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THE COCK HOUSE AT CARNFORTH.

Grand School and Adventure Tale.

BY A POPULAR AUTHOR.

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STORIES.



The poacher smashed the ice with his clenched fist, and forced a channel for himself and his burden towards the bank.

STORIES OF FOOTBALL & ADVENTURE.

OUR
FIRST
COMPLETE
STORY.

The Cock House AT CARNFORTH

A Story of School & Football.

By CHARLES HAMILTON.



On the Rugger Field.

"TRY! TRY!"

"Well run!"

"Bravo, Redfern!"

The shouts came from a hundred throats round the football-field at Carnforth College.

Owen Redfern, captain of Hilton's House at Carnforth, had made a splendid run up the field, and, with the clutching fingers of a three-quarter only a hair's-breadth from his shoulder, and the full-back fairly hanging round his neck, he had crossed the line and grounded the ball.

And the spectators, especially the boys of Hilton's House, cheered themselves hoarse.

"Try! Try!"

"Bravo, Redfern!"

Owen Redfern rose to his feet, flushed and breathless.

He took the kick himself, and the lads of Hilton's House burst into fresh acclamation as the ball flew over the bar.

"Goal!"

But amid the shouting crowd there were two spectators who were silent, and whose faces showed that they did not share in the general enthusiasm.

They watched the teams as they lined up again in glum silence.

"Redfern is in splendid form, Reg," said one of them, at last, as the ball was kicked off. "It looks bad for the match on Saturday."

The speaker was Cecil Cardew, a tall, fair-haired lad, of athletic frame. He was captain of Ransford's House at Carnforth. In football matters there was a keen rivalry between the two Houses, and the regular House match was looked forward to eagerly by both sides. For the winning House ranked as cock House of Carnforth, until its colours should be lowered again by a defeat. For several terms Ransford's had been cock house of Carnforth, a position they were determined to maintain, while Hilton's were equally determined to oust them from it.

And now it certainly looked as if the aspirants of Hilton's would gain their object.

Owen Redfern had recently become captain of Hilton's House, and under his rule the House had looked up wonderfully on the Rugger field.

He was training his fifteen with a deadly determination to pull off a victory on the following Saturday, when the House match took place. Not a boy in Hilton's doubted that he would be successful; but in Ransford's House confidence was not so strong. Cecil Cardew was the most doubtful of all.

As a matter of fact, Ransford's had been cock house so long that they had grown a little slack, and now it had suddenly dawned upon them, rather late in the day, that they would have to fight hard to maintain their supremacy.

The present match was between Hilton's fifteen, captained by Owen Redfern, and a scratch team. Redfern was putting his men through their paces, as a final preparation for the match on Saturday, and there could be no doubt that they were showing fine form. And finest of all was the young captain himself.

Cecil Cardew had strolled over to see the match, his own practice having ended, with his chum Reggie Lawrence; and the form displayed by Hilton's captain, as we have said, cast a shade upon their countenances.

"My hat, he is in form, and no mistake!" said Reggie. "He goes through those chaps like a giddy Springbok!"

"Of course, Hilton's are only facing a scratch team now," said Cecil Cardew. "It will be a bit different when they have to line up against us."

Reggie Lawrence nodded.

"That's so; we'll give them a good stiff fight, at all events."

"You speak as if you think they will win."

"Well, if Redfern plays," said Lawrence honestly. "I don't see what we can do. It's no good blinking facts, old chap. Our fifteen is about up to theirs, but we haven't got a man in it anywhere up to Redfern's form. He could walk away from any chap in Ransford's

House. If Redfern should get crocked we could pull off the match. But if Redfern plays against us, I'm afraid Hilton's will be cock House! And he won't get crocked; there's too much at stake."

"It will be a come down for us," said Cardew gloomily. "And heastly unpleasant for me, too. The fellows look to me to keep the team up to the mark, and if we have a fall they will blame me, of course. As if it were my fault that Hilton's have captured a budding international."

"That's the pleasure of being a football captain," laughed Reggie. "Hallo, there goes Redfern again! Scott, what a flier that chap is!"

Redfern had the ball, and he was off like the wind.

He went through three heavy forwards like a knife through butter, dodged a three-quarter, handed off another, flung off the full-back's tackle, and grounded the ball.

"My hat!" said Reggie Lawrence.

Cecil Cardew gave a grunt, and they walked away from the ground. Cardew did not attempt to conceal from himself that if Redfern played the supremacy of Ransford's House was more than in danger. And, of course, he would play! After the House match on Saturday Hilton's would be cock House at Carnforth. Cardew gritted his teeth at the thought.

In the Shadow of Death.

"HELP!"

"Help!"

Cecil Cardew started. It was the day after the "scratch" match at Carnforth. Cecil Cardew was strolling across the bridge over the Carne when the sudden shout fell upon his ears.

"Redfern's voice!" he muttered. "What's happened?"

Cardew looked anxiously over the parapet of the little bridge. The cry came from the rivet. It was hard winter weather, and the Carne was frozen over all the way from the school to the village. But in the latter vicinity the ice was rumoured to be thin, and dangerous for skaters.

At a glance Cardew saw what had happened. There was a gap in the ice at some distance from the bank, and in the gap appeared a boyish form wildly struggling.

It was Owen Redfern.

The captain of Hilton's had evidently been skating down to the village, and the treacherous ice had broken under his weight and let him through.

Redfern was a good swimmer, but the icy cold of the water chilled his limbs through and through, and the ice, as he grasped at it to draw himself out, broke off in his hands like glass.

Cecil Cardew turned pale as he looked.

That Redfern could not escape from that terrible trap without aid was certain, but it required a bolder heart than Cardew's to venture on the thin ice to save him, at the imminent risk of sharing his doom.

The despairing face of Redfern was turned towards the bridge. He caught sight of the captain of Ransford's looking over the parapet.

"Cardew," he shouted—"Cardew! Help!"

Cecil turned and ran down to the bank, with a vague idea of rendering assistance. But he had no intention of going on the ice.

Redfern, however, mistook his intentions, and hope came into his heart again. He had given himself up for lost until he caught sight of Cardew.

The water was gripping him with a deadly chill, and his efforts to get on the ice only made the gap round him larger.

With the terrible cold and exhaustion his senses were beginning to leave him, though he still struggled spasmodically to keep afloat.

Cardew lost sight of him as he came down to the bank, and when he came in sight of the gap in the ice again, a shudder of horror swept through him.

Redfern had disappeared!

He had gone under; but it was only for a moment. He came up again, still feebly struggling and catching at the ice.

Cardew looked wildly round.

The place was solitary, with no sign of life

not likely that he intended to run any risk to save the lad in the water. But amazement came into Cardew's face as he watched the poacher.

The rough-looking fellow was cautiously creeping out on the treacherous ice. More than once it cracked under his weight, but he kept on. Redfern was going under again, and he was lost to his surroundings. If he had once passed under the ice he would never have come up again alive. But the grip of the poacher was upon him. At the same moment the ice gave under the man's weight, and he plunged in.

Cardew gave a cry of horror. It seemed that he was to witness two deaths instead of one. But no! The poacher, supporting the insensible boy with his left arm, was using his right with effect. He was a powerfully-built man, of almost herculean strength. His heavy blows smashed through the thin ice, and so he forced a channel for himself towards the bank. He was aiming for the bank where Cardew stood, which was nearer the gap. Cardew understood his object, and ran close down to the water to render what assistance he could.

Crack! Crack! The gripping cold was telling upon the poacher, strong as he was, but he fought his way on. Now he came to firmer ice, and with a huge effort he dragged himself upon it, and drew the insensible boy from the black waters. Raising Redfern in his arms, he staggered to the bank, and sank down exhausted in the frozen rushes.

"Give him to me!"

Cardew caught hold of Redfern and drew him up the bank. A sudden shout rang through the frosty air.

"There he is!"

Cardew looked round in amazement. Two men came running down the bank—one of them a policeman, the other in the garb of a game-keeper. Abel Vetch sprang up as if electrified. He gave a shout of defiance, and springing upon the ice, he went away with a rapid slide. The two pursuers, with a doubtful glance at the gap in the ice, followed him along the bank, losing ground at every step.

Owen Redfern's eyes opened. He gave a wild glance round, and moaned faintly:

"Cardew, you have saved my life!"

Before Cecil could reply, Redfern sank back again, unconscious. His face was white and set, and for a moment Cardew's heart stood still. He shouted for help.

"Hallo! Hallo!"

Reggie Lawrence came into view through the trees.

"What's happened?"

"Help me get him to the school," said Cardew briefly. "Shove your coat round him. That's right! Now, run for it, or he'll be chilled to death."

And, waiting to ask no questions, Reggie caught hold of the insensible captain of Hilton's, and between them the two boys carried him at a run towards Carnforth.

Ten minutes later Owen Redfern was tucked up in a warm bed in the school infirmary, and a doctor was sent for post-haste.

"I wonder if he'll be crocked for the House match?" said Reggie Lawrence thoughtfully, as the two boys walked away to their House.

Cardew smiled grimly.

"I shouldn't wonder. I dare say Ransford's will remain cock House of Carnforth, after all."

In Borrowed Plumes!

DEEP was the alarm of Hilton's House when they heard of the accident to their captain. They were concerned for Owen himself, for there was no more popular boy in the House than the young footballer; but they thought of the coming trial of strength with Ransford's House, as well.

If Redfern was in the infirmary when Hilton's played Ransford's, there was an end to all the ambitious dreams of becoming cock House at Carnforth. Without their captain, even the most sanguine members of the House Fifteen doubted the possibility of getting the better of Cecil Cardew and his men. And so their anxiety was keen.

Keener still was the anxiety of Cecil Cardew. His heart was fixed upon winning the match, and from the bottom of his heart he wished that Owen Redfern might not recover in time to play. Some of his House-fellows shared his

in sight save curling smoke over the trees from a distant farm-house.

Suddenly a rough-looking figure came through the willows on the further bank, and ran down to the river's edge.

Cardew looked across at him hopelessly. He knew the man—Abel Vetch, a well-known character round Carnforth, reputed to be a poacher, and wanted by the police. It was

feeling, but the majority, to do them justice, would have been glad to see Redfern his old self again.

The same evening a message was brought to Cardew in Ransford's House by a fag, to tell him that Redfern wished to see him. The captain of Ransford's found Redfern in bed, looking very white and weak; but Cardew noticed that he did not have the look of one booked for a real illness.

Redfern held out his hand as Cardew came to his bedside.

"I wanted to thank you, old fellow," he said. "You must have run a fearful risk pulling me out of the water. No, don't speak, I know very well you might have been drowned yourself, and I wonder you were not. I am grateful, Cardew."

Cardew was silent. For a moment the honest impulse had come to him to tell the truth, and explain to Redfern that he was mistaken. But he had checked it. He knew how it might serve his turn to allow Redfern to remain in the belief that he had saved his life.

No one had seen the accident, save Abel Vetch; and there was nothing to be feared from the poacher. Cardew had last seen him flying for his liberty, and by this time he had probably cleared out of the neighbourhood. There was little danger that he would un-deceive Redfern; at least, for some time to come.

"There has been bad blood between us, Cardew," said Redfern, after a pause. "That's all over now. I admit I haven't always done you justice; I never knew what a noble fellow you really are."

"Oh, drop that!" said Cardew, reddening.

"All right. But what I wanted to say is this—I owe you my life, and I shan't forget it. If ever I can do anything to pay the debt, I'll gladly do it, at any cost; yes, even to risk of life. That's all, old chap."

And he pressed Cardew's hand again.

The captain of Ransford's House left the room with burning cheeks. He had sufficient manliness left to feel a sense of shame at the imposture, though he had no intention of speaking out the truth.

Reggie Lawrence came into Cardew's study in Ransford's House later in the evening. He was looking decidedly puzzled.

"I say, Cardew, you've seen Redfern?"

"Yes, I've been over there."

"How is he?"

"He looks pretty seedy."

"Do you think he'll play on Saturday?"

"Couldn't say," replied Cardew guardedly. "I hope so, of course."

"Of course," said Reggie, smiling. "But, I say, what is this rot the chaps are saying about you and Redfern, Cecil?"

"I really don't know."

"They say you pulled Reddy out of the river."

Cecil Cardew looked at him coolly.

"Well, didn't I?"

Lawrence gave him a stare of amazement. "No, you didn't!" he said stoutly. "Why, you were quite dry all the time; you hadn't a wet thing on you."

"Rats!" said Cardew. "I was dripping from head to foot."

"Eh?"

"You see, you don't know anything about it, Reggie."

"Look here," said Reggie, after a pause, and looking hard at his chum, "what's the giddy game, Cardew? You didn't fish him out, though I don't know who did. But I know you didn't."

"Have you told anybody your absurd belief on that point?"

"I thought I'd keep mum until I had spoken to you."

"That showed unusual sense for you, Reggie. Keep mum, and that will be all right. You can entertain whatever notions you please, but you mustn't go around stripping my blushing honours off me."

Reggie gave a sniff of disgust.

"Do you mean to say you're going to claim the credit of saving the chap's life, when you never did anything of the kind?" he exclaimed.

"I know my own business best, Reggie, and you can trust me not to do a thing without a sufficient reason," replied Cardew drily.

"I don't like the game."

"I don't ask you to like it," replied Cardew.

"I only ask you to keep silent, and not give a chum away."

"You know I won't give you away," said Reggie shortly; "but—"

"Look here, I've got my reasons," said Cardew. "I'm not on the hunt for cheap glory, Reggie, so you need not think so."

"I don't see what other reason you could have."

"Perhaps I'll explain some day. For the present, mum's the word."

"Oh, all serene!"

And Reggie Lawrence, with an extremely dissatisfied look, quitted the study. Cardew laughed softly. He did not intend to explain to Reggie Lawrence, who would undoubtedly have objected promptly to the secret scheme his captain had formed.

(Continued on the next page.)

ANSWERS
ONE PENNY.
Every Tuesday.

His Pledged Word.

THE fears of Hilton's House proved groundless. On the second day after his ducking Owen Redfern was up and about, and appeared in Form with the rest; and on the mid-week half-holiday, when Hilton's Fifteen played a trial game with a scratch team of their own House, he showed that he had lost little of his form. Whatever he lacked of it would be fully made up by Saturday.

And the hopes of Ransford's House sank again. Ransford's Fifteen worked hard, and they meant to put up a stout fight; but all impartial critics admitted that Hilton's were likely to become cock house at Carnforth.

"We shall see," said Cardew to himself between his teeth.

Each day both the teams put in all the practice possible, and, whatever the result, it was certain that the match would be a good tussle when it came off.

On Friday evening Owen Redfern came in from a run round the quadrangle, and went to his room for a rub down. He was feeling quite his old self, and the ill-effects of his adventure on the frozen river had wholly worn off.

He looked forward to the morrow's match with keen zest. At last the colours of his House, so long lowered, were to take the lead at Carnforth. His eyes sparkled at the thought.

He had changed, and was about to go down, when there came a tap at his door, and Cecil Cardew came in. The face of Ransford's captain was very sombre.

"Hallo, Cardew!" said Redfern. "Glad to see you, old fellow!"

"Can you give me a few minutes?"

"Certainly. Sit down."

Cardew sat down. He did not speak immediately, and Redfern looked at him rather curiously. The captain of Ransford's House seemed to have some little difficulty in beginning what he had come there to say. He caught Redfern's glance, and, colouring slightly, plunged abruptly into his subject.

"It's the match to-morrow, Redfern."

"Yes," said Owen cheerily. "We shall give you a tussle, Cardew."

"You are going to play, then?"

"Play?" Redfern stared at him in amazement—"play? Of course!"

"I—I thought you might be feeling too seedy after what happened the other day."

"Oh, no. I'm as right as rain; fit as a fiddle. I shall play up for all I am worth, you can bet your boots on that," said Redfern emphatically.

Cardew shifted uneasily.

"The fact is, Redfern, that's what I came to speak to you about."

"Yes?" said Redfern, in wonder.

"I'd rather you didn't play."

Redfern stared.

"Off your chump?" he inquired pleasantly.

Cardew's features assumed an obstinate expression.

"You heard what I said."

"Yes, but I don't understand you. Why shouldn't I play? Of course I shall play!"

"Then your promise counts for nothing?"

"My promise?"

"That's what I said."

Redfern looked at him long and steadily.

"Explain what you mean, Cardew. Do you mean that you want me to stand out of the match, in fulfilment of the promise I made you when you pulled me out of the river?"

"Yes, that's exactly what I do mean."

"Then you are a cad!"

Cardew bit his lip.

"So that's what your promise is worth?" he said, with a sneer. "I suppose I ought to have known you better. Of course, it was only gas."

Redfern turned scarlet.

"I never foresaw anything like this," he said slowly. "How can I fail my House, when they depend upon me? I'm bound in honour to play."

"Don't talk about honour, if you are going to break your word."

Redfern started as if he had been stung. Break his word! He could not do that. Whatever the fellows thought of him, whatever became of his football ambitions, whether Hilton's became cock house or not, his pledged word must be kept. He knew that.

Cardew saw the surrender in his face, and his eyes gleamed with triumph.

"Are you going to keep your word?" he asked.

"You hold me to it?"

"I hold you to it."

"Then I will keep it!" said Owen Redfern heavily. All the brightness had gone out of his face. "I will keep it!"

"You can let the fellows think you don't feel fit after—"

Redfern's lips curled.

"I shall not tell any lies!" he replied coldly. Cardew gave him a quick glance.

"Do you mean that you will give me away—that you will say—"

"You need not be afraid," interrupted Redfern; "I shall not give you away. I shall resign the captaincy of Hilton's House, if you want to know, and shall give no reason. I cannot tell the fellows the truth, and I will not tell them a lie. Now, go!"

And Cecil Cardew left the room.

True Blue.

HILTON'S House was amazed. The rumour was discredited when it first spread through the House; but a glance at the notice-board in the hall confirmed it. Owen Redfern had resigned his post of captain of the House Fifteen on the evening before the great match.

There could be no doubt about it. There it was in the captain's own handwriting. The boys of Hilton's read the notice, without guessing what misery it had cost the writer, and stared at each other in consternation.

What did it mean? Was Redfern off his rocker? Was he clean, stark, staring mad? The boys of Hilton's asked each other these questions without being able to answer them. They could not question Redfern himself, for immediately after pinning up the notice he had gone out.

"Redfern's resigned!"

The news ran through the school like wildfire. It revived the hopes of the Ransford House footballers, and sent the spirits of Hilton's down to zero. Without their captain they could not hope to win. Amazement was mingled with rage in their breasts.

Some of the fellows from Ransford's strolled over to get confirmation of the news. Among them was Reggie Lawrence. He was keenly interested.

"Is Redfern seedy, after all?" Lawrence asked. "Isn't he fit to play?"

"Fit as a fiddle!" exclaimed Russell, of Hilton's. "Never in better form. I can't understand it. He had a run round the quad, with

me an hour or so ago, and then he had no idea of resigning."

"Then what could have made him do it?"

"I don't know. It was after Cardew called on him; he came straight from his study and pinned up the notice, and went off on his bike, to save the trouble of answering questions I suppose."

Reggie Lawrence gave a start.

"Cardew can't have had anything to do with it, can he?" said another fellow.

"What could he have to do with it?" said Russell. "No, Redfern's right off his rocker, that's the only possible explanation. But one thing's mighty certain. If he doesn't play for Hilton's to-morrow, he'll be sent to Coventry by the whole House. But when he comes in we'll send a deputation to him and ask him what he means, anyway."

"That's a good idea."

Reggie Lawrence had gone. His face was pale, and there was a peculiar light in his eyes as he walked over to his own House. He went up to Cardew's study. The captain of Ransford's was there. He had affected to take but a languid interest in the news of Redfern's resignation.

"Hallo, Reg."

"You know Redfern's resigned?" asked Lawrence shortly.

"Yes, I heard the fellows saying so."

"Do you know why he did it?"

"How should I know?" asked Cardew, avoiding his eyes.

"Look me in the face, Cardew, and say you don't know anything about it," said Reggie, half pleadingly and half menacingly.

Cardew yawned.

"Hang it, Reggie, what are you getting your wool off for?" he expostulated. "How should I know anything about it?"

"What was your motive for deceiving Redfern about who saved his life, I mean?"

"Oh, rats!"

Lawrence thumped on the table.

"Answer me, Cardew! You went over to see him, and just after that he put up the notice. He hadn't thought of it before. I—I knew you had something up your sleeve, you—you cad!"

"What?"

"Cad!" shouted Reggie. "I know your game now. That was what you told those lies for. You want to win the match by fair means or foul. You want to get Redfern out of the way because you think they will lick us."

"Don't be a fool! Suppose that were the case—"

"I'd rather be licked—yes, a thousand times than win the match by such dirty treachery!"

"Who's captain of Ransford's, Reggie Lawrence—you or I?"

"You are, more shame to you! What's the good of being cock House if we win it by foul play? Any decent fellow would rather be licked."

"Oh, talk sense," snarled Cardew "or else—"

"Yes I'll talk sense, to Redfern!" exclaimed Lawrence. "I'm going over to Hilton's now, and Cardew turned pale as Lawrence made for the door."

"Hold on! Don't be a fool, Reggie!"

Lawrence turned back. His face was white and determined.

"You admit it, then? You made Redfern resign?"

"I asked him to," growled Cardew.



"Do not beat me!" moaned the white slave, flinging himself at the officers' feet. (A dramatic incident from this week's exciting chapters of "Nelson Lee in the Navy" in "The Boys' Herald.")

"Because you saved his life?"

"Yes."

"Very well. Now write out a note, saying that you're sorry you ever thought of such a thing, and asking his pardon, and releasing him from his promise."

"I won't—I—"

"All right!" Lawrence opened the door.

"Stop! I'll write it!"

"Buck up, then!"

With a face like a demon, Cecil Cardew wrote the note. Reggie Lawrence read it, and gave a nod of satisfaction. He blotted the paper, and placed it in his pocket, and then, without a word to his former chum, he walked out of the study.

Redfern is Relieved—The House Match—The Cock House at Carnforth.

ALLO! What's that, I wonder?"

Owen Redfern had just entered his study and lighted the gas. His eye had fallen upon an envelope placed in a conspicuous position on his table. He picked it up and slit it open. The captain of Hilton's House was looking tired and depressed.

He had kept his word to Cardew, but he knew that it was at the expense of forfeiting for ever the confidence and regard of his House-fellows. If he did not play in the House match he was ostracised. He knew it, and he faced the situation with British pluck; but he felt it keenly, and he looked white and worried.

His face changed as he recognised Cardew's hand. Had the captain of Ransford's repented of his unsportsmanlike and cowardly demand? There was a chance!

The young footballer's face lighted up as he read: "Dear Redfern,—I am sorry I asked what I did of you to-day. Upon second thoughts, I'd rather the match was played out fair and square. I hope you'll play to-morrow, and may

the best team win!—Yours sincerely, CECIL CARDEW."

Owen Redfern seemed to grow years younger as he read this note.

"My hat," he exclaimed, "this is decent of him, after all! I wondered how a fellow could be such a howling cad! I'm glad he's thought better of it, as much for the honour of the school as for my own sake. Hurrah!"

There was a sound of many steps in the corridor, and his door was flung open. He thrust Cardew's note into his pocket. Five or six seniors of Hilton's House came in, with Russell at their head, all looking grim and determined.

Redfern looked at them.

"Hallo, what do you chaps want?"

"We want an explanation," said Russell. "Are you going to stick to what you said in the notice, Redfern?"

"My resignation, do you mean?"

"Yes."

"Do you want me to withdraw it?"

"Of course, we do."

"All right," said Redfern serenely. "I withdraw it, then." He thought with gladness of the difference Cardew's note had made; but for that he would have had to make a very different reply to the deputation, and they would have gone away angry and exasperated.

Now they were surprised, but decidedly relieved.

"You mean that?" asked several voices.

"Certainly."

"Then why did you resign?"

"I—well, I thought I shouldn't play," said Redfern. "It was—was all a mistake, and if I'm wanted I'm ready. I'm sorry I thought of resigning."

"That's all right," said Russell, "so long as you play."

"Oh, I shall play!"

And the deputation withdrew satisfied.

And Hilton's House, from the oldest senior to the youngest fag, drew a breath of relief on learning that Owen Redfern was to lead the fifteen into the field, after all. And when the great day dawned Hilton's were in high spirits.

"I half thought you couldn't mean it," said Redfern, meeting Cardew in the morning, and tapping him cordially on the shoulder. "I was awfully glad to have your note."

Cardew grinned, and Reggie Lawrence, who was standing near, grinned, but he said nothing. It was not till long afterwards that Redfern learned the truth about his rescue from the frozen river.

All Carnforth rejoiced when the time came to troop into the football-field. It was a cold, sharp afternoon, with a keen wind blowing. When the two captains tossed, Cecil Cardew correctly named the coin, and the kick-off fell to Hilton's, against the wind. The ball rolled from Redfern's foot, and the game was started.

It was a splendid game, but space forbids us to follow every phase of it. Owen Redfern was a tower of strength to his side, and again and again he beat the best of the enemy. Ransford's put up a good fight, Cardew doing all he knew, but even with the advantage of the wind they could not get through Hilton's.

The first half ended with two tries and a goal, eleven points, for Hilton's, against a dropped goal for Ransford's four points. Hilton's House shouted themselves hoarse. The change of ends after half-time brought the keen wind in favour of Hilton's, and then they fairly let themselves go.

A try by Russell was converted, and the score jumped to sixteen. Then Cardew dropped a goal for his side, bringing Ransford's House up to eight points. Then a splendid run up the field by Owen Redfern gave Hilton's three more.

"Good old Redfern!" rose the roar of his House-fellows. "Buck up! Give 'em socks! Go it, Hilton's!"

And Hilton's did "go it." It was getting towards time now, but Owen Redfern and his merry men were by no means finished.

From a scrum in midfield the ball came out to a back, who instantly transferred to the captain. Away he went with it like an arrow from a bow. After him went Cardew and Reggie Lawrence, while into his path rushed a couple of determined fellows.

Lawrence made his tackle and missed, and went down on his face. Cardew's grip fell on Redfern's shoulder, and slipped off, but the pursuer kept up the race. Redfern dodged one of the enemy in his path, and left the other lying on his back. Cardew clutched again, and touched him. The touch spurred on Redfern. Forward he sprang like a racer. The full-back was the only man between him and the goal; the field were yards behind, with the exception of Cardew. The full-back made his tackle, and the next moment was down. Owen had slipped out of his grasp like an eel; but he had lost a couple of seconds, and that was enough for Cardew. The grip the captain of Ransford's House fastened upon him. Then there was a mighty cheer.

Redfern, dragging Cardew after him, plunged across the line and grounded the ball fairly under the bar. He went down, Cardew on top, but he had scored the try. Such a kick was easy, and the try was speedily converted; and then the whistle went, ending a gruelling game, and leaving Hilton's House victors by the splendid total of 24 points to 8—a score worthy of the All Blacks.

A wild, hurrahing crowd bore Owen Redfern off the field. He had won for his side, and Hilton's at last was cock House at Carnforth.

THE END.

(Another fine tale of school and football, by Mr. Charles Hamilton, the clever author of the above story, will appear on Saturday next.—YOUR EDITOR.)