of Keller's Livery Stable. And Marty knew that kind when he saw it coming. Fair and square be caught it, just where he wanted it on the bat. All his strength, heart, and soul were behind that awing. There was a sharp crack, a sudden mighty roar from the watchers, and Marty was speeding toward first base.

liigh and far sped the bell. Center and left fielder turned as one man and raced up the field, Obeying inwetureson , she't had been playing !

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it The four of the crond grew in volume. Warner, Hob and Howe were already racing home, and Marky tunning as hard at his legal would carry him, was touching second. For up the field the ball was coming to earth slowly, gently, yet iar too quickly for the fielders

"A home run!" shrieked Wolcott. "Come on-oh, come on, Marty, my boy!"

Warner was home, now Bob, and then Howe was crossing the plate. and Marty was leaving second behind. him Would the fields catch it! He dated look no longer, but sped onward. Then a new note crept into the shouts of the Vulcans, a note of disappointment, of despair. Up the neld the centre-fielder had tipped the ball with one cutstretched hand, but had failed to catch it' At last, however, it was speeding home toward second base.

"Come out Come on, Martyl" shricked Bob.

The boy's twinkling feet spurned. the third bag and he sped homeward. The ball was settling into the second-baseman's hands The latter turned quickly and threw it straight, swift, unswerving toward the plate. "Slidet" yelled Bob and Warner, in

a breath. Marty threw himself desperately forward, there was a cloud of brown dust as the plate, a thud as the ball met the catcher's goves. The little man in the alpaca coat turned away with a grin, and picked up his mask

again. "Sale berei"

The score was 13 to 12 in Summerville's favor; Marty's home run had saved the day!

In another minute or two it was all over. Sleeper had popped a high fly into the bands of the discomfited. center-fielder, and the crowds swarmed inward over the diamond. It was a tired, hungry, but joyous

little group that journeyed back to Summerville through the soft, mellow summer twilight. Marty and the leather bat-case occupied a whole seat to themselves. Marty's freckled face was beaming with happiness and pride, his heart sang a paean of triumph in time to the clickety-click of the car-wheels, and in one band. tightly clenched, nestled a ten-dollar gold piece.

It was his share of the hundreddollar purse the nine had won. Bok had explained, and it had been voted to him unsalmously. And the next spring he was to join the team as substitute! And Marty, doubting the trustiness of his pockets, held the shining prize firmly in his fist and grinned happily over the praise and

thanks of his companions. "It wasn't nothin', that home rengany feller could have done that?" And, besides, he explained, he had? known all along that they were going to win, "Why-don't you see? --the other fellers didn't have and mascot!"

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