

Complete Football Yarn by Sidney Drew.

# The Boys' Realm. 1<sup>o</sup>

• OF SPORT & ADVENTURE •



The promised aeroplane had come. It circled the ground three times, and then darted away. And Neil Grafton was lying in the goalmouth, with a bullet through his heart, stone dead!

## NEIL GRAFTON'S LAST MATCH

*A STIRRING STORY  
OF LEAGUE FOOTBALL  
By SIDNEY DREW.*

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# NEIL GRAFTON'S LAST MATCH

## A Thrilling Football Story.

By SIDNEY DREW.

### THE 1st CHAPTER.

Rodney Bruce Brings Home a Visitor.

The street was dingy, dark, and miserable, one of the mean streets of a great manufacturing town. It was raining also, and a keen wind made the dim gas-lamps that hung above the doors of the numerous cheap lodging-houses flicker drearily. A man, dressed in a faded suit of black, the collar of the coat turned up, and an old billy-cock hat pulled low over his eyes, stambled along the pavement with the listless step of one who has abandoned the battle of life, and admitted defeat.

### WHO WILL WIN THE GREAT MATCH? THE BATTLE OF THE GIANTS.

It was an excellent portrait of Neil Grafton, who had made himself the idol of the vast crowd that annually followed the fortunes of the Astonbury Rangers. It showed a handsome, deep-chested young man of five-and-a-half, with a fair, upturned moustache. If it was a fault, it was that the eyes were too close together, but it was a handsome, manly face, and a strange contrast to the cadaverous, misshapen face of the man who was glaring at it murderously. He stopped and spat at the photograph. Then, with a snarl, he drew his nails across the wet paper, and tore it away, from forehead to chin, in four long strips.

"The dog—dog!" he snarled, and spat at the mutilated picture again. "If I could only take you by the throat! Rich and happy, are you? Fools selling their windpipes ere in praise of you—ah! And I did it for you six long years of agony! I forged John Grafton's name, did I? You dog—you dog! You drew the mesh tight enough, you heard! A lad of eight and nineteen, couldn't have committed such a forgery, they said! He hadn't the brain; he hadn't the skill. But the wretched clerk took it, he was hard up, and in the moneylender's clutches. That was enough. Pah, you handsome fiend, you!"

He heard a movement in the stars, and struck hastily away. The glimmer of a policeman's cape startled him, but he remembered that he had nothing to fear. He had paid for the crime of swindling, and the law had to set him free. What a mockery! He had only a few halfpence left; nothing! But that and something he had in his pocket, which he would find it when the time came. He had tried to begin life over again in London, but London had more than the stars to offer him. And so he had slunk back to Astonbury, like a fool and a madman.

"There's one thing about it, Jack, that you can't deny, and that is, I know you're the red hot supporter of the Stars, but you can't deny that Neil Grafton plays the game like a gentleman!"

He had reached the main street, and was crossing the road. The old man stopped dead and looked round. The bell of an electric street-car was ringing, and people shouted, "Play the game like a gentleman!" he said, with a bitter laugh. "Neil Grafton?"

you, old chap?" asked his recuser kindly. "It's a bit of an awkward crossing. Hope I didn't hurt you." The old man's answer came in a few hoarse gasps. The clutch on his collar had almost strangled him. Then the car turned into the quiet street and stopped before a house.

"Thanks for the lift, Billy!" said the younger man. "I suppose you can't wait. My friends here aren't seem very well. I'll take him with me. Take care of yourself."

"Ay, I'll do that; and you take care of yourself, my lad," said the driver of the car. "That's the point to watch. If Rod Bruce was to crack up, I believe our folks would murder me."

Neil Grafton, the stalwart captain of the Astonbury Star football team, twice head of the League, and three times winners of the Association Football Cup, laughed as he halted the old man out of the car.

"The man went without protest. There was a light and a bright fire in the driver's eyes, and a lad of sixteen looked up from his book with a cry of pleasure. "All right, Sid," said Rodney Bruce; "I've brought a friend who has had a bit of a shock. Run down and get some whiskey like a hero. Put on a coat, for it's still raining."

Bruce rose readily enough, and seized a crutch, for he was lame. Rodney drew up an easy-chair for his guest, who held out his numbered hand to the crutch. They soon heard the old man's cry.

"Now, old chap," said Rodney, "drink this. It was a close shave, and enough to upset anybody. Go to bed, Sid, and get on your feet to-morrow. Ah, you're looking better already, Mr. Casper."

"Casper!" said the stranger hoarsely. "You're very kind. Yes, Casper will do for me. I've never seen you before, sir, but I've heard you spoken about. You're the great footballer, aren't you, in please."

"I'm certainly a footballer," said Bruce, with his ringing laugh, "but without the 'great.' Don't put that in, please."

"But he is great, Mr. Casper—the greatest centre-forward in England!" cried Rodney's brother and Everybody who says it, "Wait till you see how they play. Now Neil Grafton says it: it's 'Oh, my dear!'"

"Oh, my dear," asked the old man, in a queer, harsh voice. "Then it must be true. Pardon himself, Mr. Casper—"

"Well, I see him nearly every day," said Sidney. "I'm in his office, you know; one of his junior clerks. He was only clogged up with the footballers. We can't make out who told him I was out of collar, but he actually wrote for himself. Wasn't I glad to find Rod is the only player who ever beat him twice in one match. It shows footballers don't bear much of a grudge."

Casper gulped down the whiskey. There was more colour in his face, and his eyes were brighter. He did not seem so content as he said. "Perhaps it wasn't worth saving, but we'll let that go. I wish you the best you can get yourself. Wasn't I glad to find Rod is able to do you a good turn, you'd only think me a nuisance, so it's no good saying it. No, sir; you needn't be so courteous as to say 'good-night.' Good-night! Old Bob Casper won't forget me—no, never forgets!"

### THE 2nd CHAPTER.

A Mysterious Message.

The football-lovers of Astonbury, the two League matches between the rival clubs, were almost as important as the Cup-ties. In the League table the clubs stood first and third, goal average only keeping the Stars out of second place. A victory would bring them into the coveted position, unless, of course, Raydon Orient, the

second club, managed to crack a very hard nut. Even then, if the Stars ran up a fair total of goals, they might reach the top, but goals were scarce things to obtain when Neil Grafton was there to protect his place, scarier than ripe cherries in mid-winter.

Both clubs happened to have mid-week matches away, but Rodney Bruce, Neil Grafton, and several other cracks on both sides stood down. Bruce was perfectly trained, but at the request of Billy Jackson, he turned out for a brisk walk. Billy groined them, rubbed them, exercised them, and watched them as if they were not men, but a team of valuable racehorses, like the little plump, good-natured tyrant he was. His whole heart was in the team, and he had sworn, if they allowed the Rangers to beat them, to give up training footballers, and take up a more gratifying profession as a trainer of performing fleas.

There had been a heavy snowfall, followed by a sudden thaw and soft rain. A lot of flint-stones was out, but the Rangers' ground—it was the Rangers' home match—stood high, and was well drained. Billy left the team behind. Billy wore a necklace of skipping-ropes, and on the cinder-path that led across the fields to Grafton he set his charges to do a few laps. Bruce was out, but the Rangers' ground—it was the Rangers' home match—stood high, and was well drained. Billy left the team behind. Billy wore a necklace of skipping-ropes, and on the cinder-path that led across the fields to Grafton he set his charges to do a few laps. Bruce was out, but the Rangers' ground—it was the Rangers' home match—stood high, and was well drained. Billy left the team behind. Billy wore a necklace of skipping-ropes, and on the cinder-path that led across the fields to Grafton he set his charges to do a few laps.

He pointed to the clustering chimneys of Fare Hall. "It was here that Neil Grafton, the famous amateur, resided, for Grafton was the proprietor of one of the most prosperous businesses in Astonbury."

"I'll be glad to see yer bawbees a bit, Mr. Roddie, lad, aw'n thinkin'," said Sandy McKie, the right full-back. "But never say no more! Well, may Aw dee massif if it tans the enemy!"

If a dozen of the Rangers had taken the same path for the same purpose. Neil Grafton was with them. In a moment the friendly rivals were shaking hands and chatting.

"Bring your boys along, Jackson," said Grafton. "I'll be pleased for you to come to the park. Or perhaps they'd like a cup of tea. I'm sure you're jolly welcome!"

"We'll chance the park, with much thanks; but not the tea, sir," said Billy. "We have to be careful; for such funny things happen. You might hocus that tea, and poison a few of us."

They all laughed. Bruce had not seen Grafton since he had given up the game. He had heard of him hardly net the famous goalkeeper twice except in the football-field.

"It was awfully good of you to help my young brother, and I want to thank you; but I want to thank you again. Sid is a trayer, poor boy, and I hope you find him as good a fellow as I do."

"Oh, I dare say he suits, Bruce! I haven't had any complaints. If he's smart and willing I shall keep an eye on him. Great Scott, I never saw the lad so full!"

"What's the matter with the sluice?" "It must either be closed or clogged up; I never saw the lad so full!"

"It's pouring in from the brook in torrents. If you've got any tools handy we'd better clear it."

The water in the ornamental lake was washing higher and higher. Evidently the outlet was clogged; and the park would soon be under water, unless something was done speedily.

"The fools!" cried Neil Grafton. "They've let the sluice open!"

The yellow water was already brimming over the concrete parapet into the pool below.

Bruce shouted a warning as Grafton went splash-er over.

Grafton seized the iron handle, and strained with all his might; but the sluice-gate, it seemed, was jammed.

As Bruce hurried to his aid the water splashed above his boots. There was only standing room for two, and Sandy McKie turned back.

"Hang it!" said Grafton. "It might be screwed down. Try lifting, and see if that will do it. It's moving. Now press down with a jerk. A jerk may do it. I—"

below, and to Grafton, staggering to his knees, and to the feet, went splashing into safety, his face as white as death.

The others had raced down the slippery bank. They were all wet, but it didn't seem to have any effect on them. Sandy McKie had flung off his coat.

Then a head rose above the turbid water, followed by a second, and a dozen straws brought Rodney Bruce within Sandy McKie's long reach.

Both the drowned men were seized and raced ashore. "You can't blame 'em for sticking their heads in, and drinking tea, and chatting in the warm dining-room of Fare Hall, Rodney Bruce wearing one of the Stars' suits of clothes. But Grafton still looks a bit—"

"No more of those tricks, Rod!" said Billy Jackson, as Bruce was turning homewards. "It's ended all right, but I'd sooner have seen Fare Hall washed off the map than see you go over that dam as I did. Man, he was quick—as quick as if he expected the thing to be done with a stick. How did you get into a wink. How is it you didn't tumble into him, and bundle him over first? He's lying!"

"Being a smart goalkeeper," laughed Rod, "he guessed which way I was going to shoot perhaps. You don't think he wanted to drown me, do you? He'd sooner have seen Fare Hall no harm done. I'll be more careful, Billy."

At seven o'clock Sid Bruce came home, brimming with news.

"You'll have to beat 'Em, Rod, if it's only for my sake," he said. "I'm the only Star in the whole firm, and I get some chipping about it. You can't blame 'em for sticking their heads in, and drinking tea, and chatting in the warm dining-room of Fare Hall, Rodney Bruce wearing one of the Stars' suits of clothes. But Grafton still looks a bit—"

The affair was glad to find no mention of the rock at Fare Hall in the paper. Sid was a good deal disappointed, but he had always been delicate. He was so passionately devoted to his big, strong brother, the news was a great disappointment to him, and he had a startling type was the announcement that if the weather proved favourable Mr. Malcolm Hughes, who was staying with Colonel Paley, would attempt an aeroplane flight from Paley Manor to the ground towards the close of the match.

"You've that's a bit of a starter, sonny!" said Rod. "Let's hope he won't fall on me, or drop a propeller on our heads. That'll be a pretty serious accident. I couldn't get a ticket for the stand, there's such a scramble for them; but Billy Jackson says you can potter about on him. So you'll get a good view as the linesmen and police, which means you'll be right in front."

"You're a brick, Rod! It's something worth while having a brother like you. And he's tripping to know I'm not costing you such a lot of money? I know you didn't grudge it, Rod; but I couldn't help worrying you."

"Perhaps you'd better not be very hard on Mr. Grafton, Rod," he added, with a laugh. "If you score three or four I shall be satisfied."

Three or four! Rod laughed at the idea. Shooting at Neil Grafton, even when those hustling boys of the Rangers' football club were in the way, was something like shooting at a brick wall.

Presently the doctor came in—a sur sign that Billy Jackson was still uneasy about Rod's wetting. He felt Bruce's pulse, and then went off again with a grumble; for Rod Bruce was as sound as a bell.

"I'll leave you, Sid," said Rodney; "but I promised to play a game of billiards with Sandy McKie. Perhaps you'd like to come along? You're wearing a bit too hard, aren't you?"

The table had been cleaned, and Sid had brought out his German Grammar.

"I'd prefer to grind a little, Roddie," he said. "I haven't any muscles, you know; so I must be a bit of a scholar. Now press down with a jerk. A jerk may do it. I—"

"Don't be late; for I can't go to sleep till I hear you come in. Friday to-day, isn't it? No, only Thursday! I never knew a

TOPICS OF INTEREST TO JUNIOR FOOTBALLERS are discussed every Saturday in THE LONDON

## FOOTBALL EVENING NEWS

ADVICE TO YOUNG PLAYERS. By J. A. LAMBIE, the Famous Scottish International, is also a regular feature.

THE UP-TO-DATE TABLES OF OUR LONDON LEAGUES APPEAR IN THE RESULTS SECTION EACH WEEK.



YOUR EDITOR'S CHAIR.



YOUR EDITOR (H. E.)

Controller of THE BOYS' REALM - Saturday THE BOYS' REALM FOOTBALL LIBRARY, 4d. Every Thursday.

Our Complete Stories.

I do let my readers into my confidence. I don't mind admitting to them that I rather pride myself on the complete stories I publish in this paper week by week. I am quite certain of one thing, that nowhere else can my chums obtain such stirring and thrilling complete sports' yarns as in THE BOYS' REALM. Our athletic tales have gained a great reputation for excellence amongst the sports-loving lads and young men throughout our Empire, and I am constantly receiving delightful letters from readers in all parts of the globe, saying how they enjoy our complete athletic yarns. This being the case, I am put on my mettle. It is one thing to gain a reputation; it is quite another to keep it. But that it shall be kept is my absolute determination. And so the next week I am giving my readers two of the very best complete sports' tales money can buy. Their titles are:

- "SNOWPE'S MISTAKE." A Laughable Complete Football Tale, by Charles Hamilton. "FLAPPER'S REVENGE." A Splendid Story of Junior League Football, by Andrew Gray.

I strongly urge all my chums not to miss these especially fine, complete stories in next Saturday's number. I shall also be grateful if my readers will tell their friends about these grand yarns.

OUR LEAGUE COMPANION.

Being a Weekly Record of THE BOYS' REALM Football and Cricket Leagues. Tables and Prize-winners for Week ending September 18th.

Table of THE BOYS' REALM CRICKET LEAGUE results for week ending September 18th. Columns include team names, runs, wickets, and batsmen.

Table of THE BOYS' REALM CRICKET FOOTBALL TABLE of averages up to week ending September 18th. Columns include team names, runs, wickets, and batsmen.

In this week's issue of our "Football Library" is also an enthralling long instalment of the "Blue Crusaders," A. S. Hardy's great tale of League football. And that reminds me—look out for the special buldover cover of "THE BOYS' REALM" Football Library next week. It is something absolutely new, and will catch your eye in a moment. Everyone will be tiring about it on Thursday next.

Short-winded, and Suffers From Stitch.

J. P., of Canning Town, tells me that whenever he is playing football, he experiences a sharp pain in his sides, and asks me if I can suggest a cure. He also informs me that he is very short-winded. Stich is largely due to want of condition. J. P. must not only take regular exercise, but he must, to a certain extent, diet himself. No heavy or indigestible foods should be eaten for some hours before he plays in a match. Another probable reason for this pain in the side, or stitch, as it is called, is that instead of breathing through his nose, as he should, my chum breathes through his mouth, thus allowing the impurities in the air to find their way to his lungs. J. P.'s short-windedness may also be due to want of condition. My reader should pay great attention to improving his lung capacity, and this can be done by practising breathing exercises night and morning.

THE BOYS' REALM FOOTBALL LEAGUE.

Table of THE BOYS' REALM FOOTBALL LEAGUE results for week ending September 18th. Columns include team names, goals, and players.

Table of THE BOYS' REALM FOOTBALL LEAGUE results for week ending September 18th. Columns include team names, goals, and players.

"Jack Noble's Strike."

THE new number of "The Boys' Realm" Football Library, which is now on sale, is certainly the best yet. This week's long, complete story is entitled "Jack Noble's Strike," and from beginning to end it is cram full of excitement and fun. Clifford, the lorry captain of the Felbam Juniors, and his team, have a bad time in their efforts to score off Jack Noble, and at the finish begin to wish they had left the popular skipper of the three elevens and his chums severely alone. None of my readers should miss the laughable scenes where the Cliffords give a bad kicking in Farmer Mead's pond. It will make their sides ache.

He Cannot Save Money.

FROM Driffild I have received a letter from one of my young chums, signing himself 'Money-Spender,' in which he tells me that he cannot save money. He says that he is a young spendthrift. It appears that my reader has fourpence week-pocket-money, and that no sooner does he get his fourpence than he goes straightaway and spends it. The money simply burns a hole in his pocket. Perhaps if I tell my chum the plan I adopted when I was a lad, as a means of saving money, it will help him. I had a substantial money-box with a strong lock to it, and this I shut up and fastened, then threw the key down the nearest drain. I added to my pocket-money each week I used to go to this box and drop in a quarter of what had been given me, and at the end of the year, he will have saved the nice little sum of four-and-fourpence. Nowadays the Post Office issue special forms on which penny stamps may be placed, and these I presented myself spending to. I think that "Money-Spender" will find this a jolly good plan. I advise him to get a money-box, and to put one penny in it every week immediately he gets his pocket-money. Then, at the end of the year, he will have saved the nice little sum of four-and-fourpence. Nowadays the Post Office issue special forms on which penny stamps may be placed, and these I presented myself spending to. It may be deposited in the Savings Bank. This is another quite excellent way for a lad to save money.

Tobacco Stains on His Fingers.

ONE of my chums, who signs himself "Goodwife," wants me to tell him how to get rid of tobacco stains on his fingers. I am very glad to notice that my chum has had the sense to give up the bad habit of smoking cigarettes. It is a pity he ever commenced doing so, and I sincerely hope he will stick to his good work on the cigarette habit amongst lads as one of the greatest curses of our land. To remove the tobacco stains from his fingers, my chum should first thoroughly wash them with a penny piece of pumice-stone. Then let him get a basin of hot water and a piece of soap, and wash his hands thoroughly. Afterwards he should rub them well with the pumice-stone. This will probably remove a good deal of the staining. Then let him cut one of the lemons in halves, and rub the juice on his fingers. He will find that the

acid will speedily efface the remaining traces of his cigarette-smoking. The only thing he then has to do to keep his fingers clean is to let cigarette-smoking severely alone.

A Home-made Set of Boxing-gloves.

A D., who has been a reader of 'THE BOYS' REALM' for four years, and thinks it is the best boys' paper published, asks me if I can tell him how to make a pair of boxing-gloves at a moderate cost. Below, my chum will find full instructions how to make the articles he mentions at home for just over a shilling a pair—a very small sum when the ordinary price of boxing-gloves is taken into account. First I will secure about one and three-quarter yards of swansdown cloth; this will probably cost him one shilling and three-pence. Next, I will tell him how to cut it into eight good-sized pieces. Next, lay two pieces together on a table, or some other flat surface, place the left hand on them, and get a friend to draw a line round the hand, keeping about two and a half inches off the hand all the way round. Having done this, cut the pieces, my friend should lay two more on the table, and get his chum to mark the size of his right hand in the same way. Next, cut the shapes marked, and sew round with a stout needle and thread, leaving a good space open at the wrists to admit stuffing for the gloves. Now, look round and see if you can find some old throw-away article of furniture, such as a broken chair, or a broken table, all well and good; if you cannot, you must purchase some horsehair or sheep's wool, and stuff the gloves through the opening of the wrist as fully as possible, and when each glove is as full as it will hold, sew up the opening at the wrist. Then my chum must get half a yard of broad elastic—which he can purchase cheaply from any draper's shop—and put four straps of elastic on each glove, one at almost an inch and a half from the wrist, one in the centre, and one near the top of each glove, and one on the thumb. Turn the sewing inside before stuffing the glove. And when the gloves are finished, and my reader can start on the next.

YOUR EDITOR (H. E.)

Prize Football Awards For Week Ending September 18th.

Table of Prize Football Awards For Week Ending September 18th. Lists winners for various leagues and districts.

THE ARMY CHAMPIONS.

By Captain Malcolm Arnold. Splendid long instalment of a new Army sports tale.

THE CHIEF CHARACTERS ARE:

RON and VAL BRANDON, two popular young corporals attached to the Army Sports Club. Anshires have lately been transferred from Blackdown, in the Midlands, to the district of Val, a little as a retired gymnasium instructor. SIR PAUL MARROTT-TOYKES, a young lord of the manor who is heir to large estates. Major GILBERT MARROTT, Paul's casually cousin. Knowing that Paul stands for himself and does not let a horse's head get in the way of the lad. He wins Paul's confidence, and leads the lad to meet upon him as a true friend.

Our story opens at North Camp, Aldershot, where Val and Ron are utilising every spare moment in training the Anshires' football team, which has been entered for the Army Cup and Val. The Bradshires, backed up by the pep, determine to make a bold bid for this much-coveted trophy. While drilling a sound of recruits Ron comes across Paul Marrott, and is immediately struck with the lad's personality. It is the night, accompanied by a high birth, and he enters into conversation with the lad, with the result that they become firm friends.

Soon after, Gilbert Marrott makes an unsuccessful attempt on Paul's life, though nothing can be proved against him. In the first round of the Army Cup Competition the Anshires are drawn against the Army Sports Club, and after a tremendous tussle they win by three goals to nil. Paul Marrott is injured during the game, and the Anshires are unable to give any back to the Anshires, especially if the lad is still unable to play with his own firm. Gilbert Marrott falls in with a desperate ruffian named the Chairman—a cold, placid crackman as far as the game goes. Major Marrott calls the Chairman an aid in his attempts to force the lad to play. Val, who is training for a coming Marathon race, goes out for a practice run one night, accompanied by a high birth, and he enters into conversation with the lad, with the result that they become firm friends.

Man v. Horse—A Long Chase.

"YOUR trap is ready, sir," said the groom at the Royal, touching his hat. The Chairman rose to his feet and nodded. "All right," he said; "I'll be with you in a minute."

When the man had vanished, the crackman crossed the bed-chamber, and lifted the door. Then, one by one, he placed a jemmy, a bunch of keys, a small lantern, and a revolver in the pockets of his coat. He then slipped his arms through the sleeves, and glanced round, with a quick smile. "It's a long time since I had the pleasure of following a fly trap," he thought, an evil smile flickering across his cruel face. "I hope I shan't make any mistakes."

He pulled a soft cap out of his pocket and put it on, drawing it well down over his ears. Then he left the room, and made his way to the front of the hotel.

The lamps of the trap were shining brightly in their brackets, and the big horse pawed impatiently at the ground.

"It seems anxious to make a start, sir," the groom said, as he passed the reins up to the Chairman; "you'll 'avo to 'old 'im in for a bit."

The man in the trap smiled. "He won't be so spry by the time we reach Blackdown," he cried.

Then, with a swing of the whip, he started off on his long drive.

He passed the major and Odham House, thought the Chairman.

He had mentioned Bagshot, which lay in the opposite direction, simply as a name. He was very particular for the cream seats of Lord Wildermere, having received a message from Gilbert Marrott to the effect that the time was ripe for the robbery which both men had discussed some weeks before.

Major Marrott had promised to meet the Chairman at a small inn about a mile away from the scene of their operations. There they were to discuss their final arrangements.

The Chairman kept on now trotting along the Bagshot road until he came to a spot where a narrow lane led over the moors to the left, and, after describing a wide circle, struck the Bagshot road. There was a lamp-post at the foot of the lane, and he reined in the great beast as he made the turn.

To the silent figures, jogging along beneath the hedgerows, heard the crunching of the trap wheels, and he said. "There's a vehicle of some sort coming up behind us."

Ron turned and looked back. The light from the lamp fell on the sharp features peering out from beneath the cap; then the trap swept into the darkness towards them. But that glance had been enough to warn Brandon. He leaped forward, and gripping Val by the shoulder, pulled him into the shadow of the high hedge.

"I say, what the dickens—" began the younger brother.

Ron put his hand over Val's mouth.

"Shut up!" he whispered. "That man in the trap—didn't you recognise him?"

Val turned his head towards the vehicle, but the darkness only allowed him to see the black outlines of the man as he swept towards them. The two corporals crouched down and waited until the trap passed. The horse, with the auriferous instincts of the brute, shied a little as he quicker on the narrow lane ahead, and did not notice the two lads.

When he was about fifty yards ahead, Ron rose to his feet.

"We must follow that trap," he whispered quickly. "There is some mischief afoot, and I mean to see what it is."

He started to trot along the quiet lane, and Val followed into place by his side.

"I'm hanged if I know what game you're on!" he said. "You might give me a hint or two."

"I caught sight of the driver of that trap," said Ron, "and if he isn't the Chairman, then my eyes must be failing me."

"The Chairman! You mean that fellow who was burned?"

"Who was supposed to be burned," his brother amended. "I'm sorry you didn't have a chance to recognise him. It would have settled the soap business at once."

Val gave vent to a low murmur of anger.

"The Chairman is a dangerous sort of brute," the younger brother said. "If he stops anywhere within the next fifteen miles, I'll bet I shan't be far behind."

"Thank goodness we are in running kit," the younger brother said. "If he stops anywhere within the next fifteen miles, I'll bet I shan't be far behind."

They had no difficulty in following the trap. The sound of its wheels on the roadway came plainly to their ears. They always kept at least fifty yards behind it, and their soft running boots made no noise on the wet grass by the roadside upon which they ran.

For the first three miles of their long chase neither of the lads spoke a word. The beast under the shafts was a beauty, and fairly apt to the distances between the milestones.

When the two runners found themselves dropping further and further to the rear as the unconscious driver whipped up the horse; but Val—who, of course, was the more experienced—kept the sound of the trap in their ears.

"We've a long way to go, old chap," he would murmur, "and it will come back to us at the next hill."

His Marathon running had taught him that it

was the steady pace which tells, and he was content to bide his time.

At every hill, however, the corporals found that they could make up such distance as they had lost on the level. The horse, with the trap to hamper him, could not take the races as easily as the two unhampered runners.

At the end of the fifth mile Ron had his bad times that period which swoops down on all runners, and requires a mighty heart and high courage to resist. Val heard the labouring breath and the heavy thud of the feet, and checked his pace slightly.

There was no need for him to offer any suggestions; Ron's training experience would help him over the spell; but he slackened down, and drew closer to his brother's side.

"Stick it, old chap!" he murmured. Ron set his teeth hard, and laboured on. Every step he took seemed to rack him from forehead to foot. His arms felt as heavy as lead, and his head dropped forward on his breast; yet during the whole of the struggle his ears still held the rattle of the wheels ahead.

It was the only thing he could think of. Whatever happened, that sound must remain. All his efforts and energies were concentrated in that one thing.

The long, steep hill gave him the rest he needed. The Chairman allowed his panting beast to drop into a walk, and the two corporals, jogging along behind, drew nearer and nearer, until they were within a hundred yards or so of the slow-moving vehicle.

Then Val, with a glance at his brother, dropped into a walk.

"Take—a spell, now," he gasped.

The rest of that hill was taken at a walk, and when they reached the top, and felt the cool rush of the night winds against their cheeks, they felt fit to take up their work again.

The spin downward effectively cleared away the lingering traces of fatigue, and with their reserve strength pulsing through them, they butted through the darkness like deer.

On the level again the lights on the trap were seen bobbing and swaying in front, like two phantom lanterns, to guide them.

"How do you feel now, old chap?" Val asked.

Ron laughed softly.

"I'll run all night, Val," he replied. "We'll track that beggar down now all right."

Mile after mile—mile after mile they sped along the quiet road. Now and again they would swing past some quiet house or cottage, and occasionally a dog would come snuffing and rumbling horse challenges to them; but they kept steadily on their way.

At last a sharp rise in the ground brought them to a bridge, and Val caught the glint of water beneath it.

"We are crossing the canal now," he muttered.

Odham cannot be very far away. As they had crept out to Odham House a few weeks previous, they knew the road.

Ron fixed his eyes on the lights ahead. If he turns up on the left, we will know where he is stopping, and an exclamation of annoyance escaped his lips.

"We are a pair of thundering asses!" he said. "Don't you recognise that trap, Val?"

Val followed the meaning once.

"By Jove," he said, "of course I do! It is one of that Paul's scoundrelly crew that is when the traction-engine tipped him over."

And it proves that the scoundrelly crew know Major Marrott," said Ron, "and must be working for him. You needn't look much further for the solution of the soap business, Val."

"The murderous ruffian!" his brother said, clenching his fists.

A sharper sound from the front drew their attention in time to see the trap wheel round the road to the left—the road which led to Odham House.

"We are hearing the end of our run, old chap," said Ron, "and we'll have to go easy now."

They turned after the trap, and jogged on for about a half mile or so. Then the sounds ceased suddenly, and, on turning a sharp bend, they saw the lights of the little inn shining on the road. The trap was standing by the hedgerow, and was unoccupied.

"This is their rendezvous," Ron murmured. "We must try to locate them. Keep well in to the hedge."

The brothers were wet and streaming with sweat, but the work in front of them was too important for them to think of their own wants. They reached the trap, and saw that the horse was tethered to a gatepost. The Chairman had thrown a rug over the panting animal, and the warm smell which came from it reassured him that it, also, had had enough of the long chase.

"You are a good, old chap," the corporal thought, as he slid over the gate. "But we stuck to you, all the same."

He found himself in the dingy yard at the rear of the inn. Turning round, he saw a glint of light starting out from the wall attracted his attention. He gripped Val by the sleeve.

"Go carefully, now, Val!" he murmured.

A few paces brought him to a narrow window. The blind inside was slanted to one side, and allowed the interior of the room to be seen. Peering over the ledge, Ron took in the whole scene.

At the opposite ends of a small, bare table Major Marrott and the Chairman were seated. Their heads were bent forward over a sheet of white paper. Paul's scoundrelly cousin was talking rapidly in a low tone, and now and then his finger would point out some spot on the paper in front of him.

Moving his head out of the shaft of light, Ron had his hand against the bottom of the window. The murmuring voices came to his ears.

"And the dogs?" said the Chairman.

"I have seen to that," he heard the harsh voice of Marrott reply. "You need not fear them."

A low, brutal chuckle sounded.

"It will be the softest crib ever you cracked," the other went on; "and the Wildermere diamonds are worth having!"

A chair creaked, and the listener heard the shuffling of feet as the Chairman arose to go.

"And I'll have 'em before another hour has passed!" he cried.

One burst of light drew Ron clear from the window. Val was by his side in an instant.

"You heard?" began the elder brother.

"Everything," Val put in quickly. "What are you going to do?"

"Make for Odham House as quickly as we can," said his brother; "but these scoundrels come—"

He never finished his remark. There was a low sound close to where they were standing, and from his kennel a huge yard dog came bounding towards them.

The noise it made startled the two conspirators. Marrott leaped to the window and threw it up.

The light rested on the white running clothes of the two gymnasts. With a furious oath the scoundrel whipped out a revolver and fired.



With one swift swing Val sent the square mass hurtling through the air. The cushion caught the Chairman fairly between the eyes, and the astonished man was lifted clean off his feet, and went head over heels into the hedge.

**Threatened Rogers.**  
 As the infuriated man raised his revolver Ron caught the glint of the steel circle. Short as the pause was between the aim and the report, it was enough for the quick-witted gymnast. Throwing himself against his brother, he sent Val sprawling on the cold stones of the yard.  
 He hit with a crash that astonished Val. The crack of the revolver, and the plop of the bullet as it sung overhead, cut his nerve short.  
 "Keep in the shadow and make for the gate," Ron whispered; "these fellows will stop at nothing."  
 The growling yard-dog had betrayed their presence, and was plunging and tearing madly at his chain to reach the two runners. As Val lay on his back, he turned to see the other animal yelping into his kennel.  
 The change in the dog's note warned Gilbert Marriott of what was happening.  
 "They are making for the gate!" he cried, turning to the Chairman. "Quick, get round to the front and stop them!"  
 The hawk-faced crackman dashed for the door, drawing a heavy gymnasium from his pocket as he went. The heavy door was wide open, and he tore off across the yard.  
 Hearing the heavy feet pelting behind him, Ron sprang to his feet.  
 "Go straight ahead for the trap," he said to Val. "I'll tackle this fellow!"  
 "But—"  
 "Don't argue just now! Get ahead!"  
 Val vaulted the gate and ran towards the trap. Ron wheeled round. He was only just past the hedge. The huge fellow was almost on top of him.  
 "You confounded sneak and spy!" rasped Gilbert, leaping forward. "I'll break your neck for you."  
 The figure in front of him was a good four inches shorter than the major, and he thought he would have no difficulty in carrying out his threat.  
 Within a yard from Ron he reached out his huge hand and made a grab for the neck of his quick side-step, carried the gymnast out of reach. Then his hand fast closed, and drawing it back to his shoulder, he poised his body to hurl it. He had to close his heavy face in front of him with all his strength.  
 In the darkness it was impossible to make out his features, and the light from the lamp in the thick neck of the enraged man with a thud which told of its terrible power.  
 Marriott gave vent to a bellow of anguish, and staggered forward a few paces, coming to rest against the gate.  
 Holding the top bars with his left hand, he tried to reach the pocket where he had kept his key. He was just reaching for it when the lamp in the roadway allowed Ron to catch the action. With a panther-like spring he was at the bars.  
 "Drop that!" he cried.  
 The major's hand still kept on its way; and, realizing that the key was coming, he tried to save him. Brandon closed with the fellow.  
 A sharp, hard jab with his right fist into the other's sides made the huge body bend sharply; then—  
 "Crack!"  
 His left fist hooked fairly under the heavy leg of the major.  
 The major's head fell forward, and he collapsed against the wooden barrier without a sound. He lay there with the unconscious man sprawled at his feet; then, without troubling to glance at his prostrate enemy, he leaped the gate and turned to sprint towards the trap.  
 "All right, Val!" he cried, sprinting towards the trap.  
 That cry saved Val's life.  
 Brandon, who had reached the trap, and had commenced to turn the horse out from the hedge.  
 The Chairman, catching sight of the thin figure who had emerged from the trap, had crept stealthily forward, with the murderous gymnast clasped tightly in his hand. Within a few feet of the doorway, the major paused and swung his body over the bars.  
 "Come along, then, sharp!" he called, straightening up.  
 The heavy gymnasium whizzed harmlessly past his head, as the Chairman, carried away by the force of his blow, went plunging into the hedge.  
 The cry of wrath Val sprang at the man. He made a quick grab at the Chairman's arm, but the master-crackman was no mean antagonist to tackle.  
 "Come along, then, sharp!" he called, straightening up.  
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fully up the wheel, throwing himself on the cushioned seat with a grunt of pain.  
 Ron lifted the reins and shook them slightly, a shout sounded from behind them, and turning his head he caught sight of a number of figures gathered in the lighted doorway.  
 "Stop them—stop them!" the voice of Marriott roared.  
 The horse was already on the move, and a spurt from the whip sent it off down the road at a gallop.  
 "You're soon recovered, old chap," Ron thought grimly; "but you'll have to whistle for your cart."  
 The crackling in the hedge in front of them sounded, and just where a lamp-post cast a yellow gleam across the white road, he saw the thin figure of the Chairman appear.  
 The crackman stretched out his arm, and both lads caught sight of the ring of steel which swung in front of them.  
 "Halt, or I fire!" came the cold, harsh command.  
 The reply was to stand up and lash at the willing beast between the shafts. The trap surged forward; then Val, stooping down, drew the hard leather cushion from his brother's seat.  
 "Both down," he yelled.  
 Within five yards from the threatening figure Ron dropped the reins and knelt.  
 With one swift swing Val sent the square mass hurtling through the air.  
 "Stop that, you beast!" he yelled mockingly.  
 The cushion caught the Chairman fairly in the air, and curved like a comet, the astonished man was lifted clean off his feet, and went head over heels into the hedge from whence he came.  
 A peal of laughter went up as the slywage victim passed him, then Ron straightened up and sat down again.  
 "That was ripping!" he yelled. "You bowled the hound over like a ninepin!"  
 Val clutched at the side of the rocking trap and looked back at his brother with a grin.  
 From a number of dark shadows were pelting along the road. As the pursuers passed the lamp-post, a beam of light distinguished a man staggering along in front of the Chairman. He joined his fellow-rogue, and then the darkness blotted them out again.  
 "The tables are turned, my friends," he cried; "but I don't think you'll hang on as we did!"  
 He reached the trap dew further and further away from the yelling crowd, and when Ron turned into the main road all sounds of the pursuit had completely died away.  
 "That's a good job," he said, "they speed for well over twenty minutes, and then stopped to listen."  
 "I've checked it all right," Val said; "Marathon-running is not in their line, I suppose."  
 "We are safe enough now," Ron replied.  
 "Paul's ruffianly cousin is too wise to risk tackling us on the high-road. There would be too many awkward questions asked."  
 He showed the tired animal started off at a quiet trot. Val leaned back the seat, and, fooling around, came across a couple of well-worn books.  
 "We might as well be comfortable," he remarked, throwing one over his brother's shoulder; "and a thin jersey is not quite the costume for this weather."  
 The reaction which always follows a time of excitement set in, and for over an hour the brothers sat quiet, watching the lights from the lamps flickering on the road ahead.  
 "I suppose you understand what all their plotting and planning was about?" Ron said at last.  
 "I wasn't sure until the major mentioned that he was not to be caught in a trap, ago since we were introduced to the brutes. They mean to break into Odiham House."  
 "They mean to do that?" Ron corrected.  
 "Very likely they will take it now. The fact of our being at the window will scare them off it, as they won't know how or how little they can do."  
 "I must admit that I heard nothing of the younger brother said; I hadn't a chance. That's exactly what spoiled everything."  
 "Why?" asked Ron.  
 "You were not supposed to be at the window; and he is Gilbert's confederate. Our ten-minute trot has been worth while."  
 "Yes," said Val; "but it is the Chairman."  
 "Yes," Val continued; "is he the man you thought was killed?"  
 "Yes," said Ron; "and he's not easily forgotten. He's by far the most dangerous outsider we've seen."  
 "He looks an evil, vicious-tempered brute," said Val.  
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now," Val said. "and Paul should be out of hospital very shortly; then we can lay the whole business before him, and let him decide."  
 "That's the only thing we can do," his brother remarked; "but it seems a thundering weak reply to their murderous attack tonight."  
 The lights of North Camp began to glimmer and glow ahead of them, and Ron quickened the pace.  
 Within a few hundred yards from the cavalry barracks he stopped the trap and jumped out.  
 "We'll have to finish our journey on foot, Val," he said. "The mounted police patrol here during the night, and they would be sure to find us in a few paces, and to boot."  
 "But what about the trap and gee-gee?"  
 Ron turned the horse's head around, and riding by its side for a few paces, he cut across the flanks twice. It set off at a gallop along the road, disappearing around a bend.  
 "Some wandering tramp will have the pleasure of finding a light, serviceable vehicle," the gymnast murmured, with a grin.  
 "That's a new way of sending back a 'Returned empty,'" he cried.  
 The friends trotted together, and, as Ron had learned to come up with a patrol of blue-uniformed M.P.'s. The corporal in charge turned to them as they swung past.  
 "More bloomin' mad as ever," he murmured to the man on his right. "The garrison 'as gone barmy, I reckon. I'd like to see you and your mate's rest in doubling over these bally roads!"  
 His companion grinned.  
 "By trying them out of mischief," was his philosophical response.  
**Harry Gets His Own Back.**  
 THE Fife Farnborough Athletic was a strong team, and commanded a fine following among the civilian element of the town. It was a well-known fact that situated in a lane close to the main road, and at two o'clock on Saturday afternoon there was a large crowd gathered to watch the match.  
 The gate, and tendering their three-pence to the official posted there.  
 There was no tarriest nor check, and if now and again some energetic youngster succeeded in dodging the vigilant eye of the ticket-collector, and passed in without paying, he was not noticed.  
 The Athletic had no expensive tastes, and so long as their gate receipts paid for the rent of the field, etc., they were quite content.  
 The crowd, which were in uniform is admitted free of charge, but at Farnborough soldier and civilian had to stump up their own money.  
 One or two of the Anshires grumbled at this, but their grumbling did not prevent them from staying.  
 The match was due to start at three p.m., so they had plenty of time to argue on the right and wrong of the case.  
 Presently a stir at the gate heralded the arrival of their team, and the cheer which greeted Ron and his merry men was hearty one.  
 The man nearest, and touched Ron's sleeve.  
 "That fight of yours has done us a bit of good, old chap. It has raised our gate a crowd of the big fellows come to watch."  
 One of the crowd came forward and held out his hand to shake the gymnast's into the features of his old antagonist Taffy.  
 "How are you feeling—all right?" the general Cardiff man replied, shaking the strong palm; "and very glad to see you, Taff. You've brought a decent crowd with you."  
 The sturdy middle-weight grinned.  
 "I went round the canteen and collared as many as I could," he said, "and I've had something to make a noise with, whatever."  
 He held up a stout rattan and turned it a few times. The rasping of the stout lattice on the wooden floor could be heard on the other side of the field.  
 "Wait till you hear it after you've scored a goal," he said.  
 The dressing-room was a shed with a corrugated roof. A primitive affair, but quite sufficient for their purpose.  
 Harry was the first man dressed, and as he finished tying his boots on Ron turned to him.  
 "You might go up to the gate and keep a look-out for Parsons," he said. "He forgot the embrocation, and went back to fetch it. Tell him to buck up."  
 "I'll be there," said Harry, and as he reached the gate a quiet idea came to him.  
 Parsons had been the leader in the Black Horse Hunt, and he was as good as dead as he was. He had been disgraced by Harry and his "Merry Minstrels." The poetical batsman's soul still burned with hopes of revenge, and he thought that that was a good chance.  
 He stopped up to the man at the gate.  
 "How's business?" he asked.  
 "Pretty good," said the collector. "Some of your chaps grumbled a bit at paying, but they did pay, and that's the main thing, ain't it?"  
 Harry grinned. The man was playing up to him habitually.  
 "The Anshires ain't a bad lot," said the collector, "but they're not worth the names." He stopped and gazed along the lane.  
 "And the meanest of the whole lot is a big fat fellow who ain't turned up yet," he added.  
 The gatekeeper collected a few more three-pences, then Harry continued.  
 "It's a swanker of the worst sort," he said. "I've seen him in a deplorable description of Parsons' personal failings. 'D'you know what he usually does?'"  
 "Well, as you're a stranger, and seem a decent sort, I'll tell you. 'E waits until the other side of the field, then 'e swaggers up to the gate, and kids 'em a bit of the team."  
 The collector snorted indignantly.  
 "'Wh—ho! Is that a little game?'"  
 "Oh, he's a regular snorter, what's more. 'E'll argue with you about it. If you ask 'em why 'e didn't come in along with the rest, 'e'll give 'em a deplorable description of Parsons' personal failings. I tell you 'e's of 'is stuff, 'e is!"  
 The look of scorn resolved which came into the man's face showed Harry's vengeful heart leap with joy.  
 "He'll have to be very hot before he can pay me without paying his three-pence!" the man snarled.  
 Harry could have yelled with delight at this, but he succeeded in concealing his feelings.  
 "Of course, you won't give me away," he said, moving off. "I only did it as a friendly little joke to see how they come."  
 The gatekeeper nodded gratefully.  
 "I'm much obliged to you, mate," he said.  
 While Harry did not give the description given to him by the friendly Anshire, this ought to be the villain who tried to swank his way into the team.  
 The gatekeeper swept through the gate, and nodded in his friendly style to the man.  
 "I'll be there," said Harry, "I'll be there," he said, "I'll be there," he said, "I'll be there," he said.  
 The gatekeeper's laugh was a cold, sarcastic snigger which made Parsons halt and stare at him.  
 "The admission into this field is three-pence," the collector said slowly, holding out his hand.  
 Parsons gasped. In the crowd Harry saw the movement, and a thrill of abject joy.  
 "This is where I got my own back, old crowd!" he murmured.  
 The man who had dodged the gatekeeper. "But I'm playing to-day!"  
 "I know that," said the man calmly; "play me your usual dodge, my man! But it's not going to work for you."  
 Parsons leaned forward and inspected the crowd closely, trying to discover traces of drink in the faces of the men.  
 The man was in his sober senses, and evidently had been sober since the match.  
 The gatekeeper shrugged his shoulders.  
 "I was sent back to get a bottle of 'em!" he boasted.  
 The collector went off into a sort of laughter. The fat rogue was doing and saying exactly as his informant said he would.  
 "I'll be there," said Harry, "I'll be there," he said, "I'll be there," he said.  
 "Do you think that I'm going to pay and then play?" the gatekeeper asked.  
 "I don't care what you do once you're inside!" he snarled. "But it will cost you three-pence to get in."  
 "Knowing that the time was short, the disgusted goalie put down his handbag, and began to rummage through his pockets.  
 "I'll be there," said Harry, "I'll be there," he said, "I'll be there," he said.  
 Parsons picked up his bag and eyed his questioner.  
 "I suppose this is a football-ground all right?" he remarked.  
 He pocketed the three-pence, and then finished his comment.  
 "I'll be there," said Harry, "I'll be there," he said, "I'll be there," he said.  
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REDFERN MAJOR.

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



the misery in the prefect's face without feeling for him... "You need not explain," said the Head quietly.

"You came, I suppose, to speak to your minor," said the Head, somewhat surprised by the despair in the face of the prefect.

The Head was on a wrong scent, after all. He had not guessed. After all, how was he to guess? The prefect's terror had been founded upon his anxious mind and his shaken nerves.

Arthur breathed more freely. The Head was watching him, and he was surprised by the changing expressions of the Sixth-Former's face.

"I am sorry, sir," said Arthur, more collectively. "I know I ought not to have come without your permission, but—"

Arthur gave his brother a single glance as he left the room—a glance of dumb appeal. But it was not needed. This was not the first ordinal Redfern minor had been through, and

he was not likely to fail in courage at the eleventh hour. Arthur Redfern went down the passage, and the Head motioned to Phipps to place the lamp upon the table and retire. There was no gas in the punishment-room. The door closed upon the house-porter, and the Head was alone with the culprit.

The doctor did not speak at once. There was a painful silence in the room—a long pause that made Redfern's heart beat more quickly. The light from the lamp fell full upon the junior's face, and showed it troubled, but calm, steady, and resolute as ever.

"Redfern," said the Head at last—and his voice sounded strangely deep in the stillness of the room—"Redfern, you have had a day to think over your position. Have you come to any change in mind?"

"No, sir." "You still refuse to explain your visit to the public-house in Wyndale?" Redfern was silent.

"You will maintain that you went there with an innocent motive, and not for the purpose of associating with the men of low character who assemble there?" "Yes, sir," said Redfern promptly.

The Head sighed. "I would gladly believe you, Redfern. But you must see yourself how absurd this story is upon the face of it. If you have an explanation to give, why do you not give it?"

"I cannot tell you, sir." "Is this the respect that is due to your head-master?" said the doctor, with great patience.

"I am sorry, sir," said Redfern earnestly. "I hope you don't think I could be disrespectful to you, sir. I'd cut off my hand

first. But—but I can't tell you what you ask, sir! I—I can't!" "Why not?" "Redfern did not speak. "There is something in this more than appears on the surface," said the Head. "If you are telling me untruths, Redfern, you had a great deal to answer for: for if you can look like that and lie, I can never trust a boy again. Redfern, I came here to make the last appeal to you, to ask me if you consent if you have anything to say—anything that would make your story appear less incredible—I ask you to say it. I ask you to speak to me as a friend, instead of as a head-master."

"Oh, sir!" "Well, Redfern?" "I have nothing to say, sir." "The doctor's face hardened. "Very well, I have spoken to you for the last time. Redfern, I shall not see you again till the school is assembled to-morrow morning, when you will be expelled in public!"

"Redfern's face went white, but it did not falter. He was prepared to go through with the ordeal to the hilt. "Very well, sir. I can only say that if you knew what it is you wouldn't think so badly of me."

"I wish I could believe so, Redfern." The Head left the room, and Phipps came in. "I'm to see you to bed, Master Redfern, and you had better get ready for the moment."

"Right you are, Phippy!" And five minutes later Redfern minor was in bed, the room in darkness, and the door once more locked upon him.

Arthur's Last Card.

D R. CRANSTON entered his study, and gave a slight start as he saw Redfern major standing by the desk. "What a queer hour for the moment that he had directed the Sixth-Former to wait for him in his study."

"What a queer hour for the moment that he had directed the Sixth-Former to wait for him in his study." "You told me to wait for you here, sir." Arthur was still pale, but he was quite collected.

"Very good! I want to speak to you about your brother, Redfern," said Dr. Cranston, seating himself, and turning his glance upon the junior. "I am sorry to hear of the punishment-room. I will say no more. I will take the anxiety you feel for your brother's fate as a matter of course."

"Thank you, sir." "I have spoken to Redfern minor," went on the head-master, "and he has refused to explain his visit to the public-house in Wyndale. I am very sorry to have to say so, Redfern, but it leaves me no resource but to deal with him severely. But it has occurred to me that you might be able to give me some clue to his strange conduct."

"I am sorry, sir," said Redfern earnestly. "I hope you don't think I could be disrespectful to you, sir. I'd cut off my hand

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Advertisement for 'The Boys' Realm' Football Library. Features a large illustration of a football player in a dynamic pose, kicking a ball. Text includes 'The Boys' Realm Football Library', 'COMPLETE FOOTBALL STORY', 'JACK NOBLE'S STRIKE', and 'No. 5. NOW ON SALE! DON'T MISS IT!'. A speech bubble from the player says 'GOAL!'.

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 inclined to be easily led, and is under the by-no-means good influence of...

At St. Dorothy's there is a dreadfully everlasting feud existing between the Classical and Modern sides. Sidney Redfern allies himself to the Classics, to the rage and humor of the Moderns. Ransome and Arthur Redfern have got themselves into difficulties with a bookmaster named Cunliffe, who threatens to report them to the head-master unless they pay him the money they owe him.

Arthur Redfern hears of his brother's terrible position, and is a prey to agonizing doubts. He knows not how to act. Shall he disgrace himself and thus clear his young brother, or sacrifice Sidney for his own sake? He cannot make up his mind what to do. Meanwhile, Sidney is locked in solitary confinement. That night Arthur Redfern steals the key to the confinement-room and creeps in to see his young footster as he is approaching down the corridor, and a second later the head-master, and Phipps, the house-porter, enter. The light of the lamp Phipps holds shines full on the white face of Arthur Redfern, and the Head gazes at him in speechless amazement.

No Confession. "REDFERN MAJOR!" Dr. Cranston uttered the name in wonder as his glance fixed upon Arthur Redfern. A frown gathered upon his brow. Arthur's face was pale.

It was the cruellest of fancies that the Head should have discovered exactly where, and for the should have discovered the prefect that all was up, that the Head must guess the truth, that the revelation he had striven to avert must come at last. His eyes sank before Dr. Cranston's searching glance, and he could not find his voice to speak. Redfern minor trembled on in silence. He had not lost his wits, but there was nothing he could say. If only his brother had not come!

"I am surprised to see you here, Redfern major." Arthur did not speak. "I gave orders that no one was to be admitted to the punishment-room. Someone has taken the key from Phipps's bunch. I presume it was you, as I find you here." "Yes, sir." Arthur's voice was very low. "I can understand your concern for your brother," said the Head, his face relaxing a little. "But you are a prefect, Redfern, and you should know your duty better." "I—"

in his Form, sir—some Fourth-Former—had gone to that place. Sidney is just the sort of chap who'd do it like a cat to fetch him back, sir, and save him from getting into trouble." The prefect's voice grew steeper as he proceeded, and as he marked the effect of his words upon the Head, "He'd cut off, without stopping to think of the consequences, to go to a cherty sir. Now, he couldn't speak about it without giving the other fellow away. That's how I work it out, sir."

"Has Redfern minor said anything to lead you to think so?"  
 "Yes, sir, yes, sir."  
 "The doctor pursued up his lips. This was quite a new light to him, and, indeed, it cleared up many points that had been wrapped in mystery."  
 "But—"

"I place great reliance upon your judgment, Redfern, and, as a prefect, after a long pause, "You are the prefect I trust most, as you know. But are you sure that your natural and ordinary way of acting would lead you to take too favourable a view of his conduct?"

"He's quite sure of that, sir. I am certain he's just as certain as I could be if I had been with Sidney that night."  
 Another long pause.  
 "I have you any idea what person he may be shielding?"

Arthur withheld. He shrank from the lie drawn in his eyes, and it seemed much less culpable to act a falsehood than to tell one.

"I think I could guess, sir; but I should not care to mention names. As a prefect, I—I could look into the matter later, sir."  
 "You have disturbed me very much, Redfern, by saying that. I am sure you would not speak without grounds. Leave me now, I will reflect upon the matter. I wish to be just."

He breathed deeply when he stood outside in the corridor.  
 "Has he succeeded? Was that danger to be escaped, after all?"  
 The perspiration stood in thick drops on the prefect's brow.

"I—I—Redfern major!"  
 It was Skelton of the Fourth. He was in pyjamas, with his trousers on, and a jacket buttoned round his neck, and a pair of slippers on his feet.  
 The prefect glared at him severely.  
 "What are you doing out of bed, Skelton? I don't think you've been captain of the Fourth dismally, I—I've been thinking about Reddy. I—I was sure you'd do something for him. Redfern major, I tried to get to his room, but my lips is locking out. I say, is there a chance for him?"

"I think so."  
 Skelton's face brightened up wonderfully.  
 "He won't be sacked?"  
 "I hope not."  
 "Don't make a row here, you young ass! Take twenty lines for being out of your dorm, after rights out of Arthur. Oh, never mind! Don't do the lines; but get back to bed sharp."  
 "But there's a real chance for Reddy?"  
 "Oh, yes."  
 "Good egg!"

And Skelton cut off. But he did not go back to the Fourth-Form room. He scouted round Phipps's room, and saw that the house-porter was there; and then he scuttled off to the punishment-room as silently as a ghost.  
 He tapped lightly on the door. All was dark within, but he was pretty certain that his room was not asleep.  
 "Reddy," he whispered through the keyhole.  
 Redfern minor sat up in bed.

"Hello! Is it you, Skelton?"  
 "Yes. I've just seen your major. He's been with the Head; and he says there's a chance for you. He thinks you won't be sacked!"  
 Redfern minor sprang out of bed. In a second he was at the keyhole, trembling with anxiety and excitement.  
 "Hello!"  
 "I'm here!"  
 "Has Arthur opened up? He is—he is!"  
 "I don't think so. He didn't look like it. He's worked it somehow without giving himself away," said Skelton. "He's jolly deep, you know; and I dare say Ransome put him up to some device. Ransome is full of devices."  
 Redfern felt a weight lifted from his mind.  
 "Good-night!" whispered Skelton, through the keyhole.  
 "Good-night, old chap!"  
 And Skelton scuttled away. And Redfern crept back to bed in a greatly relieved frame of mind.

To Go or Not To Go.

REDFERN MINOR was out of bed in the punishment-room at the first gleam of daylight.  
 He had slept but little that night. Skelton's whispered words of encouragement had done more than anything else to keep him awake, as a matter of fact.  
 But he did not feel uneasy from want of sleep. He was in too excited a state for that.  
 Upon the happenings of that morning his whole future depended.

Was he to be sacked, or had Arthur's intentions saved him? Was he to remain, after all, at St. Dolly's?  
 Long before the rest of St. Dolly's was awake Redfern was up and dressed, and filing in the time by striding about the narrow limits of the punishment-room.  
 It seemed an age to him before he heard the door of the warden's household being unlocked.  
 The key clicked in the lock at last, and Phipps looked into the room.  
 "What a queer expression upon the house-porter's face. Redfern's face fell a little as he observed it. If there was hope for him the porter evidently did not know it.  
 "Good-morning, Phippy!"  
 "Mornin', Master Redfern!"  
 "Where's my breaker?"  
 "I'll see come for that, Master Redfern. You're to follow me to the 'Ead's study,'" said Phipps sorrowfully.  
 "Which I'm sorry it's 'appened, Master Redfern," said the house-porter, as he led the way. "If it was to be only a flogging I'd be glad to see you through it."  
 "Thank you," said the junior, with a faint smile.  
 Phipps tapped at the Head's door, and marched the Fourth-Former in. The Head was standing by the window, and he turned a severe face upon the boy.  
 "You may go, Phippy."  
 The house-porter retired, with a last look of commiseration at Redfern minor, which did not give the junior much encouragement.  
 Redfern waited.

Dr. Cranston did not seem to be in a hurry to speak. Perhaps he did not realize what tortures the suspense was to the anxious lad. Redfern's eyes had time to note the anxious and thoughtful wrinkles on the doctor's face, and to observe, too, the cane lying on his writing-table. What was the cane placed there ready for? If he were going to be expelled the Head could not be going to cane him, too. It was not likely. The sight of the cane generally had a perturbing effect upon youthful delinquents shown into the Head's study. Under the circumstances, it had an opposite effect upon Redfern.

His heart beat quickly, more hopefully.  
 "Redfern," said the Head at last, "I have something to say to you which you will probably be glad to hear. Your brother has given me what explanation he could of your conduct, and he regards it in a more favourable light than I did myself. I have tried to come to his way of thinking. I am so anxious not to commit an act of possible injustice that I shall run the risk of pardoning one who has done flagrant wrong. You will not be expelled."

Redfern's heart beat so hard that he felt almost suffocated. He could not speak.  
 "Redfern major is the prefect whom I trust the most in the school, with perhaps one exception," said the Head. "His opinion would naturally carry great weight with me. As he is your brother, he should know you. His opinion is that you are acting in this peculiar manner for the purpose of shielding someone else who is at fault; that not you but another is really guilty!"

Redfern started.  
 "In giving that explanation to the Head, Arthur had been sitting very near to the wind—very near to the wind indeed."  
 Dr. Cranston read the boy's expression.  
 "Is that true, Redfern?"  
 Silence.  
 "Very well. I repeat, that I shrink from the possibility of committing a great injustice," said the Head. "I shall not, therefore, expel you. But your refusal to answer questions put to you by your Form-master and your house-porter must be severely punished. I am going to cane you!"  
 "Yes, sir."  
 Redfern spoke quite cheerfully. He knew how the tears that would fall hereon by every evening was nothing to an expulsion. The Hn felt that he could go through that caning with a smile on his lips.  
 "Have you anything to say, Redfern?"  
 "Only that I thank you, sir, and that I am sorry I should seem to be disrespectful to you."  
 "Very good! Hold out your hand!"  
 Dr. Cranston took up the cane. Redfern held out his hands in turn, and the cane descended upon each of them eight times. Dr. Cranston laid down the cane.  
 "You may go, Redfern."  
 "Thank you, sir!"

The boy left the study unsteadily, and closed the door behind him. In the passage he stopped to squeeze his hands under his arms. The pain was terrible; he had never felt anything like it before, except once, when he had had an accidental kick on the shin at football.  
 The Head had said that the punishment was to be severe, and it had been severe. But Redfern was to stay at St. Dolly's!

There was a patter of feet in the passage, and Skelton and Brown ran up.  
 "Reddy, I've just seen Phipps. You've been to the 'Ead's study?"  
 Redfern nodded.  
 "What's the verdict?"  
 "Hold on," said Redfern, in a low voice. "Don't speak to me for a minute."  
 Redfern rubbed his hands. The pain was passing, and Redfern was tough, too. A smile dawned upon his strained face.  
 "It's all right, kids. A licking's only a licking. Let's get in to breakfast."  
 And Redfern minor went in to breakfast between his two chums, each of them holding an arm, and all three of them grinning serenely.

Skelton's Scheme.  
 "E shall have to celebrate this!"  
 Brown III., after morning lessons.  
 A group of Classical juniors had gathered round Redfern minor in the quadrangle to congratulate him on his narrow escape.  
 They wanted to ask him questions, too, and they asked them; but they received no satisfaction in the way of replies. Redfern simply wouldn't tell them what it had all been about, or what his own remarks meant to him. When inquiries grew too pressing, he frankly advised the inquirers to mind their own business and to be content with their bounds for. As Redfern was crowded nobody else would know.

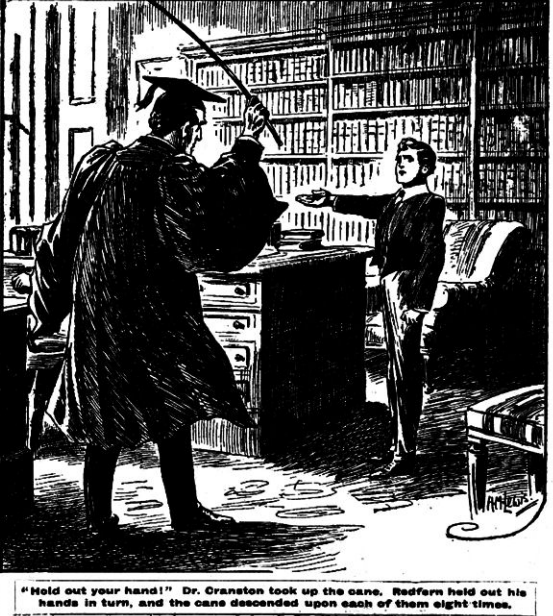
The juniors of St. Dolly's were beginning to know Redfern minor, and they even gave up asking questions. Brown III., who had started a more important subject. Redfern was a great man in the Form now, and his narrow adventure had been such up in the punishment-room and nearly expelled; there was a certain amount of eclat about it. The Model had only look on in envy.

Between the two parties of Classics there had been a trace while Redfern's peril lasted. But the moment it was known that Redfern was safe the rivalry ceased. The rivals seemed more keen than ever after his brief rest.  
 "Jolly good idea!" said Skelton. "Celebrate it!"  
 "What price parading the quadrangle with never have anything to celebrate," Redfern laughed.  
 "Very right," said Skelton. "I'm jolly glad to get off, that's all. That's sufficient celebration for me."  
 "What form had it better take?" asked Benson.  
 "Why, parading the quadrangle in a body, and blowing tin-whistles and beating drums!"

"You'll soon get a prefect on your neck if you don't bring anything of the sort."  
 "My idea would be a feed," suggested Spratt. "As Redfern is the founder of the boys' school at St. Dolly's, let's give him a feed."  
 "Good old Tubby!"  
 "I think it's a jolly good idea," persisted Spratt. "Redfern can borrow some tin from his major, and stand a big feed to all the Classics in the Fourth."  
 "Yes. We've got to celebrate Redfern, not Redfern's escape."  
 "It's all the same, so long—"

"So long as you get a free feed!" said Skelton, with a snort. "You ring off! I don't think you've got a good idea; you can't do better than stand a feed. You can't think of it, especially now the cold weather's coming on. A feed for twenty is a good wheeze."  
 "Ripping!" said a dozen voices.  
 "But Reddy's not going to stand it."  
 "Couldn't," said Redfern cheerfully. "My tin doesn't run to the extent of standing fees with twenty at table."  
 "You suppose not. It's a question for subscription from the whole Form—with the exception of Reddy."  
 "Hear, hear!"

All the Classical chaps will contribute, according to their means," said Skelton.  
 "Or let's make it to their meanness!" said Benson, grinning.  
 "Dry up, Benson!" Skelton said. "Let's get to business. I'm going to put up a money-box in the passage, for every chap to put his contributions into."  
 "Why not pass round the hat?" asked Phipps.  
 "Redfern and I, who saw a slight smile cross Redfern's face as Skelton made his brilliant proposition.  
 "Oh, I'm dead in this act, you know," said Redfern cheerfully.  
 "I don't think it's right," Skelton said, doing this thing, and I don't want to try to improve upon his methods."  
 "Well, it doesn't seem to me a pretty good idea," said Skelton.  
 "You go ahead, old chap!"  
 "What about the feed?" said Spratt anxiously.  
 "When it is to come off?"  
 "We can settle that later, Tubby."  
 And Skelton promptly carried out his wheeze.



"Hold out your hand!" Dr. Cranston took up the cane, Redfern held out his hands in turn, and the cane descended upon each of them eight times.

(Another rattling long instalment next week.)





# "CAPTAIN JACK" FOOTBALL

By Popular ARTHUR S. HARDY.

**BEGIN THE STORY HERE.**

"Bravo, Wesley Albion! Well played, Jack Fenton! A fine volley of cheers rings across the Wesley Albion playing-field as sturdy Jack Fenton slams the ball through the Aston Villa goal for the fifth time. A few seconds later the whistle sounds for time, leaving the home team victorious by five goals to all, four being scored by the new centre-forward."

"**JACK FENTON**, a handsome, strapping lad, is the son of **SIR JOHN FENTON**, of Blackmere Hall, who is the head of the greatest industry in Wesley, and owns scores of mills. Jack has quarreled with his father on countless points, and has declined position and fortune to take up the life of a professional footballer. He signs for the local team, which is in the First Division of the English League, and in Wesley Albion's opening fixture of the season with Aston Villa he wins the unstinted popularity of the townsfolk by his facilities, dashing play.

**Bad News.**

Returning to the dressing-room after the match, and after receiving a rousing reception, Jack meets his rascally cousin, **RICHARD KAPPELL**, who is a mean-spirited, unscrupulous character, who is partly to blame for Jack's quarrel with his aristocratic father, and who has now cunningly urged Jack's position.

Richard Fenton sneers at Jack for taking up the calling of a humble professional footballer, and after hot words have passed between the two, Jack's anger is aroused, and he knocks his treacherous cousin down.

Richard then departs, muttering up all the dignity he can under the circumstances.

By playing centre-forward for Wesley Albion, Jack has supplanted another man named **JIM SMART**, a subtle, malicious individual, who fosters a bitter and unjust spite against young Fenton.

Smart deliberately picks up a fight with Jack, and the two adjourn to the gymnasium to settle the disagreement with the gloves. Smart suffers a terrible thrashing, and swears to wreak vengeance on Jack in the near future.

Wesley Albion, who have won their first three matches, are next booked to play Sunderland away.

Sunderland led practically throughout the game, but one minute from time the scores are equalised, and the match ends in a draw.

Returning to the dressing-room, Jack learns from Stutter, the trainer, that a strike is threatening in Wesley, all Sir John Fenton's employees having rebelled upon his stating his intention to cut down their wages.

**On Strike.**

THE newspaper report which Trainer Bill Shuter had shown to Jack Fenton after the match with Sunderland had not lied. The workers in the Red Mill at Blackmere had gone out on strike, and had thus struck the first blow in the industrial war which was soon to shake Wesley to its foundations.

Jack Fenton tried to think of all that this might mean as the train bore the team back to Wesley. It never seemed to occur to him that the strikers might try to make capital out of him, whom they knew to be in sympathy with their movement; and, therefore, when he

stepped on to the platform at Wesley, he was astonished to find himself almost instantly surrounded by a group of workmen.

One of these, a big burly fellow, led off with a cheer.

"Now then, boys!" he cried. "Altogether! One, two, three! Hurrah!"

"Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!" cheered the crowd.

Then one of them struck up the customary refrain.

"For he's a jolly good fellow!  
He's a jolly good fellow.  
For-oh he's a jolly good fel-low!  
And so say all of us!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

The cheering died away, and Jack found himself a good twenty yards nearer the station exit, with a crowd of workmen swarming round him.

The moment he could make himself heard, Jack fought for above himself, and faced the group of working men.

He was smiling. It is as well to use tact when you deal with a crowd.

"Well," he asked, "and may I ask what this demonstration means?"

"Yes, Jack, laddie!" cried the big fellow who had led the cheering. "It means that you've got a lot of pals in Wesley, and Wesley's proud of you!"

"I don't know what I've done to deserve such praise," answered Jack.

"Stuff and nonsense," retorted the big man.

"Haven't you been turned away from home because you've got sympathy with the workers? Don't we all know that Sir John Fenton and you could never see eye to eye? And haven't we seen you play at a Saturday for the Wesley Albion, and prove yourself a man, which is more than can be said for our cousin, Mr. Richard?"

Jack walked towards the street.

The crowd followed him. He looked a group of a hundred or more men sliding away their feet on the pavement, and were waiting for the men who had chosen to give Jack such a strange welcome home. Anyway, they faced about as Jack and his cousin appeared, and there was an immediate commotion amongst them.

The moment later Jack found himself confronted by a mass of excited mill-hands. Some of them wore badges in their buttonholes, the badges which stamped them as Union men, and which they had been ordered to wear when on strike.

"Are you strikers from the Red Mill?" asked Jack of the big man who walked by his side.

The fellow nodded and grinned. But there seemed to be three or four of them, all veiled by the grin.

"Yes," he cried.

"Are you have been waiting for me? For what purpose? Have you anything to propose? If so, out with it!" cried Jack.

The young footballer was forced to a halt. The crowd in front of him prevented him from proceeding further.

"Yes," answered the big man now. "We've got talkin' things over amongst ourselves, Jack, and we've come to the conclusion that you know more about these matters than most of us. We've come here as a deputation to ask you to lead us in the strike, to voice our claims, and to force a settlement with Sir John. You're the lad to do it, if you will. And we'll see rather the Union will lose—that you don't suffer for it, either."

Jack Fenton's lips curled.

"I am not a paid agitator," he said. "I have sympathy with the workers, but I will never consent to lead them. That must be the duty of those who induce you to go out on strike. I will not do it. You would place me in a false position. How can you expect me to lead a revolt against my own work?"

"He never studied you," Jack said.

"I have never held with any sweating of labour," answered Jack fiercely. "I am against it."

"The lead us, Jack," Jack Fenton shook his head.

"No!" he answered. "My sympathies are with you, but I can't lead you."

"Do you hold with any sweating, laddie? He'd grind us abodeemed men down from 5s. 4d. a working day, to 4s. 8d. That's 8d. on his side! 8d. a day makes a difference of 4s. a week. Four shillings a week is all that stands between us and starvation. We can't do it without. We've got our families, our wives and children, to support. It's downright sweating, that Sir John Fenton may swell his profits."

Jack held up his hand.

"Workmen of Wesley," he said. "Listen to me. There are two sides to every question. Do you know what my father, Sir John Fenton, says—"

"Ay, we know!" cried the big man in a menacing voice. "We know! He says that he's reducing wages because of fierce competition is spoiling the trade in Wesley. For he's reducing the wages all round, instead of discharging 15 per cent. of his employees so as to give 'em all a chance. He's got the feeling the greatest good of the greatest number. But we workers of Wesley know that it's all lies! Lie! Do you hear?"

"Ay!" came in a mighty shout from the crowd, and the men taking off their caps burst into a thunderous cheer.

There were women workers and girl workers standing on the pavement watching the scene with moist eyes. Some of them wore the cloak and shawl. A poor, unhealthy-looking boy looked, too, for the most part.

Some of the strikers hoisted the big man up on their shoulders, and he caught sight of the women and the girls.

"Look at them!" he cried. "Look at the wimmen! Let 'em make a jalous agitator of me! They're all for the mill, and they're all bleed! That's what Sir John Fenton has driven them to!"

"Ay!" once more rang out in a menacing roar.

"And yet," shouted Jack Fenton, during a lull in the storm, "before my father came to Wesley his trade was better than it is now, and he was starving. He, at least, has made the town what it is. And, though I don't hold with the widdling 'own of the world' as it is called with arbitration. Men of Wesley, don't force Sir

John's Fenton's hand. Meet him in an amicable spirit. He's stubborn, but he's reasonable if he's approached the right way. You may give you concessions, if you'll only strive to meet him."

"Do you ever found him reasonable, Jack?" asked a workman in a heavy tread suit, leering up into Jack's handsome but pale face.

The crowd laughed at that.

Jack Fenton, the outcast from Blackmere Hall, had just given his reason. The very idea was hilarious.

"Come, Jack, laddie," cried the big man, leaping down from the shoulders of his mates, and taking arms with the crowd. "Come! They're in your lot with us. You can agitate out of your football time. The crowd love you. You've got some leader in you, or you've got a chance of a lifetime waiting for you here. You'll make yourself famous. You'll be able to stand for Parliament before the end of the year. Think of it! Honour to whom honour is due. The football member. It's worth trying, Jack! You'll save your own salvation. You'll heap coils of fire on your father's head. Come, come! I may stand by the workers!"

Jack shook his head.

"I just stand by the workers," he cried.

"And I'll do everything that lies within my power to alleviate distress, but you must let me go to work in my own way. You must leave me to pick and choose. I will not become your chosen leader. I will not consent to agitate in any way. I am not a man, but a labour leader. I am only a professional footballer. I wish you luck, but you must find someone else."

The greatest disappointment was depicted on the face of the big man, and on those of the rest of the strikers who were within hearing of Jack's voice.

"Well," cried the big man, "think it over. We won't ask you to decide now. My name's George, and I'm your own leader. We've got our committee-rooms we're organising down in 't' town. If you change your mind, come to me there, and we'll soon make a man of you."

"Thanks," answered Jack, as he forced his way onward, the colour mounting to his forehead as he thought of the blows to his mind, you'll hear from me soon, Keppell."

He found it a difficult task to pass through the surging ranks of the crowd. They all had their eyes fixed on him, and many of them wished to shake him by the hand, and when he had passed the men he had the women to deal with.

Poor souls! They crowded round him closely, peering up into his handsome, serious face, and smiling at him as if he were a god. He was indeed a god to many of them, for there was not one amongst them who did not recognise in him the son of Sir John Fenton, the capitalist, who was grinding them down—a son who had himself been crushed down beneath the iron heel of the tyrant baronet.

"I'll be the worker of a bloody man, your father, Jack!" cried one eager-looking woman. "It was our work, the labour of our hands, that gained him his title. And now he'd rob us of the right to live!"

"I hope it's not so bad as that, lass," answered Jack.

"I've never cried a brutal-looking fellow, turning to George Keppell—"I tell you that that lad's a blackleg. I know him. You can't be so sure about the work of a bloody man's generation. His sympathies are with the capitalists. He's a charlatan, that's what Jack Fenton is!"

The man was the ruffian who had led the attack on Sir John Fenton's carriage.

George Keppell thrust him rudely aside. "You speak with malice, he cried. "The lad's true—as true as steel. That's why I want him on our side. We've paid agitators at work—Union leaders to help us, but if we had the man who was grinding them down to fight on our side, too, and I hope we may get him yet."

As the man spoke, no sooner had he escaped from the women than he was joined by his football friends.

"That's the goal-keeper, Jack lad!" asked Sturges, the goalkeeper.

Jack Fenton smiled sadly.

The game is Sturges," he cried. "That the strikers are going to make a jalous agitator of me, and offer me a seat in Parliament, but I mean to keep out of this struggle if I can."

**Jack Fenton's Appeal.**

SUNDAY passed quietly away. As far as Jack Fenton could judge, there was no change in the attitude of the workers at Fenton's Mills. Monday morning came with the local papers full of the strikers' demands, and the news of the coming strike. Without exception, the opinion was expressed that both the workers and Sir John Fenton were well advised to settle the matter by arbitration.

Settle a strike by arbitration! It's a difficult matter, especially when the strike is in its third week, and the strikers have got to feel the pinch of hunger and distress, and are full of the fighting spirit, backed by a strong sense of injustice.

As yet, so far all the world as if it were surcharged with electricity.

Jack put in an early appearance at the town hall-ground on Monday, and then went home.

On the way he found himself the centre of a mob of angry men. Jack Fenton, hitherto the despised footballer, the outcast from Blackmere



THE ATHLETIC CORNER

Conducted by W. G. GEORGE, Holder of the World's One Mile Championship.

The Action for Long-Distance Running.

PROMISED in last week's article to describe to you the correct action for long distance running... The line with both feet, standing flat-footed, the feet being about three inches apart...

As each stride is taken, the foot should fall right on the ball; the heel will then be just clear of the ground, but should not touch the ground unless compelled to do so through weariness.

Unfortunately, this trouble comes to all at some time or another, and it is therefore advisable that a light but by no means too low a heel be attached to the running-shoes, so that the right position of the foot may be maintained throughout a run.

The actual action will be immediately apparent to anyone who has taken a few natural foregoing instructions, and after that, all the pupil will have to do is to swing the arms, and to let the feet take their own course...

shorten the stride, and therefore the athlete must make a point of striding out as far as possible, but never to the detriment of disturbing his even carriage and steady balance.

When the pupil has once discovered and corrected his imperfections, and has cottoned to the best possible form of his gait, his desire to do the thing properly, all he will have to do further will be to practise, and keep on practising until his legs become just as natural and more easy for him to run, or "fall forward," than to walk. Then he will be fit and ready to run a "Marathon."

Great Britain has then prided herself on her stamina and staying power, but her sons appear to be losing that prestige which she gained for her victory in the performance of those athletic contests wherein we prided ourselves many a day; in Marathon races, in rowing, and in various other games?

But I will confine myself to long-distance running, where, it will be remembered, we are ourselves in the van. In that event it was taught a very necessary and wholesome, though unpalatable, lesson at the late Olympic Marathon race of last year. In that event it was thought that Great Britain would not only hold pride of place, but would occupy all the leading positions at the termination of the race.

As it turned out, we were ignominiously beaten and outclassed, not one of our boasted champions occupying a single prominent position at the finish.

We may well ask, "What happened?" and "Why were we beaten?"

The answer is simple. We have been pre-empted so long in this class of contest that we became too cocksure of ourselves, and in consequence neglected our training, and put off the necessary preliminary physical and mental question until too late, and thus permitted other countries to outstare us from our proper position.

It is, however, a very good thing for this country that it was athletics, and not war, that gave us our lesson. But now it has been given, we must see to it to learn it, and we must strive to re-establish ourselves in the eyes of the world, and to our own satisfaction.

We certainly have the material and the knowledge, but we have lacked the discipline, and neglected our old-fashioned habits of taking the maximum of physical training.

Our trainers, motor-buses, taxis, lifts, etc., have had a great deal to do with this; but my countrymen will have to do it themselves, and at least will not develop into drones by the too great a use of all such conveniences.

Let them one and all climb a few flights of stairs, run or walk a few miles, and always play the game, my boys, at whatever you are doing; and don't forget the "handicap" of exercising your mind, for you will not only make athletes, but men of yourselves. More than that, you will quickly restore to Great Britain her prestige and pride of place.

(To be continued next week. No. 5 of THE BOYS' REALM FOOTBALL LIBRARY is now on sale—1d. Don't fail to buy a copy.)

THE YOUNG FOOTBALLER.

A Fine New Series of Instructive Articles by J. W. Robinson, the Famous International Player.

GOALKEEPING (continued).

THINK the best and easiest way to tackle this subject, so that you do not get into the way of kicking and give your four guiding rules right off, and enlarge upon them afterwards:

1. Never leave the goal, but never kick if he has time to use his hands.

2. Always throw or kick the ball to the wings, and not to the centre of the ground.

3. Never leave the goal by running out unless it is absolutely necessary.

4. Don't endeavour to gain the applause of the onlookers.

Now, regarding my first rule, you will, I am sure, know that when a shot is taken at goal there are two ways of taking it, the safest rid of the ball. The first, which is the easiest, is to catch it in both hands, and then throw or kick it away, always remembering that the quicker the ball is got rid of the better. Don't be tempted to hold the ball too long in order to make an opponent look small.

It is risky, another way of taking a shot is to use the fist and punch the ball away. Now, although I have known some great goalkeepers to use this, but very frequently, it is, in my opinion, extremely unsafe. Of course, there are times when kicking is best, but you should never attempt it unless necessary it should never be attempted. When there is time to catch the ball in the hands it is always best to do so. Kicking is certainly the centre of the ground, only other way of getting rid of a ball besides those I have mentioned is that of kicking without using the hands.

your opponents will score from it.

My rule No. 2 is a most important one, because as a goalkeeper, send the ball to the centre of the ground it is far more likely that one of the opposing side will get hold of it, in fact, the chances are that the goalkeeper will not give much time for the defence to collect itself and get into position. Kicking into the centre of the ground is sure to result in another attack, because the opposing players, having already attacked, will be more or less massed well

up in the centre; consequently, the only safe way to bring relief is to send out to the wings. In this way it doesn't matter so much if the wing player is robbed of the ball, because the defence will have had time to get into position and be ready to carefully mark each opponent.

Rule No. 5 will, if followed, be found most annoying at times. I know that it is to be standing between the posts awaiting the onslaught of opposing forwards; nevertheless, I am sure a goalkeeper should never leave his charges, excepting under one condition, and that is when a forward has got clear away, and is making straight for goal. In this case, if a goalkeeper

remains between the posts he is throwing away a fine chance of saving, as it should be fairly simple for a forward to score when he has only one man to oppose him, and a good space on either side where he can put the ball.

Coming out will naturally disconcert the forwards, besides giving him much less of the goal to aim at, and if he attempts to dribble round, the "goalie" should charge him. Otherwise, never come out unless it is one which, at times, is very hard to follow. I suppose it is only natural that a player should like to gain the applause of the forwards, besides giving him much less of the goal to aim at, and if he attempts to dribble round, the "goalie" should charge him.

This kind of play it is bad enough in other positions of the field, but it is ten times worse if allowed to be played by a goalkeeper. If you play the real, old-fashioned way, you will get far more applause than you would be by playing in bursts of brilliance. It may be said that you are not a player, but you are by some risky movement of yours, but it is not football.

W. Robinson (To be continued.)

ASTON VILLA.

The History of the Famous Midland Club Briefly Retold.

IN the year 1874 a band of young men connected with Aston Villa Wesleyan Church, and led by Mr. James H. Hunter, formed a football club. It was quite a small and humble affair, and for some time the members of the club were content to play on the common ground near the Wesleyan Church. Aston Park and had for their deadly rivals the old Birmingham Cricket and Football Club, whose field was Aston Lower Grounds, at that time the home of Birmingham sports. Such was the beginning of the great Aston Villa Football Club, to-day one of the greatest professional organisations throughout the land.

It is probable that the club would have remained obscure and unimportant all its days had it not been for the one great achievement when the members were indulging at a punt-about, there appeared on the scene a young fellow, named George Ramsey, who showed the somewhat crude shooting and dribbling of the players with a clever player.

A Clever Player. George Ramsey was a footballer of no mean repute. He had played the game in Scotland, and had made his mark in the football circles of Glasgow. He was small of stature, well knit, and full of vim and vigour. He had come to Birmingham was due to business, and this was the first time since his arrival in Birmingham that he had had an opportunity of seeing football played.

Having stood on the line for a while, George Hunter asked that he might join in. The members, and the newly-arrived player, had to welcome the new-comer, who there and then gave them an object-lesson in the art of football. Under his tuition the club was astounded. They had never seen anyone play like this young man. His control of the ball was amazing, and at such a time as he endeavoured to rob him of the leather seemed almost unsteady.

It is not to be wondered at that George Ramsey was asked to become a permanent member of the club; and within a very short time he was, and finally, elected captain of the Villa team. Under his leadership the play of the members improved marvellously.

Of course, it took a long time to link the talent into shape, and for some considerable period the Aston Villa Club were content with a strictly local programme. Such strong Black Country players as the Walsley, the Woodhouse, the Strollers, and Stafford Road were above their mettle, and they could by no means claim to be a first-class team, leading Birmingham football organisations.

Two More New Recruits

Presently, however, there came on the scene two wonderful players, Archie and Andy Hunter, and the newly-arrived player endeavoured to further improve the play of the Villa team. They schooled the members in short passing, leading, and in the best of combinations on the field, and thus brought the play of the Aston Villa Club to a very high point of development. It may be here stated that Archie Hunter was the brother of the late Mr. Archie Thistle, whilst his brother Andy had previously been identified with Third Lanark.

It is one of the early successes of the Aston Villa Club was due to George Ramsey, it was Archie Hunter who actually laid the foundations of the club, and it was Andy Hunter who brought the redoubtable Archie into touch with the club. He would have attached himself to a rival organisation, but for the fact that he could not find the ground. Hearing of the existence of the Club, and learning that already several Scotsmen were playing for it, Archie threw in his lot with them, and with the help of his brother Andy, moulded and

Improved the play

of the team beyond recognition. It is not to be wondered at that the brothers Hunter both died prematurely from that deadly scourge consumption, as did John Hunter, a third brother, who played for Third Lanark. Archie Hunter was the brother of the late Mr. Archie Thistle, and it was due to his efforts that, in a few years, George Ramsey having skipped the four seasons previous to his occupying that position.

Soon after Archie Hunter arrived on the scene, the Aston Villa Club obtained a ground for their own use, and it was on this ground that the club was first played, and that was at Perry Barr. It certainly felt much to be desired, for it was by no means level, and there were many holes in the ground, and the field was really on the edge of a small hill. However, it was not until the spectators began to come in numbers that the trees were removed.

It is on record that at more than one match during the early years of the club, the play was played on the Wellington Road field that there were only two onlookers—George Ramsey's father and the late Mr. James H. Hunter, the Father of the League. Mr. MacGregor himself states this to be the case. In course of time, however, the club grew in popularity, and on one notable occasion the noble sum of 5s. 6d. was raked in as gate-money, much to the delight of the treasurer.

(This splendid article will be continued over Saturday next.)

LOST MATCHES.

By G. L. B. COVERDALE, Hon. Sec. East Riding County F.A.

By the time this appears in print Realities will no doubt have played out, and the facts that will be remembered this week are chiefly directed to those who have lost their first encounters. Those clubs that have won or drawn will be congratulated, and play a harder to keep an unbeaten record.

My sympathy always goes out to the clubs that lose their first match, especially that club that is a new junior organisation. Should a new club lose its first two or three contests, its career is almost certainly doomed, invariably bringing dissatisfaction, and when this element makes itself apparent, it needs careful management and tact to weather the storm.

Furthermore, the officials will have to exert their persuasive powers to retain the "danglers." By this term, I mean those players and fans who are "danglers" at the first lost match want to go off to another club, and blame the management, other players, or anybody else, as long as it does not mean a loss of non-success. A club that is in a winning vein can always obtain and retain players.

Well, say I don't have "danglers" in your club. Well, it's agree, certainly; but a club is hard to get together without them, and very easy to lose them. It is a pity that you are not operative to include some of these lukewarm individuals in a team.

Captains, secretaries, and officials should always be recommended that you will get a meeting of the club, and discuss the matter of your non-success. Let the captain express his feelings, and let the secretary be a member of the team speak and give his advice. Consider where your weak points are, whether in the defence or the attack, and how the defects may be removed.

It may be that the club has been dogged with ill luck, and matches have been lost by the odd goal only. If this be the case, then

the team does not need very much reconstruction, and it only requires a little of the "We are going to win" spirit, and the next match will give your team confidence and confidence will again spring up in the hearts of players and supporters.

It is one of the early successes of the Aston Villa Club was due to George Ramsey, it was Archie Hunter who actually laid the foundations of the club, and it was Andy Hunter who brought the redoubtable Archie into touch with the club. He would have attached himself to a rival organisation, but for the fact that he could not find the ground.

A general meeting is certainly the place for a junior club to discuss the question of new players, as those members present will doubtless be able to give you the best advice they can. What is better, they may know of a new brother, or friend who is doing well with a younger club, and who is desirous of having a regular trial with one of a little higher grade.

These are the players you want. Perhaps the inclusion of one or two of such will change the whole character of the team, and success will again come your way.

Map out some defined method of attack, and try to arouse the interest of the players. If you do, "wins" are sure to come your way. Should the grumbling element be very strong, let one or two of the worst cuprits go; your club will certainly be better without them.

Captains should try to encourage their men to be of good heart, and not show the "white feather" by being beaten. Players I mean, not let players go on the field in the "I know we shall lose; we did last week" spirit. It is a matter of general opinion, as well as good play, that wins matches.

Good fellowship and unselfishness are other essential qualities of the traits, and your club is bound to be a success.

When you lose a match don't blame the referee, he may have made a mistake, but more often he is right. Players I mean, do not lay blame on that much-abused official—the football referee. How often we hear of the name given to the players who are being discussed by players who are absolutely ignorant of the offside rule, and the laws of the game generally. It is a pity that you are not the rules a little more, we should bear much loss of this dissatisfaction.

DOUGLAS HOPE CHAIRED AFTER WINNING THE MATCH



THE 2nd CHAPTER.

The Fight. "YOU'RE done, Jack! let's stop it!" "Yes, or man, do. I'll be a draw, and no shame to either of you."

The speakers were Frank Tyrrell and Geoff Deane, two Coringham College boys. On the former's knee sat Jack Playfair, breathing heavily, but with the flame of fight still as bright as ever in his eyes.

"Sponge away!" was his cry response. "I'm not caving in yet. I'm jolly well keeping on as long as I can see!" "Time!"

Prompt at the call Playfair rose to face his opponent, Hardwick, for the eleventh round. Though the hard-fought breath of such a school fight gets into double figures, but such was the case with the tussle which was waged on the greensward among the bushes of Downsford Park, two miles from Coringham.

draw; there was no satisfaction in such a result. He would rather have lost, he said. "All right, Carby," came the quiet voice of Geoff Deane, a round-looking, grey-eyed fellow who was helping Tyrrell to attend to Playfair.

"Oh," he stammered, "that's nothing to do with it. There was to be a fight between me and Playfair, and Playfair called Hardwick a liar, and—"

"No?" was the reply. "Who tried to rain me at the school because he was jealous of my being appointed skipper of the football eleven? Who turned some of my best chums—and some of the best players—against me, and got them to leave the eleven? Who poisoned the minds of Hardwick, there, and Langley, too, and Donnelly against me? Ugh! I could ask questions like these for an hour on end, and the answer to them all would be the same—Carby! Carby, who won't fight when fairly challenged, and must be shamed into standing up in his own defence. Carby! The same Carby that I strike in the teeth—so! There Carby, will you fight now?"

There was no help for it now. Carby knew that if he refused his influence over Hardwick, Langley, and the rest would be gone. Langley acted as his second, while Tyrrell officiated for Geoff Deane.

THE 2nd CHAPTER.

THE GREAT DAY. THAT great day in Downsford Park had marked the close of the summer term. Since then the holidays had passed, and now Coringham Station was echoing once again to the shouts of the boys. As Geoff Deane stood apart watching the tumult, his hands clasped in his coat, he passed him with a sneering remark to his companion, Donnelly.

"The Blue Crusaders." A. S. Hardy's Great Football Year, is Now Starting in

THE CORINGHAM FOOTBALL TEAMS.

A Fine Complete Football Story By FRED LOWTHER.

reverie by the touch of a firm hand upon his arm. Turning, he was greeted by Bradley, of the Sixth, the captain of the Coringham College first eleven.

"Look here, Deane," said the prefect, "I've got some news for you. The date of the inter-House match for the Albery Cup has been fixed. It's a new outlier than usual this year. On Wednesday week, in fact. But there's a special reason for it."

Geoff Deane nodded rather blankly. He knew what it would mean only too well. In his early days of Coringham College that famous eleven comprised ten Houses only, known as the School House and Milner's. Though the number had since been added to, the two old Houses regarded themselves as being in a class apart, and between themselves a healthy rivalry in matters both of sport and scholarship had always been carried on with unflagging vigour.

This rivalry had been encouraged when a former master, Mr. Albery—a most enthusiastic athlete, and a double Blue—had presided over the cup, and by Association teams representing the two original Houses of Coringham. The main condition was to the effect that the eleven must be drawn from the Fourth-Form boys of the respective Houses; another was that in the event of the cup being won in any three successive years by the same House, it should become the absolute property of that House.

Geoff Deane's uneasiness will be accounted for when it is added that the School House had already been successful two years in succession, so that another win would give them the coveted trophy for their own. The junior captain knew that it would be a hard job for his own House—Milner's—to put up with an eleven capable of preventing a third and decisive victory.

"I know there are long odds against you, young 'un," continued Bradley, "and the time's very short. But you'll do your best, I know. Mr. Albery was House-master up at Milner's, and you don't want to let him see his old House having its colours lowered on Wednesday. Get up the strongest lot you can, and—well, don't let anything personal—any outside matter—stand in the way."

Deane knew very well to what these concluding words of the prefect referred, and they left him thoughtful during the drive up to the college. Arriving there, he made his way along the corridor upon which the Fourth-Form boys were waiting for him. He was of his own special domain, Study No. 5, he knocked at that belonging to Study No. 5.

only a few weeks before the end of last term, and very little was known about him yet. "I want to have a few words with you fellows," began Geoff, "if you don't mind." "Oh, no, I don't mind," said the other, and he mind—very much. You see, we always make allowances. A few words, I think you said? We are not going to pass his time until tea. I don't think you'll find it hard to answer. Er, away!"

The 2nd CHAPTER. Swearing a Truce.

WEDDIE had heard something of it, returned Carby, "but, of course, we weren't much interested. It'll be a very tame affair, I expect. Last year the School House got the cup for 'keepers' that I've come here now. Instead of sitting up gloating over the defeat of your own House, Carby, it would suit you better if you came out of the field to play the game, and let Milner's to win. That's just what I'm asking you fellows to do. I don't want your heeblering to be the means of turning the Albery Cup, and so I ask you to put it aside for the time, and join in with the rest of us, to give the cup to the boys of the school."

Langley, Hardwick, and Donnelly started, and exchanged glances. Deane could see that all three were inclined to accept his proposal. But they were not to be so easily won by their spokesman, and Carby did not exactly see eye to eye with his chums.

"Ah," he drawled, "very interesting position. The noble captain at the head of the field to lead a team; so for his credit's sake, he doesn't mind putting his pride in his pocket a bit. Geoff Deane, I'm sure that the Albery Cup in Study No. 5! Good thing it's not generally known, or the whole school would be crowding in to see the show. I'm sure that's all."

But Carby stopped abruptly. He saw that Deane was roused, and though brave enough with his tongue, he did not care to provoke anything physical.

"You're sure what, Carby?" said the junior captain. "Forgotten—eh? Well, I'm sure that talk is cheap, anyway. I'm not eating humble pie, and I'm not eating my words. And as for your sneers at my pride as captain—well, if my being captain prevents you from getting the cup, I'll resign the position. I'll do anything rather than see School House carry off the Albery Cup. So there!"

This altercation took Carby by surprise. Before he could find a reply, Langley got up, and said hurriedly to Deane, "You're going to be captain still, and I, for one, am ready to help you win the match on Wednesday."

"And more similarly," said Donnelly. "For little things have got to give way to big ones. But Carby, I'm sure, I'll have to follow the majority. But it's understood, of course, that this arrangement only affects the cup match. We're not to let the eleven be for good, and when Wednesday's contest is over we go back to the old terms."

"You mean it's only a truce, not an alliance," said Tyrrell. "I'll have to go at it." (Continued on the next page.)

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that, for the present. Perhaps, when Wednesday's contest is over, we'll have something more to say about it."

"Carby started a voluminous look at the speaker, Hardwick was certainly getting very 'upstak,' and seemed to have the cheek to entertain Carby's own opinion, a statement which Carby had already thrashed out and settled. Hardwick would have to be put back in his place—not just then, however, for Geoff Deane had his own part to play. He had a remark to make which would be put down last, in his own remarking that he would be glad to play in his old place, certainly, but that he feared he was rather out of practice."

"Well," said Deane, "as soon as I take the time to brush up, I will arrange several good practice games for us."

"Good!" said Langley. "The trace is awful, the boys' hands for the time, and we must play up all we know."

On leaving Study No. 5, Deane went straight to Bradley, who, on scanning the list, squeaked the junior's hand in a hearty grip, and said: "Good, man!"

"It wasn't much, perhaps, but from Bradley it came a great deal."

"Get 'em out on the upper field to morrow, Deane, at three sharp," were his parting words, "Carby has a very rich team ready to put you through your fancies."

Returning to his own domain, Geoff found the walking round and play, the circuitous table, clearly put up, and Carby, who was holding a shiny new topper in his hand.

"Here, what if you think of this, Geoff?" exclaimed Playfair, who was looking at him with a grin, for wriggling out of a bargain like this chap Tyrell! We saw Grasshopper at the station with a queer-looking parcel, and Tyrell said he would put his best in it if it wasn't a gramophone trumpet. Well, this is Tyrell's best bat, but the owner absolutely refuses even to taste the bat, though it's been proved to him that the thing isn't what he said it was."

"Well, it looks all right," admitted Geoff.

"Yes, rather! And you bet it sounds all right!" cried Tyrell, who was looking at him with a grin that makes it all better for the purpose."

"What purpose do you mean?" queried Deane.

"Why, to cheer on Milner's to the fray, of course, on the great day of the Alberley Cup match."

"Now, then, that'll do, Grasshopper," laughed Geoff. "There'll be no chance for you to go home in megaphones on the match day. You'll want all the ready for those dashin' right wing rushes of yours."

"Oh, I don't mean to use it myself," exclaimed Tyrell, who was looking at him with a grin. "I'll give it to Freddy Ward; and if he doesn't keep on abouting the old war-cry, 'Mop 'em up, Milner's! Mop 'em up, Milner's!' I'll promise him faithfully that I'll clump him over the head with it, good and hard."

"Well," said Geoff, "I hope Milner's will be able to mop 'em up on Wednesday week, and here's the little list of those I'm depending on to do it."

"The little list was eagerly scanned, and soon there were exclamations of surprise."

"What!" Carby at centre-forward!" cried Tyrell.

"Donnelly, Deane, and Langley, half-backs!" cried Morton, in amazement.

"Right centre, you'll be reserved for Playfair," said Deane.

"Backs, Playfair, Hardwick," he stuttered.

"Playfair, Hardwick! We two, and no others!" cried Langley, who was looking at him with a grin.

Together, the result was a draw. Well, that shall be, shall be."

"So be it down, and, putting on the foghorn voice, he often assumed, said, slowly and impressively:

"Well, I hope that the School House forwards will be frequently giving us look-ups; if I fail to ourselves, I and I will be sure to get putting our fukes up!"

No more was said, and next afternoon the first practice game was played. Carby soon got over his rustiness, and managed to score twice against the scratch goalkeeper, who was by no means a bad custodian. As to the others, the first strangeness quickly wore off, and they settled down to a good game. Langley and Donnelly, the new additions to the half-back line, gave great promise; while at full-back, their common regard for the honour of their House soon made Playfair and Hardwick forget their old enmity.

"Very fair practice," was Bradley's verdict. "With a week's practice, you should do very well, Deane."

Geoff took care that the practice was given; and, though Carby grumbled that he was being overtrained, the others all seemed the better for it. In their week the strangely-assembled eleven backed up wonderfully, seeming to be inspired throughout with Geoff Deane's enthusiasm. So it happened that when the eventual Wednesday came round the prospects of School House carrying off the cup as their own were not quite so rosy as they had been. The great day broke bright and clear, with just enough of a nip in the air to nerve the players to their liveliest form. The rival Houses of Corsingham were simmering with excitement, and the field was lined with eager spectators a good hour before the time of starting play. Perched on the roof of the pavilion was Freddy Ward, tightly grasping Morton's megaphone, while his chum Dyce, to clear his voice for the cheering that was to come, kept feeding him with black-currant juices. However, the jubilee had begun to well, and Ward was all impatient to begin; so when a burst of hearty cheering rang round the field, Freddy hurriedly swallowed the jubilee he was engaged on, and raised the megaphone to his lips.



Hardwick's right and Playfair's left got home together with equally overjoyed results. The two went down just as the timekeeper called.

"Good old Milner!" he bellowed. "Play up, boys! Go it—go it! Mop 'em up, Milner's! Mop—aw—aw—aw—aw!"

"Steady on, jugskins!" shrieked Dyce, trying to play up the megaphone with the jubilee-bottle. "You can't expect our chaps to start mopping 'em up in a dressing-room. The team aren't over yet."

"Then what did all those silly cheers for?" asked Freddy.

"For Mr. Albany and the doc., of course. But they've just taken their places on the stand. But here you are, Freddy! Now's your chance! Let it rip—good—ho!"

At the end of all his noise as the teams took the field, and the trumpet responded nobly, in spite of its spint. The notes produced were on a long-drawn groove to a loud, angry, hollow, while now and again came a shrill squeak, just to relieve the monotony. Freddy Ward, tightly grasping Morton's megaphone, while his chum Dyce, to clear his voice for the cheering that was to come, kept feeding him with black-currant juices. However, the jubilee had begun to well, and Ward was all impatient to begin; so when a burst of hearty cheering rang round the field, Freddy hurriedly swallowed the jubilee he was engaged on, and raised the megaphone to his lips.

"Woolly" play, the opposing elevens settled down to one of the hardest-fought games ever seen on the playing-fields of old Corsingham. The sanguine followers of the School House soon saw that their men would have all their work out to pull off the third win.

"How do you play, you?" asked Deane, "doesn't count—not now?"

"He has drawn out," said Langley. "He's not playing again."

"Oh, Deane! Don't feel it, I suppose," said Geoff. "I was very sorry to see him crack up the way he did after the interval."

"Hub!" said Hardwick. "I dare say you'll be cornered when you know that he cracked up on purpose. He did his best to give the match away."

"Pity," thought Deane, "that it's only a truce which might it could be an alliance for always."

THE 4th CHAPTER.

THE ENDS ORDIALE.

Half-time they changed over without either side having scored. It was soon made plain that Milner's attack had lost a lot of its sting; in fact, their centre-forward seemed to have cracked up altogether. He snuffed his shots, fumbled his passes, and let the School House players romp round him generally. The display was pitiful, after the dashing show he had made in the first half.

"Good thing there's no score up!" muttered Hardwick, preparing to meet a rush.

He cleared, and then settled down with Playfair to defend their goal. They were grimly resolved that, whether their own forwards scored or not, they would try their utmost to keep the School House forwards from passing them.

Well, it was a hard job, but they did it. No goal was scored against Milner's. But Brand and Whitman did as much for their side, and so what was recognised as the hardest tussle that had ever been waged for the Alberley Cup ended in a result unknown before—a draw, 0-0.

When the referee's shrill whistle blew an end to the game, Freddy Ward followed it by a long-drawn, melancholy roar on the megaphone, a roar which might have been uttered by a grizzly bear disappointed in catching a nice bun. He let the instrument drop on his lap, and looked round dolefully.

"No score!" he groaned. "A draw! My word! And I've roared till I've given myself hiccough in the lips and shaking (palsy in the shins), and delirious trembling in the wood chlores, and it hasn't done a bit of good!"

"Yes, it has," urged Dyce. "The School House lancers haven't got the cup yet. There'll have to be a replay, and while there's life there's hope."

"Nor was that a bit of interest," said Deane. "The School House lancers haven't got the cup yet. There'll have to be a replay, and while there's life there's hope."

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"Fact," said Hardwick. "We know Carby, and we twigg'd what he was after. Of course, the other three of us did our best to make up for it. When we got fed up with Carby, we didn't deny it, but said we were soft-headed fools for not doing the same. In fact, he said so much that we got fed up with Carby, and the result is, he's seeing about a shift to another study, and I'm giving notice, on his behalf, that he isn't playing on Saturday."

"But why should he say such a low-down trick?" asked Deane.

"Why?" replied Hardwick. "Because he could stand to get away from him the other night when you came to the study to make the trace. But we've been under Carby's nose so much that we got fed up with Carby, and I'm giving notice, on his behalf, that he isn't playing on Saturday."

"That's one good turn you've done us, Deane."

"Ner a little more talk about Carby, Geoff said."

"But who can we put in his place?"

"Well," suggested Langley, "if you've got no one else, you might give my cousin Douglas Hope a try. He's going to take Carby's place in Study No. 5, and I dare say he'll be able to take his place in the field as well."

Geoff Deane interviewed Hope at once, and the matter was soon arranged. Langley's cousin was a well-known figure, and was expected to be a speedy forward. The deep chest, the slim nose, the well-knit limbs, every curve of the body were just what one would expect of a player who had not played before; but the fact was that Hope, who was by no means a duffer, had seen what a hold the unworshipful play had taken in the minds of the spectators, and had not been able to take much interest in anything until he had got Carby shifted. As this was now done, the play was all eagerness to take a part in defending the record of Milner's House. That night, Geoff Deane went to the ground, and the liveliest hopes. If Milner's had not won the match, they had at least prevented the School House from winning the cup outright. That fact, Geoff knew, would give his cause a lot of confidence, and nerve them to still more vigorous efforts when Saturday came.

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THE GAME STEALERS. Opening Chapters of a Grand Sporting Serial. By T. C. BRIDGES.

FOR THE NEW READER.

SNIPPE, the hero of this splendid new sporting yarn... DEXTER MADINE, who owns a small plot of land adjoining Colton Heathcote's... ADAM RUDMAN, a gamekeeper on a certain Colton Heathcote's estate...

poavy's suspicions. Plainly, he took him for the naughty youngster he pretended to be. "All right," he said. "You come along with us, and show where them drooled keepers be. But you let me catch you up to any tricks, and I look out!"

THE 16th CHAPTER.

SNIPPE'S heart was panic-stricken. There was no way out. If he jumped up and bolted, a hundred to one a charge of shot would bring him down. There was nothing for it but to stay where he was, and be kicked out like a hard-lying rabbit.



Snippe made a frantic spring, just reached the far side, clutched at an oak bough, missed it, and was in the act of falling back into the deep channel below, when a long, lean arm shot out and seized him.

"'Ee stop that kid!" he heard a shout. One man made a dash at him, but grasped empty air. Snippe was already in the depths of the thicket, warning along like a snake, flat on his stomach.

The thorns were thick as a hedge, but Snippe went through them like a sheaf of straw. The Crowles were shooting in earnest. He heard their guns banging away.

Above the shriek of the gale rose wild shouts, and the boots crashed through the undergrowth. The navvies were charging. In spite of his fright, Snippe could have smiled with delight at the success of his stratagem.

When they did! Snippe's skin crawled as he thought of their rage. Any one of them would be ready to kill him if they could lay their hands on him. He knew he ought to clear for all he was worth, but for the life of him he could not leave the excitement of the fight.

Bill's gun struck the other by the lock, and snapped it in two like a rotten stick. Bill flung his gun down, and sprang at the navvy with open arms. The two closed, and, locked in a fierce grip, went reeling and stamping up and down among the close-set tree-trunks.

All this time the ever-increasing gale had been stripping the clouds into tattered fragments, and driving them across the sky. Now sunlight, the ocean and the land and the flat floor of the wood was silver light, crossed by willowy-tossing shadows.

But Snippe had forgotten his danger in the excitement of the battle between the big navvy and Bill Crowle. He stood on tiptoe, peering over the tops of bushes.

There was little to choose between the two. The navvy was a bit taller, but Crowle was the heavier. Round and round they went, each strutting desperately to throw the other.

Now that the rest of the Crowles were gone, the navvy's friends stood round, shouting encouragement, but not otherwise interfering. The whole was chance settled.

Bill Crowle made a mighty effort, and, exerting all his vast strength, lifted his opponent clean off his feet, and tried to dash him down backwards. He set his feet on a root. He tripped, and both went down together.

Snippe saw the navvy's great hand close on Bill Crowle. Bill straggled furiously, his great body leaping and bouncing under the other's weight. But the choking grip soon slipped, and the spectators roared with glee.

"The navvy held him another minute, to make sure, then got stiffly to his feet. He looked at his opponent, giving the body a contemptuous kick."

"What's the little game? 'E ain't no keeper. Look at 'is gun!"

Snippe saw the navvy pick up Bill's gun, and pointed to the cut-off barrels. The others crowded round, talking excitedly. Snippe could only catch a word or two through the din.

"It was that lying kid!" the big navvy shouted suddenly. "I'll flay the young beggar, if I catches 'im!"

Snippe's heart sank as he spread out fanwise, and made off. He ducked sharply, and, as he ran, he saw the navvy's eyes fixed on him.

There was no chance to double. He was forced to run straight ahead, a course which took him right into the heart of the wood. A lone navvy stood in the middle of the covert. Snippe knew that it was deep, and its banks swampy.

He did not think he could possibly cross it. But there was no choice; he had to run on. Presently he was tearing down a grassy slope among alder and laurel bushes. At the bottom the water swarmed in the middle of the covert.

He glanced back. Three of the navvies were in sight. He could hear the other two behind. The big fellow was leading.

"Got 'un now!" shouted the latter triumphantly. "E can't see 'is eyes now, 'e has 'em shut."

He was right. When Snippe reached the edge he instantly plunged knee-deep in bog. He struggled out, and, turning to the left, ran hard along the bank.

If he could only find a place to cross! The oak wood opposite was so thick he might dodge them, but he could not get into it.

He heard the nearest of the navvies charging through the bushes above him. He was cutting off the corner. Another fifty yards would finish him. But Snippe would not let that stop him.

He took a deep breath and aching legs he still tore along up the rough, red-green bank of the stream.

Here the brook grew narrower, and on the far side the oaks overhung the deep, black, sluggish water. But on his side the bank was all deep mud. Snippe sneezed longingly at the oaks, but dared not try it.

"Jump!" The voice came keen and clear out of the thick scrub opposite.

Snippe paused, unable to believe his ears. The nearest navvy was pounding downhill through the alder and laurel. The other two were close behind.

"Jump!" came the voice again, sharp and insistent. Snippe could see no one. He glanced at the brook. Certainly this was the narrowest part, and opposite was a clear space to land on.

Like lightning he took his decision, and ran back a few paces. Then, with a burst of arms and a pleasant surprise awaited him. The near bank under the reeds was firm enough to get a good take-off.

He made a frantic spring, just reached the far side, clutched at an oak bough, missed it, and was in the act of falling back into the deep channel below, when a long, lean arm shot out and seized him.

"Quick, this way!" came the voice. And Snippe found himself pushed head foremost into a hole in the ground. It was so small that it was hardly larger than a badger's earth.

