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A Lad of the League By A. S. Hardy

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Second Instalment To-day!

A LAD OF THE LEAGUE!

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A Powerful New Football Story of Absorbing Interest. By ARTHUR S. HARDY.

THE 6th CHAPTER.
The End of the South-Eastern League Match. Registration Form—"Jones" is Asked to Sign On.

As Guy Northcote lay extended full length upon the ground, motionless and pale, his face drawn with agony, it really did seem as if the plucky lad had been badly injured. He had fallen very heavily, and to the onlookers, who could not easily separate the movements of forwards and goalkeeper, it almost looked as if the two Luton men had run on to the prostrate body of the lad before they could pull themselves up.

Robb Harwood dropped on his knees beside his friend, and the referee, full of concern, came running up.

"I am used to rendering first aid," he said. "Let me have a look at him, Harwood."

But there was no occasion, for, smiling with an effort, Guy rolled himself over and sat up.

"I'm all right," he said; but, nevertheless, the ground began to heave up and down, and strange lights danced before his eyes. He had been knocked silly by the force of the fall.

Harwood helped him up, and whilst he and another lad held him, and a group of players gathered round, the assistant-trainer, Andrews, came running out of the clubhouse with a bag full of restoratives, bandages, etc.

He set to rubbing Guy down, and when he had been operating on the lad for about a minute Guy suddenly dropped his arms and pushed them aside.

"I'm all right," he said.

The crowd applauded wildly at the plucky lad's recovery.

Guy took his place between the goalposts, and the outside-left for Luton prepared to take the corner-kick. He sent in accurately, falling down about four yards from the goal, and in the very centre. Some Luton heads bobbed up, but Guy was out of his place like a flash, both his arms shot out, and the ball was fisted away almost to the centre line. Here the watchful Luton backs secured and returned. The danger was not yet over.

This time, after a tussle with the Luton centre-half, the West London right-half got the ball and sent across the field to Robb Harwood. Robb had only one Luton back and their goalkeeper in front of him, but what mattered that? He was well within his own half of the field, and by reason of the alteration in the off-side law, he could not be given off-side. The referee, by force of habit, prepared to blow his whistle, but bethought of the changed law in time, and Robb was allowed to run on.

After him pelted the Luton halves and the other back. The back in front of him essayed to stop Robb's progress, but the clever International quietly popped the ball above the man's head, ran round him, and raced onward towards the Luton goal. The Luton goalkeeper, who had realised the danger, rushed out. The ball had come well towards him, and was actually nearer to him than it was to Robb. The chances seemed two to one on him getting there first. But he entirely underestimated the great speed of the West London centre-forward.

Robb, sprinting at a tremendous pace, rapidly closed the gap, and, getting to the ball before the goalkeeper, he literally dribbled it round him, and rushed onward.

Before him yawned the open net. The crowd held their breath!

Quick as Robb's actions had been, he had been delayed in passing the back and goalkeeper, and the Luton players were close behind. They had no ball to dribble, and there was yet a chance of their putting him off his shot. Robb never, kept his head, and running the ball to within six yards of the goal, he punted it forward all along the ground, and to his satisfaction saw it run over the very centre of the goal-line, and find a resting-place against the net.

It had been a magnificent piece of play, and the shouting of the crowd might have been heard for miles.

"Well played, ten men!" roared a stentorian voice. And then, as the ball was sent back to the centre of the field, the half-time whistle blew.

Manager Arthur Stevens on the club balcony sat pulling at his moustache.

The Reserves' match had been remarkable for three things so far—the magnificent forward play of Robb Harwood, the fine defensive work of the unknown amateur Henry Jones, and the disaffection of the goalkeeper Hines.

The manager went down to the dressing-room after the match. Robb advanced towards him.

"Sir," he said, "I adopted a rather high-handed method of dealing with Hines; but as he was throwing the match away, as captain, what else could I do? I hope you won't blame me?"

"Blame you?" said the manager cordially. "To be sure I don't, Harwood. And I tell you what, my lad, after witnessing your display on the field to-day, I am only sorry I didn't send you to Grimsby to play the Fishermen. I was talked out of it by Benson and some of the others, who declared that you wouldn't be able to play well as to last the game after your long rest. Don't you worry about Hines. We shall know how to deal with him."

Hines had finished dressing by this time, and he now advanced from the corner of the dressing-room smoking a pipe, and blowing clouds of slug tobacco-smoke into the air. He wore an insolent smile on his face. Andrews, the assistant-trainer, glared at him.

"You know the rules, my lad," he said—"no smoking in the dressing-room! You ought to be ashamed of yourself! What about the non-smokers here?"

"Oh, they've got to put up with it!" said Hines. "I don't get proper treatment here, so why should I worry about others?"

Andrews, the assistant-trainer, was a short-tempered man of few words, but a very good sort withal. His face turned scarlet, and, leaving Guy, whom he was rubbing down, he walked to Hines' side, and, with a wrench, pulled the pipe out of his mouth, placed it on the cement floor, over which the water was streaming from the spray and shower baths, and ground his heel upon it.

"You're not wanted in here, so clear out!" he growled. "You and I will have something to say to one another if you ain't careful, my lad. When Andrews is put on he's angry, and when he's angry he's horrible!"

Hines coloured to the roots of his hair. A stinging retort trembled on his lips, but he caught sight of Manager Stevens just then, and thinking better of it, he slunk out.

Andrews returned to Guy.

"I think you'll do now, my lad," he said. "And you ain't done badly in your first match. Keep it up!"

"I'll try," said Guy, with a modest smile.

"I think Jones is a credit to us, don't you, sir?" said Robb, looking sideways at his manager as he led his players out on to the field again at the referee's call.

"He's doing very well," answered the manager. "If he does as well this second half I may want to speak to him, Harwood."

The centre-forward knew what that meant. There was a certain engagement ahead with the West London Club if Jones only kept cool.

As they entered the field a hoarse murmur of dismay went up, and looking at the "Evening News" score-board, Robb noticed that the first team was doing badly at Grimsby, for the Fishermen were two up.

"Then won't do!" he murmured. "The team will never earn promotion at that rate!"

There were long and gloomy faces around the playing-piece when the game was re-started. The West London Club had a loyal following, and "following, however, who were accustomed to the sweets of victory, not the bitters of defeat. They were not used to seeing their pets do badly, and they had had several bitter pills to swallow lately. If that match with Grimsby was lost it might mean good-bye to the Second League Championship, or even a good position on the table, and too many seasons in the second division would dim the lustre of a club accustomed to have its own way. So far one game had been drawn away, and one drawn and one lost at home. Now they looked like losing another.

It was a bad start for a team that had reckoned on promotion. But soon the spectators' depression vanished under the influence of the game.

West London, of course, had recourse to one-back play, that form of the game that comes in for such a storm of abuse from the lips of the following all such agents as have not tried, and certainly it completely upset the plans of Luton. It might have been fatal had the West London men been caught napping in the Luton half of the field; but their back took control cleverly enough to the half-way, with the result that with the halves playing close to the centre whenever West London attacked, and well over the line in their own half when in defence, the Luton forwards never had a clear run for the West London goal without being declared off-side. They didn't seem able to help passing forward to a man, and that was their undoing.

The sending of Hines from the field had had a salutary effect upon the other members of the West London side. They had behind them a goalkeeper who did not intend to be beaten. And one rush out of goal by Guy, who, falling, took the ball right from the feet of the Luton centre when all seemed lost, roused the crowd to a pitch of enthusiasm such as had seldom been seen on the riverside ground.

His saving, too, at close quarters, and the clean, decisive way in which he cleared, stamped him as a player of no mean ability. He at times took risks in kicking at the ball in order to save his goal, but then, it had to be remembered that he was a back and half as well as a goalkeeper, and this "riskiness" about his play was easily forgiven.

When the second half was twenty-five minutes old, Luton, in retaliation, fell back upon the one-back game. This was what Harwood wanted. He was one of those players with a cool head and a love of problems.

A sort of instinct always told him the positions of men on the field, even when he did not see them, and he was exactly the type of man to dribble through. Added to this, he was in a class by himself as a forward to the rest of the players on the field, and by an individual effort that was almost as fine as that by which he had scored the equalising goal, he ran through the opposing defence and put his side in front with a shot that landed just under the cross-bar.

West London now pulled themselves together in fine fashion. The game was as good as won. The ten men had the whip hand, and were playing down-hill.

It was soon after that third goal had been scored than an alteration was made in the scores on the board with regard to the Grimsby match. These now showed the game to be 2 goals all, and a vigorous shout went up.

This was decidedly better for West London.

The terrific shout that greeted the altered scores also heralded a clearance by Guy, who punted the ball well over the half-way line, and here, by nice combination, the West London men carried the leather to the vicinity of the penalty area, where Harwood notched another goal by a fine low shot, knee high.

That was all the scoring, and for the remainder of the game, West London contented themselves by kicking the ball into touch whenever danger threatened.

The warmth of the day had made the playing conditions trying, and the players were glad when the end came. The crowd remained to give Guy a rousing cheer, and to applaud their brilliant forward, Harwood, and then trooped off home to talk over the incidents of the match and the club's future prospects.

Guy and Harwood had just finished dressing when a uniformed official entered the dressing-room.

"Mr. Harwood," he said, "the manager would like to see you and Mr. Jones before you go."

"Come along, Harry, my lad!" said Harwood, smacking his chum on the shoulder. "I shouldn't be surprised if the manager didn't make you an offer."

On entering the manager's room, Mr. Stevens motioned Guy to sit down.

"Jones," he said, "I was delighted with your exhibition in the match this afternoon. I should not be going too far if I said that you and Harwood won the match. Are you signed on for any club?"

"No," answered Guy; "I played last for my school."

"An amateur, of course?"

"Yes."

"Would you care to sign for us?"

"I'm afraid I can't, Mr. Stevens," answered Guy earnestly. "You see, I have no employment now, and I can't afford to play. I've got to work."

The manager's eyes gleamed.

"Well, would you care to sign on as a professional? For my part, I can tell you, I should prefer it. We should have exclusive claim on your services then, and if, as you say, you have nothing to do, three pounds a week should be a godsend for you."

Guy hesitated.

"I have some scruples about sacrificing my amateur status," he said.

The manager produced a form.

"Never mind about that, Jones," he said; "just you put your signature to this, where marked."

Guy read the Football Association's form of registration of a professional player through. It was as under:

Name of Player .....
Present Postal Address .....
Place of Birth .....

I hereby consent to be registered as a Professional Player by the ..... Football Club from ....., 19...., to 30th April, 19....

Signature of Player.....
Date .....

Signed by the said .....
In the presence of .....
Signature of Witness .....
Address of Witness.....

To the Secretary,
The Football Association, Limited,
104, High Holborn, London, W.C.

Date ....., 19....

On behalf of the ..... Football Club I request you to register..... as a Professional Player.

..... Secretary.

Sixpence is charged for each form. All forms must be sent to the Secretary, The Football Association, Limited, 104, High Holborn, London, W.C. A registration is not valid until the **receipt has been ACKNOWLEDGED by the Secretary.**

When the lad had finished his examination of the form, the manager placed ten golden sovereigns on the desk by his side.

"Now, my lad," he said; "fill in the particulars, and I look sharp, and then just pick up the ten sovereigns. I dare say you can do with them."

Guy rapidly thought it over. After all, he had done with school-life for ever, and without friends or recommendation it might be hard for him, especially with his youthful appearance, to find anything to do. Three pounds a week was better than starvation; and besides, in this new walk of life, he could remain unknown under the name of Henry Jones. Garside and Redmayne would be little likely to find him here. He wrote his name swiftly in the place intended for it, together with the other particulars, Robb Harwood added his signature as witness, and the secretary-manager, placing his name to the form, the registration was concluded. All that was now wanted was the approbation of the Football Association, and Manager Stevens had no reason to expect opposition in that quarter. He enclosed the form in an envelope together with a letter, sealed it, addressed it to the Football Association Secretary, and gave it to Robb Harwood.

"Harwood, my lad," he said, "I think you might post this on your way home."

He extended his hand to Guy.

"Henry Jones," he said, "let me wish you the best of luck with your new club, and a bumper benefit at the end of your five years' service. We are proud to have you."

Guy returned the pressure of the manager's hand and smiled.

"Thank you!" he said, and a minute later he and Robb were making their way homeward at a brisk walk, both of them far too hungry to speak a word.

THE 7th CHAPTER.
Training—A Proposed Race—Guy Beats His Friend Harwood in a Sprint—Benson and Hines are Taught a Lesson.

THERE is an interval between training-time and lunch-time when even the best of professionals—that is to say, the professionals with ideas, who are keen-hearted workers and business men as well as gifted with nimble feet, are inclined to loaf, and on Wednesday morning—mid-week following the match with Luton Reserves and the first team's draw with Grimsby Town—the players were sitting on forms just within the enclosure-rails, a few of them smoking, and the others talking to while away a long half-hour before feeding-time.

Benson had just issued perspiring from the gymnasium, and he looked angry. After him walked the head-trainer, Brown, a man with a thick-set, broad-shouldered man, with bull-like neck, and evidently gifted with unusual physical strength.

"It's no use your putting on frills with me, Benson, or Hines either, so I tell you straight," said Trainer Brown. "You can't get away from the fact that you were in bad condition last Saturday. You cost us the match. If we had had Harwood out, instead of him playing here with the Reserves, we should have beat the Fishermen easily enough. You'll do ten minutes' hard ball-punching every morning after the training-walk, and you'll put in a spell at the sculling-apparatus, and no error. Do you hear?"

"Yes," growled Benson, who looked rebellious, "I hear."

THE FIRST INSTALMENT TOLD IN BRIEF.

Whilst playing in a practice match at Renton College Lord Averdale recognises one of the freshmen, a youth named Guy Northcote, as a poor cousin of his. The young freshman is very insolent to Guy, and presently makes a quarrel with him. The same evening he and some of his cronies enter Guy's study, and rag him, destroying practically all his belongings. Guy is so enraged that he lets out right and left with his fists, and by sheer force clears his rooms of his tormentors.

The following day Guy's uncle, Benjamin Garside, and his cousin, Lord Redmayne, give him a call. Guy has been brought up by Garside, who now reveals to him that there really exists no relationship between them, but that he adopted him in hopes of his being able to repay him when he should enter into his own as Earl of Sefton. The present Earl of Sefton says Benjamin Garside is on the point of death, and Guy's cousin, Lord Averdale, will succeed him. Guy, being the next of kin to his cousin, will then assume the title of Lord Averdale.

It is a bitter pill for Guy to swallow, to learn that Garside has merely kept him on sufferance in hopes of his being repaid when he should enter into his own. He resolves to thin he had never heard of his aristocratic relations. He resolves that he will leave Renton at once, that he will no longer live on charity. He packs his things straight away, and takes train for London. At Northampton there get into his carriage two footbaiters, one named Benson, a bully, the other a popular young international named Robb Harwood. Benson immediately begins his bullying tricks, and Guy has to teach him a lesson. Harwood takes a fancy to the lad, and finding that he has nowhere to go, takes him home with him. Harwood learns from that Guy is something of a footballer, and gets the management of the West London Football Club, for which he has signed on for the new season, to give the lad a trial. In the match against Luton Guy proves himself an adept at the game, and wins the plaudits of the crowd. He is known as Henry Jones, being desirous of hiding his identity altogether. Hines, the West London goalkeeper, is ordered off the field for deliberate bad play.

"Now," says Robb Harwood, the captain of West London, "you go in goal, Jones."

Guy takes his place on the line, and presently he sees those ubiquitous blue shirts of Luton coming along the field in force. A shot comes across the centre-forward in possession, and with the utmost coolness he shoots wide of Guy, towards the corner of the net. Guy takes one look, then drops to the shot, and, with two Luton men right on him, he managed in some miraculous way, to get his finger-tips to the ball and curl it round the post.

The two men in blue stop, astounded at the save, and a wild roar of cheering ascends to the skies that makes the welkin ring.

And with that deafening roar ringing in his ears Guy lies still and motionless where he has fallen.

"Good heavens!" cried Robb Harwood, rushing towards him; "he's badly hurt!"

(Now read this week's instalment.)

"Then do it, or you and I'll quarrel, my lad."

Benson bit his lip, but still looked sulky.

"Andrews," Brown, the head-trainer, went on, turning to his assistant, "this new lad, Jones, looks very fit. You say he lasted better than anyone else in the Reserves last Saturday?"

"Him and Harwood, sir."

"H'm! And he's fast, you say? He looks as if he could move. Can you sprint, my lad?"

Guy smiled as he glanced at the trainer. So far he had had the easiest of easy times with both men. They had recognised the well-bred, cultured gentleman in Guy, and as he was not a snob, they liked him.

"I have won many a race at school," he said.

"At what distance, my boy?"

"Oh, any—say! Hundred yards, two hundred and twenty, quarter-mile, half-mile, mile, and even longer."

"Andrews, who's the fastest man in the team?"

"Harwood, sir—yards."

"Well, now I'll make a harmless little bet with you, Andrews. You owe me half-a-crown, which I lent you when you had no change the other day. I'll wager you double or quits that Jones here beats Harwood over the 120-yards cinder track. What do you say?"

Andrews gave a side glance at both Harwood and Guy.

"All right," he said.

"You lads don't mind obliging, of course," asked Brown. "Just for fun?"

Harwood smiled at Guy.

"Harry," he said, "I don't mind, do you? It would be rather fun to see whether you can beat me. I'm not far outside even time, you know."

"I'd like it," answered Guy.

"Then come on to the dressing-room and change."

They walked away, and the pros. began to speculate on the result.

"Him run?" cried Benson, jerking a thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the dressing-room. "Why, Harwood will wipe his head off. Jones run? He wouldn't beat a 'bus!"

Morris, the first team goalkeeper, who was a pretty shrewd judge of an athlete, turned.

"Harwood's a first-class sprinter," he said, "but I don't think Jones will be far behind, if he runs his race properly. I'll bet you a new muffler Jones beats him, Benson!"

"I want a new pipe," growled Benson. "Jones smashed mine on the journey up from Northampton. I'll wager a new muffler against a new pipe Harwood licks him anyhow."

"All right," said Morris.

In a couple of minutes the lads turned out, and to the surprise of the members of the West London team, both wore spiked shoes. They had expected Harwood to be provided, of course, as he had been indulging in track-running during the summer, but that Jones should wear them had scarcely been bargained for. He was evidently used to path-racing, too, it seemed.

Andrews, the assistant-trainer, busy lad as he always was, had fetched a starter's pistol from his locker.

"We'll do the thing in proper style," he said. "Brown, you judge the finish. I'll send the lads on their way."

Brown nodded, and walked to the other end of the 120-yards' cinder track that ran along one side of the ground.

The professionals lined up along the course. Many expert eyes watched Guy as he set about digging the holes for his feet to rest in, and Morris gleamed appreciation out of his kindly eyes as he saw that Guy knew what he was about. The two lads were soon set for the start, and Andrews, standing just behind them, waited with his right arm raised in the air until he saw that both lads were steady. Then, bang! The pistol cracked, and the rival sprinters rose as one man.

However, Harwood, who was renowned for his quickness in getting into his stride, had forged ahead ere twenty yards had been covered, and led by a yard. At fifty he was two yards ahead, and at seventy had quite two yards and a half the lead. He appeared to be running easily, too, and his style was perfect. Guy was also striding along in determined fashion. Still, there was hardly anyone present who thought he had a ghost of a chance of getting up with Harwood.

"You buy me a pipe," chuckled Benson, turning to Morris, the goalkeeper, "and see that it is a good one. None of your one-and-sixpenny briars."

"He's not beat yet," returned Morris quickly.

Neither was he. Guy at that moment made a terrific effort, and began to close the gap that separated him from his chum and rival rapidly.

"Look out, Harwood!" roared Brown, the trainer. "He's got you!"

Indeed, twenty yards from the tape, Guy got up level. Would he get by? Finding himself challenged, Harwood put in a tremendous effort, and gained a foot. Then, as they flashed up to the worsted that Brown had stretched across the sprint track, tying one end to the railings and holding the other in his hand, Guy just got his chest in front, and holding aloft his arms, won all out by a foot.

It had been a punishing race, and the two lads gasped as they turned and faced each other.

"Bravo, Harry," said the good-natured Harwood, extending his hand. "You're an absolute marvel. We must both have been doing about even time. You'll find that running of yours useful one of these days."

The two lads now withdrew to the dressing-room, leaving their comrades to discuss the race.

Benson, who looked disagreeably solemn, followed Harwood in, and Hines entered a moment later.

Harwood had removed his shoes, and was just stripping off his vest.

"You're a fine sort of chap, you are!" said Benson, glaring at Robb. "The next time you sell a race, perhaps you'll tell me about it beforehand. I've got to give Morris a silk muffler—all through you!"

Harwood flushed and faced swiftly about.

"What do you mean?" he asked angrily.

"I mean," said Benson, raising his voice, "that it was a put-up job! You let Jones beat you!"

Harwood smiled grimly.

"Benson," he said, "you've been trying to pick a quarrel with me ever since we came down together from Northampton. You did you out of your place in the team that went to Grimsby, and evidently you won't rest until we've come to blows. Now, look here! I won't allow anybody to say a thing like that about me, and you've got to take it back."

"Take it back?" sneered Benson. "It's likely, ain't it? Take it back? Do you think you're any good to a football club? You may impose on the management, but you don't impose on me. Hines here has got something to say to you, too. You sent him off the field on Saturday. He hasn't forgotten that."

"Are you going to apologise?" asked Harwood, taking a step forward.

"Apologise?" shouted Benson. "Apologise to a stuck-up snob like you, who gets a namby-pamby like your pal Jones into the team to try and do Hines out of his job? It ain't likely. Hines, just shut that door, will you?"

Hines closed the door, and then stepped forward to join his chum.

Harwood, who realised that the two were about to assault him, made a quick motion to Guy. Guy understood.

"Jones," said the centre-forward, "just help me! Get hold of him, will you!"

In a moment Guy and Harwood had hold of Benson, who began to struggle when he had got over his surprise.

"Will you apologise?" asked Harwood, holding on tight.

"No!" roared Benson, with an oath. "I'll see you hanged first!"

"Help me carry him to the swimming-bath, Jones," cried Robb. And, on Guy catching his idea, the two moved off at once, carrying the struggling Benson by his arms and legs until the swimming-bath, which measured 40 feet by 21 feet, was reached.

"In with him!" said Harwood.

Jones and he carried the footballer up the steps, and in they sent him with a splash that rose to the ceiling.

The whole incident took place in the space of a second or two, for the swimming-bath was situated in an inner room next to the well-fitted gymnasium, and abutted on to the dressing-room. Once more, in helping to carry Benson to the side of the swimming-bath, Guy had revealed something of the enormous strength he possessed. Hines had not interfered because he had not quite "cottoned" on to what Guy and Robb were aiming at.

Benson now showed his head above water, looking a pitiable object in his saturated clothes.

"Give it 'em, Hines!" he cried, as he tried to scramble out. But his boot-soles slipped on the glazed tiles, and in he went again. Hines, with a wild cry of rage, rushed forward, and tried to push Guy off the steps. The impetus of his rush carried him half-way up, and as Guy moved a step aside he fell. In a moment Robb was on him.

"He'd better go in too, Harry," laughed Harwood.

Guy nodded, enjoying the joke immensely. It didn't matter to either himself or Robb whether they went into the bath or not, as they had merely their running things on. Each seized an arm and leg of the struggling Hines, and a moment later—squelch!—in he went, falling on top of the furious Benson as the latter again tried to scramble out.

A second later Hines showed his face above water, spluttering with rage. Then Benson's head showed up.

"Take that!" cried the latter. "I'll teach yer to fall on me!"

And, with a vicious jab, he struck Hines on the cheek, his rage thoroughly overmastering him. Hines retaliated, and a moment later the two bosom chums, locked in a tight embrace, fell over into the water, rolling about like a couple of porpoises.

Then the dressing-room door opened, and Trainer Brown, Assistant Trainer Andrews, and the rest of the pros. trooped in. Hearing the hubbub, they ran into the bath-room.

Then, as Benson and Hines rose to the surface panting for breath, and stood glaring at each other—a pair of pretty objects in their water-sodden clothes—peal after peal of laughter shook the roof.

"What the deuce are you two up to?" growled Trainer Brown.

"Oh, they choked us!" said Guy coolly. "So Robb and I threw 'em in!"

The trainer's eyes twinkled.

"I can't say I blame you, lads," he said, "but order must be kept. You'd better get into your things and trot along home. As for you, Benson and Hines, if you haven't got a change of clothing here, you'd better send home for some."

And the incident closed.

THE 5th CHAPTER.

Benson and Bradley Object to Playing with the Reserves—On Strike—The Old Warhorse Turns Out—Benson in Danger.

FROM various indications that were given during the course of the remaining few days of the week, it became apparent that West London, unless rare diplomacy could be brought to bear, were likely to suffer from the disaffection of some of the playing members of the club.

Hines the season before had kept goal for a good-class Lancashire League club, and there was not the slightest doubt that he was an excellent custodian—when he liked. But so was Morris, and the genial disposition and good temper of the first team goalkeeper, his extra height, and the fine work he had shown during the previous season fully entitled him to keep goal for the first team. Therefore Hines was now told to stand down, not even being given a match with the Reserves.

"We'll put you on the transfer-list, my lad," said Manager Stevens, at the close of a stormy interview. "And we sha'n't ask much for you, either! We shall be glad to get rid of you at any price."

Hines sulked.

He and Benson, who reckoned he also stood a chance of being relegated to the Reserves after the fine show of Harwood against Luton, were as thick as thieves, and they began in a quiet way to try and stir up strife.

"Benson," said Manager Stevens on the Saturday morning, "you are to go to Woolwich to play against Woolwich Reserves as the Manor Ground in the South-Eastern League."

"Who's going to take my place in the West London forward line?" asked Benson aggressively.

"Harwood goes centre and Mason takes your place at inside-right. You weren't much good to us at Grimsby last Saturday, you must admit."

"I was as good as anybody," said Benson defiantly.

"You were all bad; but you were the worst, so Brown tells me. You kept Harwood out of the team. Harwood goes into it to-day, and I won't have any argument about it."

Then the manager turned to Bradley, who played right full-back in the first team.

"Bradley," he said, "you are to go with the reserve team to Woolwich, too."

"Oh!" said Bradley, colouring up. "Who's going to play in my place here, sir?"

"We're turning out the new man—Jones," answered the manager.

"And do you mean to say that I'm to be stood down because of a raw amateur—a youngster who don't know the game? Why, I played football before ever he was thought of!"

"So much the worse for you," said the manager. "No wonder you are getting stale! You go to Woolwich, Bradley. You understand?"

And with that the manager turned away.

"The brake'll be here at one o'clock," said Trainer Brown, "and Andrews will go across with you. So be here smart to time, my lads."

Bradley and Benson joined Hines, who, sulky and silent, leant against the brick wall by the dressing-room door, chewing a straw.

"Pretty game this is, isn't it?" cried Bradley. "Stood down because of a boy!"

"I don't know what's coming to the team," growled Hines. "I was sent off the field by that outsider Harwood, and banged if they don't prefer him to you, Benson, because of it!"

"But they don't take a rise out of me!" said Benson grimly. "Go to Woolwich with the Reserves? I'm blessed if I do! I'm going to strike!"

Hines's eyes gleamed at the sound of the word.

"That's a grand idea, Benson!" he said. "I never thought of that! It's a fine way to hit back! Bradley, you come in with us, and let us all strike!"

Bradley hesitated.

"It's a risky game to play," he said. "The Association is all for the manager and against the pro. We'll look silly if we're suspended from football altogether, won't we?"

"We can say it is a protest against unfair treatment," said Benson. "I had a benefit before I left Sheffield. I've got a hundred or two in the bank. You're not so badly off either, Bradley. Hines has got a father who does pretty well in the barge-building line at Rochester, so that he's got a fall-back to go to. Let's strike!"

"How shall we start?" asked Bradley.

"By not turning up at twelve o'clock, and being out if they send anyone round to our digs. Then they will have to call out some of the men intended for the first team, and will have to include us against Barnsley."

Bradley's eyes gleamed with hope.

"I may not go to the Reserves, after all?" he said. "And if I do not see why, I'm engineer the strike all right, we shouldn't be able to draw some of the other players into the scheme if necessary."

When Robb Harwood and Guy Northcote entered the dressing-room at the West London ground at three o'clock that afternoon they found Brown, the head-trainer, moving about from locker to locker with a face as black as thunder.

"What's the matter, Tom?" asked Harwood, as he proceeded to get out his things.

"Matter?" cried the trainer. "Why, some of our lads—nice chaps, I don't think—are trying to ruin the club. That's what's the matter!"

"Ruin the club?" cried Harwood, staring at Brown in amazement.

"Yes. They know how much losing a match would mean to us, and they mean us to lose against Barnsley, if possible.

"Hines has been suspended for a while, and now Benson and Bradley refuse to play with the Reserves at Woolwich, and what with Phillips on the sick-list, and the Reserve right-back barking his shins last week, and still unable to turn out, we are a man short for to-day's match. Mason's gone to Woolwich."

"Play Benson and Bradley, then," said Guy.

"Why not?"

"Why not? It's against all principle and rule. Play 'em? Manager Stevens 'ud see 'em anywhere first! No! Benson and Bradley are not at home. I've sent round to them four times. Neither is Hines. But they won't force our hands that way. We can do without 'em. We mean to do without 'em."

"But as we are a man short to-day, how can we do without them?" asked Guy.

"My boy," said the trainer, beginning to peel off his things, "I've played this game for over twenty years, and though I'm an old 'un, I've got a bit of good stuff left in me yet. I'm going to make up the team. I intend to go inside-right. I won't be fast, but you can look for some good passes from me, Harwood, my lad. And whatever you do, sir"—with an appealing look at Guy—"play your very best! We've got to keep our end up in to-day's match, or go under."

The position was indeed a serious one, for Barnsley, who had finished eighth on the Second League table the year before and got into the third round of the English Cup, beating Bury,

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FOOTBALL LEAGUE SECRETARIES READ THIS:

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.....

This form, together with full particulars of the League, to be addressed to the Secretary, THE BOYS' REALM League, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.

A LAD OF THE LEAGUE

(Continued from the previous page.)

in the third round, and only being defeated by Woolwich Arsenal, semi-finalists, in the fourth, were not a team to be sneezed at.

And West London form was bad.

There was a crowd of over 20,000 strong on the ground a quarter of an hour before the kick-off, and crowds were still rolling up.

"Here's a nice state of affairs, Brown!" cried the manager, bustling into the dressing-room and striding up and down. "It looks as if the club was to be managed by the players from what I can see. It's a mighty lucky thing for us we got Jones's registration-form through in time. We should have looked stupid if we'd another man short. Do you think you can stay the match?"

The trainer smiled.

"I'm not going to say, sir," he said, patting the roundness of his stomach, "that I haven't got a bit of 'em being pum,' as the French say. But I'm pretty fit, despite my years, and I mean to stay. We've got to stave off defeat somehow."

"You're a good chap!" said the manager, pressing Trainer Brown's hand.

Then he looked carefully round the dressing-room. The lads were panting silently and grave—for them, it might have been a Cup-tie they were turning out for to judge by the nervous looks they cast at one another.

"Now, boys," said the manager, his clear, ringing tones penetrating into every hole and corner of the room, "I want you to remember that you are a team, and that, so far, you haven't covered yourselves with glory. I won't say that you haven't done your best. And I won't say that the football you've turned out hasn't been clever. But clever football without goals doesn't win games. Remember that, Harwood will do his best for you to-day, and, seeing what has happened, I call upon every lad in the team who calls himself a sportsman to do his best for his club!"

His words, and his frank, breezy manner, had a profound effect, and only one or two of the youngsters, who were Benson's, Bradley's, and Hines's particular friends seemed unaffected by them.

The manager, after a whispered word or two with Brown, then walked to the dressing-room door. Scarcely had he reached it than a uniformed official appeared.

"What's the matter, my man?" asked Mr. Stevens.

"Matter, sir" Matter enough!" answered the man, panting a bit after his run. "Hines, Bradley, and Benson have climbed to the top of the grand-stand, and they are sitting down on the top of the roof smoking. They've been ordered to come down, but they only laughed."

The manager's face turned pale. He seemed about to burst forth into a torrent of words, but a second's thought gave him pause.

"Oh, well," he said, "let 'em stay there! They've climbed up there on purpose to make a scene, and they'll only be gratified if any notice is taken of them. We can't forcibly remove them. They'll have to come down sometime—they've got to-night. Give orders that they are to be left alone, and tell all the employees that they are not to reveal the identity of the men on the roof. Now, hurry up, Myers, and take the word round."

"On the roof, sir, they?" cried the head-trainer, following his manager at the door. "I'd have 'em down quick enough, sir, even if I had to sweep 'em off it with a fire-hose."

"No, no!" cried the manager; "let them stop! They've got the laugh now, but they laugh loudest who laugh last. They shall pay for this, Brown, mark my words."

The news that the strikers were on the roof had caused tremendous excitement amongst the players. A few minutes later they were ordered out, and the appearance of the men in black-and-white led on to the field by stalwart goalkeeper Morris, was greeted with a rousing cheer.

Barnsley, looking spick and span in their claret-coloured shirts, were already practising at the northern goal.

Guy and Robb, as soon as they were on the field, turned their eyes in the direction of the stand, and there on the roof, sure enough, near to the centre, Hines, Bradley, and Benson could be plainly seen.

The precious trio seemed as happy as could be, and waved their arms wildly to their comrades. They certainly were having the best of the argument just then; but what about afterwards, when wages might be stopped, an appeal made to the Football Association, and what not —what then?

"We want justice, justice, justice!" shouted Benson, in a stentorian voice from the roof, and his voice was recognised. Some of his friends in the enclosure answered with a prolonged cheer.

The rest of the crowd laughed, and soon, despite the manager's precautions, the truth was out.

Nearly every spectator on the ground knew before half-time that the players on the roof were Hines, Bradley, and Benson.

Meanwhile, Morris, who had won the toss, chose to defend the Putney end of the ground, the wind blowing straight across the river, and giving no advantage really to either side.

Barnsley prepared to kick off. The players were:

West London: Goal, Morris; backs, Jones (Northcote) and Foster; half-backs, Reid, Graham, and Cummings; forwards, Vane, Brown (trainer), Harwood, Robinson, and Fletcher.

Barnsley: Goal, Thorpe; backs, Hay and Stacey; half-backs, Boyle, Hughes, and Oxspring; forwards, Hall, Reeves, Halswell, Mordue, and Brooks.

No sooner were the teams lined up and the ball placed in position, than the referee's whistle blew, and with a rush Barnsley invaded the West London half of the field.

The red shirts darted forward, with sinuous, quick, nervous movements, and in the very first minute Morris had to look alive to stop a stinging shot sent in by the Barnsley outside-left. He only just managed to clear, but Guy's sure foot was there, and he put the ball in touch well down the field.

Still, the visitors were encouraged, and a cheer came from the stand that had a decided Yorkshire flavour about it.

From the throw-in Barnsley again obtained possession, and, indeed, for the first ten minutes of the game there was only one team in it, the home backs never seeming able to get going, and also having some bad luck with their passing. Brown, the trainer's, slowness was certainly a handicap to the others, but it was only natural that he should take a long time to settle down when his age came into consideration.

It was when Guy and Foster were lying well up the field to assist in one of the few attacks that West London had made that a sudden change came over the game, which had been somewhat devoid of thrilling incidents up till then. The ball, kicked by Barnsley outside-left, broke away. In a moment he was clear of Guy and Foster, and, running straight onward, dribbling the ball with great skill, and never for a moment becoming flurried, he made for goal.

Converging in toward the centre as he neared the West London end, he did not part with the ball until he had made sure of the shot, and Morris was completely beaten when the ball crashed against the cross-bar. As it fell, the giant goalkeeper just managed to push it over the top of the net. A Barnsley man took him, and the Yorkshiremen cheered again at Brooks's fine play and the resultant corner.

West London packed their goal. Brooks's centre was an excellent one, but Morris was not a goalkeeper to be easily beaten, and, getting his fists to it in masterly fashion, he only cleared, but was the means of getting his own forwards away, and in a trice play was taken to the other end.

But Barnsley's backs were not to be caught napping. They raced hard for goal, got there first, and the left-back was just in time to intercept the ball as Brown passed to Harwood. It was kicked into touch without ceremony.

A minute later Brooks broke away again, and Guy, slipping up just as he tackled, let him through. He ran along in grand style, and his centre was received by one of the forwards. Guy, recovering himself, raced up, as did Foster, and in the melee that followed the ball was rushed through by three of the Barnsley forwards. Morris having no chance, and Guy being hopelessly obstructed.

Barnsley led by a goal, and things looked bad indeed for West London.

Then a telephoned message from Woolwich brought the grim intelligence that the Gunners' ace full-back was nearly two miles away. West London Reserves in the South-Eastern League match. Manager Stevens clutched at his hair.

"What ever is the team coming to?" he murmured.

A roar of applause at that moment attracted his attention to the field, and he was just in time to see Guy make a magnificent clearance with the Barnsley forwards right upon him.

"Good lad!" he muttered.

Harwood had now got well away from a fine pass from the old warhorse Brown, and looked like going through, but at the critical moment the Barnsley left-back popped up, and, with a huge lunging kick sent the ball flying in the air. It rose at a terrific rate, going straight for the spot where the three strikers were seated astride the roof.

A cry of warning arose, but too late. The next moment the ball struck Benson with terrific force on the side of the head, and he, losing his balance, toppled over, and went rolling down the corrugated iron roof towards the gutter.

"He'll be killed!" shouted someone in the crowd.

Then as he reached the edge, Benson, with a convulsive effort, just managed to get a grip of the gutter with both hands, and the next moment he was dangling in mid-air, with a fall of forty feet below him, swaying gently from side to side.

A shout of horror arose.

(To be continued in next Saturday's issue of THE BOYS' REALM. On sale everywhere, price 1d.)

ANSWERS
ONE PENNY.
Every Tuesday.

CLUB NOTICES.

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

CLYDESDALE F.C. (average age 15, medium) want matches; also good goalkeeper, outside-right, and inside-left, aged 14 to 17. Subscription for season, 2s. 6d.; entrance fee, 6d.—Apply by letter to Hon. Secretary, F. Mellis, 84, Kuser Road, Rollerton Park.

ST. AGNES F.C. (average age 15) have nearly all fixtures open for coming football season. Ground, Tooting Common; pitches 5 and 6.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, H. L. Grayden, 18, Cornwall Street, Pimlico, S.W.

TERNDALE (average age 16) require home and away matches; all open. Usual terms (average age 16) require away dates; all open. Several players (age 15 or 16) wanted for both teams.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, Forge Villas, Wesley Row, Stamford, E.

IVY ATHLETIC CLUB (average age 14, weak) require matches, home and away, within a respectable radius. All dates open.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, R. J. Dexter, 42, Pinland Road, Brockley, S.E.

GLENAIRBE F.C. season 1907-08. Open all winter. Second-light lowering; home or away.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, Wm. Parker, junr., 1, Henshaw Street, Glasgow.

SIDNEY ROVERS F.C. (average age 16, weak) require matches, all dates open, away.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, C. Dixon, 28, Johns Place, Sidney Street, Stepney, E.

HILTON F.C. require away matches as near Stratford as possible.—For dates, apply to Hon. Secretary, W. Barnes, 17, Martin Street, Stratford.

ST. JUDE'S F.C. (average age 16, medium). Clubs requiring fixtures (Wormwood Scrubbs) please note change of Secretary. Also one or two good players required to join.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, L. Jordan, 16, Loftus Road, Shepherd's Bush, W.

ROEBUCK UNITED (average age 17) require matches home and away. Ground, Lord's, and S. Mill Fields. Subscription, 3s. 6d.; entrance, 2s. 6d.—Apply by letter, or personally, between 7 and 8 p.m., to Hon. Secretary, G. Beauieks, 13, Rudy Street Buildings, Mile End, E.

BLACKPOOL CENTRAL WEDNESDAY F.C. (average age 18) want home and away matches for coming season. Ground, Stanley Park; use of motor-car for away matches.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, G. Naylor, 1, Henthorne Street, Blackpool, Lancashire.

ANSTEY ROVERS JUNIORS (average age 16) have most dates open for coming season. Also require good players, any position.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, 3, Dorchester Terrace, Baglan Road, Plumstead, S.E.

ANSTEY-ROVERS F.C. (average age 15-16, weak) wishing to arrange dates filled: September 7th, 21st; October 12th, 26th. Ground in Station Road, West Hendon, near Hendon Station.—Write to Hon. Secretary, 93, Brent View Road, West Hendon, The Ryde, N.W.

ST. MICHAEL'S JUNIOR F.C. (average age 14½, medium) require matches home and away for coming season.—Apply, Hackney Marshes.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, W. Hawke, 38, Zetland Street, Poplar, E.

WHEELDON ECCLESHILL F.C. want matches with clubs within five miles of Preston.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, J. K. Whiteside, 47, Porter Street, Preston.

CRAVEN PARK F.C. (average age 14, weak) have number of dates, home and away. Also 1st team (average age 18, weak) have few dates open. Ground, Tottenham Marshes.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, Harry Clarke, 1, Lane, South Tottenham, N.

THE CHURCH LADS' BRIGADE F.C. have all dates open for the coming season, home or away. Ground, Hackney Marshes.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, W. Hawke, 38, Zetland Street, Poplar, E.

BRIXTON UNITED A.C. (average age 17, medium) want matches home and away for coming football season. Subscription, 3s. 6d.; entrance, 2s. 6d.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, J. J. Stratton, 12a, Angleborough Street, Brixton, S.W.

CUTLER HALL F.C. (average age 15) require matches, home and away, for the coming season, within the radius of seven miles. Nearly all dates open.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, A. Barnes, 19, Langley Lane, Colebridge, Hemel Hempsted, Herts.

MOW COP ST. LUKES S.S. F.C. (average age 16-18) want home and away matches with respectable clubs. Ground, Mow Cop, ten miles. Good field and dressing-room.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, John Bailey, Mount Pleasant, Mow Cop, Cheshire.

CLAPTON ROVERS F.C. (average age 15, weak) require away matches; all dates open from November to April.—Write to Hon. Secretary, R. Boswell, 29, Mount Pleasant, Walthamstow.

TWENTY-SECOND LONDON BOYS' BRIGADE F.C., League (average age 15), have all dates open. Also two reserve teams required, willing to join the B.B. Apply to Hon. Secretary, W. Blow, 87, Kingsdown Road, Upper Holloway, London, N.

THE LADS' BRIGADE F.C. require home and away matches for the coming season, in or around Leeds.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, J. H. Brown, 21, Hartley Avenue, New Wortley, Leeds.

MANNINGHAM WESLEYANS A.F.C. (average age 16½) will be pleased to play any club within three miles of Manningham.—For dates, apply to Hon. Secretary, Joseph Barr, 24, Seal Street, Manningham, Bodford.

GARSTON JUNIORS (average age 15, weak) want matches for the coming season within five miles' radius of the Liverpool Town Hall. All dates open.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, A. Wilkinson, 37, Penhill Road, Garston, Liverpool.

THE UPTON RANGERS (average age 15, medium) have all dates open away again, at once.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, Forest Villa, 149, Queen's Road, Upton Park, E.

HAREHILLS BRITANNIA A.F.C. Secretaries of clubs in Leeds district should write to one of the addresses as under. Only respectable clubs need apply, and average age must be 14 or 14½.—Send your address to Hon. Secretary, W. Hardcastle, 8, Hargreaves, 59, Harehills Terrace; or to J. Powell, 36, Strathmore Drive, Harehills Lane, Leeds.

EASTFIELD ROVERS (average age 17) require matches home and away for season 1907-8; all dates open.—Write or apply to Hon. Secretary, D. Scott, 110, Eastfield Road, Peterborough.

EAGLEY MISSION RESERVES F.C. (average age 14½) desire matches at home and away within three miles' radius of the address. Nearly all dates open.—Apply to Secretary, A. Davidson, 3, Victoria Terrace, Eccleshill, Bradford, Yorks.

ST. JOHN'S JUNIOR F.C. (average age 16-17) require matches for coming season, home and away; ground, Hackney Marshes.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, J. Shew, 22, Clifford Road, Kingsland, N.

ST. CLIF, newly formed (average age 13), would be glad to book dates for the coming season in the district, friendly matches. No ground of our own; playing on Wanstead Flats, Saturday afternoons.—Apply, stating age, to Hon. Secretary, H. Lambert, 66, Vernon Road, Stratford, E.

LAIRD STREET WESLEYAN RESERVES A.F.C. (average age 16) require home and away matches in Birkenhead and district.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, P. Bell, 151, Laird Street, Birkenhead.

REDHILL JUNIORS (average age 13½) require fixtures for the coming season, home and away, within five miles' radius of Coventry.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, R. Carpenter, Parting-of-the-Roads, Foleshill Road, Coventry.

MARKINCH THISTLE F.C. (average age 15-16), season 1907-8, require matches, all dates open, home or away, within nine miles' radius.—Apply to Robert Mitchell, Elleralie Place, Betson Street, Markinch, Fifeshire, Scotland.

STANLEY VILLA A.F.C. (average age 18-19) want home and away matches for the coming season; fifteen miles' radius. Would like to meet a club over 20th.—Apply to Assistant-Secretary, 38, Greenhalgh, 68, Adrian Road, Bolton.

THE AVENUE F.C. (average age 16, weak) have nearly all fixtures open for coming season; also good goalkeeper required. Small subscription.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, J. Walsh, 12, Gee Street, Euston Station.

ST. ANN'S F.C. (average age 16-17) have a few open dates; Church clubs preferred.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, P. Bayliss, 94, Cyril Road, Small Heath, Birmingham.

READING ROVERS F.C. (average age 18) would like to arrange a match with a good, gentlemanly club in London on October 5th, with good ground and dressing-room; no guarantee required. Apply at once to Hon. Secretary, Master H. Harris, 117, Elgar Road, Reading.

INVICTA RESERVES require home and away matches; open dates as follows: October 5th, 12th; November 2nd, 23rd; December 14th, 21st, 26th; January 4th, away; and January 11th, 18th; February 1st, 8th, 22nd, 29th; March 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th, at home. Within four miles' radius of Peckham.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, T. Ottaway, 59, Carlton Grove, Peckham, S.E.

CHELTENHAM COLLEGE MISSION LADS' CLUB requires fixtures for next season.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, 111, Kingsley Road, S.E.

HOLMESDALE RESERVES (average age 15-16) require matches, all dates open, home and away; locally preferred.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, J. F. Pulley, 128, Holmesdale Road, South Norwood, S.E.

PEMBRIDGE F.C. (average age 12½) have all dates open for coming season.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, P. Bewley, 10, Pembridge Villas, Bayswater, W.

ST. BARNABAS F.C. (average age 15, medium) have the following dates open for fixtures with respectable clubs: February 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th; March 9th, 23rd; April 4th, 11th, for home and away matches.—Write, stating ground, to Hon. Secretary, V. Taylor, Glenmore, 37, Kinnburn Street, Southfields, S.W.

A BOY (15) wishes to join a respectable football team with permits as outside-right. Willing to pay entrance fee and weekly subscription.—Apply to James Bunyan, junr., 4, Leage Street, Bath Street, Old Street, E.C.

A LAD (15) wishes to join a football club in the neighbourhood of Manchester. Willing to pay subscription. Can play full-back and right-wing inside.—Apply to J. Sharples, 28, Bridge Street, Salford, Manchester.

A LAD (15½) would like to join a football club in the neighbourhood of Edmonton. Height about 5 ft. 8 in. Can play either left-back, right-half, outside-right, inside-right, centre-half. Willing to pay subscription.—Please address all inquiries to F. W. Z., Rhedlington Road, Silver Street, Upper Edmonton, N.

LAD (17) desires to join club in or near Derby as half-back or forward. Can play well. Small subscription.—Apply to R. H. Woodward, 30, Leman Street, Derby.

LAD (15) would like to join a respectable football team for the coming season in or about Penge; can play any position on left.—Apply to L. C. Jessup, 156, Maple Road, Penge, S.E.

LAD (15½) would like to join a respectable football club. Must be in North London, Holloway district preferred.—For particulars, apply by letter, to W. Griffiths, 15, Albermarle Mansions, Holloway Road, N.

TWO LADS (16) would like to join a respectable football club in the neighbourhood of Clapton.—All communications to E. S. Wilson, 165, Powerscroft Road, Clapton, N.E.

THREE RESPECTABLE YOUTHS (16) wish to join football club, 1907-08, three to four miles round Forest Gate. Inside-left, outside-right, and right-half positions required.—Apply to H. A. Chapman, 105, Belgrave Road, Ilford, Essex.

TWO FRIENDS (13 and 14½) wish to join a football club for the coming season in the Bootle district of Liverpool. Can play any position on the right but full-back. Willing to pay small subscription.—For further particulars, write or apply to John Quick, 52, Upper Beau Street, Fox Street, Everton, Liverpool.

A FEW PLAYERS (average age 15-17) wanted, all positions, for a respectable football club in Walthamstow, Essex, district. Subscription, 1s.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, A. C. Beckett, Vernon Athletic Club, 10, Woredge Street, Hammersmith, W.

ANY (15) LAD wishing to join a football club being formed in Tottenham. Any position; small subscription; respectable fellow-members.—Apply, personally or by letter, to Hon. Secretary, Albert Robbins, 179, Clyde Road, South Tottenham.

BOYS (13-15) wanted to form football club in Fairfield and district. Subscription, 1s.—Apply to H. Haverstock Road; or 16, Alford Street, Liverpool.

THREE GOOD PLAYERS (16-17) wanted by a football club in Tottenham. Any position; subscription, 1s.—Apply to H. Haverstock Road, Fulham; or to G. Gilbert, 90, Hammersmith Road, Kensington, W.

WANTED, a member of respectable club, over 16 years old, about 15 years old preferred); also matches wanted with North London clubs. Ground, Hackney Downs permits at C.C. Would like to join a league.—Address to Barnsbury Orient F.C., Hon. Secretary, Harry Lein, 60, Copenhagen Street, Barnsbury.

WANTED, boys between the ages of 14 and 16 years to join a junior football club; Crossbank district preferred.—Apply by letter to Hon. Secretary, David Thomson, 67, Westmoreland Street, Crosshill, Glasgow.

WANTED, lads are about 15 to 18 for football team at Ilford; Barking or Ilford lads would do (respectable).—Apply personally, or by letter, to the Secretary, 30, Madras Road, Ilford, Essex.

YOUNG LADS (average age 14-15) wanted for a first-class team; must be good players. Also first-class teams for Second Division of the Thames Junior Football League (average age 14-15½).—Apply immediately to Hon. Secretary, A. H. Wilson, 29, Racton Road, Fulham, S.W.

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Your Editor is always glad to hear from you about yourself or your favourite paper. He will answer you by post if you enclose a stamped addressed postcard or envelope. Write to him if you are in trouble, if you want information, or if you have any ideas for our paper. All letters to be addressed to the Editor of THE BOYS' REALM, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, E.C. If your letter is not replied to here, it may be answered in "The Boys' Friend" next Tuesday, or "The Boys' Herald" next Wednesday. THE BOYS' REALM will be sent post free to any part of the world on the following terms: 12 months, 7s.; 6 months, 3s. 6d.; 3 months, 1s. 9d.—payable in advance by British stamps. Postal Orders or Money Orders to be sent to the Publisher, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.

Another New Serial.

I AM sure that my friends will agree with me that our paper is in a very strong position just now. We have already three magnificent new serials appearing in our pages—first, the powerful new football story, "A Lad of the League"; secondly, the fine new tale of Slapton School by Mr. John Finnemore; and lastly, our grand new tale of thrilling adventure, "Plucky Phil Farren." And now I have much pleasure in announcing that I am going to give my many loyal supporters yet another treat. I have made arrangements with a young and clever author to write me a new serial story for THE BOYS' REALM dealing with a subject which is much before the public at the present time. I refer to the treatment of shop-assistants as a class, and the much-criticised "living-in system." Those of my friends who read the newspapers will have seen a great deal in their columns concerning this question of late, and I feel sure that they will be interested in our great new serial, which I am calling

"Slaves of the Shop."

There will be a special interest attaching to this new yarn in that the gentleman who is contributing it has himself been employed as a shop-assistant, and knows the many petty injustices and tyrannies to which these unhappy people are subjected. The new story, "Slaves of the Shop," will throw fresh light on this great and important question, and no reader of THE BOYS' REALM should miss it. As I am certain that there must be many of my friends who are themselves shop-assistants, this great new serial will specially interest them. The opening chapters will appear in a fortnight's time, and I think my friends will vote the new story a really stunning one.

Next Week's Number.

NEXT week I am publishing two fine athletic tales. One will be a further tale of Fred Reckless, about whom a complete story appears this week, and the other a long, complete humorous cycling yarn from the pen of Mr. L. J. Beeston. I feel sure that these stories will be thoroughly enjoyed by all my friends.

When Should He Practice Running?

WHAT is the best time of the day to practise running, and how often should I run?" asks F. W. B., of Redditch.

Undoubtedly the best times for training, my friend, are in the early morning and in the evening. Say you rise at seven o'clock, F. W. B., then half an hour after you have had a glass of milk and some biscuits or bread-and-butter, there is no reason why you should not take an hour's sharp walk or steady trot out and home again. Have a bath or a sponge down on returning, and sit down to a good breakfast. As you have no business anxieties, you could rest for about an hour or so after this, and then you could spend a quarter of an hour in physical exercise, or could take an hour's gentle spin on your bicycle. After that take things easily till an hour after tea-time, when, in the cool of the evening, you could have an hour or so's steady trot, finishing up with a few sharp sprints of a hundred yards—if you are thinking of going in for short-distance racing.

Have a sponge down immediately you have finished, and dress in warm clothing. Do not have your supper late, and avoid eating all "heavy" dishes. Before you turn into bed, which should not be later than ten o'clock, take a gentle walk or bicycle ride for an hour. Sleep with your windows open. Persisted in, this common-sense form of training will not only gain you splendid staying power as an athlete, but it will lay such a foundation of health that it will remain with you during your lifetime.

How to Make a Gelatine-graph.

ALL the way from Vancouver, British Columbia, one of my chums, who signs himself "Canadian Inquirer," and who tells me that he is sub-editor of his school magazine, and is also secretary of his school debating society, writes to ask me to give him particulars how he could make a gelatine writing-pad.

I have pleasure in giving my chum the information he desires.

Take two parts of Russian glue, one and a half of distilled water, and five of glycerine. Soak the glue in the water till soft, and then pour in the glycerine and mix till the whole is mingled together. If the graph is required to be of a pale colour, add one part of fine whitening.

After this, pour the composition into a flat tray to cool. It can be used as soon as it is solid.

Another method is to soak three parts of Nelson's gelatine for ten to twelve hours in four parts of water. Add three parts of glycerine, and warm it up until the whole is dissolved. Cool and harden as described.

Football and cricket club secretaries who have a number of letters in duplicate form to write, should make one of these writing-pads, for it will save them an immense amount of labour.

Should He Work in a Wine Distillers?

ONE of my young friends who wishes me to answer his inquiry with the initials S. B., is troubled in his conscience because he is employed in a wine and spirit distillers' office. My friend is a teetotaller, and has been working for his present employers for over three years, and he fears that if he stays there very much longer he will fall to the temptation of drinking some of the strong liquor with which he is surrounded. He also feels that every time he labels a bottle of wine he is encouraging drunkenness. Ought he to continue at this employment, he asks me, or should he look about for another post?

My friend S. B. tells me that he has withstood the temptation for over three years. He is deserving of credit for that, for in an atmosphere of strong drink it is so easy to be tempted to take just a little drop. And as my chum has stood firm for three years, I should say that he would be able to continue a teetotaller for even a longer period in the future. He tells me that he knows of the evils of drink, because he has seen so many instances around him of its influence. There is therefore no need for me to emphasise this part of the matter, so I will get on with his question.

Now, if he feels strong enough to resist temptation, and his post is a well-paid and promising one, I think he might stay with his present employers: but if, on the other hand, his conscience is set against his occupation, and he feels that he cannot resist the temptation much longer, he would be doing right in looking for a post elsewhere. But I strongly advise him not to be too rash. First obtain a new post, S. B., before you break off with your present employers.

My chum also tells me that he is not by any means a lazy lad, yet he feels constantly tired and sleepy, and the colour has faded from his cheeks. Can I suggest a remedy for that? I think that this is due to my chum's employment. He is, of course, confined to a room or a warehouse all day where the air is pervaded with the smell of various liquors. The constant inhaling of this air has affected my friend's liver, and the sleepy feeling he complains of is due to this. My advice to him is to take plenty of active exercise in his spare time out of doors.

Sleep with your windows open wide, S. B., and do dumb-bell exercise in your back garden every morning for ten minutes. Have a warm bath regularly once a week, and avoid constipation at all cost. Eat plenty of vegetables and freshly-cooked fruit. This, if persevered in, will soon bring the roses back to your cheeks, my friend, and cure your liver as well.

Is There a Cure For Bandy Legs?

THIS is the question asked me by a Birmingham chum whose initials are W. W. He tells me that he is only a working lad, and cannot afford to see a doctor. I am afraid that even if my chum was a millionaire I could do little to help him. I am sorry to inform W. W. that for a lad of his age there is practically no cure for bandy legs.

The only chance of remedying this trouble is during the sufferer's childhood. The affliction known as bandy legs, which is often caused through mothers allowing their babies to get upon their feet before their little legs are strong enough to bear the weight of their bodies, can be remedied in childhood by the sufferer's legs being broken, being placed together in their proper position, and being secured by splints until the legs are strong and have assumed the normal shape. It can be safely practised with babies, because the bones of their legs are little more than sticks of gristle, and the broken parts soon heal and grow strong.

But it is very different in the case of a grown lad. Were the bones of his legs broken, there might arise the possibility that everything would not end satisfactorily, and even in a satisfactory case the limbs never move with the freedom that they should do.

I am sorry, W. W., that I cannot give you better news than this, but bear your trouble manfully. Only narrow-minded people will take notice of the shape of your legs; your friends will value you for your good character, your straightforwardness, and your other manly qualities.

YOUR EDITOR (H. E.).

NOW ON SALE! PRICE 3d. EACH.

No. 25

The Stolen Submarine.

A Thrilling Tale of Nelson Lee, Detective, and the Great Unknown.
By - - - MAXWELL SCOTT.

&

No. 26

Pete, Detective.

A New, Original, and Laughable Tale of JACK, SAM, and PETE.
By - - S. CLARKE HOOK.

THE BOYS' FRIEND 3d. LIBRARY.

OUR LEAGUE CORNER.

Now that the football season is in full swing I shall be glad if secretaries of clubs which have affiliated themselves to our league will send in the reports of their matches from week to week. A postcard is quite sufficient, and the name of the club should be plainly written at the top. Then should follow the date when the match was played, the name of the opposing club, goals for and against. Please write very plainly, so that there may be no mistake made in entering the results in our league books.

Any clubs desirous of joining our league may still do so. The lists will be kept open a little longer for the benefit of any who have up till now neglected to enter. Join at once, or it may be too late. Full particulars will be found on another page.

OUR CRICKET LEAGUE.

Two of the cricket leagues to which your Editor promised to present silver challenge cups have now finished their competition, the trophies having been won by the following clubs:

BELFAST MINOR LEAGUE.

Champions: MOUNT C.C.—Secretary, Mr. T. Handforth, 109, Albert Bridge Road, Belfast.

MERSEY CRICKET LEAGUE.

Champions: EASTWOOD C.C.—Secretary, Mr. H. German, 228, Picton Road, Wavertree, Liverpool.

We heartily congratulate these clubs on their well-merited success, and trust that THE BOYS' REALM Cup they have won will give them every satisfaction.

The following is the final table showing the position of the various clubs affiliated to the Mersey Cricket League at the close of the season.

DIVISION I.

Club.	P.	W.	L.	D.	P.
*Eastwood	14	13	1	0	26
Allan's	13	9	4	0	18
Waterloo St. Faith's	14	9	5	0	18
Bransby	14	7	6	1	15
Parkfield	14	7	6	1	15
Avondale	13	6	7	0	12
St. Paul's	13	3	10	0	6
Fazakerley	14	0	14	0	0

* Champions, 1907; winners of THE BOYS' REALM Cup.

DIVISION II.

Helsby	10	8	2	0	16
St. Clement's	12	8	4	0	16
Clevelly	12	6	3	0	12
Vale	10	5	4	0	10
Central (Egremont)	10	5	5	0	10
Marfig's Juniors	11	2	9	0	4
York	10	1	9	0	2

SECTION II.

League table up to and including Saturday, August 17th:

JUNIOR.

Club.	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
The Realm	16	15	0	1	700	376	31
Garfield	15	15	0	0	1428	521	30
Rebecca St.	15	15	0	0	1143	461	30
St. Barnabas	15	15	0	0	1402	1166	30
Primitive Juniors	15	14	1	0	861	463	28
Heckmondwike	14	14	0	0	806	385	28
Malmesbury	14	13	1	0	742	424	26
Wilton	13	12	1	0	1032	677	24
B.O.A.	11	11	0	0	919	411	22
Oakley	13	10	3	0	719	544	20

SENIOR.

Club.	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	P.
Northgate	14	14	0	0	1227	417	28
Sankey	15	14	1	0	1209	443	28
Lovely Lane	18	13	0	5	1291	594	26
Camden	13	11	1	1	880	477	23
St. Jude's	10	9	1	0	580	435	18
Histon Excelsior	12	8	3	1	617	561	17

Cricket bat awards for weeks ending August 10th and 17th:

SECTION I.

SUNDERLAND AND DISTRICT LEAGUE.
WESLEY HALL C.C.—Secretary, W. Rankin, 12, Hazeldene Terrace, Sunderland.
Y.M.C.A. C.C.—Secretary, H. Vincent, 19, Dunbar Street, Sunderland.

EAST LONDON CHURCH LEAGUE.
ST. BARNABAS C.C.—Secretary, A. Cheetham, 47, Strahan Road, Bow.
BROMLEY CHURCH C.C.—Secretary, E. Webster, 19, Usher Road, Bow.

MANCHESTER RECHABITE LEAGUE.
CONCORD C.C.—Secretary, W. Carter, 48, Bickley Street, Moss Side, Manchester.
STAR OF SALE C.C.—Secretary, J. Hall, 8, Joynson Street, Sale, near Manchester.

NORTH LIVERPOOL LEAGUE.
HILL O'LION C.C.—Secretary, R. Hatton, 82, Gwladys Street, Walton, Liverpool.
QUEEN'S ROAD MISSION.—Secretary, W. Bain, 47, Fowler Street, Everton, Liverpool.

SOUTH LONDON CHURCH LEAGUE.
ALL SAINTS MEN'S C.C.—Secretary, C. Randall, 65, Plumstead Common Road, Plumstead, S.E.

IRONBRIDGE AND DISTRICT LEAGUE.
LAWLEY BANK C.C.—Secretary (of League), Mr. H. Bowen, The Folly, Broseley.

SWINTON AND DISTRICT LEAGUE.
GREASBRO' C.C.—Secretary, Mr. A. Widdowson, Greasbro', near Rotherham.

MERSEY CRICKET LEAGUE.
HELBYS C.C.—Secretary, Mr. H. Norris, 5, Ribbledale Avenue, Aintree, Liverpool.
ST. FAITH'S C.C.—Secretary, Mr. L. Rogers, Blundellsands Hotel, Blundellsands, near Liverpool.

BELFAST MINOR LEAGUE.
ANNANDALE C.C.—Secretary, M. J. Greer, 22, Delaware Street, Belfast.
MOUNT C.C.—Secretary, Mr. T. Handforth, 109, Albert Bridge Road, Belfast.

SOUTH LONDON S.S. LEAGUE.
CLAREMONT JUNIORS C.C.—Secretary, T. H. Smith, 9, Cumbrae Buildings, Tabard Street, Borough, S.E.

SECTION 2.

JUNIOR DIVISION.

KINGSGATE A.C.C.—Secretary, F. Grundy, 41, Abbey Gardens, St. John's Wood, N.W.

SENIOR DIVISION.

ST. MICHAEL'S C.C.—Secretary, F. A. Neville, 62, North Street, Edgware Road, N.W.

DAILY MAIL.

OFF DUTY YARNS

OR, THE DIVERSIONS OF DANNIE AND GINGER.

An Enthralling Series of Complete Humorous Military Stories by W. MURRAY GRAYDON.

THE TRIBULATIONS OF DR. SLAMMERS.

THE 1st CHAPTER.
Ginger Wakes Up—A Friend in Need—The Doctor's Little Joke.

IF there had ever been a time when Ginger was not thirsting to get even with Dr. Slammers, or Dr. Slammers was not watching for an opportunity of wiping out an old score against Ginger, you might have believed that the millennium was near at hand, which is the time when the lion and the lamb will lie down side by side. Not that there was anything lamb-like about either Ginger or the doctor. The reader knows about their pleasant relations in the past, but this is a brand-new story, and an example of how one thing may lead to another; for it began in the first place with Toddy Binks, who had been thrashed by Ginger in the canteen at the exercise-camp up at Chandlagor, on the night when the 2nd Royal Vullers was taking of transmigration. The manner in which Toddy squared his grievance—if suspicion rightly fell on him—paved the way for Dr. Slammers; and not long afterwards, as may be supposed, Ginger got his own back, and interest, from both Binks and the doctor; in which he was assisted by Corporal Maloney, and, unwittingly, by the corporal's wife. But the story is not so complicated as you might think.

The day had been very hot and close, and after tiffin Ginger had kicked off his boots, rolled a blanket into a pillow, and gone to sleep on a bench in the mess-room. When Dannie roused him, towards supper-time, there were half a dozen Sloggers in the room, and Toddy Binks was among them.

"How did you enjoy your nap?" he asked pleasantly.

"It wasn't a nap," replied Ginger, with a sigh. "It was a blissful dream of a London 'ommanid wot 'ad come into a fortune, and wanted me to marry 'er."

He got into one of his boots, jerked it off with a sharp cry, and shook from it, on to the floor, a hideous specimen of the scorpion tribe. Then he lifted his foot, from which a drop of blood was oozing, and gave a yell that was loud enough to have awakened the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus.

"Good heavens, have you been bitten?" exclaimed Dannie.

"I 'ave!" howled Ginger, hopping about. "I'm bit by a black scorpion! I can feel the poison working! I'm a dead man; it's all up with me! And next week is to be the gunners' ball, wot I'd been lookin' forward to! I'll give my love to Uncle Bill, Dannie. Don't forget that! But why don't you chaps do something, you monkey-faced idjuts? Fetch a bottle of brandy from the canteen. Send for the doctor. Will you see me perishin' before your very eyes?"

"It's too late to do anything," Pottle Stubbs said solemnly. "Lie down, Ginger, and die like a hero."

"I won't die!" raved Ginger. "It's too cruel 'ard! I ain't goin' to be cut off in the bloom of youth!"

His eyes rolling wildly, he danced from the room, floundered down the stairs and out of the barracks, and nearly ran into Dr. Slammers, who happened to be passing.

"What's the trouble, demanded the medical man. "What's the trouble, Larkins?"

"Boot—scorpion—bitten!" gasped Ginger. "Save me! Save me, doctor, and I'll be your friend for life! I'll never play another joke on you!"

Dr. Slammers glanced up at the window, where he saw a row of grinning faces, and with that the truth flashed upon him—and an inspiration as well.

"Come along, my poor fellow," he said. "I'll do my best, but there is very little hope."

The officers' mess-house was close by, and here Dr. Slammers hastily led Ginger. He dragged him into the ante-room, and made him lie down on a table; and then, taking a small phial from his pocket, he poured half the contents on to a handkerchief, which he pressed to the patient's mouth and nostrils.

"Wot is it?" mumbled the terrified Slogger. "Wot is it for?"

"It is to put you to sleep," was the reply, "while I cauterise the bite."

"But I don't want to go to sleep! I'd rather 'ave brandy, sir. They say a bottle of that is the best thing for——"

Ginger's voice was growing faint as he inhaled the fumes of the drug. His struggles ceased, his eyes closed, and he lay perfectly still. The doctor rubbed his hands gleefully, and winked at Major Mumbles, who had just entered the room.

"What's wrong with Larkins?" exclaimed the major.

"A sad case—a very sad case!" chuckled Dr. Slammers. "Wait here, Mumbles," he added, "while I run over to my bungalow."

When Ginger returned to consciousness and opened his eyes a few minutes later, he was still stretched out on the table, with a pillow under his head and a blanket over his body. Major Mumbles and the doctor were standing at one side of him, and on the other side was a smaller table on which were a basin of water and a large leather case. In the doorway, looking on curiously, he saw a number of his mates.

"Ow am I, sir?" he asked faintly. "'Ave you pulled me through, doctor?"

"I think so," answered Dr. Slammers, who wore a white apron and had rolled up his sleeves. "Yes, I trust that the worst is over. But I fear you will never be the same again."

"Never the same? Wot do you mean by that, sir?"

"My poor fellow, how can I tell you?" muttered the doctor. "What a pity! A splendid soldier lost to the Service!"

"Break it to him gently," put in Major Mumbles. "You must be brave, Larkins—very brave."

"Wot is it?" gasped Ginger, turning green. "Why don't you tell me? Is the poison still workin' in my system?"

"It is not this," replied Dr. Slammers, sighing deeply. "No; it is not that!"

He picked up the leather case, drew from it a glittering saw, and rubbed the teeth of it with a cloth.

"Wot—wot are you goin' to do to me?" fairly shrieked the frightened Slogger.

"Nothing, my poor fellow," said the doctor, with another sigh. "It is already done. Heroic measures, you know. Only chance to save your life. It was better for you to lose your left leg than to——"

"You've cut it off!" yelled Ginger. "You cut off my leg while I was lying 'ere uncon scious? 'Ow dared you? I'll pay you back, you blunderin', chuckle-headed sawbones! You did it out of revenge, because you've always 'ad a grudge against me. Wot sort of a soldier will I make now, trippin' about on a wooden leg? 'Ow am I goin' to dance at the gunners' ball next week? 'Ow am I goin' to——"

"Cheer up, Larkins!" bade Major Mumbles. "I'll contribute a guinea towards buying you an artificial limb. You should be grateful to the doctor, whose skill has saved you from——"

A fit of coughing interrupted the major, and then, as Dr. Slammers's lips twitched suspiciously, it flashed upon Ginger that he had been badly done. He suddenly kicked off the blanket, raised his legs in the air, and jumped off the table.

"I'll be even for this!" he spluttered. "It'll be my turn next!"

His relief was at first greater than his anger. With peals of laughter ringing in his ears he pushed through the crowd in the doorway, and strode across the parade-ground, muttering to himself, until he was overtaken by Dannie.

"I'm sorry," said the lad. "I hadn't anything to do with it, honest injun!"

"Who 'ad, then?" Ginger demanded wrathfully.

"I shouldn't wonder if it was Toddy Binks. The scorpion was a dead one, and there was a thorn put into the boot with it. That was what pricked you."

"And you pretend as 'ow you wasn't in the know?"

"Of course I wasn't," vowed Dannie.

"I'll 'ave to take your word for it," said Ginger, with a scowl. "Glory be, wot a fright I've 'ad! But I'll get square with Toddy Binks and Dr. Slammers. And I'll begin with old sawbones, who is in the 'abit of takin' a loady swim every evening."

"How is that going to help you?" asked the lad.

"Come along, my son, and we'll think it out," replied Ginger, whose brain was plotting mischief.

THE 2nd CHAPTER.
The Bathing Pool—Dr. Slammers Has a Bad Time—The End of the Chase.

LATE on the following afternoon, about an hour before sunset, Dr. Slammers did what he had been accustomed to do every evening for the past month. He passed out of the lines with a towel under his arm, and a walk of half a mile, along a lonely road that skirted the Forest Reserve, brought him to the river at a point not far from the bridge of boats. Here was a deep, clear pool, with a sandy bottom, which was protected by wire netting, and was therefore safe from the intrusion of crocodiles.

Having undressed and put his clothes behind a rock, the doctor entered the water. For a quarter of an hour he swam and dived, enjoying himself hugely, but when he finally came out and started using the towel, he made a most dreadful discovery. His clothes had been carried off, and where they had been lay a purple petticoat, a pink blouse with green spots, a bonnet with strings, and a Japanese sunshade.

"That scoundrel Larkins is at the bottom of this," he reflected, when his fiery wrath had cooled a little. "I should have been on my guard against him. What the deuce am I to do? It's no use looking for my clothes, for I shouldn't find them. I shall have to wait here until dark, and then I can slip back without being seen."

But Dr. Slammers was not to get off so easily. He did not suspect as yet to what lengths the joke was to be carried. With much grumbling, and some lurid language, he got into the petticoat and the blouse, and then, as he was about to sit down, he heard voices not far off.

"I'm sure I saw her go this way," said one speaker.

"We'll 'ave 'er!" declared another. "We'll catch the woman wot pinched the corporal's wife's Sunday-best duds!"

The unfortunate doctor listened with a sinking heart.

"Good heavens, there has been a theft at the cantonment!" he told himself. "The thief was probably some rascally native, and he exchanged the stolen property for my clothes while I was in the water! But I won't wait to explain. I must make a dash for it, and try to reach my bungalow. I wouldn't have anybody recognise me in this rig for a year's screw!"

He raised the sunshade, clapped on the bonnet, and tied the strings under his chin. Away he went, but he had only gone a few yards when he heard a loud clamour and the barking of a dog. Looking over his shoulder he saw Pottle Stubbs and Dannie, Corporal Maloney and Larkins, accompanied by the latter's dog, Ruff.

"There she goes!" cried the lad.

"We'll get 'er!" shouted Ginger. "There she is, wearin' the stolen goods as bold as brass! We'll drive 'er back to the lines!"

It was then that Dr. Slammers lost his head, and little blame to him. He suspected a trick, but that made no difference. Fear and shame, the dread of being caught under such humiliating circumstances, urged him to do his best to escape. He kept to the dusty road, for on his right were low bushes, and on the left was the forest. He got a good start, and after that he held his own against the pursuing soldiers, though he had to reckon with the dog, who was soon at his heels. Ruff was enjoying the fun, however, and all he did was to bark joyously.

On the doctor went, puffing and blowing, yelling angrily at the dog, with the hue and cry in his ears. They had gone nearly half a mile, and a few moments later, as he turned a sharp curve of the road, he saw close in front of him the sentry who was posted at the entrance to the lines. And that sentry, as it happened, was Toddy Binks. He started in genuine amazement at the comical figure, and then threw his rifle to his shoulder.

"Halt! Who goes there?" he demanded.

"Let me pass, quick!" gasped Dr. Slammers, trusting that he could avoid recognition.

"I seem to know your face!" exclaimed Toddy Binks. "Why, blow me if you ain't old Sawbones! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get out of the way, you fool!" Dr. Slammers cried in a fury.

With that he swung at the grinning soldier, struck down his weapon, and smashed the sunshade over his head. And he did more than that, for a few seconds later, as the doctor sped on, Toddy Binks was nursing a black eye and a bleeding nose.

"Serves you jolly well right!" shouted Ginger, as he and his companions reached the spot. "It'll do to wipe my own little score! What price scorpions, you scut?"

The pursuit was continued, and the language that Toddy Binks used—it cannot be printed—faded on the air. The road now led for a short distance between hedges, and thirty yards beyond the sentry's post, cropping the grass and tethered to a peg, was an aged buffalo that belonged to one of the cantonment water-carriers. Dr. Slammers got safely by, but the approaching clamour frightened the animal, and when Ruff dashed at it, barking shrilly, it jerked up its peg and bolted. It resented such treatment, being an ill-tempered beast, and it promptly concluded to take it's spite out of the doctor, who looked back and saw his peril.

By straining every nerve Dr. Slammers kept the lead, but he had not much space to spare when he reached the open part of the cantonment and turned to the left, towards the row of bungalows, where he hoped to hide his shame.

"If I get out of this scrape," vowed the terrified doctor, "I'll have that ruffian Larkins flayed alive!"

He had reached the first of the bungalows, and was bounding along towards his own gate, which was closer by, when the buffalo overtook him. The animal charged with lowered head, and Dr. Slammers rose in the air like a feather. He flew over the wall into the compound of Colonel Podgers' bungalow, and landed ungracefully at the feet of the colonel himself, who had just rushed out of the house to see what was the matter.

"Save me!" cried the doctor, as he jumped up and threw his arms around the astounded officer. "Hide me! Take me away!"

The buffalo had trotted off; and now, as Ginger and his companions took to their heels in the opposite direction, bubbling with mirth, Mrs. Colonel Podgers ran out of the bungalow with a riding-whip in her hand.

"Podgers, you villain!" she shrieked. "Actually embracing a shameless hussy before my very eyes! Take that, you perfidious monster!"

Twice the lash fell before the angry woman recognised Dr. Slammers in his gaudy disguise. And then—— But it is best to draw a veil over the rest of the scene.

The sentry, as it happened, was Toddy Binks. He started in genuine amazement at the comical figure, and then threw his rifle to his shoulder. "Halt! Who goes there?" he demanded. "Let me pass, quick!" gasped Dr. Slammers.

When explanations were sternly demanded on the following morning, Ginger declared that Mrs. Maloney's finery had been stolen from her quarters by some native woman; that he and the corporal, and other good pals, had taken up the pursuit; that they had seen the thief, lost sight of her, and discovered her again—as they supposed—at the bathing-pool, where, unknown to her pursuers, she must have substituted the stolen garments for the doctor's clothes, which accounted for the very natural mistake.

Under the circumstances Ginger was reluctantly given the benefit of the doubt, as was the corporal, though it was recalled that he also had an old grudge against the doctor. So there the matter ended, though you may be sure that Dr. Slammers will not forget it.

THE END.

TEDDY LESTER'S CHUMS.

A Rattling New Tale of Slapton School.

By JOHN FINNEMORE.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS IN BRIEF.

TEDDY LESTER, a pupil at Slapton School, in Mr. Jayne's House. A popular character well known to readers of THE BOYS' REALM.

JIMMY WEST, nicknamed the Bat. A new boy at Slapton. He is an old chum of Teddy's.

DIGBY, SANDYS, and ITO NAGAO (a little Jap), chums of Teddy Lester at Slapton.

CURZON, GIBSON, and PALMER, three bullies of Slapton School; also in Jayne's House.

The opening of a new term at Slapton School is made conspicuous by the arrival of Jimmy West. In appearance he is guileless and a little bit soft, but beneath this deceptive exterior he is as sharp as any inmate of Slapton. Curzon, Gibson, and Palmer at once fall foul of West, who shows them that in spite of his queer looks he can keep his end up.

On the first half-holiday of the term Teddy Lester and his chums go into the neighbouring town of Oakford. The river there is greatly swollen owing to the torrential rainfalls which have recently been experienced, and is rising steadily. Three cottages, containing a woman and her children, are in terrible danger from an insecure embankment, which suddenly gives way with a loud roar. The seething waters rush down into the hollow and flood the cottages almost to the roofs. Ito, Teddy, and the Bat are imprisoned therein, having hurried down to warn the occupants. They hastily construct a raft, and Ito paddles the woman and her family ashore. Then he returns for his two chums. They board the raft, but almost at once a strong current seizes it, and sweeps it swiftly, with its three occupants, towards a dangerous weir, which is heard thundering in the distance.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

THE 14th CHAPTER.
A Friend in Need.

AND now, at this moment of most awful peril, as the tiny raft swung down on the full force of the flood towards the thundering weir, the best qualities of the two allied races came out in the two young Britons and the Jap who had to face death.

They faced it calmly, and chatted as quietly as they rode down towards the foaming whirlpool as if they were strolling over the cricket meadow at Slapton.

"Do you think we can ride it, Ito, old chap?" said Teddy.

"I'm afraid not," replied Nagao. "There might be a chance if the raft held together, and we hung on to it. But it is almost certain to go to pieces in that mad rush of cross-currents."

"I d-do wish you chaps had j-jumped and s-swum for it," said the Bat. "I w-w-was awfully g-g-good of you to s-s-stay by me, but there'd have b-b-been a chance for y-y-you."

"That's all right, Bat, old boy," said Teddy; "but we're bound to stand by the ship unless all the crew can come off."

The boys had been crouching on the door lashed across the middle of their frail ark. Now Teddy carefully got on his knees, and then, little by little, raised himself to full height. He had to make every movement cautiously, for the raft could only be fairly trimmed by balancing the weight upon it with much care.

Standing erect, his feet well apart to give him a steady purchase on the tossing boards below him, Teddy looked on every hand.

He glanced at the shore. There the crowd were streaming along the bank, crying, shouting, the waving their arms in the tension wringing their hands, all aghast with horror at the fate which seemed certain to overtake the gallant three.

But Teddy only gave them a single glance. No help could be expected from them. There was no sign of a boat, and even if a boat had been available, the boldest boatman would scarce have dared to launch it now, and venture into the mad race of waters which swept down directly to the roaring weir.

"No, Teddy, it won't," we've got to go over. What chance ahead? Can we go over and hang on to the raft through it all? It's a black look-out, but it's the only one for us."

He turned his clear, steady gaze on the wild fury before them where the vast flood swept over the steep fall, and suddenly his glance sharpened.

What was that low, dark mass on the very edge of the descent, a mass which cut the furious torrent into two unequal portions? Teddy knew it; it was the lock-keeper's house. Was there a chance there for them?

"All hands to the pumps!" roared Teddy; and looked round at his companions. Ito grasped Teddy's meaning, and looked up with a quick, eager glance of inquiry.

"Is there anything we can do, Teddy?" he asked.

"Just one chance in ten thousand, Ito, my son," replied the skipper. "Stick that paddle into the water, and shove her over to the left bank for all you're worth."

Ito did so, but his keen, quick eye marked the left bank with no hopeful glance.

"I know what you're thinking, old chap," said Teddy, "and you're thinking right. We shall never make the left bank before we go over the fall; but then, I ain't aiming for it. Swing yourself up, and take a squint down-stream."

Ito did so, and gave a sharp exclamation.

"There is a house in the river!" he cried.

"There is," said Teddy, "and it gives us just a bare chance, though nothing much to brag about. You see, there's the weir, and there's a big lock. The weir is on the right-hand side, and the lock's on the left. The lock-keeper's house is between the two, and it's his job to let barges through the lock as they go up and down the river. Now, can we run her on the house, or not? That's the question for us."

"Is the h-h-house pretty s-s-strong?" asked the Bat.

"Strong as a little castle," replied Teddy. "That will never be swept away. It's built of stone on a rock which crops up out of the bed of the river."

No more was said for a few moments. The little Jap worked at his paddle with all his strength and skill. Steadily he drove the clumsy little craft across the stream, and as they shot down the lock-house came more and more plainly into view. Suddenly Teddy gave a cry.

"The house is not empty," he said; "I can see someone at a window—an upper window."

"Where's the rest of the house?" queried Ito.

"Under the flood," replied Teddy. "Only the bed-room windows and the roof stand out of the water. Now, Ito, you've shoved her over well, old chap! We're running straight down for the house now."

But the little Jap had only worked the raft over just in time. For now they were seized by the fierce new current. They hurried then faster and faster towards the lip of the wild descent. The roar of the frightful turmoil of waters was stunning; the crash of destruction rang in their ears.

"Body, Ito!" sang out Teddy.

"Steady it is!" cried the little Jap.

"Pass the line!" roared Teddy.

The Bat, cool as a cucumber, gathered up the line, and passed it to the skipper, who stood at the forward end of the raft.

Teddy swiftly coiled the line, and held it ready to sling. There was now just one chance, and a very slender chance at that. Nothing but the utmost coolness and nerve could save them.

Through the upper window of the lock-house the keeper, a big, powerful man, was hanging half out, his hands outstretched. He had marked the raft, with its load of three boys, sweeping down upon his house. He had seen Teddy coil the line, and he was ready to play his part. Could he grasp the line and check the downward rush of the raft into the pit of destruction which howled immediately below his dwelling? He was willing to try, and he could do no more.

Faster, faster, faster the raft swept down on the rushing torrent. Hold fair and true by Ito's steady hand, she actually struck the stones of the lock-keeper's dwelling, and Teddy swung the line clean into the room through the window. The lock-keeper grasped the rope, swung back, and disappeared.

Only for a second did the raft hang beside the smooth stone wall. The Bat grabbed at the stones, but there was nothing to grip, and the suck of the stream drew them once more towards the fall. The boys watched the line with straining eyes. Would it tauten and check their way?

Yes, it was tightening. They gave a cry of joy; and yet that tightening almost brought about a most terrible loss to their little company. For suddenly the line was taut, and held the little raft firmly against the rushing flood. But this tilted the raft on end, and Teddy, who was on his feet, was flung clean off his balance. He tottered, clutched at a table-leg, missed it, and went headlong into the savage stream.

Nothing on earth could have saved him save the quickness and coolness of the Bat. The latter slid along the raft in some miraculous fashion, shot out one long arm, and fastened his long, bony fingers in a furious clutch about Teddy's ankle.

In a second Ito was beside him, and together they dragged Teddy aboard. Then they felt the raft moving under them. The lock-keeper was hauling on the line, working them in by a few inches at a time.

Little by little he worked them under the window.

"Come up the line!" he shouted; and the boys nodded.

"Up you go, Teddy!" said Ito; and Teddy, none the worse for his short, sudden ducking, went aloft hand over hand.

"You next," said Ito to the Bat; and up went Jimmy, his long arms and thin legs serving him admirably for the work. Then up scrambled Ito, swiftly as a squirrel, and tumbled in through the window.

"All hands aloft? Hooray!" shouted the lock-keeper; and patted his guests on the shoulder.

For a moment the boys could not speak. They could only stare at each other and their kind helper with eyes shining brightly from the excitement which had been crowded into the last few wild moments. Then Teddy burst out:

"I say, you chaps, you saved my life!"

"That they did," cried the lock-keeper. "No swimmer in this world could ha' saved himself on the very edge o' the weir there."

"That's all right, Teddy!" said Ito. "You'd have done the same for either of us. But it was the line really did the trick. He moved like lightning."

"Good old Jimmy! I sha'n't forget it," said Teddy.

"Whoo!" blew out the Bat. "That's n-n-nothing! Where sh-sh-should I have b-b-been if you f-f-fellows hadn't s-s-stuck to me?"

"And you've saved the lot of us!" went on Teddy, turning to the lock-keeper. "You worked us in against the stream splendidly."

The boys thanked the good fellow heartily, but the pain his share of the adventure suited at of very small moment, and was eager to hear how they got into their queer predicament.

"When I see ye a-comin' down the stream on that there Noah's ark arrangement," said he, "I could scarce believe my own eyes. Where did ye pick it up?"

Teddy related their adventure, and the lock-keeper listened open-mouthed. Then he explained his position in turn. When the flood began to come down he had felt certain that it was going to be a big one, and he had put his wife and children ashore. But, feeling just as certain that his house would resist the fiercest flood that the river could send down, he had stood out in it to see the thing out.

"Well, here we are, and here we've got to stop, too," said Teddy; "and a jolly good streak of luck to find ourselves here."

His companions agreed, and Ito said:

"How shall we be able to get ashore?"

"Well, sir," said the lock-keeper, "we shall be able to see in the morning. This river soon runs out, for however big the flood is the water clears off in one burst. I've got plenty of grub, luckily, and the water won't come in here. You'll have to take pot luck wi' me to-night."

The boys were quite satisfied with the prospect, and made themselves quite at home with the good fellow. He lighted a fire in the upper room, for he had carried up fuel before the water entered the lower part of the dwelling, and Teddy dried his clothes. When darkness settled down over the roaring river and the wide expanse of the flood, the boys lay down and slept like tops, tired out with their lively day.

The 15th CHAPTER.
Back to Slapton—Jayne's v. the School.

THEY woke next morning to find that the vast mass of the flood had run out. The river was still very full, very angry, but by no means so large as the night before.

"I told ye she'd soon run off," said the lock-keeper. "Now, how am I goin' to get you young gen'lmen ashore? They'll be worryin' about you at Slapton School, I'm thinkin'."

There was no going ashore, however, until the afternoon, by which time the flood had gone down much lower still, and a boat was launched for the lock-keeper's house. A couple of skilful watermen made the trip safely, and all embarked, the lock-keeper as well.

On the shore a large crowd had gathered, and everyone's mouth was full of the story of the heroism the three boys had displayed the night before. The great river was raised as they stepped ashore, and Teddy said to his friends:

"Here, let's hook it! I don't want any 'See the Conquering Hero Comes!' in mine, thank you."

The others nodded, and they tried to push quickly through the crowd, when suddenly, to their surprise, they found themselves face to face with the Head, Dr. Balshaw himself.

"Well done, boys!" said the doctor. "Slapton's proud of you this day."

He shook hands with them, and led them through the cheering crowd. On the outskirts was the doctor's carriage.

"Jump in!" he said. "I've been here some time waiting for you to come ashore. Now we'll get back to school."

As the carriage rolled up to the main gates of Slapton it was met by a tremendous throng of boys, who gave their brave schoolfellows a welcome back with three times three, for Slapton was delighted with their coolness and pluck shown by the comrades, and meant to show their admiration.

But among the shouting, cheering throng Curzon and his companions were not to be found. They were down at the nets practising.

"What a precious fuss they're making about those miserable kids. If they'd been drowned they'd have been no great loss to us."

"I wish that cock-eyed beast had been drowned!" yelped Gibson. "I believe he let me in for a most beastly game yesterday. He's artful, he is, though he doesn't look it."

"I haven't done with those kids yet," said Curzon darkly. "I'll give 'em a jolly good milling yet. But never mind now, Gibson, you get hold of that ball, and sling in some of your leg-breaks. I want a bit of practice."

"What are you sweating at cricket for now, Curzon?" asked Palmer. "Here's the fag end of the season. I should think you've about had enough."

Curzon grinned.

"You chaps don't know what's in the wind," he said, "but I do."

"What's up, Curzon?" they cried, and crowded round him. "What's the game?"

"Why, the most ripping game of the season is still to come, late as it is," said Curzon. "It's Mr. Paton's idea, and a jolly good one." (Mr. Paton was the cricket-master.) "He's going on the lines of the last game in first-class cricket, with the champions meet the Rest of England. He proposes that the House that has won the school cup shall face the Rest of the School, and the game's next Saturday week."

"I see!" cried Gibson. "So our house, Jayne's, will have to face the best eleven picked from the other seven houses, for we won the cup."

"That's it," said Curzon; "so now chuck me a few up, for I'm keen on getting a score in this game."

Before night the whole school had learned of the great game in prospect, the game suggested by Mr. Paton, and taken up at once and enthusiastically in every house in Slapton. The Champions of the School v. The Rest became the topic of conversation in every study and in every day-room.

Nowhere was it debated more keenly and delightedly than in the room over which Teddy and Ito ruled.

"I rather fancy we shall be in the eleven, Ito," said Teddy. "I hope old Tom will put us in."

"He won't unless we deserve our places," said Ito quietly.

"Not he," agreed Teddy. "There's no favouritism about Tom. He'll chuck you at once unless you're worth your place, and never mind about private feelings."

Tom Sandys was now captain of Jayne's eleven, and he ruled the House cricket without fear or favour.

"I sh-should l-l-like to play in that g-g-game," murmured the Bat.

"Ah, old chap," said Teddy, "you used to bowl not bad last term—you come on with that as well as your sparring?"

"B-b-b-better!" grunted the Bat.

"Better—eh?" said Teddy. "We'll have a turn at the nets to-morrow. You shall give Ito and me a few leg-breaks."

The next day the Bat slung down two or three dozen to Teddy and Ito, and the way he did his work set Teddy thinking.

"Look here, Ito," he said to his chum, "it seems one Jimmy bowls uncommon well. That ball of his coming with the arm wants a bit of watching. I think Tom ought to know about him, at any rate."

So Teddy went in search of Tom Sandys, and ran Tom to earth in his study. Tom was seated at his desk with a sheet of paper before him.

"Excuse me, skipper," said Teddy; "it's a bit of awful cheek on my part, I know, but would you mind telling me whether you've fixed on all the eleven yet?"

Tom smiled. He fancied he knew what was at the bottom of Teddy's anxiety, but he was wrong.

"It's all right, Teddy, my son," he remarked. "You're in, and so is Ito."

"Thank you awfully, Tom," said Teddy, his pale face lighting up with pleasure. "But, really and truly, that isn't what I'm after. I heard Arthur say you wouldn't mind having another change bowler, and I think I've spotted one for you, that new chap."

Teddy launched into an account of the Bat's bowling, and Tom listened intently.

"Left-hand, round the wicket, and the ball goes with his arm—eh?" said the captain.

"That sounds all right, Teddy. We haven't got a left-hander, and one is always useful. Bring him round to the first eleven nets to-morrow, and I'll give him a trial."

"Thanks, Tom, old chap. I feel sure you'll like his style," cried Teddy.

"Oh, I don't know that I've got room for him," said Tom. "In fact, there's only one place open. We've got four first and three second eleven men in the house. In they go, of course. Then you and Ito and Foulkes are down from the house eleven, and that's ten. And for a change bowler I've promised to give Gibson a trial, so he's very likely to get the last place."

"H'm!" said Teddy. "Gibson's leg-breaks are all right if they come off. But he chucks a lot of loose ones down."

"Well," said Tom, "I'm going to try Gibson to-morrow as it happens. Bring your man along, and I'm good to sample 'em both."

THE 16th CHAPTER.
A Cunning Trick which Did Not Quite Come Off.

THE next afternoon Gibson and Curzon were strolling towards the first eleven nets, when they saw, to their surprise, Teddy, Ito, and the Bat going the same way.

"What do those chaps want at the first nets?" said Gibson. "And Cock-eye is in flannels, too! What's he going to do there?"

Their surprise was changed to wrath when they learned the reason for the presence of the Bat.

"It's young Lester who's wheedled Sandys into giving that new beast a trial. A piece of confounded favouritism, that's what I call it!" spluttered Gibson. He had felt so perfectly sure of getting his cap for this big match that he had looked upon this trial as a pure formality.

"Pooh!" said Curzon. "You're all right! That fellow looks as blind as an owl. You're easily the best bowler not yet chosen. I know Sandys is keen on getting a change bowler. Your place is a dead certainty."

The trial began, and Gibson bowled first. Tom smote his leg-breaks hard and often, for

he wished to see how steady Gibson was under punishment.

Gibson was not steady at all. He went to pieces, and at last slung along nothing but long hops.

Then the Bat went on, and at first the poor old Bat was so frightfully nervous that he pitched down the most wretched piffle.

"What could Teddy have been thinking of to recommend this chap to me?" though Tom. "Teddy knows what is cricket as well as anyone."

And then, all of a sudden, Tom had to buck up. There came down a ball of beautiful length, which snapped from the pitch like lightning, came in to the off stump, and nearly bowled the finest bat at Slapton.

"Hallo," thought Tom, "that's better! The poor chap was nervous." By this time the Bat had conquered his attack of nerves, and began to show his true form. Within ten minutes he had convinced Tom that here was the change bowler of whom Jayne's stood in need. The list of Jayne's eleven was posted the next day, and Jimmy West's name was down for eleventh man.

Gibson's chagrin and vexation were beyond description. He had actually been so sure of being chosen that he had ordered his cap. The news of this crept out, and was received with a great shout of laughter in the house. The joke was altogether too good.

"Tale of counting chickens before they were hatched! This was doing so with a vengeance, and Gibson became a butt for such jokes and remarks that he was ready to kill the Bat, who had done nothing but prove himself to be the better man.

Some of Gibson's cronies grumbled, however, and wanted to know what use a fellow with spectacles and squinting eyes could be on the cricket field.

But Teddy was ready to meet these enemies in the gate.

"Dry up," he said, "and don't talk rot! Why, some of the best men in first-class cricket play in spectacles. What about C. N. Crawford, of Surrey, and R. A. Young, of Sussex and Cambridge, and a heap more fellows? You may as well shut up if you can't do better than that by way of objections."

The days slipped on till the eve of this great winding-up of the season match had arrived. After tea the Bat stood in the corridor leading to the studies, polishing his glasses on his handkerchief. A boy came round the corner near at hand.

"Oh, here you are, Teddy!" said the Bat. But the boy only gave him a scowl, and passed on. The Bat put on his glasses, and found he was addressing Gibson.

"S-s-sorry!" stuttered the Bat. "I t-t-took you f-f-for a good m-m-man!"

Gibson only gave him another evil scowl, and passed on without reply. He was going to Curzon's study, and when he got there Curzon looked up from the book he was reading.

"Hallo, Gibson!" he said. "A penny for your thoughts! You appear to be reflecting on some serious subject."

"I've got it!" cried Gibson, and smote his thigh a resounding crack.

"I've got it, and I've got him, Curzon!"

"Explain!" said Curzon. "Why this thunness?"

"Leave it to me, Curzon," said Gibson earnestly. "If that beast of a Cock-eye got chucked from to-morrow's match, who'd get his ticket?"

"Why, you, of course," replied Curzon. "There's no possible shadow of doubt about that. Sandys must have a bowler."

"Good!" cried Gibson. "Then I've got him! I'll do him in, and blue his chance!"

"How?" cried Curzon.

"Simplest thing in the world!" chuckled Gibson. "I'll smash his gig-lamps!"

"Smash his specs—eh?" said Curzon. "Not a bad idea if you're sure he can't do without 'em."

"I've just proved it, and that's what put the idea into my head," cried Gibson. "I passed him in the corridor, and he was polishing his specs on his handkerchief, and without 'em he's as blind as an owl. Took me for Lester, and called me 'Teddy!'"

"I see," said Curzon, nodding. "You're about the size of Lester, and that was all he could make out. It seems to me your little dodge looks rather promising. How will you work it?"

"Oh, I'll lie low, you can bet your last copper on that!" replied Gibson. "I'll find someone to work the racket for me."

He went at once upon this sneakish errand, and events proved that he was entirely successful in his search.

The next morning was the day of the great match. Mr. Paton had made interest with the doctor, and had obtained permission to make the affair a whole day match. So there was to be no morning school, and play was to begin at 10.30 on a splendid pitch.

All breakfast-time Teddy, Ito, and the Bat could talk of nothing but the chances for the big fight.

"It's going to be a day of days!" declared Teddy. "The weather's simply scrumptious, and there's going to be a jolly good fight before stumps are drawn to-night!"

"Let's go up to our study," said Ito, when breakfast was over. "We've got nothing to do till it's time to go on the ground."

"Right you are," said Teddy. "Come along, Jimmy."

"I'll b-b-be with y-y-you in a m-m-minute," said the Bat. "I'll g-go and g-g-get my c-c-cap."

Teddy and Ito went up at once to their study, and the Bat raced for the room where his box was stored. He did not observe that another fellow followed him, for he never once looked behind.

Just outside the box-room door there was a dark corner where a couple of steps made a sudden turn. On his way back the Bat took these stairs with a flying leap. Then from the dark corner slid out a hockey stick, and took the Bat's right ankle in its crook. He was tripped up, and crashed headlong to the stone floor.

A boy then sprang forward, bent over the prostrate figure, snatched off the spectacles—which, by a miracle, were still unbroken—and hurled them on the floor. Then he ground the glasses under his heel, turned, and fled.

It was Palmer, and he never stopped until he reached Curzon's study, where Curzon and Gibson were awaiting him.

"I've done that proper," bragged the dirty sneak. "Tripped him up just outside the box-room and, while he was in a heap on the floor, knocked silly by the tumble, I whipped off his glasses and smashed them to bits."

"Good for you, old man!" cried Gibson, in delight. "Now I've only got to wait for a message from Sandys."

We must now return to the unlucky Bat, who had had all his wind knocked out of him by his rough tumble. He picked himself up in time to see a flying figure, but, without his glasses, he only saw it dimly, and he hastened to search for his precious spectacles.

"Smashed to bits!" grunted the Bat. "And he pulled 'em off while I was winded. This is a put-up job!"

He hastened up to the study and told his story. Teddy and Ito were furious.

"This is a deep laid and cunning plan," yelled Teddy. "Just an hour or so before the match begins, when you haven't time to get a fresh pair!"

"No," sighed the Bat. "I'm out of it to-day for good and all."

"Wait a bit—wait a bit," said Teddy. "Isn't there some dodge we can hit on? It would be too bad to let those sneaks best us."

"Borrow another pair, if a pair can be found to suit him," suggested Ito.

"You've got it, old chap. If there's a pair to suit Jimmy in Jayne's they'll be lent, for our fellows are a sporting crowd!" cried Teddy. "Of course, we bar Curzon & Co.; but then, there are bad eggs in every basket. Stay here, Jimmy, and we'll hunt up the chaps who wear specs."

Out went Teddy and Ito in search, and they hit upon Foulkes and a friend, and set them searching, too. Within twenty minutes the Bat had tried on eleven pairs of spectacles, for, as Teddy had said, the vast majority of Jayne's were a sporting crowd; but, unluckily, not one pair would fit Jimmy's queer vision.

"I'm blest if I don't work through every house in the school!" roared Teddy. "We ain't going to be beaten any too easily."

"Good for you, Teddy," said Foulkes. "Let's go over to Grey's. My cousin, Billy Rivers, is head prefect. He's a good sort is Billy. He'll lend us a hand."

Teddy, Ito, and Foulkes took the Bat over to Grey's, and the affair was laid before big, good-natured Billy Rivers.

"Jolly hard lines on the poor cove," said Billy, and at once went to work sending out flags to summon to his study all the spectacled members of Grey's.

At the eighth pair the Bat tried on he let out a squeal of delight.

"These are as good as my own!" he yelled.

"Right you are," said Billy Rivers. "You'll lend them for to-day, won't you, Bayley?"

Bayley was the owner of the specs.

"Oh, rather!" said Bayley. "We all want to give Jayne's a sporting chance for their fight."

While this was going on the artful Gibson was waiting and waiting for the expected summons from the House captain. He licked his lips joyfully. He would want his cap, after all. But he waited and waited and no summons came. Boys began to troop towards the field, and no word came for him to get into his flannels.

At last he jumped. There went the bell from the pavilion. The game was going to begin. Perhaps Sandys was looking for him on the field. He raced down to the pitch, and there the first thing he saw was a group of three figures strolling along in bright colours and shining flannels, Teddy, Ito, and the Bat, and the sun glittering on the latter's spectacles.

"Done!" growled Gibson savagely. "Clean done! The cock-eyed beast had another pair!"

But here Gibson was wrong; he hadn't. But he had a pair of chums who were very bad men to beat, and they had pulled him through the difficulty in triumphant fashion.

The 17th CHAPTER. The Big Game.

TOM won the toss.

"We'll bat," he said promptly, and drew a breath of relief. It was first blood to him in the game, and he knew that they would need every chance that could fall to them if they were to pull off the match.

Tom let go at the ball and cracked it to the boundary, opening his account with a 4.

He arranged his field a little differently, and sent down two or three easy tempters. But Teddy knew the time of day. He left a couple of them alone, and cut the third along the carpet for 3.

This gave Tom the bowling, and he finished off the over by promptly cutting the fast man for a very pretty pair of 4's.

Teddy now began to feel a little easier and to look out for loose balls. He picked out the right one to hit on four occasions, and made 14 runs off them. Then he mistimed a "googly," and hit it into the hands of mid-off.

But Jayne's were very satisfied with Teddy's performance.

"He's made 21, and stopped the rot. Good little man! The tail's begun to wag."

And they gave him a rousing cheer as he went back to the pavilion.

Out came Foulkes now, and Foulkes was a hitter pure and simple. He had a good eye, and could time the ball to a miracle, but of steady play he was no exponent.

He stayed at the wickets for exactly eleven minutes; but it was a merry little turn, and caused great delight. He went for both men, fast and "googly," and made some lucky hits. By slashing at everything, and hitting nine balls out of the fifteen he received, he made 28—four 4's, two 3's, and three 2's.

"Jolly good tail! Well wagged," chorussed Jayne's, as the slogger returned to the pavilion after the fast man had spread-eagled his wicket; and then out went Ito.

The little Jap was an excellent defensive bat, and made a stand while Tom hit, as he had now been doing for some time, for he was eager to make runs. When Tom failed quite to get hold of a ball which hung a little, and he was taken in the deep field by a very fine catch. He had made 68, and was received with a rousing cheer as he returned to the pavilion.

Then out went the Bat, and there was a general grin as he shambled, with his long legs and his arms swinging, across to the wickets.

But the School did not grin when the Bat had laid hold of the "googly" man and hit him clean to the boundary three times running. For the Bat's style of play was this: He did not attempt to watch the ball up to the bat; he was unequal to doing so. But he went always for the pitch of the ball, and trusted to the wicket.

On a good, fast wicket, such as the one Tom was playing on, this policy was not half bad, and, to the delight of Jayne's, he slashed six balls to the boundary with his long arms and sweeping bat before he was bowled.

Ito carried out his bat for 17, and the innings closed for 177, a most unexpected total after the early collapse.

"Jolly good tail! Well wagged!" roared Jayne's louder than ever.

The School went in and made 185. Jayne's bowling was splendid, and not a change was made in the innings, for, though the School topped Jayne's score, yet every run had to be fought for.

The wicket was rolled, and in went Tom and Curzon to open the second innings. The last ball of the very first over brought about disaster, though it was entirely owing to Curzon's own stupidity. He was mad to break his duck, lest he should beg his dreadful pair of spectacles, and when he shoved the ball away to leg he believed "Come on—come on!" and started at full pelt down the pitch.

"No, no!" cried Tom. "Go back! There's no run at all!"

But before Curzon could turn the balls were whipped off and he was out, and nothing lay before him but to return to the pavilion, with the ghastly pair of 0's to his name in the score-sheet.

Jayne's received Curzon with a howl of wrath.

"What an idiot you were to run, Curzon! There wasn't the ghost of a chance. Sandys was quite right not to run."

But Curzon said nothing. He tore off his pads in gloomy fury and flung them down and went away. Behind the pavilion he met Gibson.

"Did you see that?" hissed Curzon. "Sandys wouldn't move. He did it on purpose; he wanted to run me out!"

"So he did," agreed the toady. "It's a beastly shame! You'd have knocked up 50 this time."

"But I'll get level with him!" hissed Curzon, his face white with rage. "If I can stop him, he shan't win this match!"

"I should be jolly glad to see the beast lose!" said Gibson.

"And he shall," said Curzon. "I'll tell you what I'll do, Gibson."

Curzon leaned over and whispered in Gibson's ear. Gibson grinned all over his malicious face as he listened.

"That'll settle 'em, old man!" he chuckled. "That'll do the trick proper! You've got 'em on toast!"

The School Eleven had, of course, been the simplest thing to make up. Jayne's had four first eleven men; the other seven went straight into the School team. Then there were eight second eleven fellows to choose from; and Hawkins, the captain of the school, had picked four rattling good fellows of the second string.

Within an hour the School had showed their power in tremendous fashion. Every one of the first and second eleven in Jayne's team, except Tom Sandys, had made a trip in search of runs, failed to find them, and returned to the pavilion. Tom had gone in first, and was still in, but the score was only 45 for six wickets. The best men had come out for pitiful scores—2, 4, 5, 3, 0, and 1. The duck stood to the name of Curzon, who, in a hurry to score, had let out at a "googly," had hit all round it, and had been clean bowled.

The School supporters were jubilant.

As for Jayne's supporters, they were rather blue.

"If our tail doesn't wag to-day," they murmured to each other, "it's a blue look-out for us!"

First of the tail, in went Teddy.

"Steady on, Teddy," said Tom, giving him a word of friendly advice. "The School are bowling jolly well, but our chaps have been chucking wickets away. Pat 'em down, and don't worry about getting 'em away at first."

Teddy had a splendid eye, and played a straight bat. He followed Tom's instructions, and went in for stern, close defence. If a ball could go by in safety, he let it go. If it was coming for his pegs he dropped the middle of the bat on it and rendered it harmless. He had been in nearly twenty minutes when a very loose one came along on the leg. He let go at it and cracked it to the boundary, opening his account with a 4. During this time Tom had made 23, and Teddy's hit sent up the 70.

"Hallo!" thought the fast bowler whom Teddy had hit. "That kid's trying to hit, is he?"

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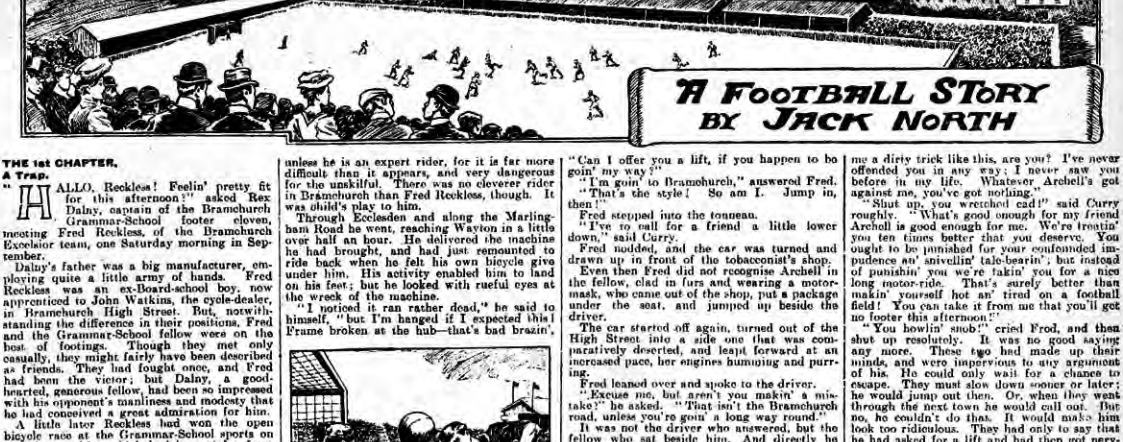
(To be continued in next week's BOYS' REALM.)

THE CRAMMAR SCHOOL MATCH.



A FOOTBALL STORY BY JACK NORTH

THE 1st CHAPTER.
A Trap.

"HALLO, Reckless! Feelin' pretty fit for this afternoon?" asked Rex Dalny, captain of the Bramchurch Grammar-School footer eleven, meeting Fred Reckless, of the Bramchurch Excelsior team, one Saturday morning in September.

Dalny's father was a big manufacturer, employing quite a little army of hands. Fred Reckless was an ex-Board-school boy, now apprenticed to John Watkins, the cycle-dealer, in Bramchurch High Street. But, notwithstanding the difference in their positions, Fred and the Grammar-School fellow were on the best of footings. Though they met only casually, they might fairly have been described as friends. They had fought once, and Fred had been the victor; but Dalny, a good-hearted, generous fellow, had been so impressed with his opponent's manliness and modesty that he had conceived a great admiration for him.

A little later Reckless had won the open bicycle race at the Grammar-School sports on a racing-machine which had been stolen from Raikes, one of Dalny's chums at the school, and, though Fred had come into possession of it quite honestly, things might have gone badly for him had not Dalny and Raikes between them managed to find out the real thief and prove Fred's innocence. It was little wonder, therefore, that Fred's respect and liking for Dalny were to the full as great as Dalny's for him.

"Oh, yes, thanks! I don't suppose we can beat you, but I fancy we shall be able to give you a good game."

"I'm sure of that. You seem to have fairly wiped the floor with Stoke Eaton last Saturday. What's this story about Archell's bein' sent off the field for foulin'?"

"Oh, he deserved it! There's no doubt about that. He'd been playing a rotten foul game all through, an' at last he deliberately tripped me, an' Mr. Watkins gave him his marchin' orders."

"He always was that sort of beast."

"D'ye know him then?" asked Fred.

"Rather! He was at our shop before he went to Thirlestane, an' jolly glad we all were to see the back of him. Bully an' snob all through—that's what he was! But he'd got pluck, an' he's pretty hefty with his fists. I'm not sure whether you could thrash him, though he'd have some trouble in stoppin' those left-handers of yours."

"I'd like the chance of tryin'," said Fred grimly.

"Shouldn't wonder if you got it then. I hear he's goin' about vowin' vengeance on you. But never mind him, I'm just goin' along to your boss to ask him if he'll referee to-day."

"Oh, I say, that's jolly good of you! He will be pleased."

"There's no better ref. in Bramchurch, you know."

"No; that there certainly isn't. Well, I'll have to be goin', Dalny. I'm on an errand for him, an' he don't like loiterin'."

Loitering was certainly not one of Fred's faults. He went about his employer's business as though it were his own, and those who noted him prophesied a bright future for the hard-working, willing lad.

Fred was back at the shop half an hour later.

"Young Mr. Dalny, from the Grammar School, has just been down to ask me to referee the game this afternoon, Fred," said Mr. Watkins.

"An' you're goin' to, of course, sir?"

"Of course, eh? Don't fancy that old John Watkins could possibly have more important business than refereein' for the Excelsior Club, do you?" returned the boss, with the slight note of sarcasm that gave pungency to his speech at times. "Yes, I'm goin' to, lad. Is that machine of Mr. Borrodaile's finished?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then I wish you'd run over to Wayton with it. You're not afraid of tirin' yourself, I know."

Fred assuredly was not. A ten-mile ride on the morning of a match, half of it with another machine to be run alongside his own, was so far from having any terror for him that he welcomed it. It took him out of the somewhat stuffy atmosphere of the shop, and, though the continual smell of rubber and solution had grown so familiar to him that he hardly noticed it, the fresh air was better.

Deftly and easily he made his way among the traffic, one hand on his own handle-bar, the other on that of the machine he was taking back to its owner. It is a trick that looks easy enough, but no one ought to attempt it unless he is an expert rider, for it is far more difficult than it appears, and very dangerous for the unskilful. There was no cleverer rider in Bramchurch than Fred Reckless, though. It was child's play to him.

Through Ecclesden and along the Marlingham Road he went, reaching Wayton in a little over half an hour. He delivered the machine he had brought, and had just remounted to ride back when he felt his own bicycle give under him. His activity enabled him to land on his feet; but he looked with rueful eyes at the wreck of the machine.

"I noticed it ran rather dead," he said to himself, "but I'm hanged if I expected this! Frame broken at the hub—that's bad brazin',

Harker got his foot to the ball, but as it came out again breast-high Fred lowered his head and fairly butted it into the net.

I guess. And the cross-stay snapped; of course, all the weight came on that directly the other went. I can't make it out. The jigger was all right when I rode it last. Who's been on it since?"

He remembered then. Dan Duller, one of his fellow apprentices at Watkins's, had borrowed it a day or two before.

"Dan's had a spill. Didn't notice anything wrong with the bike after it, an' thought he wouldn't tell me. Ought to have told me, though; it wasn't very honest not to. An' he certainly ought to have overhauled it thoroughly afterwards. It might have been kingdom come for me if this had happened among the trams an' carts in the High Street. Have to go home by train, I expect. I dare say Mr. Borrodaile's gardener won't mind if I leave this scrap-iron with him."

He turned back to the house he had just left, shouldering the broken bicycle. A fellow of about nineteen, sitting in a motor-car twenty yards away, pointed him out to another who had just emerged from a tobacconist's shop.

"See that chap, Arthur? His machine's just given away—snapped right under him."

"By Jingo, it's that cad Reckless! You know, Algy—the fellow I told you about. Here's a chance to get even with the beast! Look here, I'm goin' back into the shop. When he comes out of that place he's just gone into, roll up an' ask him if he wants a lift home. Say you saw the accident. Don't let on that you know who he is, or anything. I'll explain the little game afterwards."

He disappeared into the shop again, and, to explain his coming back, asked to see some boxes of cigars. His companion, a bird of like feather to himself, had winked in token that he fell in with the plan, whatever it might be. The wink was completely lost behind his motor-goggles; but Arthur Archell knew Algernon Curry too well to need it.

When Fred came out of the garden gate of the Mount a green Daimler was drawn up by the kerb. If it had been BA115, Archell's own car, nothing would have induced Fred to have got into it. But the car was strange to him, and so was the face of its occupant, and he suspected nothing.

"Saw your accident just now. Beastly rough luck!" said the stranger sympathetically.

"Can I offer you a lift, if you happen to be goin' my way?"

"I'm goin' to Bramchurch," answered Fred.

"That's the style! So am I. Jump in, then!"

Fred stepped into the tonneau.

"I've to call for a friend a little lower down," said Curry.

Fred nodded, and the car was turned and drawn up in front of the tobacconist's shop.

Even then Fred did not recognise Archell in the fellow, clad in furs and wearing a motor-mask, who came out of the shop, put a package under the seat, and jumped up beside the driver.

The car started off again, turned out of the High Street into a side one that was comparatively deserted, and leapt forward at an increased pace, her engines humming and purring.

Fred leaned over and spoke to the driver.

"Excuse me, but aren't you makin' a mistake?" he asked. "That isn't the Bramchurch road, unless you're goin' a long way round."

It was not the driver who answered, but the fellow who sat beside him. And directly he spoke Fred recognised him, and blamed himself bitterly for not having done so before.

"We are goin' a long way round," he said. "Couple of hundred miles or so, I expect. We shall be back a little before dark—must be, you see, because we didn't bring the lamps along. I've taken such a fancy to you, Reckless, that I positively can't do without your society for the day."

"But I'm playin' in a match this afternoon! I must be back by two o'clock at latest!"

"A mistake—quite a mistake, I assure you!" answered Archell airily. "You may think you're goin' to play, but I know better. Algy, I don't think you've been introduced. This, Reckless, is the Honourable Algernon Curry, son of Lord Hottstuph. He's heard about you, an', like myself, is pinin' for a chance to know you better. Algy, this is Reckless Frederick, or Reckitt's Blue, or some such name: I'm not quite sure what, only I know he's errand-boy to an old cad of a cycle-cobbler at Bramchurch!"

Fred clenched his fists and his teeth. He longed to strike with all his strength at the mocking face so close to his, but common prudence forbade. They were out of Wayton now, and ripping along an open road at the rate of a mile in two minutes. To strike Archell

With a daring feint Fred outwitted the first man; then, with a swerve, ran round the second, and rushed with the ball for the goal.

might have meant precipitating him from the car, and that would be murder.

What was he to do? Surely they never meant to carry out their threat; or, rather, Archell's threat? Perhaps an appeal to the other fellow's sense of manliness and fair-play might be of some use.

"Mr. Curry!" said Fred.

He had to shout to make his voice heard above the whirring and humming of the car. Apparently he had not shouted loud enough, for he got no answer.

"Mr. Curry! You're never goin' to serve me a dirty trick like this, are you? I've never offended you in any way; I never saw you before in my life. Whatever Archell's got against me, you've got nothing."

"Shut up, you wretched cad!" said Curry roughly. "What's good enough for my friend Archell is good enough for me. We're treatin' you ten times better that you deserve. You ought to be punished for your confounded impudence an' snivellin' tale-bearin', but instead of punishin' you we're takin' you for a nice long motor-ride. That's surely better than makin' yourself hot an' tired on a football field! You can take it from me that you'll get no footer this afternoon!"

"You howlin' snob!" cried Fred, and then shut up resolutely. It was no good saying any more. These two had made up their minds, and were impervious to any argument of his. He could only wait for a chance to escape. They must slow down sooner or later; he would jump out then. Or, when they went through the next town he would call out. But no, he couldn't do that. It would make him look too ridiculous. They had only to say that he had asked for a lift and had then got nervous. No one would believe his story.

It was cold for him sitting there with nothing but his ordinary clothes on. To the two in front, wrapped up in their heavy fur coats, the rush through the air was exhilarating; but twenty miles of it had made him shiver.

But every mile further from Bramchurch increased his determination to get back somehow in time for the match. Had Mr. Watkins said to him two hours earlier, "I shall want you this afternoon, Fred," he would have been disappointed, but not at all aggrieved. He was keen on the game, of course, but not so keen as to make a silly fuss about being kept out of it. Now, kidnapped like this, he had begun to feel that his playing was little short of a life and death matter.

On most strong, self reliant natures unfair opposition has some such effect as this.

But Fred's chance seemed a small one. The car sped on, up hill and down, through pine-woods, past pale-yellow stubble-fields and huge ricks that told of the lately finished harvest, now speeding under a railway viaduct over which an express panted and banged, anon over and under an ivy-arched bridge that seemed utterly disproportionate to the small stream that flowed through the middle arch. Fred had never seen that bridge before, but it gave him a notion where he was. There was only one river for many miles round that was so narrow and small as this at its lowest, yet at its highest would be swirling through all those arches, stained with the red soil through which it flowed from the far-away hills where its source was.

Forty miles at the least from Bramchurch, and still speeding farther away! What hope was there for him unless the petrol gave out or something went wrong with the car?

THE 2nd CHAPTER.
Getting Home.

EVEN as the thought passed through his mind the car began to slow down.

"What's that for?" asked Archell.

"Nothing to stop for, is there?"

"Petrol runnin' out, I expect. We shall have to halt an' fill up. There are a couple of bidons behind."

Archell leaned nearer and spoke in a low voice to his friend. The lad behind did not try to overhear what was said. He smiled scornfully as he thought, "Talkin' about how to keep me in, I 'spose! They needn't worry. Once the car stops I'm goin', an' I bet it will take more than two like them to stop me!"

The car's motion grew slower and slower.

"Shall I jump?" thought Fred. But he decided not to risk it. Then Curry applied the brake sharply, and switched off the lever. Before Fred could jump out Archell was down and ready to stop him.

"All right!" said Fred, between his clenched teeth. "If you must have it, take it!"

He sprang, and struck out at his cheek Archell under the jaw just as he was raising his hands to seize Fred. He dropped on his back in the dusty road.

"Come on!" cried Fred, his blood fairly up, as Curry moved threateningly towards him. Curry held a bidon of petrol in his hand, having just snatched it from the place where it was fastened. Their scheme seemed to have been that Archell should overawe Fred and keep him a prisoner while the other fellow, with all haste, supplied the car with the fresh motive-power that it needed.

But the scheme had failed badly. The individual who was to have done the overawing lay prostrate, and his rider and abettor now

joined him; or, rather, floundered on top of him.

Ordinarily the opening of a bidon of petrol is no very easy matter. Even to skilled hands it often gives trouble. But this particular tin must have been an exception. Its stopper was evidently loose, for when Fred hit Curry fairly and squarely between the eyes and sent him reeling backwards, the stopper came out, the bidon flew up, and a deluge of petrol descended upon the two abductors!

Fred did not wait for more. He strode rapidly away, looking back only once. Then he saw that the two had gained their feet, and stood yelling strong and stormy words at him. They were covered with dust and soaked with petrol.

"Keep the moth out of their furs!" chuckled Fred. "Moths don't like petrol. Guess I'd better find out where I am, an' how to get to the nearest railway-station.

He met a jolly-looking farmer on a fat cob just then, and addressed the inquiry to him.

"Markwick's, the nearest—two miles—straight along this road," said the farmer.

"I say, if you see two fellows with a motor—rather dusty chaps an' sniffin' strongly of petrol—you might give 'em Reckless's compliments, an' say I'll finish the hidin' I was givin' them some other time."

"Eh? What?" asked the farmer, astonished. But Fred did not wait to explain. "I say, my lad, you'll have to hurry if it's the down-train you want," roared the farmer after him. "It's due in less than ten minutes."

Then Fred knew. He had been half frozen ten minutes earlier. By the time he reached Markwick Station he was perspiring from head to foot, for he had run his hardest all the way. But two miles—a generous two miles—is not easily run in ten minutes. The train was a minute or two late; but Fred was only just in time to see it go out while he was still a hundred yards or more from the station.

He looked at his watch.

"Twelve-ten," he groaned. "An' this is only a little branch line. Fifty to one if there's another train in time."

"Next train to Bramchurch? Three-fifteen," said the functionary who was stationmaster and booking-clerk in one at the village's station. He did not wait to answer any more questions, but crossed over at once to his house on the other side of the station-yard, whence proceeded a savoury smell of steak and onions. Evidently the stationmaster had his dinner early. Fred's mouth watered. He could have done with some dinner himself.

There was no one else about the place except a middle-aged porter, whose shrewd, kindly face attracted Fred's attention.

"I say, I've just lost the train to Bramchurch. I particularly want to get there by two o'clock, an' the stationmaster says there's no train till 3.15. Of course, he's right; but isn't there any other way? How far are you from main line? Is it too far for me to get to some station on it in time?"

The porter scratched his head.

"London's the nearest on the main. Seven mile away. There's a down-train by there at 1.14. But you can't get there in time for that."

"If I could hire a bike," said Fred eagerly.

"No go. When I said seven mile I meant seven by rail. It's a good fifteen by road, an' part of the road rain. You'd have to go round by Osfordby. Take you all of a quarter of an hour to get a bike, an' that would leave you about thirty-five minutes to ride. Dare say you're a good enough rider; but you can't do fifteen mile in thirty-five minutes, can you?"

"No, I can't, of course. Isn't there any way you can think of?"

"Well, look here, young man, you seem very anxious to get to Bramchurch before two; but I don't see why you're so anxious. If you could tell me now——"

Then Fred poured forth his story. He had almost despaired of any help or suggestion by this time; but it did him good to tell someone.

"Dang me if ever I heard the like!" said the porter, slapping his green corduroyed thigh. "Of all the owdacious young ruffians! What did you say your name was, young feller?"

Fred had not mentioned his name; but he saw that his sympathetic listener wanted to know, so he gave it.

"You don't happen to be any relation to Jack Reckless, as plays centre-half for the Rovers, do you?"

"He's brother."

"His brother, d'ye say? Bust my buttons if I don't manage to get you through in time, then! Look you here, I wouldn't do this for you if you was anybody else, an' I daresn't do it only the boss has gone in to his dinner, an' won't be out again afore one o'clock. There'll be a goods train through here in twenty minutes or so—12.45 or thereabouts she's timed for. Well, she won't get through to London in time for the 1.14 down; but she also goes on to Bramchurch. You'll only have to slip aboard her—or here's a better scheme than that. She'll pick up two trucks here; you'd best get inside one o' them. I shall have to speak to the guard an' the driver; but they're both chaps as are keen on football, an' they'll shut their eyes when it's a brother of Jack Reckless as is concerned. On'y you mustn't be seen when you get to Bramchurch, or them an' me will all be in the dickens of a row. Come along an' get aboard now!"

"Half a mo," said Fred. "Could you get me something to eat first? I'm jolly peckish, an' I've got the money to pay for it. An' I'd like to send a telegram, too, or perhaps they'll be fillin' my place in the team when I don't turn up."

"You go along an' get into that truck o' straw-trusses. I'll see about the rest of it. Here's a form o' paper to write your telegram on. Look sharp now, or the stationmaster may look out of the window an' suspect something."

Two minutes later Fred was warmly—rather too warmly—ensconced under the tarpaulin that covered the trusses of straw, and the porter was on his way to the little public-house just outside the station gates.

Fred scribbled a few words, deciding that the wire had better be addressed to Mr. Watkins. He could not explain what had happened to him; but he said that he hoped to be there soon after the start, and asked that the bag containing his football togs, which was at the shop, might be taken down to the Grammar School ground.

The friendly porter came back, with a lounging, indifferent air assumed to lull any possible suspicion on the part of the station-master. He handed up to Fred a couple of slices of cold boiled bacon, a lump of cheese, the top of a crusty cottage loaf, and a bottle of some ginger-beer.

"Eightpence," he said. "Best they could do for you. 'Tain't much of a place."

"It's a meal good enough for anybody," said Fred gratefully. "Here's the paper for the wire. That'll be sixpence. I'd be glad if you'd keep the change out of this half-crown for yourself."

"Not me! Tell you what I will do. I'll take the price of a pint o' four-ale, because I know as you're offerin' of it to me free an' willin', an' you look like it if I said no. But I won't take a ha'penny more. Here's a bob—that'll just put it right. An' I'll send your wire directly I go to my dinner, which will be when the boss comes away from his."

"You're a good chap," said Fred. "Here, shake hands!"

They gripped hands heartily, and the friendly porter went off. A little later the goods train came in. There was some shunting, and the waggon in which Fred was was added to the main line. It moved on again, and Fred, turning back a corner of the tarpaulin now that he was safely under way, took a last glance back at the little station where he had found such a friend in need.

The stationmaster stood on the platform, picking his teeth, his legs wide apart, the satisfaction consequent upon a good dinner well and truly dealt with apparent in every line of his figure. A form in green corduroys was moving from the white gates—the porter going to his dinner. And Fred, his anxiety partly allayed, popped the cork of his ginger-beer, and after a good long welcome drink—rather too fizzy, but that could not be helped—addressed himself with hearty goodwill to his bacon and bread and cheese.

THE 3rd CHAPTER.
The Match.

FORTUNATELY, there was not much shunting to be done at London. Fred feared once that all was up with him, though. A big hand partly lifted the tarpaulin under which he was. But a voice said:

"Not that one, Bill, you muddle-head! The one afore it!" And he knew himself reprieved.

The train reached Ecclesden at last, and Fred's heart leaped for he thankfully saw they were passed, and began to chafe and worry as he noted that the slow movements of the heavily-laden train were not keeping pace with the watch. It was already ten minutes past two when Ecclesden was reached. Fred did not have jumped out there and made a run for it; but he could hear voices near, and he did not want to get the porter and the men on the goods train into trouble. So he lay still, and was glad in a minute or two that he had done so, for the halt at Ecclesden was very short, and the train would reach Bramchurch Station far sooner than he could have got to the Grammar School ground on foot.

Need he go to the station, though? The ground on which the match would by now have begun was a good half-mile from the station, but the train would pass it before it got there. It lay close to the curvet embankment along which the line between Ecclesden and Bramchurch runs for two stations, save only a little over a mile apart. Already, looking ahead, he could see the Grammar School flag flaunting in the breeze, and hear the shouting of the spectators.

Then his duke his resolve. The train was going very slowly around the curve. Owing to that curve and the short distance between the two stations no train was ever allowed to get up speed there.

He would jump out. He thrust the tarpaulin aside, and poised himself ready. Just as the train neared the boundary of the ground he sprang.

His feet struck the sloping embankment, and slipped, and he rolled down the rest of the way; but he jumped to his feet unhurt just in time to wave his hand and shout back an answer to the guard's hearty: "Bravo, young Reckless! Good luck to you!"

A cheer arose as he clambered over the fence and showed himself on the ground. He saw at a glance that his place had been kept open, so he rushed at once for the pavilion, not even pausing on the way for a word to Philip Raynton, the International, who had been introduced by the lads of Fred's club to keep goal for the eleven. But when he came running back, garbed for the fray, Mr. Raynton asked:

"Anything wrong, Fred?"

"There was, sir, but it's all right now. Tell you all about it afterwards. How does the game stand?"

"We're two down."

"Oh, I say, how rotten! Never mind, sir, I know it wasn't your fault. We must try to pull up now."

Fred's comrades greeted him with acclamation. He was by far the best forward on the side; and, deprived of their pivot, the other four had done no good thus far.

Consequently too much work had fallen upon the defence, and Dalny, who was the finest right man in the Grammar School team, had scored twice with shots that had given Raynton no possible chance of stopping them.

The first half of the game was about halfway through. Fred realised that he would have to put in all he knew; and he realised, too, that he was hardly in the best possible condition for doing so.

He had had rather a crowded morning, and his roll down the embankment had made him quite stiff and sore. He had put up with the pangs of thirst, or else that the good Samaritan of Markwick had thought of bringing him a glass.

For that tumble had made him uncomfortably conscious that ginger-beer drunk from the bottle is not the best liquid refreshment to take before football.

However, if he did little during his first few minutes on the field, the other forwards, encouraged by his appearance, got going, and severely tested the school defence.

Dann all but scored with a shot that Harker, the goalkeeper of the home side, just managed to turn outside the post, and twice Chesworthy and Bloggs only just failed to find a resting-place in the net.

Just before half-time Raikes, the Grammar School centre-forward, and Dalny went through the Excelsior defence with a rush. Ankerdine, the back, had lay greased in their track; Bifford, on the left, was beaten, and left behind; and as Warman rushed at Raikes, the latter cleverly tipped the ball back to Dalny, a yard or so in his rear, and five yards away. Dalny dashed past Telfer, steadied himself, and shot at goal.

"Goal!" yelled the school, in delight, for it seemed that a score was absolutely certain. But Philip Raynton fairly flung himself at it, and stopped it away.

Next instant Warman sent it down the field with one of those long, skimming kicks of his. Burton trapped it on the right, and smartly eluded the half who rushed at him. Taking it at racing pace along past inside touch, he middled at twenty yards or so from the goal-line.

The ball fell at Fred's feet. He took it in his rush, and was past the back on the instant; but just as he shot for goal the whistle shrilled.

"Rats! That wasn't any off-side!" cried cheeky Chesworthy.

"No; it's half-time," replied John Watkins quietly.

"Oh, I say, Mr. Watkins, you might have given us another two seconds! That was a sure and certain goal."

"Should you have wanted another two seconds if it had been Dalny or Raikes who had it, an' our goal in danger?" asked Fred, disappointed, but too good a sportsman to wish an unfair advantage given him.

"That's the way to look at it, lad," said John Watkins.

"Yes, but that'd have been a different thing," grumbled Chesworthy.

"Think it over, Ches," said Bloggs, the insidiefe. "You open your mouth before your little bit of brain's actin', you know. Take time. There's all day to-morrow. You're sure to see it before Monday morning."

And now his own side crowded round Fred, and, as he was sucking an orange bits of lemon, gave him no chance of sucking his, demanding to be informed of what had delayed him.

He soon had an audience of twenty-two. Not only his own side, but the referee and the Grammar School team were listening with all their ears; and the fellows around the ropes, forbidden by the school edicts to set foot on the pitch until play was over, chafed at the restriction, and fidgeted for the resumption of play.

"I say, you've had more than your time. Get back to your places directly!" said John Watkins, with a glance at his watch. "Fred," he added, in a lower tone, "look over there:"

Fred looked in the direction indicated. There, four furlongs off, Archell and his friend Curry, their eyes wide open with astonishment. They had consulted a time-table at a public-house they had stopped at, and had agreed that it was utterly impossible for Fred to reach Denchworth in time for the match to be over. And yet there he was, dressed for play, and with absolutely nothing to show what experiences he had been through.

Fred had not mentioned the names of his two abductors. Most of his hearers had been under the impression that the affair had been a foolish, practical joke; but he knew now that his master had surmised who they were, and a glance from Philip Raynton had told him that his author-friend had also guessed.

"Beats me how the beggar managed it, Algy!" said Archell.

"So it does me. I say, Arthur, we ain't over an' above safe, I guess. S'pose these cads take it into their heads to lynch us? He's told them his yarn, you bet, an' they won't be feelin' very pleasant about it."

"Oh, there's no fear of that, old man. This is the Grammar School ground, remember, an' I'm an old Grammar School boy myself. They'd have odds of ten to one against them."

Curry was not so sure of that. He was inclined to think that the schoolboys would hardly take up the cudgels for them if they knew the truth; but he resolved to stand his ground, since Archell was not inclined to budge.

The game had been restarted; and now Fred, fresher for the short rest, and inspirited by the presence of his two enemies, was playing at the very top of his form.

Kicking off, he turned the ball over to Dann, on his right. Dann sent it quickly back, and Fred dribbled past Grover, the opposing centre-half, and was off at top speed for the school goal, with the halves rushing vainly after him.

It was a magnificent piece of single-handed play. When Fred once got off like that his colleagues in the forward line, though not one of them was slow, simply could not keep up with him.

They and the school halves were alike left behind. The right-back came forward; the left-back waited in the rear. The ball was never a yard from Fred's toes.

With a daring feint he outwitted the first man; then, with a swerve like that of a swallow on the wing, ran round the second, and rushed with the ball for the goal.

Harker hesitated whether to run or stay at home. His indecision was only momentary, but it was fatal, as he realised when the ball crashed past him, and rebounded from the back of the net.

How the Excelsiors cheered! John Watkins beamed with delight, but, being referee, kept silence, save for a low whistle, with a note of triumph in it, on his whistle. Mr. Raynton's voice rang out in a deep: "Well dribbled, Fred!"

"My word, the beggar can play!" said Curry.

Archell gritted his teeth, and answered nothing. Five minutes later the game stood at two all. Chesworthy had run the ball down, and transferred to Bloggs. Bloggs, with the back upon him, had tipped it to Fred, who shot hard and low. Harker got his foot to it, but as it came out again breast-high Fred lowered his head and fairly batted it into the net.

Then came half an hour of ding-dong play, the ball travelling rapidly from one end of the ground to the other.

But Fred, the Excelsiors had no forward equal to either Dalny or Raikes; but, on the other hand, their forward line was better together than that of the school. It was not often that Fred rushed away from the rest. He knew well that combination is usually of more avail than spasmodic individual effort.

Again and again Dalny and Raikes made tracks for the Excelsiors' goal; but there, always ready, was the old Corinthian cut-todian, with active feet, eyes like a hawk's, and wrists that seemed of steel.

They could not beat him again; and just before time Fred, receiving from Burton, sent in a shot that Harker touched, but could not clear, and the Excelsiors had won by the odd goal.

Archell and Curry hurried off the ground then. They had no mind to meet Fred and his comrades flushed with victory. And Archell cursed as he went. His scheme for getting even with Reckless had failed, and he guessed that there would be a reckoning for it sooner or later.

"I only hope he won't go blabbin' to my governor," he said.

But he need not have been afraid of that. It was hardly in Fred's line. If he took revenge he would take it in a manlier fashion.

THE END.

(*Another fine tale of Fred Reckless next week.*)

Football and How to Play it.

By WILLIAM McGREGOR

(*The Father of Football League*).

The above valuable addition to football literature has just been published, and is the first volume in a new series of books on sport, entitled "The Burleigh Sports Library."

The book, which is well printed and illustrated, is full of information relating to our favourite winter pastime, and should be obtained by every one who has an intelligent interest in football. It includes chapters on "How to Excel at Football," "Hints to Young Players," by William McGregor, in which this talented expert deals with the question of training, and advises as to the best means to be pursued "by the young fellow who really has an ambition to excel at football."

Other subjects dealt with are: "Our International players, and what can be learnt from their method of play," "The English Cup, 1907-8," "First, Second, and Southern League Fixtures for 1907-8," etc., etc.; in fact, the volume is a combined Football Annual and Encyclopædia.

We have much pleasure in announcing that arrangements have been made whereby for a short time EVERY READER OF "THE BOYS' REALM" CAN OBTAIN A COPY OF THIS BOOK, POST FREE, but to avoid disappointment application should be made at once.

Address your letter **The Burleigh Sports Co., No. 73, Mildmay House, Burleigh Street, Strand, London, W.C.**

BACK PLAY:

Mr. W. I. BASSETT, the Famous International, gives readers some useful hints on how to become successful in this position.

I CAN understand the position of full-back appealing strongly to the youthful football aspirant. I never played at full-back myself; indeed, considering the time I was at the game, I played in very few positions. Of course, I casually filled most places as a youth, but I should imagine that few men adhered more rigidly to a right-wing position than I did. Still, I understand the aspirations, means of triumph, and difficulties which are inseparably connected with football, and the position of full-back would, I think, have appealed to me strongly if I had possessed the physical advantages which a full-back should enjoy. But I did not.

The full-back should not be a midget. There have been some good full-backs of small stature, but they have been hopelessly outclassed in numbers by the backs of goodly proportions and robust physique. It is useless to see a pair of fast, men operating at full-back. I was playing football at the time that the famous brothers, A. M. and P. M. Walters, of Old Carthusian and Corinthian fame, were at their best, and I do not think they would have met with the success they did had they been men of small dimensions. Nearly all the great backs have been, if not big men, men of good stature and substantial build. The Brothers Walters, in particular, were men who not only possessed valuable physical attributes, but they knew how to utilise them to the best possible advantage. They were heavy chargers, although their charging was always perfectly fair, honourable, and sportsmanlike. They charged because they knew that they possessed the requisite ability to properly employ the vigour which Nature had so generously presented them with. They were fast and speedy, as all good backs should be, and, above all, they had a most perfect understanding.

There, again, I would request my youthful readers to give full value to the question of understanding. I have heard it said that the Brothers Walters played too risky a game, and that

they lost some matches

by getting too far up the field. Well, it may have been so; but they won a good many matches by impairing the efficiency of clever forward lines to which they were opposed by standing well towards the half-way line and pulling up their adversaries before they had time to become dangerous. I like to see one back play well in advance of the other; but that is all a question of proper understanding. It is useless for one back to be among the halves if he cannot implicitly trust his colleague. The Brothers Walters were adepts in the art of throwing a forward off-side; indeed, Walter Arnott, the greatest back that ever played for Scotland, and possibly the greatest back of all time (although most of us have a weakness for considering N. J. Ross, of North End, as the deadliest performer of this type), pays a great tribute to their genius. He said once: "The one knew intuitively what the other was going to do, and they covered up each other in the most perfect manner. We hear a great deal in modern times about the back putting his opponent off-side, but the modern back has not a line to learn from the Brothers Walters, who played a forward off-side in a manner I have never seen equalled." Walter Arnott had a great appreciation of the value of the game played by the Walters, and he says that their tactics were never properly appreciated by Scottish crowds, and, indeed, they were sometimes resented by Scottish players; "but," concluded Arnott, "they were a cute pair, and as fearless a back division as ever went on to a field." You cannot quote a greater authority than Arnott in regard to back play.

I also like to see a full-back play well to his forwards. Now, of course, there is nothing to back the game of the full-back giving a nice, timely pass to his half, and leaving that player to start the forward line going. As a rule, a half-back can do this much more effectively than a back; but there are times when a full-back, by

a judicious long kick,

can drop the ball to the feet of his own forwards much more promptly and effectively than the ball could reach them through an intermediary.

One of the greatest qualifications a back can have is the capacity to instantly make up his mind what he shall do. There is nothing like making up your mind to go for the ball, because, if you do that, you get it nine times out of ten. If two men of the same physique and of the same mental resolution go for the ball, it is a toss-up what happens; but it is remarkable how successful the man who makes a determined rush is. Nick Ross was, I suppose, the greatest man at going for the ball and getting it that ever stepped upon a football field. Not once, but hundreds of times, have I seen the ball lying, not equidistant between Ross and a forward, but much nearer the forward than to the Preston back; but Ross has sailed along to it with hair waving and teeth set, and the ball has been his. The forward has "given" at the last moment. It was a case of the stronger will dominating the weaker one.

(To be continued on Saturday next.)

CYCLING:

Mr. A. E. WILLS, the holder of a world's record for cycling, tells readers how to excel at this magnificent sport.

TYRES are a great source of worry to all riders alike. They are a constant means of upsets of form in racing, both on the path and on the road. As regards speed,

the beaded-edge tyre

is generally acknowledged to be slower than the wired-on variety. It is slightly heavier in weight, and perhaps also its rather peculiar construction helps somewhat to retard speed. Users of the beaded-edge tyre, however, point out how much more easily this type can be removed in case of puncture as compared with the wired-on tyre. This is perhaps due to the fact that they have not acquired the knack of dismounting the latter from the rim. Starting at the point opposite the valve, you should push the cover on one side well into the bed of the rim, drawing your fingers round the tyre until the valve is reached, when, if one side of the cover has been evenly pushed into the bed of the rim all the way round, it should rise in a loop at the valve, which can easily be slipped over the edge of the rim and thus detached. A little practice is sufficient to become expert in this method, which will do away with that spoke often exploited—the difficulty of removing wired-on tyres.

A question which I have often had put to me of late is: How many seasons have you been riding? The answer having been given, it is not unusual for the conversation to drift into a discussion on the subject of how long a rider can keep at the top of his form. The road-racing cyclist has, as a rule, a more extended career than the path-racing man, although there are several old-timers of the latter order amongst the riders of the present day.

Chief among these is "Major" Taylor, the coloured cyclist, who did not show his best form this season until after the championships had been ridden, but who made amends by twice afterwards defeating the world's spring champion, Friol, in a level match. The "Major" had retired from the path, and for some time allowed himself to "rust" in seclusion. The consequence was that, when taking up again an active career, he found himself at the beginning of this season many pounds over

his racing weight,

and it took months of hard practice to get him into thorough going order. Jack Green, the Newcastle-on-Tyne professional, did some of his best riding after having figured on the path for many years in serious contests. W. A. Edmonds, of Bristol, is another long stayer at racing, having been on the path for seventeen years.

The art of keeping in good shape year after year is due to plain and regular living when young, getting plenty of sleep, and abstaining from alcoholic liquors and tobacco. Actual riding upon the machine must be kept up continuously all the year round. All care must be taken not to overtrain, and after a hard day's racing it is useful to take a couple of days' rest.

Present-day methods of training are nothing like so severe as was once the order. Between the bouts of regular exercise in which the professional indulges, the crack rider of to-day is like a schoolboy just released from lessons. He is full of life and spirits, animation and vim, and this is ample evidence that his training agrees with him, and that he is not overworked, be his trainer ever so zealous.

A friend of mine, who has achieved much success in club time-trials and contests this season, adopts a very simple form of training for the same. He believes in being in the saddle as much as possible, but bars long rides. For instance, in training for a fifty-mile ride, his longest training-spin does not exceed about twenty-five miles, which he covers at a good all-round even speed.

(To be continued in next week's issue of THE BOYS' REALM.)

SWIMMING:

Mr. WILLIAM HENRY, Secretary of the Royal Life-Saving Society, couches readers in the art of Fancy Swimming.

THE most simple of fancy strokes is that known as dog swimming. It is an imitation with the arms and legs of the movements of a dog when in the act of swimming, and is performed as follows: Place the body in the same position as for breast swimming; then, instead of circling the arms outward to the sides, push one arm forward at half-arm length and pull it down under the body. When the first arm is in the act of being pulled down, push the other arm forward and repeat the movement of the first arm.

The legs are also alternately moved, as in walking, by one leg at a time being pulled up under the body by bending the knee. When one leg is nearly straight the other leg is pulled up into position for the stroke. The legs are kicked out straight behind and not circled, as in the ordinary breast-stroke swimming. The right arm is pulled down and the left leg is kicked out, and vice-versa.

You will see that these movements are similar to those of a dog swimming, and in all details very much the same as he walks on land. For this movement to be well done there must be no splash, and the ripple on the water should be kept behind one's body; this will give the appearance that one is

moving very quickly,

particularly if the head is kept steady and does not move from side to side. Many people have the idea that a dog does not swim as fast as a man. I know several fast swimmers who have had a trial against dogs, and on each occasion were beaten.

Some years ago several matches for money were decided, and the result was in each case in favour of the dog. A dog will also swim a long distance at a greater pace than a man, and his pace will also be more regular. The only chance that a man has against a dog is at distances between fifty and one hundred yards. The reason why a dog will do a long distance more easily than a man is contained in the fact that he uses his limbs in the same way as he walks or runs; man, on the other hand, has to entirely alter his natural method of progression, and because of that he gets tired, and gradually becomes slow, as the muscles he uses for swimming have not the same strength as those which are used for walking. A dog, when swimming, uses the same muscles as he does when walking or running.

Treading Water.

Many suppose that treading water is a very easy method of getting through the water, because the action by which it is accomplished appears to the onlooker to be almost the same as walking; but, in reality, such is not the case. Because treading water is supposed to be similar to walking, many stories have been written around it.

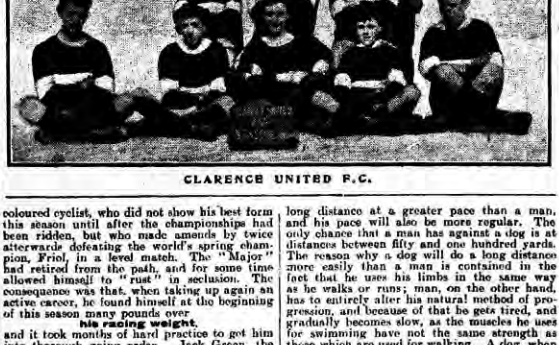
One writer has given a graphic account of how Frederick the Great caused all his soldiers to be trained to cross rivers in this fashion, and illustrated his text showing companies crossing a river with their arms and ammunition carried above their heads, to prevent damage by water. This idea probably originated with one named Oronzio de Bernardi, who, in a book published in 1797, actually claimed that a pupil of his, after eleven days' teaching, traversed six miles by the upright method of swimming. If this interesting pupil did the distance, it must have been in the Tiber at springtime, when the current flows at the rate of six to eight miles an hour, and so enables one to

float the distance

when time is no object. Even to-day these very interesting legends are credited by some people.

(To be continued on Saturday next.)

"THE BOYS' REALM'S" PORTRAIT GALLERY.



CLARENCE UNITED F.C.

FOOTBALL:

Mr. ALAN HAIG BROWN, the famous International, chats with readers concerning how to excel at the game.

IT always seems to me a very funny thing that while everybody—boys in particular—spend long hours at the nets practising to become good cricketers, nobody bothers about practising to become a good footballer. Of course, all boys play practice-games, but this is not what I mean. Football, just the same as cricket, demands those little odd half-hours spent by oneself, or with a few companions, paying attention to one's weak points. Only in this manner can an indifferent player become a good one, and the born footballer develop into a first-class man.

You may go and play in an ordinary eleven-a-side game every day of the week, but you will find that probably you do not improve very much or very quickly. The reason is this. Your chances in a game are strictly limited. There's an hour and a half for play, at the outside, and there are twenty-two of you to have your fair share of the game; if you choose to work out a little aim you will find that your share does not come to very much, and in all probability you will have only two or three chances of correcting your weak points, and that is not enough.

Now, first of all, let me say what I consider desirable in a good football player in his early youth. Bear in mind that I am not yet going to tell you the special points for any particular position in the field, because I hold that boys should be able to play anywhere, except in goal, which is a position which requires

certain special qualifications.

It will be quite time enough later on to decide where you play best, and you will be all the more useful in your chosen position through having had experience of all the others.

These, then, are the qualities which you must have if you are ever to make your mark in the football world—you must be able to kick equally well with either foot, you must know how to tackle, to pass, to dribble, and to shoot.

Now, kicking with either foot is most essential, and really very easily learnt. All of us to start with are right or left footed, and it seems uncommonly hard at first to kick with any other than our favourite foot.

All you have to do to learn to use the foot that you are unaccustomed to kick with is to find something like the side of a shed or a house—only mind there are no windows about—and kick the ball against it time after time, taking it always on the rebound with the weak foot. In a very short time this practice, if indulged in for a little while each day, will make the most confirmed one-legger into a player who can use either foot with equal ease.

Dribbling and tackling and short passing are usually best learnt in the following way—get some of your friends together, as many as you can, but numbers don't really matter, two or three are quite enough, though twenty are not too many for the kind of game I am going to introduce to you. Now, all you want is a football and

somewhere to play.

The backyard will do, or the backgarden, providing it hasn't any flower-beds or vegetables. Choose your sides and start away, but remember this isn't an ordinary game of football—this is where the practice at cricket, and is going to make you into a player. These, therefore, are the rules which you must abide by. First of all, however many players you have got together, nobody is to play a special position, but they are all to go after the ball wherever it is; nobody may kick the ball further than a yard at a time, and that is all. Quite simple, isn't it? But just think what it will teach you.

It will teach you, first of all, to have that perfect command of the ball which is absolutely essential; it will teach you to dribble, because you will always have all the players against you, hovering round you at once; it will teach you to tackle, because whenever you haven't got the ball, you will be trying to get it from someone who has, and it will teach you to do those lovely little short passes like Woolward does them, because you're not allowed to kick more than a yard at a time.

Last of all, you've got to learn to be a good shot at goal. That's how matches are won. Don't you think it strange that so few goals are scored in matches? The reason is that very, very few players can shoot in any direction. That's what you've got to learn to do, and I will tell you how. You don't need anyone to help you, all you want is a ball and that old wooden shed or fence I told you of before. Chalk up on it a small goal and take shots at it. You must remember, however, that it will be worse than useless if you stop the ball each time it rebounds and place it in an easy position for your favourite foot. This will only make you into a hitter—one who loses opportunities. Take the ball each time it rebounds,

just as it comes,

put plenty of powder behind your shots, and keep them low. You can go on practising at this till you get tired of it, or until you make a hole in the fence, and if you always get in your kicks in any position you will find yourself ready to do so in a real match. The man who wins matches is the man who can take the ball and bang it in, however it comes to him.

(To be continued on Saturday next.)

The Boys' Realm Football League.

No Entrance Fees! Prizes for All!

SOLID SILVER CUPS, SILVER MEDALS, AND HUNDREDS OF MATCH FOOTBALLS TO BE GIVEN AWAY!

The following Leagues have been formed for the benefit of Unattached Clubs throughout the country—

Section 1. "THE BOYS' REALM" LONDON LEAGUE.

TWO HANDSOME SILVER TROPHIES (Senior and Junior) for open competition.
DIVISION ONE—NORTH. *DIVISION TWO—SOUTH.*
Finalists (Senior and Junior) in each Division to play each other at Close of Season for the Cups. The losing teams in the Finals to receive Solid Silver Medals.
Average age of teams in Junior Division not to exceed fifteen. Average age of teams in Senior Division not to exceed eighteen.

Section 2. "THE BOYS' REALM" SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

Open to any football club in the South of England, excluding Greater London.

TWO HANDSOME SOLID SILVER TROPHIES (Senior and Junior) for open competition.
Average age of teams in Junior Division not to exceed fifteen. Average age of teams in Senior Division not to exceed eighteen.

Section 3. "THE BOYS' REALM" NORTHERN LEAGUE.

Open to any football club in the North of England.

TWO HANDSOME SOLID SILVER CUPS (Senior and Junior) for open competition.
Average age of teams in Junior Division not to exceed fifteen. Average age of teams in Senior Division not to exceed eighteen.

Section 4. "THE BOYS' REALM" SCOTS LEAGUE.

Open to any football club in Scotland.

TWO HANDSOME SOLID SILVER TROPHIES (Senior and Junior) for open competition.
Average age of teams in Junior Division not to exceed fifteen. Average age of teams in Senior Division not to exceed eighteen.

Section 5. "THE BOYS' REALM" IRISH LEAGUE.

Open to any football club in Ireland.

TWO HANDSOME SILVER TROPHIES (Senior and Junior) for open competition.
Average age of teams in Junior Division not to exceed fifteen. Average age of teams in Senior Division not to exceed eighteen.

N.B.—These Trophies are only to be put up for competition on condition that a certain number of clubs make application to compete for them, such number to be decided by Your Editor at an early date.

The following Clubs have been enrolled since last week:

SECTION I.—"THE BOYS' REALM" LONDON LEAGUE.

Plumstead Albions. Vere Rovers. Barnsbury Orient.

SECTION II.—"THE BOYS' REALM" SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

Red Rovers (Woolston).
Weston Grove F.C. (Southampton).
Rochester Excelsior (Rochester).
Woolston Thistle (Woolston).
Grosvenor F.C. (Westcliff).
Tory Town (Rochester).

SECTION III.—"THE BOYS' REALM" NORTHERN LEAGUE.

Kirkstall White Star (Leeds)
Walmersley F.C. (Bury).
St. Joseph's (Bradford).
Gresley Swifts (Burton).
Hesledon F.C. (Durham).
Park Gate Juniors (Newhall).
Longford Amateurs (Warrington).
Wellfield F.C. (Bradford).
Dipton Juniors (Dipton).
Kirby Banks Juniors (Leeds).
Holbeck Prospect (Leeds).
Rawmarsh Albions (Rotherham)

RULES AND CONDITIONS.

(a) Only clubs which have been established at least one season (exclusive of 1907-8) are eligible for entry, and the respectability and standing of each club must be vouched for by some responsible person.

(b) Clubs desirous of entering one of the above contests must fill in the form below, and send it, together with a list of their engagements, with the average age of members of the opposing clubs, and a letter from the president of the club, to the Secretary, BOYS' REALM Football League, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, E.C., as soon as possible.

(c) The cups will be presented at the end of the football season to the clubs in each section which Your Editor, the Secretary, and another referee, consider to hold the best records in the first twenty-four matches actually played. It does not matter on what date the first match is played. Wednesday and Thursday clubs may compete. Points to be awarded as follows: Two for a win, one for a draw; the points to be counted as in the First and Second Divisions of the Football League. If two or more clubs finish with an equal number of points, the goal average shall decide the winners. The decision of the referees (Your Editor, the Secretary, and another) on any question of dispute in this competition shall be final.

(d) After the contest has started we shall, from time to time, publish tables showing the positions of the clubs at the time of going to press. Secretaries must, therefore, send in each week the full results of their matches. Each result must also be accompanied by a notification from the Captain of the opposing team signifying that the report is quite correct. These results must reach the Secretary of THE BOYS' REALM League at the above address not later than the Tuesday morning following the match.

(e) Strict investigation will be made by the controllers of the League into the bona-fides of the entering clubs and their fixtures.

(f) All matches to be played under the Rules of the Football Association.

(g) The Cups to be won outright. No club which has previously won a Cup will be allowed to compete again for a period of three years, although they may send in their reports in order to participate in our weekly award of Prize Footballs.

(h) Opposing teams must, in every case, be of the same average age.

THIS FORM FOR SINGLE UNATTACHED CLUBS ONLY.

Date..... Club.....
Playing Ground .....
Average Age of Members .....
Colours .....
The above club is desirous of entering THE BOYS' REALM League (Section .....), and the members agree to conform to the conditions governing the contest, and to abide by the decision of Your Editor, the Secretary, and a referee in any case of dispute.
Secretary's Name .....
Address .....

Plucky Phil Farren

A Marvellous New Tale of Peril and Adventure,

BY A POPULAR AUTHOR.

The First Chapters Briefly Told.

The theft of a purse containing a large sum of money from the desk of Mr. Radnor, the headmaster of Brythewaite Classical School, causes much commotion and discussion amongst the pupils of the same. Suspicion falls upon Phil Farren, and he is accused of the theft by Mr. Radnor, and confined in the punishment chamber. A few hours later the headmaster is greatly shocked to hear of the disappearance of an inmate of the school, William Morton, who leaves behind him a note confessing to the crime. Upon one of the boys going to acquaint Phil Farren of the turn of affairs, it is discovered that he has escaped through the window of the punishment chamber and vanished.

Plucky Phil journeys to London, and makes his way to the docks with the intention of getting a berth aboard some outward-bound vessel, leaving for the Colonies. His efforts are without avail, and he is in deep despair, when he hears a sudden step behind him.

"Cheero, messmate! How's the wind?" exclaims a rasping voice.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

THE 5th CHAPTER.

Captain Skinner.

PHIL FARREN turned smartly round, to behold a sailor in a suit of coarse blue serge, a bright-coloured handkerchief tied round his collarless, sun-browned neck, and a battered peak cap stuck jauntily on a shock of thick red hair. The man's face was big and red, his nose was a little twisted, in his ears he wore a pair of gold rings, and he surveyed Phil with one eye in a queer manner, while he kept the other tightly closed.

"I beg your pardon, sir?" said Phil. "I do not understand you."

"Why, on course not, young gentleman," returned the man, smacking his thigh with a huge hand—"why, on course not, seein' as how you ain't, by appearances, one o' the freest and jolliest and healthiest of all the craft what floats! On course you ain't! How stoopid it was o' me to take you for a gallant midship-man! But ye was very like a young 'un I once knew who got tired o' l'arnin', and shipped——"

"Did he run away from school?" asked Phil, with wide-open eyes.

"An' sure he did," returned the man, closing his left eye again, and tapping his dirty nose with a tarry finger. "He come aboard my ship, the Snuey Jane, an' says he, 'Captain Bartholomy Skinner,' says he, 'I'm cookin' aboard your ship as a middy. I like the looks on ye; ye wears a kind figure'ead, an' ye've got as stout a good ol' ship as ever sailed the good ol' sea. I'll take ten shillin's a week to commence with, as wages.'"

"He had some cheek, talking to a captain like that," said Phil, greatly interested.

"Well," continued Bartholemy Skinner, "I takes 'im on, an' what do you think he is now, young gent? A real live hadmiral, with a dozen ships o' his own!"

"But I thought admirals belonged to the Navy," said Phil doubtfully, "and that their ships belonged to the Navy, too?"

"So they do—so they do!" returned the sailor, giving the boy a searching glance. "But o' course you ain't 'eard o' no other admirals, seein' as how you be a landlubber, an' ain't never smelled the briny. An' course, you ain't never heered of the hadmirals in the Merchant Service. I was werry near bein' a hadmiral myself once. 'Captain Skinner,' they says—'Captain Skinner, an 'onest old salt like you, what's sailed round the world hunderds of times, ought to be nothing less than a hadmiral!'

"'Not me,' says I. 'Plain Captain Skinner's the name o' this yer craft, an' though, says you, she's got a 'onest figurehead, she don't anker arter no titles.'"

Phil thought, here is a simple, straightforward, good-hearted old sailor, who could do nothing but kindness for everybody. That the boy, in his inexperience of the world, was to be cruelly awakened to the truth of Captain Skinner's character will very soon be told.

The queer seafaring man took a black cake of tobacco from his pocket, opened a big clasp-knife, and proceeded to chip off some pieces of the tobacco, with which he filled a short-stemmed wooden pipe. All the time he did this he closed one eye, but kept the other glued on Phil Farren's face, as if he were trying to read the boy's thoughts. Phil didn't notice him because he was thinking hard.

"Captain Skinner," he stammered at last, "I—I want to be a midshipman. I'd like to earn ten shillings a week aboard your ship. Can you take me—me——"

"Ye would, sonny?" exclaimed Captain Skinner, looking up from lighting his pipe, and burning his fingers with the match—"ye would, sonny? Ye would like to ship aboard the good ol' Sauey Jane, an' make yer fortune, an' see the sights of the world? Sonny, I'll take ye! I'll gi'e ye——"

He stopped suddenly and pulled a very glum face. Phil looked at him anxiously, and then his face also took on a look of disappointment.

"I'm sorry, young gent," said the man—"sorry to disapp'int ye, but I clean lost me bearin's! I clean forgot as 'ow there ain't room aboard for another middy. Every single cabin is full, sonny. I'm downright sorry, I am! There's no room aboard, unless—unless——"

"I'll take five shillings a week for a few months if you'll let me come," said Phil.

"Tain't that, sonny," replied Captain Skinner. "I'm not the kind o' craft what'd take a mean advantage of a young gent like that. If ye come aboard the Snuey Jane ye'll 'ave yeer wages each week as regularly as eight bells. Tain't that, sonny. But unless ye'd care to have a bunk aboard my ship in my cabin, I'm afeerd——"

"Oh, never mind that!" cried Phil, his hopes rising again. "I'd sleep anywhere, sir! Do say you'll take me aboard!"

Captain Bartholemy Skinner rubbed his nose with a tarry forefinger, and appeared to think long and deeply.

"I don't know as how I'm actin' proper," he said at last, "seein' as how you ain't been to sea afore. But, howsomever, ye looks a likely lad. Ye've got the money ready for yer kit, I s'pose?"

He shot such a keen and direct glance at Phil that the boy winced under it.

"Won't these clothes do?" asked Phil, in fresh alarm. And then, as the sailorman wagged his head slowly, added nervously: "I've got a little money, captain. If you'll make me a midshipman, I'll give it to you, every penny of it. I'm only afraid it won't be enough to buy many clothes."

"Where is it?" asked the sailorman, looking round the wharfside. No one was observing them. "How much have ye got?"

Captain Skinner's anxiety seemed somewhat suspicious to the young country lad, but in a moment the suspicion had passed.

"I'm afraid it's not much," Phil Farren said, producing his purse from a pocket and counting the money. "There's half-a-sovereign, a lucky threepenny-bit, and twopence-halfpenny. Will that do, sir?"

"Can you get any more?" asked the sailorman, closing one eye. "Do ye live hereabouts?"

"No," replied Phil. "I can't get any more. I live in the country."

"It's a pity—a great pity!" muttered Captain Skinner. "Howsomever, I'm not goin' back on my word. Give me the half-sovereign, sonny. It's better than nothin'—I mean, it'll buy some of yer clothes. And ye can coom aboard the Saucy Jane to-morrow mornin'. Ye can meet me 'ere to-morrow mornin' at this spot, and I'll take ye aboard."

Phil took the half-sovereign out of the purse, made a movement to put it into the outstretched sailorman's hand, and then changed his mind.

"If I am to meet you here to-morrow morning, captain," he said, "wouldn't it be better to pay you the half-sovereign then?"

"Young gent," said Captain Skinner sternly, "I see you don't trust me—me, as is known all over the world for me 'onest figurehead. Yer not comin' aboard my ship!"

He turned on his heel and walked slowly away.

"Captain, captain," cried Phil, running after him, with a very worried face. "I'm very, very sorry! Here's the money! Say you'll take me aboard!"

Captain Skinner took the half-sovereign, looked at it quizzically, made a queer noise in his throat that was supposed to be a laugh, then

knelt down, and let the half-sovereign fall on the stone pavement.

"Yes, it's a good 'un!" he muttered. Then he added aloud: "All right, young gent, I'll go straight away an' order yer kit for yo. Ha, ha! Don't forgit, young gent, to wait for me 'ere to-morrow mornin'!"

He hurried away at what seemed to Phil Farren an unnecessarily quick pace. The boy watched him go up a flight of stone steps into the narrow street that ran alongside the wharf, and then, to his huge surprise, Captain Skinner broke into a run.

"That's funny!" cried Phil. "Whatever is he running for?"

Now that everything was settled for his going aboard a real ship as a real midshipman, he did not feel so happy as he thought he would have been.

"Great Scott, the captain hasn't told me what time I am to meet him to-morrow morning!" he suddenly exclaimed. "If the ship sails early before I get on this wharfside, I shall lose my chance of becoming a midshipman, and my half-sovereign as well!"

Phil started to run up the stone steps after Captain Skinner, and had reached the narrow street before that worthy old salt was down. But instead of stopping or paying any attention to Phil's repeated calls of "Hi, captain!" he set off down the street at a faster rate than ever.

Phil could not understand it, and a vague sort of suspicion came into his mind that he had been swindled.

"Perhaps he hasn't seen me running after him," he said, "though I feel almost positive I saw him look deliberately towards me."

Presently Captain Skinner turned a corner and disappeared from sight. When Phil reached the corner the sailorman was just turning out of the street into another. Through a maze of squalid streets and narrow courts they twisted and turned, and though Phil lessened considerably the distance that separated them he could not overtake the captain.

At last they emerged into a dirty, wide road, which Phil saw painted up as Commercial Road, and down the centre of which lay tramlines. Indeed, before Phil had reached the top of the street he saw a yellow horse-tram pass by, and to his chagrin also saw Captain Skinner run out into the road and leap upon the tram without waiting for it to stop for him.

Phil ran after the tram, but it was too far, and was travelling too fast for him to overtake it. He stood on the pavement perplexed, not knowing what to do. He felt grave doubts about Captain Skinner's acting honestly by him. But if any thought came into his mind about returning home, it was speedily checked by the fact that he now had not the necessary money to buy the ticket.

While Phil stood in indecision, a tram came up, travelling in the same direction that the captain had gone.

A notice-board on the tram announced that it went to Limehouse, Poplar, and the London Docks. An inspiration came to Phil Farren, and he sprang upon the tram. He would ride along the road, keeping a sharp look-out for Captain Skinner.

It was a long, wearying ride, through lines of squalid and dirty-looking shops and houses, but towards the end of the journey the tall masts of ships could be seen in the distance, and on the pavements seamen of almost every nationality were to seen loafing about. Lascars in white linen trousers and jackets, and many-coloured turbans, Chinamen in blue linen overalls, Swedes, Norwegians, and Scandinavians moved about in motley crowds, or stood in groups talking noisily together.

All the way Phil had scanned the pavements eagerly to see if he could recognise in the crowds that loitered about them the queer figure of Captain Skinner, and at last he was rewarded. As the tram reached the terminus Phil leaned overside, and amongst the crowd leaving the car that had reached its destination just previously he saw the sailorman.

Captain Skinner locked round eagerly for a full minute when he passed between the swing doors of a public-house which went by the name of the Mariner's Compass.

Phil got off the tram, and, crossing the road to the tavern, peered within the doors. Captain Skinner was in the act of drinking from a pewter-pot. Five minutes later the sailorman came out into the street. At the sight of Phil waiting there he muttered a curse.

"Captain Skinner," said Phil brightly, "you didn't tell me what time I——"

The captain would not allow him to continue. He seized Phil by the shoulders and shook him till his teeth rattled.

"If yo follow me any more, yo whelp," he hissed, "I'll put yer froo it!"

THE 6th CHAPTER.
Phil Secures a Passage Aboard.

TO say that Phil was flabbergasted puts it mildly. But if the sailorman thought that such methods would frighten the boy, he made a big mistake. The soul of honour and straightforwardness, with little experience of the world, Phil Farren had never seriously considered that there existed people in the world who habitually endeavoured to swindle all with whom they came into contact. Instead of being frightened, the boy was more determined than ever to follow the sailorman.

Therefore, though he stood for a moment in doubt, it was with no hesitating step that he turned in the direction in which Captain Skinner had disappeared, and then stepped smartly out after him. This time Phil took care, while he followed the captain, to keep in the shadow of the houses as much as possible, and after turning and twisting through innumerable miserable alleys, Phil at last emerged by the riverside.

He hid himself in the doorway while Captain Skinner paused at the foot of a gangway leading to the deck of a full-rigged sailing-ship and for a few moments glanced about him in all directions. Then, apparently satisfied that he was not being followed by the boy he had whacked, he passed up the gangway and disappeared.

Three minutes passed, and then Phil came out of his hiding-place and walked across to the sailing-ship. Across the bow of the boat was painted the name Arethusa.

"He said his ship's name was the Saucy Jane!" muttered Phil. "Why doesn't he wish me to follow him, I wonder, if he is acting honestly? He's got my half-sovereign, and he said he was going to buy me a kit; but instead, he's come straight here. I've a good mind to go aboard and see whether he's trying to swindle me or not."

Phil decided to wait and watch the vessel. Taking up a position some distance off, where he could watch the deck of the Arethusa, he saw some men clamber aboard, and after watching for quite an hour, he observed several men come up on deck, amongst them Captain Skinner. The men set about clearing up the decks and hauling sails into position.

"I see the old Arethusa's makin' ready to

Instead of replying the man seized Phil roughly and dragged him into the light at the foot of the companion steps. "Great Scott!" gurgled Phil, as the light fell upon the man's face. "It's Captain Skinner!"

sail," said a man standing at Phil's elbow.

"Yes," said his companion, "she's off to South Africa with high tide, which will be less than an hour now."

Phil heard the words with a quickening pulse. There was no doubt now that Captain Skinner had lied to him and robbed him of his money. There was no doubt that he had no power or intention of offering him a berth as a midshipman. Besides that, the man was no captain at all. It was plain to see that, for he worked on board in stowing the cargo and hauling the ropes like one of the other seamen.

"I'll go aboard and denounce the scoundrel," decided Phil at last. "If he's not the captain, I'll tell the man who is about him. He may force him to give me back my money."

With a fast-beating heart Phil went boldly up the gangway and stood upon the deck of the vessel. But at that moment the men were working below in the hold. Some distance away Phil saw some steps that led down a companion-way to the decks below. He passed down these and emerged into a dark, narrow passage.

As he groped his way along this he ran into a man coming from the opposite direction.

"I beg your pardon," said Phil. "Can you tell me where to find the captain?"

Instead of replying the man seized the boy by the throat and dragged him into the light at the foot of the companion steps.

"Great Scott," gurgled Phil, as the light fell upon the man's face, "it's Captain Skinner! Don't, don't, you're choking me!"

Captain Skinner never uttered a sound; but, seizing the boy's head with a firm grip, he banged it against the woodwork. Phil gave utterance to a cry that was cut short in the middle. Then he fell at the feet of the brute in a limp, unconscious heap.

The sailorman muttered angrily as he peered at the boy, and rubbed his nose with a forefinger. Treading softly up the companion stairs, as soon as his head was above the deck, he glanced keenly round the deck of the Arethusa, and beyond that to the ships and riversides. An exclamation of satisfaction left his lips. He disappeared below again, hardly making any noise as he came up the steps once more with Phil Farren's body flung across his shoulder.

Captain Skinner, as he called himself, tiptoed across the deck, and had almost reached the side of the vessel, raising Phil's unconscious form aloft as he did so, when there sounded the heavy rattle of feet up the companion stairs, and the harsh voice of someone in far from a good temper rang out:

"Weezel, Weezel, you skulkin' 'ound you, why the dickens 'aven't you cast off, as I told you? Ain't it high tide, you beer-swillin' landlubber, an' time we was startin'? Put a reef out, or, by George, I'll tan the hide off you with a rope's end!"

"Curse him!" muttered the sailorman.

"Another minute, and—and I should have been—been safe!"

A huge tarpaulin lay at the sailorman's feet. He quickly thrust Phil beneath, entirely covering his body with it. As he straightened himself and turned round, a short, fat man, with a scarlet face, came waddling on to the deck.

Captain Skinner saluted him, and ran to a hatchway.

"Tumble up, below there!" he bawled, "tumble up, and stand by to cast off!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" came the response.

Five minutes later the Arethusa moved off down the Thames on her way to South Africa, and under the tarpaulin there still lay the unconscious body of Phil Farren.

THE 7th CHAPTER.
Weezel Gets a Ducking and Phil Gets a Post.

IT was well on into the afternoon before the Arethusa had left her moorings, but so secure had been the blow that the sailorman—whom Phil had known as Captain Skinner, but who was really Bartholemy Weezel, mate of the Arethusa—had given him, that the sun had been set for more than a couple of hours before our hero recovered consciousness.

Phil did not realise where he was and what had happened to him for some minutes. It was pitch-dark, and almost suffocating beneath the heavy tarpaulin. Phil lay in a stupor, staring into the blackness, and conscious of nothing but a dull "flap, flap" sound as sudden patches of wind caught the sails and tightened them. He had a pain in his temples as if someone was beating a tattoo on them with a hammer.

Slowly, bit by bit, the stirring events of that day came back to him, and then, with a flood of recollection, he realised that he was aboard some ship, probably the very vessel upon which he had entered that afternoon, and had been stricken down by the cruel blow of the scoundrelly sailorman.

Phil had felt cold on first recovering consciousness, but soon he found it difficult to breathe, and his face and body became covered with perspiration. Where was he? Was he imprisoned below deck in some dark, suffocating hole? What was it that covered him with such a heavy weight? He raised one arm, and found that by doing so a current of fresh, sweet air came under the tarpaulin.

But before he could repeat the action, the tarpaulin was quietly withdrawn from him, and the cool wind and the salt spray splashed on his face. Phil sucked down great draughts of the refreshing breeze, then slowly opened his eyes. Someone—a man—was bending over him. Phil stared at him vacantly for a moment, and noticed the loop on the man's face darken to a vicious scowl. There was no mistaking that big, crafty face, with the twisted nose and the ears with the big rings in them. It was the man who had robbed him of his money; who had stunned him aboard the Arethusa a few hours previously.

"Help, help!" cried Phil, springing to his feet. He was seized round the waist at the same moment by Bartholemy Weezel. But Phil understood now with what sort of man he had to deal. He realised that he would have to fight for his life.

Phil knew nothing of wrestling, but he unconsciously did the best thing he possibly could have done under the circumstances. He twined his legs round the sailorman's, and clasped the fellow's thick throat with his hands. But, of course, he could not prevent Weezel carrying him bodily to the side of the vessel.

Phil dug his fingers into the sailorman's throat, and saw to his joy that his adversary found it difficult to breathe. He cried "Help, help!" again, but the man put his hand over the boy's chin, stifling his cry and forcing back his head.

It was a short, sharp struggle, and Phil fought pluckily. He realised that the scoundrel's intention was to throw him overboard. And it seemed, too, as if he would succeed. For to Phil's cries for assistance there came no answer, and bit by bit he was being forced to the level of the taffrail. Phil now found it difficult to breathe as the brute's hand covered his mouth, but he clung to him like a leech.

"Leave go, ye whelp!" hissed Weezel.

The boy could not utter a sound. The muscles of his arms cracked as he strained to retain his grip on the ruffian's throat. His arms felt as if they were being pulled from their sockets, but gradually, gradually, he felt his fingers slipping.

Bartholemy Weezel braced himself to his full height against the vessel's side and made a gigantic effort. It succeeded. Phil felt himself torn from the sailorman, and his mouth being free for an instant again from the ruffian's hand, he let out another lusty yell for "Help!"

At that instant Bartholemy Weezel hurled him above the taffrail and let him fall. But even as he fell, Phil Farren grabbed at the sailorman's head. The fingers of one hand caught the man's red hair and held it, but the fingers of the other slipped and caught his coat, and in the twinkling of an eye the sailorman lost his balance and followed Phil into the sea!

As Phil's head rose above the water, he caught sight of the big sails of the Arethusa looming only a few yards in front of him, and at once commenced swimming towards the vessel. A moment later the dark head of Bartholemy Weezel appeared between him and the Arethusa. The sailorman trod water for an instant while he looked round. When he saw that the boy was swimming, he shook his fist at him, then turned over on his breast and began to move towards the vessel with vigorous strokes.

By this time, those aboard the Arethusa had heard Phil's last despairing shout, and a number of men hung over the stern with lighted lanterns.

"Ahoy, ahoy!" yelled Weezel lustily.

"Ahoy!" came back the answer. "Is that you, Weezel? We'll have a boat out in a jiffy!"

"Ahoy! Help!" cried Phil; but if anyone heard his cry, no answer was returned to him.

As our readers know, Phil Farren was a good swimmer, but the mate of the Arethusa never ceased to relax his efforts as he saw a boat being launched overside, and he swam with such vigour that he soon left Phil yards behind. Phil noticed this, and endeavoured to lessen the distance by using the sidestroke, and exerting himself to his utmost. It had little avail, however, so hampered was he by his clothing and so powerful a swimmer was the sailorman.

Phil was struggling on when he heard faintly the shout:

"Weezel, Weezel! Where are you?"

"Ahoy!" replied the mate.

The splash of oars came dully to the boy's ears, and then he heard the shout:

"Here he is, lads!"

"Would they see him?" Phil asked himself. "Would the sailorman tell them that he was struggling for his life in the sea? Would

PLUCKY PHIL FARREN.

(Continued from the previous page.)

Weezel hold his tongue and leave him to drown?"

Phil began to despair. He was such a long way now from the Arethusa and the boat that had put out from her. If Weezel had tried to take his life on the vessel, he wouldn't be anxious now that he should be rescued. With all the strength of his lungs, he shouted:

"Help, help! I'm drowning!"

At that instant many hands were helping Weezel into the boat. It was a task the rough seamen would rather have left undone, for the mate was deservedly hated by them.

"That was a near touch, sir," said one of the four men in the boat when the mate had been hauled aboard. "'Ow'd yer come to go over?"

"Shut yer mouth!" said Weezel, in a black temper. "Are yer goin' to keep me out 'ere all night in these wet clothes while I answers yer questions? If ye don't get a 'and on that oar, and put yer back behind it pretty smart, I'll break it across yer thick skull for ye."

The man glared sullenly at the mate, but did as he was bidden.

"Help, help! I'm drowning!" cried Phil again.

"What's that?" inquired one of the other men—Scraggs, the carpenter. "Sounded like someone callin' for 'elp."

"Yus, I thought I 'eard summink," said another.

The men were about to pull at their oars, but they stopped and looked at the mate.

"Ain't yer seen a 'andsome man afore?" asked Bartholemy Weezel. By thunder, if ye don't make for the Arethusa instead of 'aving a little talky-talky out 'ere, there'll be thick heads for all of yer when we got aboard!"

"Help, help!" came the cry from Phil again. It was fainter this time, for the boy was fast becoming exhausted.

"There it is again!" cried the four seamen together.

"Look 'ere, sir," said Scraggs; "there's someone drowning not far from 'ere. He ain't from our boat, that's certain. But it's only 'uman for us to gi' 'im 'elp if we can."

"Hear, hear!" mumbled the others.

"Ye'll row me back to the Arethusa at once!" roared the mate, trying to hide his confusion. "Ye better, I tell ye, or there'll be trouble!"

"Help, help!" came another despairing cry from Phil.

"That settles it," answered Scraggs. "Trouble or no trouble, I ain't goin' to leave a fellow-creature to drown when I've got the chance to save 'im."

"We'll stand by yer in that," said another man; and the rest nodded agreement.

Bartholomy Weezel roared and swore, but the men turned the nose of the boat in the direction from which Phil's cry had sounded.

"Ahoy, ahoy!" yelled Scraggs lustily. "Keep up! We're coming to ye!"

"Ahoy!" Phil cried, in reply. He had little food that day, and his strength was fast giving out.

Five minutes later he was dragged into the boat, and lay on the bottom with his head pillowed upon the lap of Scraggs, feeling more dead than alive. Another five minutes and the boat would have been too late, and there would have been no occasion to write this story.

Exhausted though he was, Phil had no sooner set eyes on Weezel than he trembled with fear.

"Keep him away!" he cried to Scraggs, pointing to Weezel. "Keep him away! He tried to drown me!"

The men were thunderstruck at this accusation, but the mate flew instantly into a savage temper.

"The lying varmint!" roared Weezel. "Let me get at 'im! Get out o' the way, Scraggs, or I'll pitch ye overboard, too!"

"Steady on, sir—steady on!" said Scraggs. "It's bellke the youngster, in his terror at being nearly done for, takes you for another person."

"No, no!" cried Phil. "Keep him away! He's the man who threw me over the side of the Arethusa. I wont aboard——"

"Arethusa, did ye say, laddie?" asked Scraggs, wonderstruck. "When did you come aboard the Arethusa?"

"When she was in Katrina's Dock along the Thames," said Phil.

"It's a lie!" roared Weezel, in a terrific passion.

"Great Scots!" whispered Scraggs to the other men. "There's no doubt the kid's speaking the truth. He must have been chucked overboard from our vessel, or else how would he have known its name and her mooring quarters!"

"There's something behind all this," said Billy Harris, angely wagging his head. Billy was a weather-beaten old salt, whose greatest enemy was Bartholemy Weezel.

"S-sh!" said Scraggs. "The plucky little chap's either gone unconscious or he's gone to sleep. Pull away, boys; the cap'n and his mate-nincshes'll soon put 'im to rights!"

The scoundrelly mate still sat in the stern with a passion-inflamed face, not daring to look at the men, as they pulled at their oars, but scowling at the darkening waters. Soon they pulled alongside the dark hull of the Arethusa.

"Hallo," cried Captain Webster, leaning overside and looking down into the boat, "we've fished up the top-headed, beer-swilling vagabond who chooses to delay my ship while he washes some of the mud out of his brains! Get aboard, Mr. Weezel. I'll have a private interview with you as soon as you've got into dry clothes. And what have you got there, Scraggs—another of 'em?"

The carpenter had thrown the unconscious form of Phil Farren across his shoulder preparatory to clutching the rope and hauling himself on deck.

"I 'ave," answered Scraggs. "It's a boy we found in the sea as near drowning as possible. I think he's gone off, sir, and wants a dose o' your physic."

"Then he can have it, Scraggs! Bring him aboard and carry him to my cabin. How did he come to be in the sea?"

"He—he——" P'r'aps Mr. Weezel could explain, sir," replied the carpenter, scrambling aboard.

"Mr. Weezel?" repeated the captain. "What do you mean?"

Scraggs, with the boy still upon his shoulder, turned towards the spot where Weezel stood, with a face from the lantern on the mainmast streaming down on his evil features. Captain Webster turned a searching look upon his mate that made that bully—in reality a coward at heart—tremble with fear.

"It's a lie!" roared the mate. "I didn't throw him overboard! I never set eyes on the brat before."

"Oh, so that's how the matter stands!" said Captain Webster coolly, regarding Bartholemy Weezel with a want no more explanations now, Mr. Mate. You can finish your story in my cabin when you've got dry clothes on."

The stout old skipper turned to Phil Farren and laid his hand on the boy's chest.

"He's still breathing, Scraggs," he said. "I expect he's only exhausted through the exposure. Take him down to my cabin and tell cook to get some good, hot soup ready. While I'm skipper of the Arethusa there shall be perfect discipline aboard, but there shall be justice as well, Mr. Scraggs."

And the carpenter, who knew that for all his bluster and fussiness, Captain Webster had a kind heart, muttered "Ay, ay, sir!" and carried Phil below deck.

THE 8th CHAPTER.

Phil Leaves the Arethusa, and Lands in Natal.

PHIL FARREN soon recovered consciousness. He looked around him, to see a ruddy-faced man standing beside him with a flask of brandy to his fingers. He was lying on a couch in a nicely-furnished cabin.

"Feel better, my boy?" said Captain Webster kindly. "I'll soon have you right again. Cookie's getting you some hot soup, and when you are wrapped up in blankets and have swallowed the hot stuff, you just come to me and tell me your story."

Scraggs, who stood by the captain's door, led the boy aft to the hands' quarters. Here willing hands kindly hands tore the boy's wet clothes from him, rubbed him dry with towels, and finally put him, wrapped in blankets, in a bunk, with a basin of rich, hot soup in his hands.

In the intervals of drinking the warm, nourishing liquid, Phil told the rough seamen his story as they crowded into the little cabin—told them how he had first met with Weezel on the wharf at London Bridge—told them everything, and had hopened until the moment the carpenter and the three other seamen had picked him up out of the sea.

"Ay," said Billy Harris, "that's a likely story, that. 'Tain't the first of the like natur' I've 'eerd said about Bartholemy Weezel. Ye been't the first lad who's been anxious to get to sea he's swindled. But never yo fear. Ye tell Cap'n Webster the whole truth, lad, an' he'll do summat for ye. We ain't got a boy aboard this trip, so he'll have no difficulty in finding a job for ye."

The rest of the men out of Phil's hearing expressed their sympathy for him, and their admiration for the boy's pluck.

An hour later, feeling little the worse for his immersion, Phil, dressed in a suit several times too big for him that Scraggs had borrowed, presented himself at the captain's cabin.

At the skipper's request, he told him his story. Phil made no secret of anything. He told Captain Webster how that he had been accused at a school of a theft he had never committed, how he had run away, and how he had met with Weezel, who had termed himself Captain Bartholemy Skinner, and so on, until Captain Webster himself had seen him slung across Scragga's shoulder.

"And what's your idea, my boy?" asked Captain Webster. "What are you going to do when you get abroad?"

"I want to make my fortune," said Phil, blushing. "I want to go somewhere where I can earn a lot of money—to dig for gold. I've heard that there's been a lot of gold-mines discovered lately in our colonies, and all a man or boy has to do is to go out there and dig away till he gets to the gold and makes his fortune."

The stout old skipper laughed.

"That's all, my boy," he said. "You've only got to pick up the gold and make your fortune. As it happens, I'm bound for one of these 'get-rich-quick' places, and provided the story you've told me is a true one, and you're willing to work for your board, old man or boy has to do it, I'll

"SLAVES OF THE SHOP" STARTS IN A FORTNIGHT'S TIME.

KING CRICKET!

A Fascinating Story of County Cricket.

Specially Written for THE BOYS' REALM by One of Our Most Popular Authors.

The Chief Characters in this Fine Story.

ARTHUR LOVELL, Loamshire's champion bat. He becomes a professional. His uncle is ruined by James Lagden.

KIT VALANCE, Loamshire's best bowler. He first comes to notice in the Colts' match, where he takes Arthur Lovell's wicket. Later he becomes Arthur's firm chum.

LEN VALANCE, Kit's twin brother.

GEOFFREY LAGDEN, an amateur and a good bat. He is bitterly jealous of Arthur Lovell, whom he hates and endeavours to injure. He is Arthur's rival for the hand of Molly Hilton. A snobbish character.

JAMES LAGDEN, who has ruined Arthur's uncle.

BLANE, Captain of Loamshire, and the steady friend of Arthur and Kit. He is Molly Hilton's cousin.

PONSONBY, Geoffrey Lagden's friend, and a man of similar character—snobbish to a degree.

Arthur Lovell, owing to the ruin of his uncle, has to forfeit his status as an amateur player for Loamshire and turns professional.

Kit Valance, Arthur's bosom chum, has a twin brother named Len, who is not a credit to his family. Lagden bribes Len Valance to injure Arthur.

Arthur Lovell is thus prevented from playing for Loamshire for two or three weeks, and in the meantime the team fare more or less badly.

Both Arthur Lovell and Kit know who are the cause of Arthur's suffering, but agree to say nothing.

Len Valance, who is in the employ of James Lagden, steals from the latter's safe a bundle of documents which prove only too clearly the criminal methods which Lagden exercised to bring about the ruin of Arthur Lovell's uncle. Len converses with Kit Valance, and divulges his intention of attempting to sell the papers to Arthur Lovell.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

In the Shadow of Death!

LEN VALANCE strolled away through the thickening dusk. There was a keen satisfaction in the face of the scapegrace as he walked along with his hands in his pockets, puffing out little streams of blue smoke. That Kit would succeed with Lovell, he had now little doubt. The deed of abstracting the documents being done, the only question was whether to make use of them; and surely Lovell would see reason upon that point.

A thousand pounds for himself, and the loss of fifty thousand for the man who had earned his hatred; that was an attractive prospect. A thousand pounds, probably, would not last the spendthrift long, but he did not think of that. The prospect of possessing such a sum, of the pleasure he could derive from it, made the future rosy to him.

From his rosy dreams he was suddenly recalled to real life in a startling manner. A dark figure leaped from the hedge and rushed upon him.

Len Valance started back, his cigarette dropping from his lips. But he could not escape. In a twinkling the dim form was upon him, and two sinewy, savage hands were clutching at his throat.

"Help!"

The word was choked back by that savage grip. He went down heavily into the road, his assailant upon him.

"Quick, pater!"

The voice was sharp and quick. Len Valance knew it at once.

"Geoffrey Lagden!"

He leaped out the name, struggling furiously. But a second figure—a more portly one—joined the first, and a second pair of hands grasped him. He was dragged from the road through the gap in the hedge.

"Across the field, pater! I'll see that he makes no noise."

Geoffrey Lagden's voice was hard and determined. He picked Len Valance up by the shoulders and took a grip on his collar, grinding his knuckles into the neck and half choking the unfortunate scapegrace. James Lagden gripped his ankles, and between them they carried the prisoner away; where, and for what purpose, Len could only wildly guess.

He struggled desperately, but without avail. Twenty yards from the lane they carried him over rough ground, and then flung him down again—with Lagden's knee on his chest, Lagden's grip on his throat.

"Now, you hound, where are the papers?"

Len Valance could only gasp.

"Do you hear me, you cur? I was right in suspecting that you would go and see Kit Valance, and we have lain in wait for you a long time. Now we have laid you by the heels, you had better come to terms, sharp! We are not to be trifled with. Where are the papers?"

"Where you will never find them!" gasped Len.

"Have you given them to Kit Valance?"

"Find out!"

"Are they upon you?"

"No."

"We'll see! Search him, father, while I hold him! Attempt to cry out, Len Valance, and you are a dead man!"

"You—you dare not——"

"You shall see. Give me that cane, father. Do you see this, Len Valance? It is loaded with lead at the end, and a blow would brain an ox."

"You dare not——"

"You shall see. I offer you your life for those papers. Without them you are as helpless as an adder with his fang drawn. Retain them, my fine fellow, and you will not live to make use of them."

Len gasped and was silent.

Geoffrey Lagden was showing a new side of his character. The snob, the plotter, the schemer, he had always been, and he had given no suspicion that he could be a villain, too! But a cool, determined, remorseless villain—Len had not suspected him to be this! The prospect of ruin had brought out a side of Geoffrey's character that had only been latent.

Even his father was amazed, and gave him more than one uneasy glance as he searched Len for the papers. James Lagden was not of the stuff of which heroes, or even courageous villains are made. He had joined with his son in this desperate enterprise because there was no other resource left to save him from utter ruin. But he was trembling!

The search was soon made. There was no trace of the documents about the scapegrace. It was evident that he had spoken the truth when he said that they were not upon him.

"They are not here, Geoffrey."

"I told you so!" gasped Len. "You will never see them. They are in a safe place."

Geoffrey gritted his teeth.

"Where are they?"

"I will not say a word."

"Very well. Father, they are either in his lodgings at Brighton or in London; and in either case we must have them. It is that or ruin. But if this scoundrel goes free we shall never succeed."

"Geoffrey——"

"Bah, no cowardice now!" said the younger man savagely. "Whatever happens, this scoundrel shall not aid in ruining us. He——"

The loaded cane swung aloft.

"Geoffrey, stop——"

"Bah!"

Len Valance, frantic with terror, made a terrible effort. Geoffrey reeled aside, and the descending blow struck only the earth. A ringing scream left the white lips of the scapegrace.

"Help, help!"

He scrambled to his feet. The moon came out from behind a bank of clouds and glimmered on the field, on shadowy trees, and three dim figures. Geoffrey Lagden, with a curse, recovered himself, and sprang at the scapegrace.

"Help, help!"

Wide rang the piercing cry. The loaded cane whizzed through the air. Len attempted to elude the blow, and he saved his head, but it took effect upon his shoulder, and he sank on his knees.

Again that frenzied cry.

"Help!"

With an imprecation, Lagden swung up the loaded cane. The banker stood trembling and terror-stricken.

"Help!"

A rapid footstep—a dim, running figure in the moonlight—the loaded cane was descending, but a fierce blow under the ear sent Geoffrey Lagden reeling, and the blow missed its mark. The cane crashed to the ground, and Lagden followed it there.

"You hound!"

It was Arthur Lovell. Len's cry for help had reached his ears as he strode along the lane to his quarters with Kit. Little dreaming who was in peril, and from whom, the cry had been enough for him, and he had rushed to the rescue.

Lagden, gritting his teeth, scrambled to his feet. He was mad with rage, and desperate now. But Arthur Lovell had quickly gripped the loaded cane.

"Stand back, you scoundrel!"

"Help!" shrieked Len. "Save me! They meant to murder me!"

"Len Valance!" Arthur Lovell uttered the name in amazement. "And—and Geoffrey Lagden! In the name of wonder, what does this mean?"

"They were going to murder me." Len was on his feet now, keeping close to the stalwart young cricketer. His shoulder was aching horribly, but his coolness was returning as he saw that the danger was past. "It's Geoffrey Lagden and his father—they were going to murder me."

Lagden gave a bitter laugh. The game was up now with a vengeance. His father was useless in a struggle, and he was no match for two—no match for Lovell singly, for that matter.

Without a word—with no sound but that bitter laugh, in which despair was blended with cynical mockery, he turned and strode away, and his father followed him. Arthur Lovell did not seek to prevent their going. He fixed his eyes upon Len Valance.

"Tell me what this means!"

Len panted.

"It means that I hold the documents to prove that James Lagden robbed your uncle—it means that whether you like it or not, the truth will come out now, and justice will be done—and Geoffrey Lagden and his father are ruined." He laughed hoarsely. "That is what it means."

And then, as pain and exhaustion overcame him, he reeled, and would have fallen, but the strong arm of Arthur Lovell caught him, and held him firmly.

"Come with me," said Lovell quietly.

Justice at Last.

ARTHUR LOVELL'S brow grew darker and darker. There was silence in the room, broken only by the faint rustle of the papers as the young cricketer turned them over.

It was the day after Loamshire's splendid victory over Sussex on the county ground at Hove. Lou Valance, saved from his assailants by the young cricketer whom he had so often injured, had been brought to Lovell's quarters. The papers which the Lagdens—father and son—had in vain sought to recover were in Arthur Lovell's hands now.

Len Valance had placed them there. Scapegrace and ne'er-do-well as Len was, he was not wholly bad, and Lovell's action had touched his heart. Lovell had never received anything but injury at his hands, yet when he was in danger it was Lovell who had come to his rescue. And even Len could not help feeling something like gratitude.

Arthur had at first hesitated to receive the papers from him. He could not approve of the way they had been obtained; but Len's assertion that they contained clear proof of James Lagden's villainy weighed with him.

He thought of his uncle, spending his old days in obscure poverty by the act of James Lagden. If it was possible to compel the rascally banker to disgorge, surely it was his duty to use every means in his power to that end.

He had decided, at all events, to read the papers. He sat at the table, examining them carefully one by one. Len lay back in a chair, his head bandaged, his face white, his eyes scintillating. Kit Valance sat waiting in silence till Arthur should be finished.

The young cricketer's brow was very dark.

What he was reading fully bore out Len's statements. Between them, James Lagden and his son, Reuben, had deceived and swindled the unsuspecting man who had trusted them, and the records of the huge swindle were clear enough to condemn the rascals in any court of law.

Arthur Lovell had only to make the documents public in order to bring the banker to ruin, even to prison, and to banish him for ever from the society of honest men; and, so far as it was in the banker's power to make restitution, he could be forced to restore what he had dishonestly gained.

Arthur looked up at last with a sigh. It had not been a pleasant task. There was something strangely repellent in this record of trickery and dishonesty to the healthy, wholesome mind of the young cricketer. Len Valance was watching him.

"What do you think, Lovell? Will you spare James Lagden?"

Lovell did not immediately reply.

"He ruined your uncle! He can be forced to restore fifty thousand pounds that he robbed him of. The man Isaacson would turn against him, and give evidence to save his own skin, if he had to. There is no difficulty now that you have the papers. James Lagden can be shown up to all the kingdom, and you can be rich again. You would be mad to hesitate."

Arthur Lovell nodded, still without speaking.

"If you do not act," said the scapegrace passionately, "I shall act without you. James Lagden and his son attempted my life. I am laid up now. Do you think I am going to bear that patiently? I have said nothing yet, but I tell you that before another hour has passed the police will be tracking them on my information. There is penal servitude waiting for both of them, and serve them right."

And the eyes of the scapegrace gleamed vindictively. There was a knock at the door, and a card was brought in. Arthur Lovell started as he read the name of James Lagden. He had not imagined that the banker would have the audacity to come there, after the happenings of the previous night.

The banker was at the heels of the servant. He had not waited for permission to enter.

(Continued on the next page.)

THE LEAGUE OF YOUNG ATHLETES.

A Great New Organisation affiliated to "The Boys' Realm," banding together Junior Athletes who have shown Marked Ability in given Sports by performing certain Feats set by the President.

SECTION 1.—SWIMMING.

To any reader up to the age of 18 who can swim 100 yards will be awarded a handsome Diploma stating this fact and making him a member of the League of Young Athletes. In addition, a BOYS' REALM Third Class Standard Medal will be awarded to any reader who can perform one of the following tests up to and including 100 yards, a Second Class Medal for 200 yards, and a First Class Medal for 440 yards, in accordance with the conditions stated at foot.

Age 12-15.

APPLICANTS MUST SWIM—

40	yards in	- - -	35 secs.
100	,,	,, -	1 m. 55 secs.
220	,,	,, -	4 m. 0 secs.
440	,,	,, -	8 m. 30 secs.

Age 16-18.

APPLICANTS MUST SWIM—

40	yards in	- - -	30 secs.
100	,,	,, -	1 m. 30 secs.
220	,,	,, -	3 m. 40 secs.
440	,,	,, -	8 m. 0 secs.

SECTION 2.—RUNNING.

Age 12-15.

APPLICANTS MUST RUN—

100	yards in	- - -	14 secs.
300	,,	,, - - -	44 secs.
440	,,	,, - - -	60 secs.
880	,,	,, -	2 m. 35 secs.
One mile	,,	-	5 m. 30 secs.

Age 16-18.

APPLICANTS MUST RUN—

100	yards in	- - -	12 secs.
300	,,	,, - - -	38 secs.
440	,,	,, - - -	57 secs.
880	,,	,, -	2 m. 15 secs.
One mile	,,	-	5 m. 10 secs.

Application must be made on the Form below, and must be accompanied by details of the performance, vouched for by a headmaster, clergyman, trainer, or some responsible adult person approved by the President. A penny stamp for return postage must be enclosed.

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KING CRICKET.

(Continued from the previous page.)

His face, usually somewhat florid, was pale now, and almost haggard in expression. His eyes were sunken and restless, and showed plainly that he had not slept the previous night. He looked nervously at Arthur.

"Can I speak to you, Lovell? I—I——"

He broke off. The door closed behind the servant. Arthur Lovell motioned the banker to a seat. Bitterly as this man had injured him, Arthur could not help feeling a sentiment of compassion. The young cricketer was not the man to use a victory unsparingly. In the hour of success he was more inclined to pardon than to punish.

The banker's eyes wandered to the papers on the table, and he started. His hand involuntarily stretched out towards them, but he met Arthur's stern glance, and it dropped again. Len Valance gave a mocking laugh.

"It is too late, Mr. Lagden! You played your last card, and lost, when you tried to murder me. The game is up."

The banker did not look at him.

"Silence, Len!" said Kit Valance.

The scapegrace shrugged his shoulders.

"I have come here to see you, Lovell," said the banker, fixing his eyes upon Arthur. "It is in your power to ruin me if you choose."

Lovell nodded.

"You have read the papers?"

"I have read them from beginning to end."

"You know that there were—were irregularities in my dealings with Mr. Lovell," the banker stammered.

"I know that you deceived and robbed my uncle, if that is what you mean!" said Arthur sternly.

The banker's lips twitched.

"I do not defend my conduct. Many things are done in the City that would not bear the light of day," he said haltingly. "I am no worse than others; only more unfortunate in having had a spying scoundrel in my employ."

Len Valance laughed.

"Whom you tried to make a tool of to do your dirty work, and who was more than a match for you," he sneered, "and who is about to give information to the police for the issue of a warrant for your arrest on a charge of attempted murder."

The banker shuddered. At the same time a light of hope gleamed in his eyes.

"Then nothing has been made public, so far?"

"Nothing, so far," said Lovell; "but you surely cannot expect us to keep silent? You have robbed my uncle of fifty thousand pounds, and your accomplice Len Valance's life. If you are given a chance to fly before arrest you must consider yourself fortunate."

"Listen to me, for mercy's sake!" said the banker, in a low voice. "I admit everything. You can hold me in the drive now to despair, I can and will restore to Mr. Lovell every shilling that is due to him, with full interest for the time that has elapsed since—since he lost his money. Can I say more than that?"

"That will be satisfactory so far as I am concerned," said Arthur slowly, "and I can answer for my uncle. But the attack on Len Valance is a different matter."

"I will compensate him. It will do anything in reason you must know, Lovell, that that was not my idea. My son was headstrong. He was furious at the trick Valance had played upon us. He acted hastily, and dragged me with him."

The perspiration was clotting the brow of the banker. He was in earnest. It was evident that he spoke the truth. That wild deed of the previous night had been the work of Geoffrey Lagden, not of his father.

"I know that you hate my son," went on Mr. Lagden. "I know——"

"I do not hate him," said Arthur Lovell coldly. "We have always been enemies in the Loamshire County Club, but by no fault of mine. I was willing to stand well with him, as with everybody else in the club. He has deliberately gone out of his way to injure me, and to try to drive me from the team."

"And you were enemies, and now that it is possible for you to crush him, to disgrace him, I know I cannot expect you to hold your hand. Yet——"

"You are mistaken. I have not the slightest idea of seeking revenge, either upon you or upon Geoffrey Lagden. So long as mere justice is done, I am satisfied for my part."

"As for Len Valance, I will make him every compensation in my power."

The scapegrace grinned.

"I am quite willing to come to an agreement on those terms, sir. I am not afraid of your trying any more tricks."

"That is no business of mine," said Arthur. "You may settle your own affair as you please, without my assistance. I have no desire for a scandal, certainly, and I should not like the name of the Loamshire Club to be mixed up with an unpleasant sensation in the papers; but one point I cannot concede. An attempted murderer is not the kind of member the Loamshire Club wants. Geoffrey Lagden will have to go. Whether he goes to prison or not, I do not care; but he cannot remain in the Loamshire Club."

The banker nodded.

"That is already decided upon, Mr. Lovell. We shall not be able to keep up our old position after this—this repayment, as I have had other losses. As a matter of fact, Geoffrey did not believe that I should be able to make terms with you, and—and he feared arrest. He has already fled."

The banker covered his face with his hands for a moment. The once pompous and important banker, the wealthy backer of the Loamshire Club, had been brought very low indeed. His rose to his feet, pale and worn.

"Thank Heaven I have been able to come to a settlement!" he said. "At least, we are saved from the worst! I thank you, Mr. Lovell. You have been more generous than I deserve. I—I am grateful. What I have said I will do—I will do at once. I am in your hands, and I cannot resist. You can rely upon me."

He moved falteringly to the door, and passed from the room.

Silence reigned for some minutes after he had gone. Arthur Lovell folded up the papers, and rose to his feet.

"This will make a difference to you, Arthur," said Kit Valance, with a slight catch in his voice.

Lovell turned to him quickly.

"A difference to my fortunes, Kit," he said, holding out his hand. "Next season I shall play for Loamshire as an amateur, certainly. But no difference to our friendship."

Kit grasped his hand.

"I know it, Lovell. I was sure of that."

made more trouble in the club than he was worth. There will be a great deal less friction now that he is gone, and I hope the team will pull together better. We shall certainly miss James Lagden's backing of the club, but we don't want money gained as he seems to have gained his. I'd rather see the Loamshires go under."

"As for that, sir, the club will not lose," said Arthur. "Lagden has repaid my uncle all that he deprived him of. My uncle was always a steady backer of the club while he was wealthy, and now he will be all that he ever was, or more. The club will be no loser."

"I am glad to hear that, Lovell. A club manager is compelled to think of the financial considerations," the colonel remarked, with a smile. "I am very glad you have been able to arrange this matter without a scandal. We don't want the name of the Loamshire County Cricket Club disgraced in the eyes of the public, especially as it now seems pretty certain that we shall win the championship."

Arthur's eyes sparkled.

"You think so, sir?"

The colonel nodded emphatically.

"Yes, I think so, Lovell, and if we finish at the top of the list, it will be due more to your batting and Kit Valance's bowling than to anything else."

"It's very good of you to say so, sir."

"It's the mere truth. I have noticed for

As captain once more, he would find the team ready to back him up to any extent. His change in fortune was the finishing touch. The most carping critic could not find any objection to make now.

Captain of Loamshire! It was a glorious prospect—a prospect to make the young cricketer's heart beat faster, and to bring a flush of pride to his handsome face!

The colonel watched his face, easily reading the thoughts within.

"You would accept the offer if it were made, Lovell?"

"I could not do otherwise, sir. But what of Ponsonby!"

Colonel Hilton smiled grimly.

"Ponsonby has sent in his resignation from the club.

Arthur looked surprised.

"It was a question of expenses, in which he could not agree with the committee," the colonel remarked. "There is no secret about it."

A slight smile hovered over Arthur Lovell's lips.

Ponsonby, one of his enemies in the club, had been an "amateur" of the kind well known in modern county cricket.

His "expenses" had frequently amounted to more than twice as much as Arthur Lovell's earnings as a "professional" player.

Arthur had often thought that the Loamshire committee must find Ponsonby rather an expensive luxury, and he was not surprised to learn that the amateur's "expenses" had found objection raised to them at last.

Ponsonby had evidently resigned in a huff, and would probably be astonished at not being asked to reconsider the matter. That was his own business, however.

"The captaincy is vacant," said Colonel Hilton. "Of course, in the interests of the county, I should have asked Ponsonby to stand aside if necessary. As it happens, though, the place is empty and ready for you to take if you choose to take it."

"I should not refuse it, sir."

"Then it is as good as settled."

Colonel Hilton shook hands heartily with the young cricketer.

"I am glad we shall have you with us as an amateur, Lovell. You have forced the club to respect you as a professional player, and it is owing to you mainly that there is a better feeling all round between professionals and amateurs in the Loamshire Club. And I am glad, more than anything else, that you will captain the team in the match against the Rest of England at the Oval—for there is no doubt in my mind now about Loamshire winning the championship."

Arthur's face was happy, his heart beating joyously, as he left the house. He had known trouble—black and bitter trouble, but the clouds had rolled by at last. He had faced his troubles manfully; he had always played the game, and now he was reaping his reward.

"Molly!"

He uttered the name involuntarily as he caught sight of the girl's white dress under the trees. She turned at the sound of his voice, and her face was blushing. Lovell joined her in the shade of the old beeches.

"You are looking happy," she said.

"I am feeling happy. May I tell you why?"

"Please tell me."

He told her as much as was necessary to inform her of his change in fortune, of the sunshine that had driven the clouds to his life.

She listened attentively, her eyes glowing.

"Oh, I am so glad," she cried—"so glad!"

She held out her hands. He clasped them, and did not let them go again. His eyes were on her face; hers sank under his glance.

"Molly! May I call you so? You know—you cannot fail to know—how I have always loved you! Now I can dare to speak."

Her face was crimson. She did not raise her eyes.

"Molly! I can speak at last! I love you! Could you ever care for me?"

Then she raised her eyes. They were wet with tears.

"—I have always cared," she whispered.

And then, as he drew her to his heart, it seemed to Arthur Lovell that the sun had never shone so brightly—never had the birds sung so merrily to his ears.

(To be concluded shortly.)

THE RULES OF FOOTBALL.

ALTERATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE THIS SEASON.

By G. L. B. COVERDALE, Secretary East Riding of Yorks F.A.

EVERY year finds the International Football Association Board making some alteration to the laws of the game and rules of Association football. At this year's meeting the alterations are not very numerous, but there are one or two points which should be borne in mind by players, referees, and also supporters.

It would not, I think, be out of place to explain how alterations in the laws of the game are made, and to indicate how carefully a proposed deviation from an old rule is considered before it can actually come into force. The International Football Association Board consists of two representatives from each of the following associations:—The English Football Association, the Scottish Football Association, the Football Association of Wales, and the Irish Football Association. This Board discusses and decides upon

all proposed alterations

in the laws of the game, and such matters affecting Association football in its international relations as may be referred to them after consideration by either the governing bodies or general meetings of the associations forming the Board. The governing bodies of each association entitled to representation on the Board send in writing, on or before April 1st in each year, to the secretary of the association entitled to convene the next meeting any suggestions or alterations deemed desirable, which are printed and distributed immediately for consideration at the annual general meetings of the associations. The meetings of the Board are held annually on the second Saturday in June at the invitation of each association in order of seniority. One of the representatives of the association convening the meeting shall preside and the other representative shall act as secretary. The secretary must keep a minute of the proceedings, and then forward the same to the association next in rotation. No business can be proceeded with unless three out of the four associations are represented. No alterations in the laws of the game can be made unless there is a unanimous vote of the members present at the Board meeting. Alterations other than the laws of the game may be adopted on a three-fourths majority of those present. The decisions of the Board are at once binding on all the associations, and no alteration in the laws of the game made by any association are valid until accepted by the International Board. It will be seen that to get a rule or law of the game altered means that it cannot be rushed through, but receives due consideration before coming into operation. This year the International Board met in Scotland, and probably the most far-reaching alteration that was made was the addition to Rule 6, making it so that

a player cannot be off-side

when he himself is within his own half of the field of play at the moment the ball is played or thrown in from touch by any player of the same side. This addition, both from a player's and a spectator's point of view, will be better for the game, as it will tend to lessen that rather unsportsmanlike style of play—i.e., the one-back game. All of us have seen a player pulled up for off-side in his own half of the field when, if his opponents had been playing the game in the right spirit, and having both their full-backs in their understood positions, the player would have a good chance of breaking clear away. The rule as it now stands will make a swift forward a greater factor in a team than ever.

The next alteration we find is that to Rule 12, which now gives the referee power, after having cautioned a man for ungentlemanly conduct, to send him off the field if any further offence is committed. This alteration will give the referee a still stronger hand over the players.

The addition to Law 17 is the words "or of a player being sent off the field under Law 13 a free-kick shall be awarded to the opposite side, from the place where the infringement occurred." Hitherto it has very often happened that when a player has been sent off the field the referee has considered this sufficient punishment to the offending side, and has not further penalised them.

The above are the only alterations and additions to the rules that were carried, the proposition by the Welsh Association that a goal could be scored direct from a corner-kick being lost. Players and referees, therefore, have not many new points to watch.

Sunshine After Shadow.

COLONEL HILTON was looking amazed.

The Loamshire cricketers were home again in Loamchester, and Arthur Lovell had called on the colonel at Lincroft. He had caught a glimpse of Molly in the garden as he went up to the house, and his heart beat at the sight of the girl's winsome face.

Between Arthur and Molly a great gulf had been fixed for long months; but now, with the young cricketer's return to fortune, his hopes had risen again.

Colonel Hilton listened to what Arthur had to relate to him in extreme astonishment.

Arthur concealed some of the story, for the sake of those who had injured him, and who had been made to pay so dearly for it. But the colonel had a pretty clear idea of what had passed.

The restoration of the Lovell fortune by James Lagden, showed what the true character of the banker must be, and Geoffrey Lagden's resignation from the Loamshire Club showed that he, too, had nothing to say for himself.

"We shall not miss Lagden very much, as a matter of fact," the colonel remarked. "He some time, Lovell, that there has been a better feeling in the club towards you. You must have observed it yourself."

"I think I have, sir."

"It crossed my mind to ask you to take the captaincy again. I believe that even as a professional player you would have been welcomed, so much have the lads come to think of you lately. But this alteration in your circumstances makes everything easy. You will resume your old footing in the club—or, rather, more than your old footing."

Lovell was silent.

He had tried being captain of Loamshire before, and the experiment could not be called a success. But, as the colonel said, matters had changed now, and more important than anything else was the change in the sentiment of the club.

Arthur Lovell, as a professional, as a "paid player," had won respect and esteem, even from the most reluctant, and by courage and by steadily playing the game, he had succeeded in silencing the whispers of envy and malice.

Few now in the Loamshire County Cricket Club who did not like and admire the gallant young batsman who had done so much to bring his county to the front.

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THE TERROR?

You can't be an up-to-date sort of chap unless you've made his acquaintance. It's worth making. His pranks will set you roaring with laughter. He is certainly the queerest kind of character who has ever appeared in "THE BOYS' HERALD." How will you recognise him? Look for this in big type—

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OF

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