

Walter Camp—Maker of Watches and Football Players

By Hubert M. Sedgwick

Illustration from Photograph

ASK a Yale man anywhere "who is Walter Camp?" and the answer comes bubbling up, "First in peace, first in war," etc. Yet that is not all. Ask a New England business man the question and he will say, "Head of one of the biggest manufacturing concerns in Connecticut."

Camp leads a double life. Athletes and college men are proud to point to him as their inspiration and example, and the shining star of their firmament, and business men hail him as equally luminous in their sphere. Of a two-sided man it was once said: "Oh, doctors call him a baseball player and baseball players call him a doctor." This mistake is never made about Camp. He is welcomed by athletes as one of their king-pins and by business men as

one of their most successful number. Few college men know that Mr. Camp has a business side and business men, who don't read the sporting pages, haven't any idea that he is extensively in athletics.

Only one criticism has been brought against Mr. Camp, that of being too successful. The grumbling against him be-

gan way back in the early eighties when he led the short stops of the old intercollegiate baseball league both in fielding and batting. They complained that he had finished his academic course, was simply a medical student and they wanted him to make way for other rivals. When he codified the rules for modern football the other members of

the committee grumbled that he had made a set that he understood better than they did, and that, therefore, Yale was bound to win oftener at football than its colleges could. When the Yale faculty tried to learn about the mysterious athletic fund Camp had, as treasurer of the Yale Financial Union, been storing away in the bank, year after year, to the credit of the Yale athletic association, they took their turn at grum-

bling. Their investigating committees finally learned that Camp had committed the misdemeanor of accumulating for Yale \$100,000, from the surplus of ten years in athletics.

Rivals of the New Haven Clock Company have grumbled ever since he was elected president of the concern. It had not paid dividends for years before, but



WALTER CAMP AND "MIKE" MURPHY

after he was elected its president, it began to gobble up all the loose orders in sight, and it hasn't missed a dividend since.

Mr. Camp is a living picture of Yankee organization and success. Coming to Yale a spindle-shanked youth as a member of the class of '80, he wasn't rugged enough for varsity athletics till he had nearly reached his junior year, and his pre-eminence in sports dates from about the time he was graduated from the academic department. In 1881 and 1882 he had no equal among the college half-backs on the gridiron, nor among the short stops on the diamond. College baseball was then organized in a regular league, which included most of the Eastern teams, and Camp was a pioneer in scientific baseball as well as football. He was then preparing himself for the practice of medicine, but a business opening presented itself and he entered the employ of the New Haven Clock Company. He did not halt till he was chosen its president.

To those who ask "What has Walter Camp done for Yale?" the only fitting answer is that life is too short to run through the category. Yale's athletic policy for a quarter of a century has been largely his policy, and it is only fair to say, in regard to the dark period in Yale athletics from 1894 to 1897, that he had resigned as chairman of the Yale Athletic Committee, and did not resume his activity as a Yale adviser till a few months before Yale began to win again. Till 1883 football was a mongrel game. A losing team could prevent being scored upon by deliberately making safeties by touching the ball down behind its own goal. It was clear that the rules must be revised. Camp, who represented Yale at the conference, suggested the principle of five yards to be gained in four downs. The other delegates were skeptical, but Camp asked for a trial of the rule. They asked for time before adopting the principle, and as Mr. Camp was head of the Clock Company he had plenty of time. The rule was put into effect and by November 1 was working so well that every college wrote that the rule had solved the difficulty, and that there was no need of any further revision.

Three years ago when mass formations had made the game too close for popular interest, it was clearly time for a change. Camp had suggested the change himself. He wrote to Jack Hallowell, a prominent Harvard alumnus and former end rush. "Why not make the distance to be gained ten yards instead of five, and open up the game?" It took Camp a year to convince the rules committee that the change was just what the game needed, but it has been proved thoroughly since then.

When Morgan Bowman was elected captain of the Yale 1905 nine, he beat it for the factory of the New Haven Clock Company and asked Mr. Camp to take charge of the policy of the baseball team. The world had forgotten how Camp led the intercollegiate short stops and batsmen in the early eighties and had labelled himself only as a football coach.

After Bowman's team became the first Yale nine since 1898 to win a baseball championship, it dawned on the world that Camp himself had a baseball past.

No sketch of Mr. Camp would be complete without an anecdote at attempts to get an interview from that gentleman. Perhaps a surgical operation might extract one, but it would be only successful with the subject either hypnotized or under the influence of an anesthetic. Two days before the Yale-Princeton game last fall, I met him on the street wearing a worried look. "What do you think about the Yale-Princeton game?" I ventured. "I'll tell you," he said, pausing as if marshalling his thoughts for a sage reflection. Instantly I had pad and pencil out, and waited on his words. "I'll tell you," said Camp, from the depths of his wisdom, "I shall be mighty glad when it's over."

Walter Camp is a dangerous man, dangerous in a world of competition, and the struggle for existence, because he has outstripped most competitors. Walter Camp is a menace to athletics. At least, that is the opinion of those who said that it was suspicious that under his direction Yale should have saved a surplus of \$100,000 from the athletics of ten years while other universities were having to make up a deficit for as large an amount.