

# The Boys' Realm

*of Sport & Adventure.*



**THE ARMY CHAMPIONS**  
A MILITARY FOOTBALL TALE  
By CAPTAIN MALCOLM ARNOLD





# REDFERN MINOR.

A Rattling Long Instalment of Charles Hamilton's Fascinating School Tale.

**THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS ARE:**

**SIDNEY REDFERN**, a bright, fun-loving lad, who is a new pupil at St. Dorothy's School.  
**ARTHUR REDFERN**, Sidney's elder brother, who is a prefect in the Sixth Form. Arthur Redfern is inclined to be easily led, and is under the by-no-means good influence of  
**RANSOME**, another Sixth-Former, a slacker, and a good-for-nothing.  
**SKELTON** and **BROWN**, two Fourth-Formers, and leaders of the Classical side of St. Dorothy's.  
**TAPPY MORGAN**, **VERNON**, and **RAKE**, the leaders of the Modern side at St. Dorothy's, deadly rivals of Skelton and Brown.

At St. Dorothy's there is a deadly and everlasting feud existing between the Classical and Modern sides. At the time of the arrival of Sidney Redfern, the captain of the Fourth Form, who has always been elected from the Classical side, has just left, and affairs are in a complicated state. There are exactly as many Classics in the Fourth as there are Moderns, and the result of the election for a new captain is bound to be a tie. Now Sidney Redfern has arrived, however, his vote will turn the scale one way or the other.

After much persuasion from both sides, Sidney votes for the Classics, to the rage and humiliation of the Moderns.

A few weeks later St. Dorothy's is playing a cricket match away with a rival school named Lexham. This is a very important match, and all St. Dolly's intend being present.

**Ransome's Evil Influence.**

Arthur Redfern is playing for St. Dolly's, and as both he and Ransome are greatly in debt to a book-maker named Cunliffe, Ransome tries to persuade Arthur to sell the game, so that by betting on Lexham they can win enough money to pay Cunliffe.

This at first Arthur refuses to do; but later, under stress of circumstance, he gives way, and through him St. Dolly's lose the match.

That night Ransome persuades Arthur Redfern to go down to see Cunliffe to settle up with the man. Arthur does so. But it so happens that it is Redfern major's turn to see the Fourth Form into bed, and as he does not turn up to fulfil this duty, the headmaster discovers his absence, and tells Lunsford that unless Arthur Redfern has returned by eleven o'clock, to report to him. Redfern minor overhears this, and guessing where his brother is, he breaks bounds and hurries over to Wyndale, where he finds Arthur and warns him of his danger. It is then twenty minutes to eleven, so to get back to St. Dolly's in time Arthur borrows a bicycle from Cunliffe and dashes off, leaving Sidney and Ransome to follow on foot.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

**The Return.**

**D**ARK and gloomy looked the great pile of St. Dolly's as Ransome and Redfern minor halted before the gates. Redfern was tired and sleepy, and his eyes had closed involuntarily several times during that long tramp through the dark lanes. But he was more anxious than fatigued. How had Arthur fared? That was the thought he could not dismiss from his mind.

Ransome's expression was less cheerful than usual, too. If Arthur had gone up to the Head, there was trouble to look for—serious trouble, and an end of those little excursions to Wyndale.

"How are we getting in?" asked Redfern minor.

"The side gate."  
 "But it's locked."  
 Ransome grinned.  
 "That's all right!"

Redfern followed him. Ransome unlocked the side gate, and they passed in, and the cad of the Sixth carefully turned the key behind him. It struck Redfern as curious that he should have a key to that gate. Only masters and prefects were supposed to have them, and Ransome was not a prefect.

"Well, we part here," said Ransome, as the shadowy School House loomed up before them. "Get back to your dormitory and keep your mouth shut."

"Hold on!"

"What is it?" said Ransome impatiently.

"We don't want to hang about here!"

"About Arthur?"

"What about him?"

"I want to know what's happened," said Redfern quietly. "If he didn't get in before

eleven he was to go up to the Head. You know that means that he will be sacked. I want to know what's happened."

"You'll know in the morning."

Ransome's lips tightened.

"I shall know to-night, Ransome!"

Ransome started a little. It was a new tone for his fag to take with him, but he realised that he had better avoid trouble with Redfern minor at that hour, in that place.

"Well, I suppose you're anxious," he said, with a slight laugh.

"If I hadn't been anxious I shouldn't have broken bounds to get to Wyndale to warn Arthur," said Redfern quietly.

"But you can't see Arthur to-night," said Ransome uneasily. "He's gone to bed most likely. Whichever way the matter went, it's all over now. I'll tell you about it the first thing in the morning."

"That won't do!"

"You cheeky brat!" said Ransome, between his teeth. "Are you going to dictate to me?"

Redfern did not flinch.

"I am going to know about Arthur to-night!"

"You can't! Ten to one it's all right!"

"That's not good enough."

Ransome trembled with anger. He would have given a great deal to take his fag by the shoulders and shake him, and cuff him him right and left. But the slightest noise would have betrayed him.

"Look here, Redfern minor; there's no way of seeing Arthur! I have to get in at my study window myself, and you can't come in there. You'll give the whole show away if you act the giddy ox now!"

"I'm going to know whether Arthur's all right before I go to bed!"

Ransome gritted his teeth.

"You obstinate young fool!"

"That's enough! If you've nothing to suggest, I'll manage it for myself," said Redfern.

He was not in the least afraid of Ransome, especially at that moment. And he was quite determined to have his way.

The cad of the Sixth reflected for a few moments. It was evidently useless either to argue with or to bully Redfern minor, and every minute he lingered outside the house was full of peril.

"Come this way," he said at last; "I'll see Arthur, and speak to you from my study window."

"Good!"

Ransome's study window was easy of access. He swung himself up to the sill by means of a rain-pipe clamped to the wall. The window was unfastened, and in a couple of minutes the Sixth-Former disappeared into the house.

Redfern waited below.

The great facade of the School House was in complete darkness, except at one point, where a light burned in the window of Dr. Cranston's study.

The Head was still up.

Redfern minor wondered whether the scene

he dreaded had taken place in that study; whether Arthur Redfern had been called up there to explain his absence from the school; to faller out what explanation he could under the severe eyes of the doctor. Or had he reached St. Dolly's in time?

The junior would soon know. He waited there in the darkness, his eyes fixed upon the glimmering square of Ransome's study window. The Sixth-Former was a long time. Perhaps Arthur was gone to bed; perhaps—

Redfern's thoughts were interrupted by a shadow at the window. A head appeared from the gloom of the study, and looked down at him.

"Is that you, Ransome?" asked Redfern, in bated tones.

"No!"

Redfern started. It was Arthur's voice.

"It's you, Arthur?"

"Yes, Sid!"

Redfern had a curious feeling as his brother spoke. Arthur's voice was very soft. He had not called his minor "Sid" since the boy had come to St. Dolly's. That affectionate name of childhood had seemed to be quite forgotten. Even when the minor was trying to do him a service, the major had always seemed to regard him as a trouble and a worry. But what Sidney Redfern had done that night had touched the heart of Arthur. For the time, at least, he was the kind elder brother Redfern had known at home, and whom he had sorely missed at St. Dolly's.

"Is it all right, Arthur?"

"Yes!"

"You got in in time?"

Arthur laughed softly.

"Yes; I scorched for all I was worth, kid. I had nearly five minutes to spare, and Lunsford was as relieved as I was."

Redfern felt a weight rolled from his heart.

"I'm so glad, Arthur!"

"Thank you, young 'un! You've done a lot for me to-night."

"Oh, that's nothing! I'm glad—so glad! Then it's all right?"

"Right as rain! I shall have a jaw with Lunsford in the morning—but that will be all right. Get back to your dorm. now, young 'un. You'll be pretty heavy in the morning."

"Good-night, Arthur!"

"Good-night, Sid!"

Redfern minor, feeling very happy, ran away in the shadows. He heard the window close softly as he went.

Sleepy and fatigued as he was, the junior had seldom been in so light a mood. He had saved Arthur, and the clouds that had arisen between him and his brother seemed to have rolled away in consequence.

The junior stopped under the window from which he had made his exit—long ago it seemed to him. The window was closed. Was Skelton still waiting?

Redfern whistled softly.

There was no reply to the whistle—the usual

signal of the Classical juniors. Redfern's heart beat hard.

Had Skelton forgotten him and gone back to bed? The window was closed, and if it was fastened, too—

Redfern climbed the rain-pipe, and planted his knee on the sill. He peered in at the opaque glass. It was too dark within for him to see anything. He felt the sash with his hands; it was tightly closed, and refused to move to his touch.

It was fastened inside!

Redfern heart almost stopped beating as he realised it. He was shut out—shut out at midnight!

Where was Skelton?

His chum could not purposely have left him in the lurch? Why had he fastened the window, too? It occurred dimly to Redfern's mind that perhaps Skelton had gone back to the dormitory to wait there, and had fallen asleep, and perhaps some careful master had observed the unfastened window, and fastened it.

However it had happened, Redfern minor was shut out.

What was to be done?

He thought of going back to Ransome's window, but that was too late. He had heard Arthur close it as he left. Arthur would be in his own room by this time. Ransome was probably in bed, and asleep.

Redfern strained his eyes through the window. Perhaps, after all, Skelton was just inside, waiting for a signal.

He tapped on the glass.

Tap, tap, tap!

A slight sound came to him from within. He breathed more freely with relief. A dim shadow loomed on the glass from inside. He heard the sound of the catch being pushed back.

"Thank goodness!" murmured Redfern minor.

The window was opened for him. He tumbled in, and alighted on his feet, and stood breathing hard, while the unseen helper closed the window and re-fastened the catch.

"You bouncer!" said Redfern, in a whisper.

"I thought I was done, that time!"

Then he gave a sudden start. In the darkness he could not see the form beside him, but the black shadow looming up seemed too big for that of Skelton.

Redfern caught his breath.

"Who—who are you?" he stammered.

"Your Form-master," said a quiet voice.

"I think you are Redfern minor?"

Redfern reeled against the wall.

It was the voice of Mr. Ford, the master of the Fourth.

**Caught.**

**R**EDFERN stared blankly at the dim form of the Form-master. The quiet tones had seemed to cut the silence like a knife.

The junior could not speak—he could hardly breathe.

Midnight had rung out from the clock-tower. Midnight! To be caught by his Form-master, surreptitiously entering the school at such an hour! The mere thought of it made the boy's brain swim.

Caught!

He had risked it for Arthur's sake. The danger had not deterred him for a second; but now that it had fallen upon him, he did not regret what he had done. He had saved Arthur.

"You are Redfern minor?" repeated the quiet voice.

"Ye-es, sir."

"I have been waiting for you."

"Oh, sir!"

"I am sorry for this, Redfern minor. You are not the boy I should have expected it of."

"I—I—"

"I am afraid you can make no explanation, Redfern minor. But you will have an opportunity to-morrow. Go to bed now."

"I—I—"

"Go to your dormitory."

After all, what could he say? Without betraying Arthur, he could not give his reasons for going out. Redfern turned away, and went with slow, uncertain steps towards his dormitory. After the excitement, the anxiety, and the fatigue he had been through, this was a crushing blow.

He entered the long, dark, dormitory, and felt his way to his bed. He undressed quietly, in order to wake no one. But there was one who was awake. An anxious, whispering voice came through the gloom:

"Is that you, Reddy?"

"Yes, Skelton."

"Have you been nabbed?"

"Yes."

"By old Ford?"

"Yes, he caught me getting in."

"I'm awfully sorry, Reddy! It wasn't my fault. I was waiting at the window for you to come back," said Skelton, in a hurried whisper.

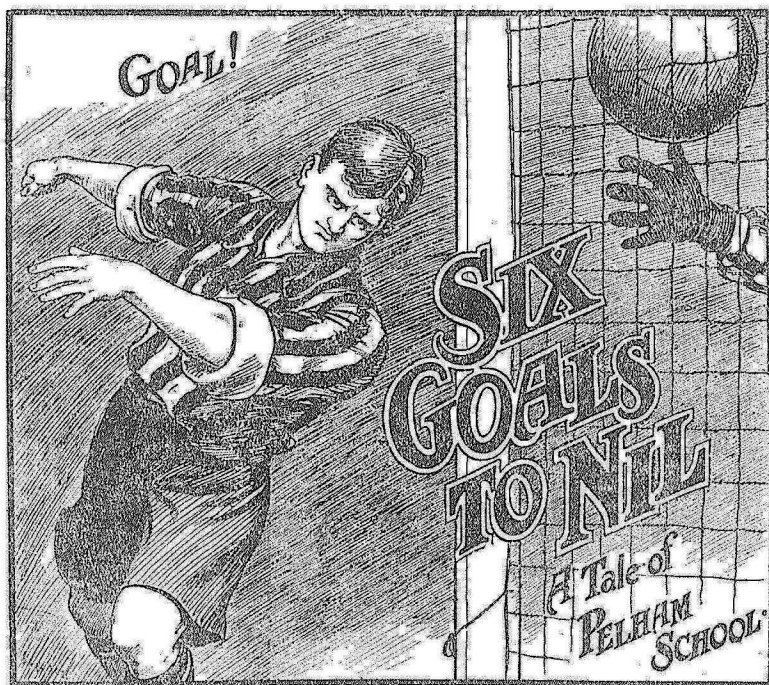
"A jolly long wait it was, too; but that doesn't matter. I heard a trap drive in, and soon after that Mr. Ford came upstairs. I bunked, of course, thinking he was going up to bed. But he didn't. He came straight to the Fourth-Form dorm., and I had only just time to bunk into bed and pretend to be asleep. I say, Reddy, he didn't see you while he was out, did he?"

"I think he caught sight of me on the Wyndale road. He was driving."

"What rotten luck!"

Redfern did not speak. Luck had certainly been against him that night, as far as he himself was concerned.

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Every Thursday.



"I thought he smelt a rat," said Skelton. "I watched him from under the bedclothes when he came in. He went from bed to bed, and he gave a curious sort of grunt when he looked at yours."

Redfern could quite believe it. "Then he went out. I followed him after a bit, and he went round looking at the windows. He grunted again when he found the landing window unfastened, and I heard him fasten it. I had no chance to help you, Reddy. He waited there without going away ever since he fastened the window. He never left the spot, except to come back here and squint into the dorm. I suppose he had a suspicion that you had one of us waiting for you, and he wasn't going to take any chances. I couldn't do anything, could I, Reddy?"

Redfern smiled grimly. "You couldn't, old chap. It was a fair catch!"

"What has he said?" "I'm to explain in the morning." "What will you say?" "Blessed if I know!"

And Redfern tumbled into bed. He was anxious, and troubled in mind but he was tired. His eyes closed the moment his head touched the pillow.

"I say, Reddy," came Skelton's anxious voice. "Eh?"

"What are you going to do?" "Sleep!" grunted Redfern.

And he closed his eyes, and did not open them again. Skelton whistled softly in the darkness. "Well, I always said he was a cool customer," he murmured. "And he went to sleep himself."

Redfern minor did not wake as usual at the clang of the rising-bell. He would have slept on another hour or two, in all probability, if his Form fellows had not kindly awakened him. Benson brought a dripping sponge, and squeezed it over his face, and Redfern came with a sudden start out of the land of dreams.

"Goo-oo-ow!" he gasped. "Time to get up," said Benson.

"Ow! I'm wet!" Benson giggled.

"That's the water," he explained. "It's always wet."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Redfern tumbled out of bed. He had been dreaming of the Green Man, of the card-table, and the coarse faces of Mr. Cunliffe and his friends, and Arthur among them. He rubbed his eyes. He felt a heavy load upon his mind, he did not know why. He usually awoke in high spirits.

But recollection came quickly. He remembered the ill-luck of the previous night, and that promised interview with the Form-master this morning.

And his usually cheery face was clouded as he turned to his morning tub. What was he to say to Mr. Ford?"

"How did you get on last night, Reddy?" asked Brown III. in a whisper, as the Classical juniors left their dormitory.

"Rotten!" said Redfern minor; and that was all the explanation he would make.

The Fourth-Form master's face was very grave as he sat at the head of the Form-table. He did not glance at Redfern minor; but Redfern knew that Mr. Ford was thinking of him, and of the previous night's escapade.

What explanation was he to make? What could he say, without bringing Arthur into the matter?

He could think of nothing. Yet to refuse to speak—He remembered the interview with Lunsford, when the St. Dolly's captain had called him to account, on the first night he had spent at the school.

Lunsford had been easy with him—had allowed him to keep silence. But that was not to be expected of a Form-master. The grave and severe expression of Mr. Ford's face showed what a serious view he took of the matter.

Redfern ate little breakfast. His appetite was as keen, as a rule, as any in the Fourth; but this morning he felt that he could not eat.

When the juniors left the breakfast-table, Mr. Ford made a sign to Redfern minor. While the rest of the Fourth poured out into the Close, Redfern quietly followed the Form-master to his study.

Ransome came out of the dining-room, and glanced towards them. He noted the expression upon Mr. Ford's face and upon Redfern's. The cad of the Sixth gave a start, and a long, low, whistle. It was the first hint he had had of trouble in store for his bag.

Redfern followed Mr. Ford into his study, and

closed the door at a sign from the Form-master. Mr. Ford did not sit down; he stood with one hand resting upon the table, and his grave eyes fixed upon the junior.

Redfern was silent; his heart was beating painfully. The crucial moment had come, and he had not in the least made up his mind what was to be said or done.

"Well, Redfern," said the Form-master, speaking slowly and quietly, "have you anything to say?"

Redfern did not speak. "Last night," said Mr. Ford, "I passed a boy, wearing the St. Dorothy's cap, on the Wyndale road at a very late hour. That was you?"

"Yes, sir."

"When I returned to the school, I waited for that boy. I discovered you getting into a window at midnight?"

"Yes, sir."

"You had been to Wyndale?" "Yes, sir."

The Form-master looked a little perplexed. "I am glad to see that you are speaking the truth, so far," he said. "You have not been long at St. Dorothy's, Redfern minor, but I had noticed you, and formed a favourable opinion of you. I can forgive scrapes due to boyish effervescence of spirits, and I had seen nothing worse than that in you. But this is a matter of the greatest seriousness. There is a place of low character in Wyndale, which it is suspected

open his lips, the Form-master went on, at last:

"I am sorry for this, Redfern. I cannot understand why you do not answer me. You will have to answer the Head. Once more, did you go to the Green Man in Wyndale?"

"Yes," said Redfern desperately. "To see Mr. Cunliffe?"

"No."

"For an unlawful purpose, at all events?" "No, sir."

"Why did you go, then?" Redfern was silent. A dark cloud gathered upon Mr. Ford's face.

Redfern, you admit having been to that low den of gambling and betting—it would have been useless for you to deny it—can you seriously maintain that you went there for an innocent purpose, and not to play cards, to make bets, or to be guilty of any offence against the rules of the college?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then why did you go?" Silence.

"You cannot tell me?" "No, sir."

"Then you cannot expect me to believe so wild and absurd a statement," said Mr. Ford quietly. "I am afraid that appearances are very deceitful in your case. Under an appearance of boyish frankness, I am afraid you conceal a nature that can only do harm to the boys you associate with. It is very clear to me that

"Yes, sir."

Skelton stood open-mouthed while the junior followed the Form-master. He was almost dazed. He watched them as far as the door of Dr. Cranston's study, and he saw the door of that dreaded apartment close upon them.

Redfern was before the Head!

Skelton gave an inward groan. It was not a light thing to be taken before the Head in any case, even when innocent, and Redfern was not innocent of breaking bounds at night.

"My only hat!" murmured Skelton, hurrying away in search of Brown III., feeling that he needed counsel at that moment. "What's going to come of it? Reddy will be expelled; and he won't say a word about that rotten brother of his! What's to be done? My only summer hat! Reddy sha'n't be sacked if I can help it!"

Bump!

Skelton, dashing on he hardly knew whither in his anxiety and excitement, ran right into Brown III., and sent him flying.

Brown sat down on the ground and glared at Skelton, who reeled against a tree, gasping for breath.

"You—you utter ass!" panted Brown. "Ow! Sorry!" gasped Skelton.

"You frabjous idiot!" "Look here, shut up! Reddy's in trouble!" said Skelton quickly.

Brown whistled. "Blessed if that chap isn't always in trouble!" he said. "What's the latest?"

"Ford's taken him into the Head." "Great Christopher Columbus!"

"Jolly serious, ain't it?" said Skelton glumly. "What's to be done? We're not going to have old Reddy sacked from St. Dolly's."

"Phew!"

"That's what it means, you know. Reddy says Ford saw him last night near Wyndale. He'll put two and two together and make five of it, as these grown-ups generally do," said Skelton, with all the wisdom of fourteen and a half. "They'll think Reddy was on the razzle, you know. Anyway, they know he broke bounds at night, and that's enough for the sack."

"He could explain—"

"Not without giving his major away." "By George, no! And that would mean the sack for Redfern major."

"You know Reddy," said Skelton, almost tearfully. "He'd let himself be cut in pieces for that major of his. Blessed if I know what he sees in him! But there you are!"

"It's rotten!"

"I know it's rotten, but what's to be done?" Brown shook his head. The problem was too much for him, and he gave it up.

"Reddy's made me promise not to say a word about his major," said Skelton miserably. "But for that, I'd be jolly well inclined to give his lordship away, and risk being called a sneak—what?"

Brown uttered a sudden exclamation. "I've got it!"

"You've got what?" asked Skelton suspiciously. "A bee in your bonnet?"

"No!" said Brown excitedly. "Redfern major's the man!"

"What on earth are you jabbering about?" "Don't you see? Redfern major doesn't know anything about it so far, but when he knows, he would be a worm if he didn't own up."

"And get sacked himself?"

"Well, any fellow would do it rather than let a chap suffer in his place," said Brown III. sturdily. "I would, Skelty, and you would."

"I—I hope so, Brownie, but—but I don't feel quite so sure about Redfern major. He's a prefect, and in the Sixth, and he's got a lot to lose. I—"

"Give him a chance, anyway. It's the only thing that can save Reddy."

"Blessed if I don't!" said Skelton. "It's a chance. I don't care if he knocks my head off for speaking to him. It's a chance to help Reddy. Where is the chap? Have you seen him?"

"He was over by the gym. a few minutes ago, talking to Ransome."

"Then I'm off!"

And Skelton pelted away in the direction of the gym. Sure enough, there were the two Sixth-Formers standing by the door. They were chatting, and Arthur's tone was very light. He was still feeling the satisfaction of his escape on the previous night, and he had no suspicion so far that his minor was in trouble.

Skelton dashed up, and halted breathless, and the two seniors looked at him. Skelton was so out of breath that he could do nothing but gasp for some seconds. Ransome took him by the ear.

"You can go and do the dying grampus act somewhere else," he said. "Cut off!"

"I w-w-w-want—"

"You want a thick ear!"

"I w-w-want to speak to Redfern major," gulped out the breathless junior.

"Go ahead!" said Arthur.

"It's about Reddy—your minor, you know," Skelton went on, panting out the words. "He was nabbed last night! Fordy collared him as he came in!"

Arthur changed colour. "What do you mean? What—"

"He's up before the Head!"

"What!"

"And he'll be sacked—sacked as sure as a gun—unless—unless you own up and save him!" panted out Skelton.

Arthur Redfern reeled against the wall of the gym.

(Another rattling, long instalment next week.)



Skelton watched them as far as the door of Dr. Cranston's study, and he saw the door of that dreaded apartment close upon them.

that some St. Dolly's boys have visited—and visit now—for purposes of gambling, or making bets with low men they meet there. I find you breaking bounds at a late hour—I meet you on the Wyndale road going in that direction. The conclusion is obvious."

Redfern turned pale. It was obvious enough, according to the light Mr. Ford had on the subject. Redfern had not thought of that.

"Had you been to the Green Man, Redfern?"

The junior did not speak.

"Come, Redfern," said the Form-master, raising his voice a little, "I must insist upon an answer."

The boy's face grew almost haggard, but he did not speak. He understood the peril he was in, but he could only save himself at his brother's expense.

"Redfern, you cannot hope to serve your cause by remaining silent," said Mr. Ford, with great patience. "If you had not been to the Green Man, you would naturally say so. If you refuse to answer, it is tantamount to a confession that you had been there."

Still Redfern was silent.

"I may take it, then, that you had been to this place?" said Mr. Ford. "It is the last thing I should have expected of you, especially of the brother of a lad who bears so high a character in the school as Redfern major."

In spite of his misery, Redfern almost smiled. There was a curious and unconscious irony in Mr. Ford's words.

"For the sake of your brother, I should like to deal with you as easily as possible," said Mr. Ford quietly. "I appeal to you to speak, Redfern. If you have anything to say that will justify me in keeping this matter from the Head, I appeal to you to say it."

Redfern's face was like chalk. Already in his mind's eye he could see the stern face of the doctor; he could hear the merciless words upon his lips; he could see himself sentenced—expelled from the school!

There was a full minute's silence. Mr. Ford waited for the junior to speak. As he did not

you had an assistant in breaking bounds last night."

Redfern kept his eyes on the floor. He was not likely to give away Skelton.

"I will not ask you his name," said Mr. Ford. "He did not go with you, and so he is probably less guilty. For the last time, Redfern, can you give me a full and credible account of what you did last night?"

Silence.

"Very well," said the Fourth-Form master quietly. "You will come with me to the Head."

He opened the study door and led the way.

**The Last Chance.**

**R**EDDY!" Skelton was calling the name in the passage when the Fourth-Form master came out of his study, followed by Redfern minor.

Mr. Ford did not look round. His face was very grave and pained in expression. He had a kind heart, and the escapade of Redfern minor troubled him more than the boys would easily have credited. But he had his duty to do.

Redfern glanced at Skelton, but did not speak. Skelton stared at him blankly, and hurried towards him. Mr. Ford, striding on ahead with a rustle of his gown, did not look back.

"What's the row, Reddy?" whispered Skelton.

"I'm going to the Head."

"My only hat!"

"I hope I shall pull through. Anyway, keep your mouth shut—you understand?" whispered Redfern hurriedly.

"But—"

"Not a word—about Arthur, you know—not a word about my going to see him," Redfern whispered. "Keep quiet—and tell Brownie."

"But—but—"

"Mind, not a word!" "All right, but—"

The whispering voices seemed to catch the Form-master's ear at last, and he glanced sternly round.