The Free Press' Short Story

HEADLONG

By Henry Carleton

BOOKS were open on the table between them, but they were not studying. They were too excited for that. Two opened letters contained the explanation. "Mine says that he will be down for the game Saturday," Vincent Sullivan told his roommate, Clarence Dillingham. "Guess he figures on looking us over then."

"Mine is the same. And he's inviting both of us to dine with him at his hotel afterward."

The boys studied each other across the table. For the first time in the three years that they had roomed together, there was something more than the good humored, affectionate rivalry which had led each to exert himself to outdo the other, whether in sports or in classes.

The contrast between them was remarkable and their friendship had been the wonder of the whole school. Vincent Sullivan was lean raw-boned and spare, and while he was always presentable, he was inclined to be careless in his dress when he become preoccupied with other affairs. Now he was in flannel shirt, open at the neck his sleeves rolled high over his muscular arms. Opposite him Clarence Dillingham was in a pale blue silk dressing gown. Vincent's hair was red and rumpled, while Clarence's was black and sleek. Sullivan had come from a northern Michigan village where his father was foreman of a pulp-wood camp. Dillingham had come from a wealthy home in Chicago.

"You'll probably get the job," said Vincent. "What do I know about selling bonds? I was foolish to apply."

"Oh, you'd learn quickly enough. I have some friends in the business and I can tell you they're not so smart. Anybody can do it, though it takes brains and ambition to be successful."

Vincent chuckled, not at what his roommate was saying but at some thought of his own. "I don't even know what a bond salesman looks like. Never saw one, that I know of."

"Well, they're pretty snappy. Their chief concern seems to be keeping their clothes pressed and their hair combed."

"Then that lets me out. Go ahead, Clarence. Get the place. If nothing else turns up, I can go back home and saw wood. I can do that, at any rate."

"And I can go into dad's office," replied the other. "All the same, I'd rather make good by myself. We'll both go into competition for the place—and may the best man win."

Across the table the boys clasped hands and then, embarrassed by their demonstration, forced themselves to their work. There was, however, a tenseness in the situation that frightened both of them. Always there had been rivalry, but it had been only in the relatively unimportant events of school life, and had only strengthened the bond of friendship between them. Now it was something more serious than football and English "Lit." Something more absorbing than baseball and calculus. However, there was no time to dwell upon it. It was examination week, and study came first.

Work was hard, though, under the circumstances. Both were thinking more of the baseball game to be played Saturday, the last one either of them would be in. Floyd Heaton, who had said that he would take one of them into his office, was an alumnus of Waltham College and had been one of its greatest athletes. He had not said that the game's outcome would influence his decision, but both felt, and not perhaps without reason, that it would have some bearing.

They felt that their last college game would be, in effect, their first game in the world of business, and each was determined to outplay the other. The rivalry still was friendly, but it was rivalry nevertheless. They had said, "Let the best man win," and they meant it.

The week dragged by slowly, each day intensifying the tension of their relations, and Friday evening, with the great game on the morrow, found them nearer to an open break than they had been in all their years together. Practice was concluded for the last time, and supper was over. Vincent slouched about the room, busy with liniment and manipulation of a strained leg muscle. It was nothing serious, but he was taking no chances. He was sulky and nervous; but for that matter, Dillingham also was.

"This place smells like a stable," complained Clarence. "You've used enough of that liniment to cure a half dozen horses of anything from fallen arches to broken legs."

"You should have a lot to say," he flashed, "you with all your gasoline. It smells more like a garage."

"I want to look decent to-morrow. I—I don't want to look like a tramp, and there wasn't time to send my uniform to the cleaners." He did not mention that he wanted to make a good appearance for the benefit of Heaton, but the other boy understood. Clarence worked doggedly with gasoline, taking spots off the white suit. When it was clean, he borrowed a flatiron to press it. "Want to fix yours?" he asked when he had finished.

"Huh! Won't help me to play, will it?"

"N-no, but—oh, well if you don't want to, I'm sure I don't care."

"It won't help to win that ball game. That's the main thing right now." It was on his tongue to say that probably Floyd Heaton would never notice whether his suit was clean or not, but he held back the words. When Clarence went out to return the borrowed flatiron, Vincent put away the liniment. By nine-thirty both were in bed.

They were up early in the morning for breakfast, followed by a brisk walk with the other members of the team. Lunch was very light, but neither Vincent nor Clarence cared. The thoughts of each were of the dinner to follow the game.

The hours went slowly, and for the first time, the two friends found that they had nothing to say to each other. Both were on edge; their nerves were taut; they were at a pass where a word would have put them at swords' points. At last it was time to go to the gymnasium to dress, and they were glad. Action was the one thing that both craved more than anything else.

Vincent stamped into the dressing room and hurried into his uniform. He tore his shirt in putting it on and never noticed. He shoved his feet roughly into his shoes and broke a lace. He tied it together again; then he ran savagely out to the field.

Clarence, on the other hand, dressed carefully. He was particular not to get his freshly-cleaned uniform on the dusty floor; he was painstaking with his striped socks, that they should fit smoothly, with the rings parallel and even. Before going to the field he combed his hair, and put his cap on with such nicety as not to rumple its sleekness.

Really there were two games that day. There was the game between Waltham College and Norwich College, played by eighteen men and witnessed by five thousand spectators. There was the other game, played by two men. This, too, was in full view of the five thousand, but actually only one man saw it. Of the two games, perhaps Floyd Heaton was more interested in that between Sullivan and Dillingham.

Heaton smiled at the cheers which greeted the appearance of Sullivan, his uniform already in disarray, at the plate for batting practice, and intently watched the athlete who stood oblivious of everything but the business at hand. Again he watched Dillingham and studied him. Clarence smiled a reply to the cheering, and looked about him, alert, interested in everything that was happening. He looked into the stands and nodded at friends. He joked with the other players. It was easy to see that he was popular. Even on the baseball field, Dillingham was the polished, suave, immaculate gentleman, while Sullivan, wearing the same uniform, seemed still to be wearing the same flannel shirt and corduroys and boots in which he had come from his home in the little lumber town.

Heaton's friends were commenting upon the contrast offered by the appearance of the two men. Sullivan was the loser in their comparisons. "Don't talk," said Heaton. "I have to choose one of them to come into my office. I want to watch them."

The man next to him laughed. "That shouldn't be hard. One look is enough. Does Sullivan look like a bond salesman? No. He looks like a lumberjack; but Dillingham—ah, there's a man to grace a brief case."

"Wait," Heaton advised, determined to withhold his judgment until after the game.

Out on the field the umpire shouted "Play ball!" and the game was under way.

Sullivan was in centre field, Dillingham in left. The first Norwich batter sent a long fly to Dillingham, and Clarence, running toward the fence, took it with one hand. The next hitter dropped a Texas leaguer behind second base and Sullivan, racing in at top speed, took it at his shoe-strings. The next batter was struck out. Honors in the two-man game were even.

Dillingham was fourth on the batting list and came up with two out and a man on base. He popped a fly to shortstop and Waltham was retired without scoring. In the second inning, Sullivan, following Dillingham in the batting order, was the first at bat. He struck out. Again honors were even.

For eight innings the game between the two friendly rivals was even. Hit for hit, put-out for put-out, they were neck and neck. Neither could gain a point's advantage. Their records on the scorer's book were the same.

Norwich College was ahead, however. The score was three to two at the start of the ninth inning. Waltham, at the same time, would have the last chance to score.

The first Norwich batter was out on a caught fly. The second went out to Dillingham, who took the liner without moving. The third slammed to centre, but Sullivan took it against the fence.

Waltham College went in to bat for the last time, with the advantage of having the heavy end of the batting order to start off with. Cooper, the rangy first baseman, stepped to the plate. The first pitched ball went by him, a called strike. The second he swung at and missed, but the next he knocked down to the shortstop who made a bad throw to first and Cooper was safe on the error. Harris, the catcher, was next. The first ball came straight and he met it just to early, the Norwich third baseman catching the foul close to the bleachers. With one man on base and one man out, Norton, shortstop, went to bat. He was a safe, steady man, whose average was just under .300. He let the first two balls go by, but the Norwich pitcher was in top form and they were called as strikes. The next one was outside and the one after that was too low; then Norton met the ball for a hit that looked good for two bases. He was too slow, however, and only got one while Cooper got all the way to third.

Heaton, in his box back of the plate, was on the edge of his chair. He was, however, more intent upon the men in the dugout than upon what was happening on the playing field.

Dillingham paid little attention to the game, Heaton noticed. Instead, he was chatting with friends who were in the boxes above the dugout. His cap was off, revealing his sleek black hair, carefully brushed and in place. His uniform was as clean and unwrinkled as evening clothes. Dillingham was, in short, perfectly turned out and perfectly at ease.

Sullivan, on the other hand, was on the bench, hunched far forward and intent upon the Norwich pitcher. Sullivan's uniform was dirty his shirt torn, a sock twisted from sliding a base earlier in the game. His cap was under his feet and his red hair waved in the wind, while his brown face was blackened in streaks from his dirty hands and from perspiration. Under his eyes were lines of mud, placed there intentionally to relieve the glare of the sun. Sullivan did not seem to know that anyone else was on the field; he was alone with that Norwich pitcher.

Heaton noticed that Dillingham did not go to bat until the Waltham captain called him by name. Dillingham calmly picked up his bat and strolled to the plate.

The score still was three to two, with two men on bases and only one out. The situation was made to order, and after he had studied the play, Dillingham grinned cheerfully at the Norwich moundsman.

The first ball Dillingham let go. It was a ball. The second he ticked and it dropped behind the stand, the third was a called strike.

With two strikes against him, Dillingham was in earnest. He took a new stance at the plate and got a firmer grip on his club. Cooper took a long lead from third base and Norton was on his toes off first.

The Norwich pitcher smiled quietly, his toes for an instant motionless, and confidently, as he wound up, poised on then like a steel spring unwound himself, shooting the ball straight and true.

Dillingham swung hard, but even as he swung he knew that he had missed the ball. It had been a drop and his swing had been fully an inch too high.

Slowly he walked to the dugout as Sullivan bounded out whirling three clubs around his head. There were two men out now. It was the last chance.

Sullivan never took his eyes off the pitcher. The first ball pitched was wide and Sullivan pulled his swing. The pitcher nodded slightly, meaningly, at catcher. Sullivan watched him. The pitcher wound up, poised for an instant as before, seemingly suspended by some unseen support, and then untwisted. As before, the ball came straight and true.

It was that drop ball again, but Sullivan was ready for it. As the curve broke, his bat met it squarely with a sharp crack.

Cooper raced for the plate. Norton plunged down to second, his short legs working like pistons, but there was no need to hurry. Sullivan, as he ran toward first base, saw the ball soar over the fence and drop out of sight. He jogged around the diamond as the Norwich team trotted in from the field. At the right field fence the score was being changed to: Waltham, 5; Norwich, 3.

A few minutes later Vincent and Clarence were back in their room, struggling into starched shirts, unaccustomed stiff collars, and dinner jackets.

"You win, I guess," said Clarence. "No man who ever played baseball could resist a home run like yours, two out, two on, and two runs needed to win. It all goes to show that of the two of us—"

"Now, Clarence, don't start that. No business man would let a home run interfere with his judgment. What was it you said about bond salesmen? Pretty dressy? Oh, I guess you'll get the place, all right, and I'll go back to sawing logs."

Dinner, with a baseball victory for the topic of conversation, was anything but a dull affair. Floyd Heaton was enthusiastic. He was back in the old days before his hair had grayed, in the days when he had played for Waltham. "That was a wonderful hit," Heaton said to Sullivan when the coffee had been served. "Wonderful." It was the first time he had mentioned it, and Vincent and Clarence exchanged quick glances that were full of meaning. "I have made up my mind now, as to which of you I want in my office," he continued. "You know, Wellington said that Waterloo was won on the playing fields of England. Well, I feel the same way. Business battles are won in sports before men leave college." He paused, studying the younger men across the table. They waited.

"Sullivan," said Heaton, at last, "I want you."

Vincent flushed and stammered. "I—I thank you, of course, but—well, is it because of that hit? If it is, I—I can't take the job."

"It is," said Heaton, and added, "in a way."

"I should dislike to think that you would judge a man's busines ability simply by a lucky play."

Heaton smiled. "You dont understand, I'm afraid." He turned to Dillingham. "Why did you miss that third strike?" he asked abruptly.

"It was a drop, and I wasn't looking for it," was the ready answer.

"And what was the ball on which you got the home run?" asked Heaton, turning to Sullivan.

"The same."

Heaton nodded. "There," he said, "is the answer. You, Dillingham, didn't know it was going to be a drop, but Sullivan did, and I did, too. Sullivan was studying the pitcher all through the game, and when he wound up, he knew from his manner just what the throw would be."

"While I," said Clarence, "was busy talking with my friends."

"Exactly. You see my choice is not based on a lucky play, but on the things which led up to a play in which luck did not enter. In business, as in baseball, the important thing is to know what the other man is going to do before he does it."

Sullivan blushed.

Dillingham flicked a speck of dust from his sleeve.

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A TREE RING CALENDAR

Pushing the horizons of history back to seven centuries before the coming of Columbus, solving puzzles of ancient Indian ruins in the Southwest, revealing tense dramas in the lives of prehistoric men, and adding invaluable information to our knowledge of weather and its mysterious cycles, a 1200-year tree-ring calendar has been pieced together by Dr. Andrew E. Douglass, of the University of Arizona at Tucson.

So important is his work that he has just been awarded the $2,500 Research Corporation Prize by the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D. C.

One of the most dramatic results of his 30-year study of tree rings was discovering the exact age of Pueblo Bonito, the mysterious metropolis of the ancient Southwest. This oldest known Pueblo ruin has been an archeological enigma for generations. Its prehistoric inhabitants had no written language and they left no calendars.

Dr. Douglass, however, has read their secrets in wood and charcoal that once were beams in the ancient dwellings. He found the city was under construction in A. D. 919, and reached its heyday in 1067.

Similarly, by making microscopic examinations of ancient timbers in other ruins and by boring cores from beams still in use, he has dated 40 other communities in which early tribes once made their homes. Among these are the canyon palaces of the ancient Arizona cliff dwellers, one of which, its timbers reveal, was being built in 1066, the year William the Conqueror invaded the British Isles.

It was an investigation of sun spots that led Dr. Douglass, an astronomer, to his unique study of old woods, in 1901. As everyone knows, each ring in the cross section of a log represents a year of growth. In addition, the width of the ring varies according to the amount of rainfall. Thus the astronomer was able to note the effect of 11-year sun spot cycles on rain and drought by examining rings of century-old pines and Douglas firs.

Continuing his researches, he studied beams that had been shaped by stone axes centuries before the coming of the white man, and charred timbers dug from the oldest ruins. In the end, by overlapping specimens and matching rings, he pieced together a remarkable wooden calendar that reaches back to A. D. 700.

Besides allowing the accurate dating of any ruin containing timbers, this tree-written record forms a precise 1200-year calendar of rains and droughts.

In it, Dr. Douglass found recorded the dramatic story of a great catastrophe, unknown to history, which afflicted the inhabitants of the Southwest about the time of the last Crusade. In the year 1275, the tree-ring records show, there was abundant rainfall—the last for 20 years. Before the dawn of America's written history, this terrible drought, during which no rain fell on the high plateaus, left its mark upon every living thing.

The Indians changed their mode of life, and for a time the populous Pueblo cities were abandoned.

In translating these diaries kept by ancient trees, Dr. Douglass has found ample evidence of long-time weather cycles in which conditions re-occur, changes taking place over 100-year and 300-year periods. He also proved definitely that a thousand years ago, rain in the Southwest was far more plentiful than at present.

His 12-century graph gives science the first opportunity to study precise weather records extending far beyond the days of the first weather bureaus. These records promise to play a pioneer part in making long-range weather forecasting an actuality.

All told, Dr. Douglass has examined more than half a million rings in his fireproof basement workshop at Tucson. When he completes a study of a new specimen, he plots the high points of rain and drought on a piece of paper. Then he can easily determine the exact age of the wood by moving its graph, in the manner of a slide rule, along the master chart that covers the whole 1200 years, until drought lines match. Never he reports, has he found two logs that "fingerprinted" exactly alike unless they were produced at the same period.

In his wood-hunting trips, Dr. Douglass has covered most of the Southwestern plateau country where ruins are found. He is now adding cross sections of stumps from the famous redwood trees of northern California. By studying them, he hopes to push the horizon of accurate weather history back 3000 years.—Popular Science Monthly.

Nearly, all children are subject to worms, and many are born with them. Spare them suffering by using Mother Graves' Worm Exterminator, an excellent remedy.

14 DAYS of UNPARALLELED ENTERTAINMENT

The dawn of Friday, August 26th, ushers in the fifty-fourth consecutive Canadian National Exhibition. From the impressive opening and up to midnight of Sept. 10, hundreds of thousands of happy visitors will cast away dull care and enjoy in full measure the varied and inspiring programme of the world's largest annual exposition.

Each day something different. On Opening Day the women's world championship Marathon swim. Saturday, Warriors' Day—features the largest veteran's parade and re-union held in Canada with military and naval tattoo in the evening, combining the first presentation of the romantic pageant "The Triumph" with 1500 performers on 1000 foot stage, pyrotechnic display, scarlet-coated Dragoons on steeds that perform to music, and a marvellous, entrancing tableaux. Spare the time for many a day at the Exhibition this year.

DAYS OF EXHIBITION, 1932

Fri., Aug. 26—Opening Day Ceremonies—Women's Marathon Swim.
Sat., Aug. 27—Warriors' Day—Mammoth Veteran's Parade—Naval and Military Tattoo—First showing of grandstand pageant "The Triumph." Exhibition 2000-Voice Chorus.
Mon., Aug. 29—Young Canada's Day.
Tues., Aug. 30—Highways and Automotive Day.
Wed., Aug. 31—Retail Merchants' and Service Clubs' Day, 7th Marathon Swim for world championship.
Thurs., Sept. 1—Music, Radio and Women's Day. Exhibition Chorus.
Fri., Sept. 2—Press Day.
Sat., Sept. 3—Manufacturers', Athletic and Floral Day.
Mon., Sept. 5—Labor Day.
Tues., Sept. 6—International and Aviation Day. Exhibition Chorus.
Wed., Sept. 7—Agriculturists' Day.
Thurs., Sept. 8—Transportation and Commercial Travellers' Day.
Fri., Sept. 9—Live Stock Review Day.
Sat., Sept. 10—Citizens' and Public Utilities Day—Exhibition Chorus.

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MINDING YOUR OWN BUSINESS

By Arthur B. Rhinow

A lady of mature years overheard the conversation of two little girls in a store:

"My mother gave me twenty-five cents to put on the collection plate in church," one said to the other; "but I'm not going to do it. I'm going to use some of that for myself."

"But, little girl," the lady ventured to intrude, "that is stealing."

"Do you know what you could do?" the little girl snapped back. "You could mind your own business."

That was just one of the metropolitan movies of every day life, but it moves us to serious thought.

You made a mistake, little girl, when you insinuated that your dishonesty was none of the elderly lady's business. It was her business, even though you were strangers to each other.

There are people who believe that it would be for the benefit of all if everybody were allowed to do just as he pleases without any interference from anybody else. They argue that by experience, including sufferings and failures, the individual would really come to himself and develop a strong character. He might, if he survived. Many would go down under the strain. The price humanity would pay in manhood and womanhood staggers us even as we only imagine such experiments. Besides, the theory is fallacious.

The individual is entitled to just so much personal liberty as is consistent with general welfare. Unless each one curbs his own liberty so as not to interfere with the liberty of others, we shall have chaos worse than the jungle.

And the dishonesty of one is the concern of all, a child's theft of a few pennies as well as graft in high places. If we say, "That's none of my business," we are culpably indifferent.

LET HIM DISAPPEAR

The John D. Rockefeller of to-day is a very different person from the Rockefeller of 30 years ago who, enveloped in a gale of bitterness, was dour and secretive.

"John, why don't you answer these slanders?" asked a friend walking with him along a path of the Forest Hill estate. "Why let people call you a hypocrite and crook?"

The president of the Standard Oil Company silently pointed to a worm wriggling along the path. After a moment he said: "If I step on that worm I will call attention to it. If I ignore it, it will disappear."

A COMMON HABIT

"I hereby sentence you to ninety years in the state penitentiary. Have you anything to say to the court?"

"Well, I guess you're pretty liberal with another man's time."

"It's lovely honey—how much do you want?"

All her neighbors wonder how Ed. Baker's wife gets such good prices for her honey. But Mrs. Baker's secret is simple. She sells by Long Distance telephone.

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