

# The Boys' Realm

## Football Series

# 10

A BRIGHT AND UP-TO-DATE PAPER FOR ALL BRITISH BOYS AND YOUNG MEN.

No. 189. Vol. IV.]

EVERY SATURDAY—ONE PENNY.

[SATURDAY, JANUARY 13TH, 1906.]

OUR GRAND NEW STORY  
OF SCHOOL LIFE.

YOU CAN COMMENCE IT TO-DAY.

(The preceding chapters of this fine tale will  
be found on the next page.)

Prospects of a Heavy Winter—Bouncer  
Shows the People the Way to Toboggan.

NOTWITHSTANDING the airy manner  
of Mr. Achilles Chopps, the boys  
took a very serious view of the ghost  
question. There was something very  
peculiar in the story told by Noddy's father  
being confirmed before their eyes.

There was a difference in the exact spot of  
its appearance, it is true, but it was there, and  
its movements were certainly peculiar.

Now, John McLata, known in the school as  
Cautious Johnny, was of the party, and his  
opinion of the apparition was as follows:

"If it's a ghost, it's very like a man; and if  
it's a man, he's as strange a one as ever I saw."

"There's snow enough to show footmarks,"  
said Noddy Berrill to Tom, as they were part-  
ing. "I'll be up as soon as it's light, and be  
off to see if I can find any, and, if there are,  
what they are like. I can tell in a minute if  
it's any of our people playing tricks; we all get  
our boots at the same shop."

But, alas! for Noddy's arrangement. It was  
upset by Dame Nature, who that night favoured  
the valley of the Tarn with one of the heaviest  
falls of snow known within the memory of that  
played-out old party—the oldest inhabitant.

About ten o'clock the sky became overcast,  
and shortly after the first flake fell. In five  
minutes it was heavily snowing, and on the  
sleeping village and the schools and all around  
untold millions of flakes fell silently. Hour  
after hour the fall continued, the flakes in-  
creasing in size. At dawn the air was so thick  
with them that the landscape fifty yards away  
was blotted out.

"Oh, here's a lark!" said Sam Smith, as he  
pushed aside the blind and peeped out.

"What's the matter?" asked Tom sleepily.

"Everything is buried under the snow,"  
replied Sam, "and it's coming down still. It's  
drifting up against the house, and Jerry is cut-  
ting a gangway to the gate."

Everything was not quite buried; but the  
snow had fallen so fast that it was very deep.  
Moreover, it had drifted against the house, and  
was lying half-way up the lower windows.  
Wooden Jerry was clearing a path under the  
direction of Perks, whose beak-like nose was  
peeping over his comforter.

The boys were all out of bed sharp, and, after  
a wash in water so cold that it made them  
think of the North Pole, they went downstairs.  
The other boys were also up and stirring now.  
As no orders as yet had been issued against  
their going out, they rushed forth.

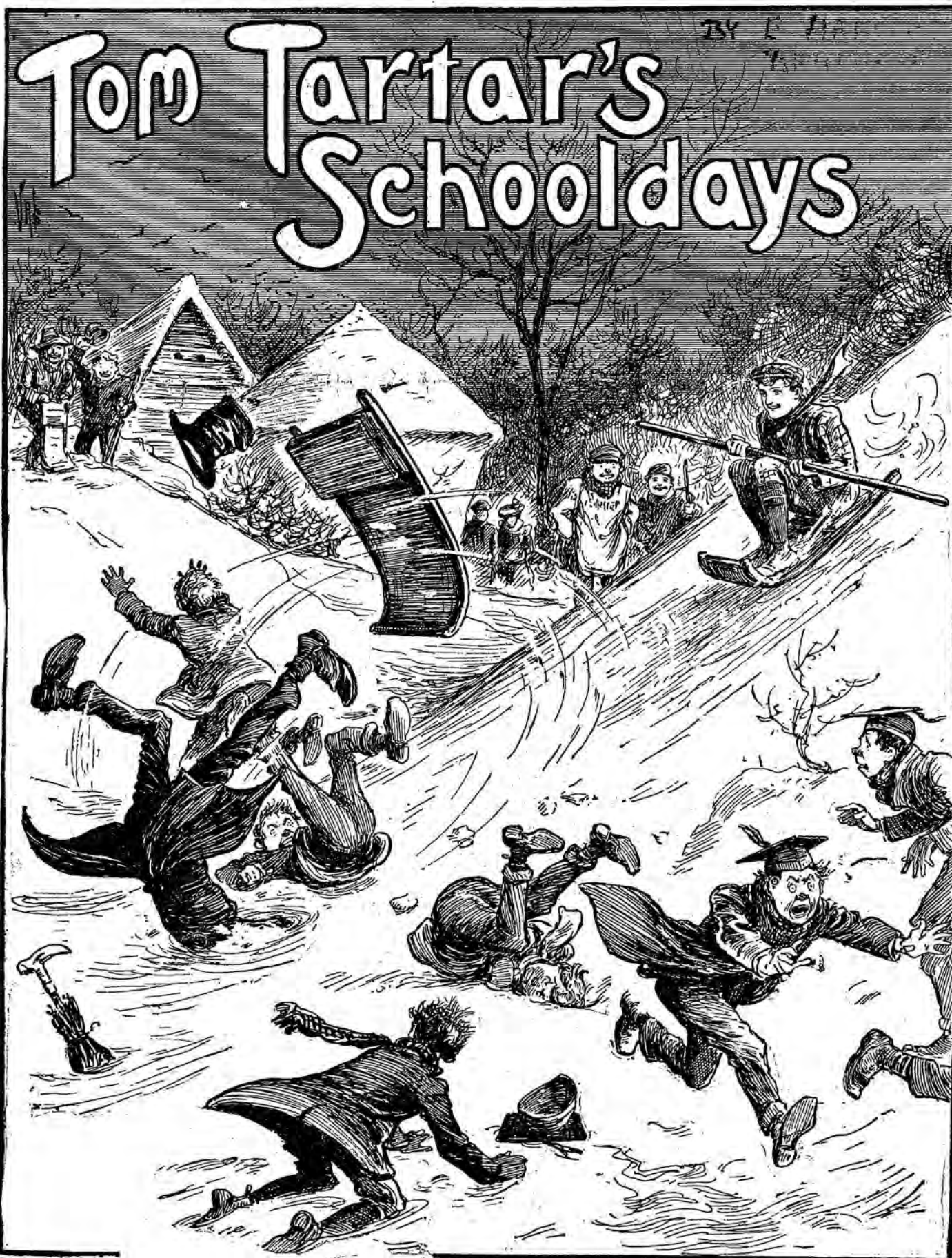
Wooden Jerry was speedily made aware of  
their arrival by his receiving a splendidly made  
snowball in the nape of the neck. Perks had  
heard the boys coming, and, with consummate  
generalship, beat a retreat.

"Here, what are you doing?" cried Jerry.

He made a face-shield of the shovel and ran  
for shelter. The only way into the house avail-  
able was that by which the boys came out, and  
Jerry had to run the gauntlet of a cross fire.  
He dashed into the house, looking like one of  
those figures we see on twelfth-cakes. Perks,  
awaiting him within, welcomed him with a  
burst of laughter.

(Continued on the next page.)

THE BOYS SCATTERED RIGHT  
AND LEFT AS MR. BOUNCER  
TURNED A VIOLENT SOMERSAULT  
AND CAME DOWN HEAD  
FIRST IN THE SNOW.



# THE FIRST CHAPTERS RE-WITTEN BY THE AUTHOR.

WING to a sudden financial failure, Pat Clare's father has been obliged to remove that lad from Blackdale School. Mr. Clare attributed the disaster which he had suffered to his erstwhile friend, Abel Darrell, who had advised him to invest in a company which had gone smash. The man's name continually occurred in the wretched story which Mr. Clare told his son, a story of heartless villainy, poor Pat's father being the dupe. The blow was too much, and Mr. Clare's mind became unlined. Abel Darrell had a daughter, of whom Pat was very fond. He did not know whether Darrell was really a villain, and when he offered Pat a post in his office, the boy began to think that what had happened could not be his fault after all. "Perhaps he also had been misled," thought the boy.

Pat began his new life with the determination to be

cheerful and contented, and to win his way upward by hard and steady work. It was not a pleasant change after his life at Blackdale.

With his new associates he was soon on good terms, as he usually was with everybody—with one exception. That was Glyn Elmhurst, Mr. Darrell's confidential secretary.

Elmhurst seemed to take a dislike to Clare from the first day of his coming to the mills; and although he made no open show of hostility, Clare could not fail to be aware of the feelings with which the secretary regarded him.

The fact was that Elmhurst looked on Pat as his rival for the hand of Madge Darrell. Hence his hatred of the boy.

The Blackfield Ramblers asked Pat to play for them on an occasion soon after his change of life. He, of course, was only too willing to accede to the request.

The last instalment showed how Elmhurst tried to get Pat's dismissal from the Blackfield Club, and was not successful.

## The Reserve Match.

GLYN ELMHURST left Blackfield Mills on Monday evening in a black humour. He had been told of the colonel's decision in favour of Pat Clare, and it deeply exasperated him. He turned over in his mind a dozen schemes for baulking Clare's ambition, but he could think of none to his satisfaction.

As he walked homeward, he was joined by Nugent.

"So that's the end," Philip said savagely. "Clare is going to play for Blackfield. Couldn't you do anything?"

"What could I do?" growled Elmhurst.

"You have influence with the directors, and—"

"It is pretty well known that there's no love lost between Clare and me," said Elmhurst. "If I spoke against him it would be put down to that. He will go in."

Nugent gritted his teeth. He had got ahead of his cousin by trickery, but it had not availed him. But Clare was to be given his trial for United, and he knew what the result would be. He knew that his football was not a patch upon his cousin's, and it would be the same old story over again; he would be cast utterly into the shade by Pat, as of old. All the bitterness of his nature was stirred by the thought.

"Something might be done," observed Elmhurst, after a pause, looking at Nugent out of the corner of his eye. "There is a match on Saturday between Blackfield Reserves and Wendover Reserves, and both you and Clare play for us."

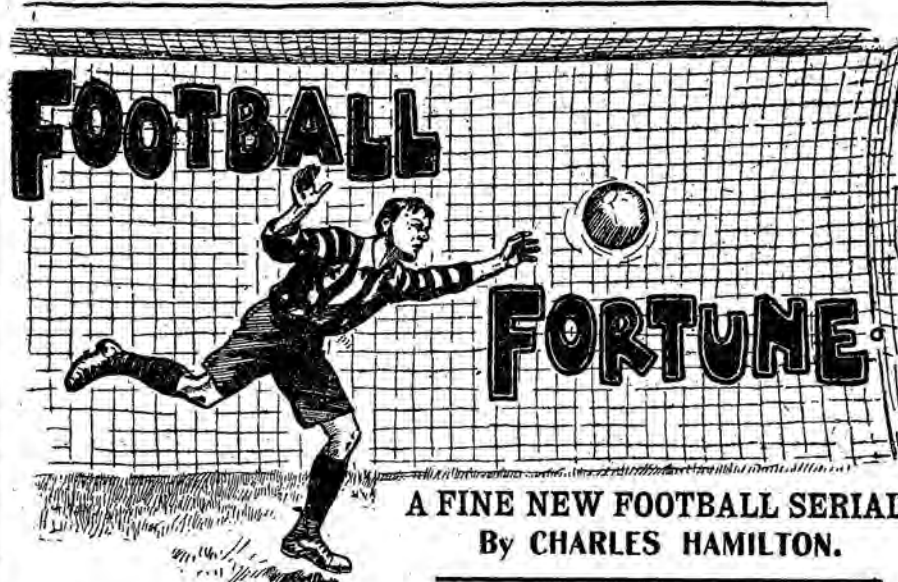
"What about it?"

"Nothing, only a kick is easily given in a melee, and no one would suspect a player on one's own side of purposely disabling a comrade."

Nugent started.

"It would be risky."

"Not at all, if you are careful. There's one thing that's certain, and that is, that if Clare passes this final test in the reserve match, he



will be put into the first team, and on Saturday week he will play in a League match. You know what his football is like. He will become the crack player of Blackfield. You and I will be nowhere in comparison. And Madge Darrell—"

"Enough!" said Nugent, between his teeth. "Let me have only half a chance, and next Saturday shall see the end of his football for some weeks to come, at least."

Elmhurst's eyes glittered. So long as Pat was injured, he cared very little what happened to Nugent afterwards.

"Have you heard anything of the notes yet?" asked Nugent abruptly, when they parted.

"No."

But news was awaiting Elmhurst at his home, if he had known it. As soon as he arrived there, he was informed that a gentleman was waiting to see him. He found that it was Detective Ferrers.

The detective's expression at once put Elmhurst upon his guard.

"Have you any news of the stolen notes?" he asked carelessly.

"Yes, sir. They have been found; at least, most of them."

"Indeed! Where?"

"In the possession of a man named Belton. He claims that you paid them to him in settlement of a bet that Friday night, in Blackfield Lane. He is now in custody, and he has written this note."

Elmhurst, utterly amazed, took the open sheet of paper which the detective extended to him. Upon it was written in a scrawling hand:

"Dear sir,—I think you will remember having paid me fifty pounds in notes, in settlement of our bet on the Leamshire Cup, in Blackfield Lane, just after your conversation with Mr. N. JAMES BELTON."

Elmhurst staggered to a chair.

He was utterly dumfounded for a moment, but he was quick to grasp the situation.

Belton, in some unexplained way, had come into possession of the notes, and he knew all the plot against Clare. He had no doubt that the rough had overheard his talk with Nugent.

As a matter of fact, Belton had not done so; it was only after he had heard of Clare's arrest that he understood what had been arranged between Elmhurst and Nugent. But now, it was clear, he was in possession of the facts. His note meant that unless Elmhurst bore him out in his statement that the notes had been paid to him, he would betray the whole of the conspiracy against Clare.

The detective's keen eyes were reading the

secretary's face. Elmhurst saw it, and with an effort regained his composure.

"Well?" said Ferrers.

"There has been a terrible mistake," said Elmhurst, his voice a little tremulous. "The explanation is, that I was so dazed by the assault made upon me by Clare, that the matter was driven completely out of my mind."

"Do you mean that you did pay the notes to this man Belton?"

"Yes, now that I recall it, that is certainly the case."

"And then you accused Patrick Clare of stealing them?"

"I have already said that I was so dazed—"

"You have said so," said the detective, with a strong expression of unbelief. "It is very remarkable, however, that the recollection did not come to you until this moment. If Pat Clare chooses to bring an action for slander, Mr. Elmhurst—"

"I do not think he will do that, when I explain to him the mistake," said Elmhurst calmly. "Good-evening!"

Left alone, he paced the room like a caged tiger. He was amazed by the turn affairs had taken, and deeply enraged. The last shadow of suspicion would now be lifted from Pat Clare's name, and he— After all, he need not fear for himself. There was a way of disarming Clare.

The next day all Blackfield knew of the arrest of Belton, and of his release on the evidence of Glyn Elmhurst. When Clare arrived at Blackfield Mills he was called into Mr. Darrell's presence. He expected some reference to the matter, but he was hardly prepared for what awaited him.

The agitation of the millowner was apparent. When he spoke it was almost in a pleading voice.

"This is a distressing matter, Clare—a very distressing matter," he said. "Yet, as the blows you yourself struck were the cause of that painful lapse of memory on Mr. Elmhurst's part—"

"I do not believe a single word of Mr. Elmhurst's statement, sir," replied Clare calmly.

"You are—er—naturally prejudiced. But I trust that it is not your intention to let this unfortunate matter go any further?"

Pat was silent.

"I do not wish to remind you of any little favours I may have done you," said Mr. Darrell. "I only wish to say that I shall take it as a personal obligation if you will let this unfortunate matter drop."

"I will do as you wish, sir," said Pat quietly. The millowner was evidently relieved.

"Thank you, Clare—thank you! I shall not forget this."

Pat wondered, as he had wondered many a

time before, what was the mysterious power in the hands of the secretary which made his employer his slave. It was plainly enough not by his own wish that Mr. Darrell had interfered in the matter.

But Clare, upon the whole, was satisfied. His innocence had been proved beyond the shadow of a doubt, and that was enough for him. And he had plenty to think of just now.

Calmly as he usually took things, the thought of playing for Blackfield in League matches made his heart beat faster.

On Saturday the Wendover Reserves were coming to Blackfield to play the United second team, and he was to play for the town. If he passed this ordeal successfully his future as a footballer was assured.

It will be imagined how eagerly he looked forward to Saturday, and how careful he was to keep fit. When the great day dawned he was in the pink of condition. He left the mill early, his mind full of the coming match.

Colonel Darrell met him at the club grounds. The first team was playing away; but the colonel, who was down with influenza, had been unable to accompany them. He contrived, however, to get down to the home ground to see the reserve match.

Clare had already received a hearty welcome from most of the United players. United, as we have before mentioned, was mainly recruited from local talent, and Clare knew most of the men very well. They were glad enough to have him in their ranks, with the exception of Philip Nugent. Nugent, however, for very shame could not betray his real feelings, and he was compelled to keep up an outward appearance of cordiality towards Pat, while his heart was full of bitterness.

Pat, always unsuspecting, thought, from Nugent's manner, that he had resolved to bury the hatchet, and he was frankly cordial in return, never dreaming for an instant of the black purpose in his cousin's heart.

Madge, of course, was in the grand stand. Clare had a few words with her before he went into the dressing-room. He had not forgotten her note to him, nor her appeal to him for his help. But neither referred to it now. Madge spoke of the coming match.

"You'll do your best, Pat?" she said. "You know how delighted I should be to see you in the first team. That would be glorious!"

Pat smiled.

"I hope it will come to pass," he said. "I shall do my best, at any rate. I don't know what kind of figure I should cut in the first team, though. League football is a bit above what I have played, you know, as yet."

"I am sure you will make your mark," replied Madge decidedly. "To-day week you will be kicking goals for Blackfield, and helping us to get into the first division."

"I hope so, Madge," smiled Pat.

"You will be playing along with your cousin to-day," continued Madge, with a nod towards Nugent. "That will be pleasant, won't it?"

"Very pleasant!" said Clare, a little grimly.

"Come on, Clare!" called out Gale, the Blackfield skipper. "Time, old man!"

And Pat took his leave of Madge and followed the rest into the dressing-room.

There was a fair-sized crowd to see the match, for Blackfield took football seriously, and the townsmen who could not follow the first team abroad consoled themselves by coming to see the reserves at home.

When the opposing teams were in the field, Pat looked keenly over the enemy, and the thought flashed into his mind that they were a stronger side than his own. The thought made him more determined than ever to "buck up" and do his best for Blackfield.

Wendover won the toss and chose a goal. The whistle went, and Blackfield kicked off, and the game began.

Clare's anticipation as to the visitors proving superior in force were soon realised. The Wendover rushes were heavy and hard to baffle. In the first five minutes their forward line got

(Continued on the next page.)

## FOOTBALL NOTES.

NOTICES AND CHALLENGES  
FROM READERS' OWN  
CLUBS. THESE ARE  
INSERTED FREE OF CHARGE.

This new feature is proving of great service to Secretaries in arranging fixtures and in advertising the doings of their clubs. Notices can be inserted quite free of charge. Send one along, and see what a lot of good it does.

ROLLO'S A.F.C. (age 15-17) require open dates both home and away. Ground, Bootle South Park. Dressing-room, Miranda Road.—Apply, Alex. McSeagh.

ST. OLAVE'S LADS' BRIGADE F.C. 2nd Eleven (14; weak) have all dates open.—Apply, J. A. Smith, 3, Block L, Vine Street Buildings, Tooley Street, S.E.

SWINDON RANGERS F.C. (16-19; medium) have open March 10, April 7, 14, 21, 28, home or away.—Apply, F. Ferris, 27, Reading Street, Swindon, Wilts.

WYNDHAM ATHLETIC (16; weak) want matches. All dates open, away.—W. Middle-ditch, 19, Wyndham Road, Upton Park, E.

WOODGRANGE BAPTIST F.C. (14, weak) have most dates open. Within short distance of Forest Gate. Church teams preferred.—Apply, J. Ferguson, 453, Romford Road, Forest Gate, E.

SYRIAM THISTLE F.C. (average, 15) have open dates on and after January 20th, home or away.—T. Henderson, 2, Syriam Terrace, Springburn, Glasgow.

ST. LUKE'S (17, weak) have several open dates in following months.—Apply, S. Fleet, 63, Chatterton Road, Bromley, Kent.

ST. THOMAS'S JUNIORS F.C. (average, 13½) have all dates open.—Apply to F. Chapman, 62, Gwendoline Avenue, Upton Park, E.

A GOOD GOALKEEPER, age 17; height 5ft. 5in., would like to join juvenile football club (Wednesdays) in or near Paignton.—Letters to R. Kenner, King Street, Brixham, Devon.

WANTED, Goalkeeper, age 15-16.—Apply, 13, Crosten Road, Brixton Hill.

ALFRED COURT, 3, Moranda Road, Kirkdale, Liverpool, would like to join a football club in the neighbourhood of Liverpool and Bootle. Will pay small fee. Position, outside-right or centre. Age, 17. Height, 5ft. 4in.

C. GLYN and two friends are desirous of joining a respectable football club near the City. Can play half-back or forward. Age, 16.—Apply, 13F, Errol Street, Finsbury, London, E.C.

AVENUE v. NORTH HARRINGAY.—This match was played at Haringay on December 22nd. The game was fast and exciting, ending in a win for Avenue by 2-0. J. Percy scored the first, through a pass from Harris; the second was obtained by Swift. Haringay got down many times, but were stopped by Pharaoh and S. Howell. Weston played best for the losers.

CRANBROOK PARK v. ST. PAUL'S.—Played at Wood Green Common on December 23rd. The game was very even, and it was close on half-time when Smale put the Parks one up. After half-time Goodyer and Smale added further goals, Cranbrook winning by 3-0. The Parks have won every match since November 18th, when they went down before St. Paul's by 3-0.

GRASMERE SWIFTS met St. Andrew's C.L.B. on the former's ground at Leicester on December 25th. St. Andrew's kicked off, and

had the best of the play from the start, and from a centre by East H. Warner scored. They still continued to press, and H. Hill had hard lines. Half-time: St. Andrew's, 1; Swifts, 0. In the second half Grasmere played much better, and Moule scored for them; but the "Drews" replied with two by Armstrong and Harrison. Result: St. Andrew's C.L.B., 3; Grasmere, 1. Whiting played well in goal for Grasmere, as did Clarke and Derbyshire in the forwards.

## MISCELLANEOUS ANNOUNCEMENTS.

HOLY TRINITY (BROMPTON) CRICKET CLUB (average, 14½) would be glad to arrange cricket fixtures with any team. Nearly all dates open.—Apply, W. E. Sinkins, 31, Yeoman's Row, Brompton Road, S.W.

ANY READER wishing to join a good cycling club for the coming season should apply to the Secretary of the B.C.C., 67, Lever Street, Bolton, Lancs. Stamped envelope to be enclosed for reply. N.B.—This club will be formed on the same principles as the C.T.C.

ANY BOY between the age of 16 and 18 who would like to join a cricket team for next season may do so by writing to W. Currey, 16, Suffolk Road, Plaistow.

away in excellent style, and, with the ball passing from foot to foot and giving the home halves no chance, they were soon besieging the United's goal.

Blackfield's defence was obstinate, however, and presently the ball was kicked out, and the centre-half headed it into midfield. Gale was away with it in a moment; but a Wendover half robbed him neatly, only to lose the ball in turn to Pat Clare, who took it fairly from his foot and raced away with it, amid a cheer from the crowd.

Forward went Pat, and just at the right moment he let Nugent have the ball, completely deceiving the defence, who had imagined that he would give it to his centre. Nugent rushed it in and kicked for goal; but the Wendover custodian saved, and the leather came out into a press of players.

The next moment, like a stone from a catapult, it went in from the head of Pat Clare, and the goalie snatched at it wildly a second too late.

"Goal!"

"Goal!"

It was a delighted cheer from the Blackfield crowd. Colonel Darrell clapped his hands. The "flue" had left him with a generally depressed feeling, but he forgot that now, and looked as cheerful as a cricket.

"Bravo!" he shouted; and Madge's soft voice added its small note to the cheering.

It had indeed been a beautiful goal, and Pat well deserved the cheers he received.

Philip Nugent bit his lip till the blood came. That he should have missed a goal, only to see Pat fluke one the next moment, was maddening. He persisted in regarding it as a fluke, although it was in reality a fine bit of football, with more good play than good luck about it.

And if he had wavered in his purpose—the purpose which had been instilled into his mind by Glyn Elmhurst—he was determined again now. His hatred and jealousy were seething in his breast till every other thought and feeling was banished. His face was pale, but his eyes were burning, when the sides lined up again.

The Wendovers attacked again, as before, determined to wipe out the stain of losing that goal. But this time the home players met them more sturdily; and, to their surprise, the Blackfielders broke away in line, and swept on gallantly. But the Wendover defence was good, and there was a sharp struggle on the edge of the penalty area. A Wendover half obtained the ball, and with a skilful back-heel sent it to a full back; but before the latter could deal with it two Blackfield forwards were on him like a flash.

They were Pat Clare and Phil Nugent. Pat robbed the Wendover man of the ball, and at the same moment Nugent crashed into Pat with fearful force. Unable to save himself, Pat went down upon his side with a terrible concussion, and Nugent fell heavily on top of him.

It was all over in a moment. The referee's whistle screamed for a cessation of play, and Nugent was dragged off. But Pat Clare did not move.

With a scared look, Gale knelt beside the fallen lad, and looked into the white, drawn face upturned to the winter sunlight.

#### Fair or Foul.

WHITE and drawn was the face of Pat Clare, and his eyes were closed. For a moment a terrible fear smote his comrades as they looked down at the deathly face.

And Philip Nugent, dreading that he had done his dastardly work only too well, staggered away, as pale as his victim, and leaned limply against a goalpost for support.

But that fear lasted only a moment or two. Pat's eyes opened, and a low moan passed his lips.

"Thank goodness!" gasped Gale. "I—I was afraid—" He did not finish. "Help me to get him to the dressing-room, some of you."

"Is he badly hurt?"

It was Colonel Darrell's voice. The colonel had instantly left Madge when he saw what had happened, and he was upon the spot in a few seconds. His bronzed face was very anxious.

"I'm afraid so, sir," replied Gale. "He won't be able to play again to-day, that's certain."

Colonel Darrell fixed a stern gaze upon Nugent.

"Why did you do it?" he said grimly. Nugent panted.

"It—it was an accident. Surely you cannot think—"

"We shall see!"

The colonel helped to carry Pat to the dressing-room. He had relapsed into unconsciousness before they got him there. The doctor was immediately in attendance. The players returned to the field with somewhat saddened faces. But the whistle blew, and the play was resumed, and the game soon absorbed all their thoughts.

Although Blackfield were one up, it did not seem likely that they would keep the lead. They were playing ten men now, and it was soon seen that it was their best man who was gone. Playing the one-back game, they managed, however, to keep their end up till half-time, when the interval gave them a much-needed respite.

Meanwhile, Pat Clare had come to himself in the dressing-room. The doctor had examined his injury, and pronounced that it was not so serious as had been feared. His head had come into violent contact with the earth, and a huge bruise had formed under his thick brown hair. But the medical man averred that with rest and quiet he would soon pull round. But, as for playing again that day, that was out of the question.

"Very well," said the colonel. "It will mean a victory for Wendover, I am afraid; but thank goodness it's no worse! How do you feel now, my boy?"

"A bit rotten," said Pat, with a faint smile. "My head is buzzing like a hive of bees! Who was it bowled me over? One of our fellows, wasn't it?"

"It was Nugent."

Pat's face changed a little.

"Oh, Phil? Well, it was bad luck for both of us!"

The colonel looked at him keenly.

"It did not look to me like bad luck," he said slowly. "Is there any special ill-feeling between you and your cousin?"

Pat was silent for a minute.

"We are not on the best of terms," he said at length; "or, rather, I should say, we were not, for Phil has been friendly since you asked me to play for United." He hesitated a little, and then went on: "I hope you don't suspect Phil of fouling me on purpose, sir?"

"The thought was in my mind."

It had been in Clare's also, but he strove to banish it.

"Well, well, we shall see," said the colonel. And he left Pat, and returned to the grandstand to rejoin Madge.

When the players came trooping in at half-time, they found Pat looking white and ill, but much better than they had expected.

"What's the score?" was the first question. Gale grinned.

"I see you're keen as ever. We are still one up; but I have my doubts about the second

to take full advantage of the fact that Blackfield were playing a man short. They pressed hard and harder, and Blackfield's efforts were mainly directed towards defending their goal. This they did for some time successfully, baffling every attempt of Wendover to put the ball into the net. But at last the visitors made a determined effort, and the leather went in like a shot.

The score was equal now, and half the second "forty-five" had elapsed. Wendover were in high spirits, confident of ultimate victory.

Blackfield kicked off again, and in five minutes their goal was once more besieged by the determined Wendovers. As before, they were compelled to devote all their energies to defence, and the visitors' side of the half-way line was deserted, and the Wendover goalkeeper stamped about in his goal to keep himself warm. The Blackfield goalie, however, had plenty of exercise, being called upon to save incessantly.

The Blackfielders were, in point of fact, only staving off the inevitable, for ten minutes before time the ball went into the net again, with a shot that the goalie could not save.

Colonel Darrell gnawed his grey moustache. The visitors were two to one now. It was only what was to be expected, under the circumstances, but the colonel did not like it. He had hoped against hope for a victory, or at least a draw.

From the crowd came shouts and advice galore, addressed to the players.

"Play up, Blackfield—play up!"

It looked, however, as if all was over bar



Nugent found that the temptation to shoot was very strong upon him. He resisted it, however, and centred to Gale, who sent the ball whizzing in with a fine kick.

half, as you can't rejoin us. But we shall do our best for our colours, and at the worst I think we can make it a draw!"

"I hope so!" It's sickening to be shoved out of it like this!" said Pat. "Still, I suppose I ought to be thankful, for the doctor says it might have been much worse. I feel as if my head had been under a hammer! Hallo, Phil!"

Nugent's face was rather red as he came to speak to his cousin.

"I'm sorry I charged you over, Pat," he said, in a low voice. "Of course, you know that I didn't do it on purpose!"

"Of course you didn't!" said Pat heartily.

The uncomfortable thought had been in his mind, but Nugent's first words were sufficient to drive it away. He felt ashamed of having allowed it to enter, and he held out his hand to Philip in the frankest way. Nugent winced a little as he took it.

"I'm glad you do me justice, Pat," he said, with an effort. "Colonel Darrell seems to have the idea in his head that I did it on purpose."

"I'll speak to him," said Pat. "It's all rot, of course! Why should you want to spoil my game?"

Nugent winced again, and left him with a nod. Pat's good faith made him feel small and mean, and he felt something like remorse for what he had done.

The five minutes ticked away, and the players streamed into the field again.

The second half was lively from the kick-off. Wendover had evidently made up their minds

shouting. It was getting near time, and the Wendover men were in trim for victory.

But one of the sudden surprises frequently afforded by the national game was in store for the spectators.

Within five minutes of time the Blackfielders woke to new life. Nugent had the ball, and his fine play gave his side a chance of getting away at last. They did not fail to take advantage of it.

The Wendover forwards, somewhat to their surprise, found themselves robbed of the ball, which the Blackfield men were taking up the field in fine style, passing and repassing from one to another in a way that completely foiled the halves, and gave the backs little chance.

It was Nugent who brought the leather right up to the visitors' goal, and the temptation to shoot was strong upon him, but he restrained himself, and centred to Gale, who sent the ball whizzing in with a fine kick.

"Goal!" roared the spectators, in delight.

And Colonel Darrell's face cleared.

"That was Nugent's goal," he said. "His play in that last bit was very fine. And there's no time for Wendover to get ahead again. It is a drawn game."

The whistle went as he finished speaking.

Nugent was cheered as he went off with his comrades, and his face flushed with pleasure. He had exerted himself to the very utmost in that last ten minutes, and he had saved his side from a defeat, and shown, he hoped, that Clare was not indispensable. That was the bitter thought in his mind—even in the hour of victory he could not forget his rivalry.

#### Pat Leaves the Mill.

COLONEL DARRELL sought Clare after the match. The old soldier's face was very thoughtful, and he tugged at his grey moustache. Pat saw that there was a weight upon his mind, and guessed what it was.

Nugent's brilliant play at the close of the match had not been without its effect upon the colonel, but he could not banish from his mind the dark suspicion that had risen there. But as soon as he spoke on the subject to Pat, the generous young footballer did his best to drive away the idea.

"You don't think he fouled you on purpose, then?" the colonel asked bluntly.

Pat shook his head decidedly.

"No. He has quite reassured me on that point. He is incapable of such treachery."

"If you are sure of that I will let the matter drop. It looked very black to me at first, but you ought to know best. He played up very finely at the finish, and I should be sorry to lose him; but if I thought— However, I will take your view of it," said the colonel. "But as for playing him in a League match, I shall have to think twice about that."

"He seems to be in good form, sir," Pat ventured.

"If he did not foul you on purpose, he was guilty of a piece of clumsiness that cannot be condoned," said the colonel grimly. "In either case he isn't fit to be put into the first team. I shall tell him so plainly. I shall be glad to have him in the reserves but that is the best I can do for him."

Pat was silent. He was sorry for Nugent, but there was no gainsaying the colonel's decision, which was strictly just. Nugent had been guilty of either treachery or a serious blunder, and in either case he could not expect to represent Blackfield in a League contest.

"As for you, Clare," the colonel continued, "I have no doubts. If you are in your usual form next Saturday, I shall play you in the first team."

Pat's eyes sparkled.

"You mean it, sir?"

"Certainly!" The colonel reflected for a moment. "And look here. If you should leave the Blackfield Mills, there's a big career before you as a professional footballer. I won't undertake to advise you, but there's the fact."

Pat drew a deep breath. He had already resolved to leave the mills, and the thought of this had crossed his mind in a dim sort of way. But he had hardly expected to have his hopes so soon realised.

"Thank you, sir. I was thinking of leaving the mills. Things have been rather unpleasant there of late."

"Then think over what I have said. There is no hurry; take your time."

And the colonel shook hands with the young footballer and bade him good-bye.

Before he left the ground he had an interview with Nugent. He told him that his cousin had spoken up for him, and that the incident in the reserve match would be overlooked. But his hopes of soon playing in a League match were knocked on the head once and for all.

Nugent parted from the manager of Blackfield United with hatred seething in his breast. His foul play had done him more harm than good. He had not succeeded in keeping Clare out of the first team, and if he had had a chance himself he had spoiled it. But he did not condemn himself. It was against Clare that his hatred grew fiercer than ever.

He met Elmhurst when the United's first team returned that evening to Blackfield. But he received little consolation from the amateur Blackfield winger.

"So you bungled it!" growled Elmhurst. "I might have expected as much."

"I did my best," Nugent snarled. "As it was I was hauled over the coals by the colonel."

"You think he'll be fit to play next Saturday?"

"I believe so. He has Satan's own luck." A sneer came upon his face. "You will be playing then. You had better try your luck."

"That's what I was thinking of," said Elmhurst coolly.

He looked at Clare curiously when the young man appeared at the mills on Monday. Clare was recovering from the shock of Saturday's accident, but he looked far from well. But there was little doubt that he would be in fighting trim by the end of the week, when United were to meet Bolton Rovers. He had an interview with Mr. Darrell soon after his arrival, and told the mill-owner respectfully but plainly that he had decided to leave his employment. Mr. Darrell looked perturbed.

"I am sorry to hear this, Clare," he said. "I hoped you had thought better of it. But I shall not accept your decision now. Leave it till the end of the week, and think over it again. Meanwhile—his narrow, grey eyes rested curiously upon the lad as he went on—"meanwhile, if you would like to visit your father at Bournemouth, you need not trouble about coming to the office to-morrow."

Clare thanked him, and withdrew. He had not been able to see his father since the latter was sent away from Blackfield. He had received favourable accounts of his progress from the superintendent of the institution of which Mr. Clare was now an inmate, but he longed to see him and hear the sound of his voice again.

He felt that it would be ungracious to refuse Mr. Darrell's kindness, and so the next day saw him speeding southward on the railway. It was in the afternoon that he arrived at the "Home." Dr. Bransom received him with much politeness. He was a little, dark man with an oily manner, and Clare was not

very favourably impressed by him. But his manner was kindness itself.

Pat was kept waiting about ten minutes before he was taken into the room where his father awaited him. He was shown in at last by a silent-footed attendant.

It was a very comfortable room, and Mr. Clare was seated in a big armchair by a window that looked out upon the sea. The first sight of him was pleasing to Clare. He looked almost perfectly restored to bodily health.

"Dad!" exclaimed Pat, advancing to him eagerly.

Mr. Clare rose and shook hands with him in a placid way that rather puzzled Clare.

"You know who I am?" Pat ventured.

"Yes, you are my son Patrick," said the old gentleman. "I am glad to see you well. I hope you are getting on very well at Blackdale?"

Pat's heart was like a stone in his breast. The old gentleman's health was good, but it was clear that there had been little or no change in the state of his mind.

"I have left school, dad," said Clare gently.

"I am in the Blackfield Mills now."

He took a seat beside his father, and tried to look cheerful.

Mr. Clare nodded.

"Ah, yes, I remember; they told me so," he said. "Who is your employer?"

"Mr. Darrell."

At that name a strange change came over the face of the patient. He wrinkled his brows as if trying to recollect.

"You remember Madge's father," said Pat.

"Ah, yes, Abel Darrell. He swindled me."

Pat gave a start. Since he had been in Mr. Darrell's employ, the dark suspicions raised in his mind by his last talk with his father had almost wholly gone. He had put down his father's statements to the wanderings of a brain on the verge of fever. It startled him to see that, even in his present sad state, the same

idea haunted the mind of the ruined manufacturer.

"The Sonora Copper Mine," said Mr. Clare vacantly. "You remember, Pat? It ruined me and made his fortune. Beware of him. He is a snake in the grass. If he is kind to you, he is seeking to betray you. He betrayed me. But you will not meet him," he went on lightly. "He will not come to the school, of course."

The tears rose to Clare's eyes. The poor old gentleman had already forgotten what he had just said about leaving Blackdale College.

"You are happy here, father?" he asked.

"Oh, yes. They are very kind. Did Mr. Darrell come with you, Patrick?"

"Why, no."

"What is he doing here, then?"

"Here? He is not here," said Pat, in amazement.

The old gentleman nodded wisely.

"I saw him, from my window, this morning. He came in a cab."

Pat decided that this was a vagary of his father's weakened intellect. If Mr. Darrell had been coming there, he would certainly have mentioned his intention yesterday. He could have no motive for coming secretly.

He drew the invalid's mind away from the subject, and went on to speak of various matters as cheerfully as he could. Mr. Clare remained placid, and talked freely, but his mind wandered, and he sometimes forgot what he was speaking about before he finished a sentence. Only one idea remained fixed in his mind; it was his distrust and hatred of Abel Darrell. To that topic he continually recurred, in spite of Pat's efforts to avoid it.

The time to go came all too soon. Pat was very miserable. He felt that as soon as he was out of sight the old gentleman would forget his existence. Was it to be always thus? He could scarcely keep back his tears at the thought.

He took his leave at last. Dr. Bransom's manner was as kind and oily as ever when Pat reappeared.

"I thank you for your kindness to him," Clare faltered. "Can you give me any hope that he will ever be himself again?"

"I hope so," said the doctor smoothly. "I have, in fact, every hope. But we must not expect too much at once."

And with such consolation as that afforded him, Pat Clare took his departure. Dr. Bransom smiled in a peculiar way as soon as the door closed behind him, and made his way to a small room adjoining the apartment in which Pat had talked with his father.

If Clare could have followed him there he would have met with a surprise. For it was Mr. Darrell who turned, with a disturbed and gloomy look, to face the doctor. By means of a tube hidden in the wall he had overheard the whole of the conversation between father and son.

"Are you satisfied?" asked the doctor.

"Quite. It is strange that that idea should still dominate Clare's mind," said the millowner, with a furtive look at the other.

"It is not an uncommon occurrence," said Dr. Bransom blandly. "Insane persons frequently turn against their best friends."

"It is, of course, very painful to me. I wish the poor fellow's mind could be disabused of the idea."

"There are ways and means," suggested the doctor. "I would undertake to blot any idea out of a patient's mind, without the slightest injury to his bodily health. It would be somewhat expensive, that is all."

The millowner shuddered slightly.

"I will think over what you say," he said hastily; and the subject was dropped.

Pat Clare returned to Blackfield with a conflict of thoughts in his mind. His father's words had roused his long dormant suspicions again. In spite of all his efforts, he had never been able either to like or to trust Mr. Darrell, and now his

old distrust was reawakened as keenly as ever. He felt that, even leaving Elmhurst out of the matter, it was impossible for him to remain in Blackfield Mills.

And so when, on Saturday, Mr. Darrell asked him if he had changed his mind, his reply was in the negative.

"I am sorry," said the millowner. "I will go further, and say that I greatly desire you to remain with me. Does not that influence you?"

Clare hardly knew what to answer. His position was difficult in the extreme. Yet even a the manufacturer spoke Daniel Clare's word came back into his mind: "If he is kind to you, he is seeking to betray you." It seemed impossible that the richest manufacturer in Blackfield could have anything to fear from him, an uneasy desire to keep him under observation. And yet—

And yet Pat was determined to go.

"I hope you will not think me ungrateful," he said, "but I have thought the matter over very carefully, and I think I ought to go."

"Very well. I think you will probably regret it. Good-morning!"

So Pat Clare walked out of Blackfield Mills for the last time. The same day he signed on to Blackfield United.

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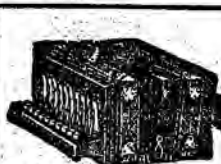
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