NEWSAGENTS! KINDLY ORDER NOW, THE NEW COMPLETE STORY BOOK, "THE MAGNET."

The Boys' Realm of Sport and Adventure. 1d.

No. 297. Vol. VI.] EVERY SATURDAY—ONE PENNY. [Saturday, February 8, 1908.

Fred Reckless: Amateur.

A Powerful New Athletic Serial. - - By JACK NORTH.

(Synopsis of Opening Chapters will be found at the foot of the next page.)

The Match with Crossop.

THERE was not a player on the Excelsior side who did not resent the leaving out of John Warman from the team. Some of the more hot-headed among them made schemes for showing their resentment—pretty wild schemes, for the most part. The soberest proposal was one for a joint protest to the selection committee. But the wiser heads—Mr. Raynton, Fred Reckless, George Raikes, and John himself—would not agree even to this.

"They've got a good excuse for it," said Warman. "I did come jolly near losin' you the match, you know."

"And it would be hardly fair to Darnall," added Fred. "It would look like a dead set made against him. There are some of the new men who don't by any means love us now. We mustn't give them a chance of sayin' that they haven't had fair play."

There was, indeed, a good deal of feeling against the old members of the team on the part of a majority of the newly-engaged men, of whom Darnall was one. As has already been mentioned, not one of these was a well-known player, though all were considered to possess considerable promise. But, to judge from their grumbling, one might have thought that they were cracks from Eston House, or Tyneside United, at least.

"They hadn't come to Bramchurch to play second fiddle to a lot of local josers," said Bingham, the centre-forward of the reserves, a fellow from a small Norweatshire club, who aspired to supplant Fred Reckless. "Let 'em put the local chaps into the reserves. It's we who ought to play in the first team."

In this way they formed a hostile camp, with Bingham as their leader, and Darnall as his lieutenant. The Excelsior lads still used their old clubhouse; but only two of the new pros.—Wallace, the reserves' goalkeeper, and McCoy, a half-back—ever entered its doors. These two stood somewhat aloof from the cabal the others had formed. They were fellows of superior rearing and better brains than the rest, and both were teetotallers, and did not care to join with the rest in making the Pig and Partridge—which stood near the ground, and was booming strongly—their headquarters.

Not that the pros. from a distance were likely to take any harm at the Pig and Partridge if James Rolls, the landlord, could prevent it. Rolls was an enthusiastic supporter of the club, and a man whom everyone whose opinion was worth having respected. A publican of the right type can be a powerful agent for good, since public-houses there must be, and Rolls was emphatically of the right type. He was zealous for the good name of his house. Habitual drunks and other undesirable characters were never allowed to get a footing there, and if he had been subsidised heavily to keep the new Excelsior men in good order he could not have done more.

"I don't like Darnall," said Chesworthy, who had not lost his natural frank outspokenness in studying for the legal profession. Mr. David Deedes had told him more than once that before he would be fit to be a solicitor he would have to learn to keep his tongue behind his teeth. Not that Chesworthy divulged office

(Continued on the next page.)

NEW SCHOOL STORY STARTS TO-DAY.

Fred Reckless: Amateur.

(Continued from the previous page.)

secrets, or, indeed, secrets of any sort. It was simply that he was too free with his opinions.

"Why not?" asked Telfer.

"Because it isn't the right sort. Did you hear about the row that he and Bingham had with Jim Rolls, any of you?"

It appeared that nobody had. Chesworthy almost always got early information about anything that happened in or around Branscholme.

"Nothing very much, on the face of it; but, anyway, show which way the wind blows," he observed sapiently. "Bingham and Darnall were in the billiard-room at the Pig and Partridge last night. They had had about a dozen shandies between eight an' a little after nine, an' they ordered a third each. An' Jarvey came up an' told them straight that they wouldn't get it there. He talked to them like a father, so I hear. Then they began to get either nasty, an' Jim Rolls chucked them each by the collar an' marched them out of the house. 'I won't say you shan't come here again,' he said, 'for I think you're safer here than in another licensed house, an' I'll be pleased to see you both, so long as you behave yourselves, an' submit to my authority. But that you've got to do, I warn you!'"

Everyone laughed. Though the old Excelsior players were very little in the way of frequenting public-houses, they knew and liked Rolls. Chesworthy's story might be coloured a little, but there was nothing in it at all improbable. Jim Rolls stood six feet two, weighed sixteen stone, and was an exceptionally powerful man: he was quite capable of dealing with Bingham and Darnall in conjunction.

"I hope Darnall will be fit to-morrow," said Ben Ankerdine.

"Let him be at his fittest an' best; he can't fill Johnson's place," growled Telfer.

Telfer chaffed his colleague at back in the most unmerciful way at times. His favourite name for John was "Old Stick-in-the-mud"; he was no less fonder of the big fellow, and on one had more perfect faith in him. Nothing few were less in the way of giving expression to it.

"Well, Crossop's no great side, anyway," said John.

They were taking some comfort from that. The Peakshire team that was due to visit Branchurch the next day had been among the last half-dozen on the Second League table during the preceding season, and had started the present campaign with two defeats. It really did seem that the Excelsiors, at home, ought to be easily capable of beating them.

"They've a new centre-forward chap from some Deeshire club," said Hills, whose sole reading was the football papers, and the football columns in such other papers as came his way, and who always retained in memory any recent migration.

"What's his name?"

"Morrell. I believe he's pretty hot stuff, too."

"Why, that must surely be the same man that East Frommidge tried last season, or the season before," remarked Telfer.

Hills nodded.

"That's the chap. But they say he's come on since then."

Telfer growled again, inaudibly this time. He had never yet played for the Excelsior without Warman alongside him, and he didn't like the prospect of doing so.

The crowd did not appreciate John's absence on the Saturday afternoon, either. Some few there were, as always on all grounds, who preferred a new face simply because it was a new face; but the majority said bitter things about the selection committee when the fact that John's absence was due neither to accident nor illness leaked out.

The teams lined up thus:

Branchurch Excelsior: Raynton; Darnall and Telfer; Dalby, Ankerdine, and Hills; Chesworthy, Raikes, Reckless, Dalby, and Burton.

Crossop: Husting; Collar and Wettins; Grigarach, Pomroy, and Grier; Chrimes, Jobson (R.), Morrell, Jobson (R. T.), and Tower.

Morrell, wearing for the first time the white shirt, with its blue collar, and the white knickers that were the colours of the Peakshire club, was the chief centre of interest to the Excelsior players. Somehow, they had taken up a notion that if they were beaten it would be largely by the prowess of the new man. Perhaps there was some slight justification for this, since Crossop's performance in the way of goal thus far that season had been anything but great, and new blood in the forward line appeared to be needed badly.

The ground was hard and true, there having been no rain during the week, and there was so little wind stirring that Fred had been in doubt as to which way to kick when he won the toss. Such conditions favoured the Excelsiors' fast, open style of play; but, nevertheless, it was with less confidence than usual that the team took the field.

John Warman had not been sent with the Reserves to London. Bingham was also out of the second team that day. He said that he had strained an ankle slightly; and Johnson, the trainer, who was wholly on the side of the "foreign" professionals, had agreed that a rest would be the best thing for him.

John met Bingham near the dressing-room, just as the teams had turned out.

"Hallo, Warman! Come to see Darnall put your nose out of joint?" asked Bingham, with a sneer.

"Come to see the game," replied John, quite calmly.

He could have thrashed Bingham with one hand; and as the two stood facing one another they might well have reminded anyone who saw of a big, serious mastiff and a yapping little cross-bred terrier.

"I thought it wouldn't be long before some of you old hands would have to be hoofed out."

"I should go on thinkin', if I were you. Perhaps in a year or two you'll be able to think something sensible."

Considered as repartee, that could hardly be held very incisive. Charlie Chesworthy would have called it weak. But it was sufficient to make Bingham very furious.

"If I wasn't for my strained ankle, I'd go for you, you hulkin' lout!"

"If it wasn't for my size, I'd knock your impleasant head off!" answered John, a little roused now.

Bingham danced up to him with his fists clenched. No one would have suspected that there was anything the matter with his ankle from the way he moved.

He aimed a blow at Warman's face. Then John lost his forbearance. He guarded the blow without difficulty, and, seizing Bingham by the back of the collar, forced him backwards until his balance was lost. Then John deposited him on his back on the ground.

"You'd better stay there till you cool off," he said.

Just at that moment Archell came up.

"What's this?" he said sharply. "Has Warman been assaultin' you, Bingham?"

"Nothing to bother about, a little difference of opinion!" answered Bingham, scrambling up with rather a shamefaced look.

"I should have fancied you'd be ashamed to knock down a man little more than half your weight. What you should describe such conduct as mere bullying."

"I don't think your opinion matters much, Mr. Archell. You know me better than to think me capable of bullyin', whatever you may say, too."

"Oh, I know that you an' the rest of the Reckless gang are a lot of sanctified saints, whose mouths would hold butter without its meltin'!" replied Archell sneeringly. "But you're not goin' to rule the roost here any longer! There's a different order of things in store for the Bramchurch Excelsiors in the near future, I can tell you!"

Warman looked him straight in the eyes, and answered quietly:

"Yes, I think there must be. Nothing worse could possibly have happened to the club than you bein' elected to the directorate. We can't expect things to go on pleasantly for sensibly after that."

"Do you remember that you are the club's paid servant, fellow?"

"I am not your servant, anyway, Mr. Archell! An' as for the club—well, I'm not dependent on it. I've a living apart from it; an' I can sign on for the Rovers at any time that the committee care to put me on the free transfer list."

With that John turned his back upon the two, and walked off to a position where he could see the game, which had begun some five minutes before.

Bingham and Archell looked at one another. The little bow-legged, red-headed forward had the latter's temper held under a pretty tight rein for long. They fell before Archell's now.

"I don't like that chap, or any of the crowd he belongs to, sir," he remarked cunningly.

"Don't you, Bingham?" was all Archell said. But as he walked to the members' stand his mind was busy with schemes against the fellows of whom Bingham spoke; and if it ever happened that he could see a way of making Bingham's enmity useful in the furtherance of his schemes nothing was more certain than that he would not hesitate to use him.

The match had begun with a hot raid by the Crossop forwards upon the home goal. Morrell, kicking off, had sent one to his right wing, where Robert Jobson and Tower had got away, passing and repassing from one to another in excellent style. Bifford had gone to grass; Darnall had rushed in and miskicked. Telfer came across with a dash, and landed the ball into touch, momentarily averting danger.

But Grier threw in well and strongly, and again the ball was in dangerous proximity to the goal. Darnall, instead of tackling resolutely, gave ground step by step before Tower, as though quite unable to make up his mind to any definite action.

"Tackle him, man!" yelled Telfer.

Darnall took another step or two backwards, his knees quaking like a dancing doll's, a second on his sallow face.

"Tackle him! Why don't you tackle him?" yelled a hundred voices, rising together like one.

And then Darnall tackled, but too late to be of any use. Tower, getting quickly, thrust the ball on to Bob Jobson, and he, with Ankerdine challenging him, transferred neatly to Morrell.

Before Telfer could reach him Crossop's new centre-forward had shot. The ball came into good touch at four before the level of the crossbar. Philip Raynton jumped and fisted out.

The leather fell close to Darnall. He trapped it cleverly enough, touched it past Tower, and then, to the amazement of all who saw, had on his way with it at his toes.

"Don't dribble, man! Clear it!" cried Telfer.

"Kick, Darnall!" roared Fred.

But the new back took no notice. On the preceding Saturday, playing for the Reserves against one of the weakest teams in the Midshire League, he had taken the ball almost from one end to the other, receiving the unstinted applause of the onlookers by his cleverness. He had a notion of doing something of the same sort now. Essentially a galley player, he meditated making his position in the team secure by some such display. Darnall and he forgot that the keen critics who were watching him would hardly forgive him his indiscretion, even if his attempt met with success.

But there was no likelihood of its doing that. Grier bore down upon him; the two met with a crash, the half's right shoulder against the back's chest. Then Darnall sat down suddenly and painfully, and Grier, steadying the ball, took a long shot for goal.

It did not score. Not often did a long shot score from any quarter. Philip Raynton's accurate eye and cool judgment. He dealt with it easily enough, and the leather went down the field, out towards the right wing.

Dalby and Grigarach were both close to it as it fell, but Dalby was a little the closer, and it was he who secured. He lifted it into the centre, over the heads of Morrell and Ben Ankerdine. Before Ben could turn, Morrell had pounced upon it, and was making all speed for goal. Darnall had been left on his left.

Telfer tackled, but it was Dick Jobson, not Morrell, whose charge met him, and the centre rushed on. Darnall challenged, but the new Crossop forward dodged him with consummate ease, and found himself five yards from the goal, with only the custodian to beat.

He shot hard into the farthest corner. Mr. Raynton flung himself forward on the instant, and got the tips of his fingers to the ball, but could not stay its course.

"Fit to play for a kindergarten school!" said Telfer to Darnall. "You're a fool, a funk, and a frost!"

"Steady, Telfer!" said Philip Raynton sternly. And the impulsive one reddened, and felt that he had done wrong in speaking his mind so plainly, but could not find it in his heart to apologise.

Unmistakably, though, Darnall's feebleness had been responsible for that goal, and there was considerable hissing all round the arena. The mayor spoke words that he would not have liked Mrs. Admead or the deacons at his chapel to hear: Mr. Warren had recourse to his flask; Mr. Bynoe took out his handkerchief and trumpeted loudly. His invariable practice when his feelings became too much for him.

"Honery" Evans roared out:

"Take 'im away! 'E's nought but a passonger! Play wi' ten men; yer'll be better orf so!"

Not far from Henery stood Jonathan Cox, a rough, whose previous conduct had induced the directors to give strict orders that he was not to be admitted to the ground. He had slipped in to-day at a turnstile where a new man was in charge.

Cox was one of those ultra-enthusiastic supporters whom no club wants. His sole desire was to see the team that he supported win. For fair play he cared nothing. He had often been heard to say that the Excelsiors would be twice the team they were if they "wasn't so bloomin' perticular about behavin' the same when the referee warn't lookin' as when he weer!"

Jonathan had even a heavier load of drink to carry to-day than usual. He had also, which was not so usual a thing with him, a bet of five shillings upon the game.

"If that crime go lettin' the team do ev'agen like that there," he proclaimed, at the top of his voice, "I'll git over the barrier an' slosh 'im, that's what I'll do!"

"Shut up, Cox, or yer'll get verself put out!" said Evans, who was a neighbour of the fellow's, and had known him from childhood. In acquiring a spirit of fair play and sportsmanship—and he had acquired that in the months that had passed since the beginning of his whole-hearted devotion to Fred Reckless—Henery had not turned his back upon old friends. To the superficial eye there might seem no difference in him; but there was a real difference, and, unconsciously to himself, he had done something to raise his friends' standard, too.

But his influence had not penetrated as far down as Jonathan Cox. It was unlikely that it ever would.

"Yer'd like to slosh 'im yerself, Henery!" returned Cox.

"I might like, but I knows better'n to do it, or even to talk of a-doin' of it!" returned Evans. "Gag that chap, some on yer! I would if I was in reach on him!"

But none of the hands had been restarted, and Cox subsided. In a minute or two he was giving tongue again, however, though in a different way.

For now the forwards in the green-and-white shirts were moving rapidly down on the Crossop goal, quite in the old familiar style.

Fred had passed hard out to Raikes, who had soon transferred to Chesworthy. And Charles was off in one of his rapid dashes along the touch-line, with Grier in hot pursuit, but not gaining.

Twenty yards from the goal-line Chesworthy swung his left foot hard, and straight and true the ball sped for the centre. As Fred Reckless trapped it and dodged past Pomroy, the Bramchurch war-cry arose. Surely the home lads would score now!

Collar and Wettins dashed at Fred, one on either side. With a sudden burst he went between them, but as he drew clear the ball was picked up from his very toes and hurled down the field.

Husting had run out, and made a splendid save. Even the home spectators, disappointed as they were, gave the plucky goalkeeper a cheer, and the Crossop players clapped him in the big stand burst into rapturous applause.

But again the Bramchurch forwards pressed on to the attack—again, and yet again. Collar and Wettins tackled fearlessly, and kicked well, and Husting performed marvellously, but it was plain to be seen that such pressure must end sooner or later in goal.

And so it did, but not until the game was thirty-five minutes old. Then Fred got through with a low shot at close range, and the spectators breathed freely at last.

In the remaining portion of the first half the game was even, and Darnall distinguished himself by pulling up Morrell, and clearing in good style on one occasion.

He looked round triumphantly at Telfer when the ball was once well away. The fellow was all smiles now. That one success had wiped out all his previous failures, to his little, self-satisfied mind.

"Yes," grunted Telfer. "Be all very well if you did that every time, I dare say. But one clearance don't make a first-class back any more than one swallow makes a summer."

"I'd be all right if I only got fair play from the rest of you," said Darnall sulkily.

"Who's preventin' your havin' fair play?"

"I don't like bein' shouted at as if I was a mad dog."

"Man alive, who could help shoutin' at you? Backin' an' backin', with your blessed knees gone all wobbly, like a chap in a mortal funk, instead of runnin' in an' tacklin'! Why, it was enough to make a corpse shout!"

"Telfer!" said Mr. Raynton, less sternly this time, for he could not help smiling. And Telfer shut up. One and all they loved and admired Philip Raynton, those lads of the old Excelsior Club. He was their true friend, as he had proved in many a way; and they knew it.

And now half-time came, with the scores equal, though the home team had had something like eighty per cent. of the play.

As the teams returned to the field, the sun suddenly shone out, emerging from the grey clouds that had hidden it, and a gusty breeze caused the green and white flag to flap bravely, bright in the rays that fell upon it.

"A good omen!" said the mayor gaily, his thick forefinger to the flag.

"Confound the wind!" said Rex Dalby.

THE CHIEF CHARACTERS ARE:

FRED RECKLESS, the captain of the Bramchurch Excelsior Football Club. Fred has skippered this organisation since its start as a junior amateur club. Recently, it has embraced professionalism and entered the Second Division of the Midshire League. Fred, however, still retains his amateur status, as do a few of the other members, namely:

RAIKES, DALNY, CHESWORTHY, and PHILIP RAYNTON. The latter is an ex-Corinthian, who keeps goal for the Excelsior Club. He is an author by profession, and a splendid fellow to wit.

TOMMY TUNDALE, my friend of old, who is in great trouble. He has had the ill-luck to lose his situation, and his stepfather and stepmother threaten to turn him from home, unless he quickly procures another one. Tommy's earnings have been the sole support of his step-parents for some time past.

ARTHUR ARCHELL, the son of the squire of Stoke Eaton. He is a deadly enemy to Fred Reckless, notwithstanding the fact that the latter on one occasion saved his life at the risk of his own. Archell does everything in his power to wreck Fred's career and to bring about his downfall, not even stopping at personal injury.

The Bramchurch Excelsior's first match of the season in the Second Division of the English League is with Fishertown. After a keen and strenuous tussle they beat the Fishermen by three goals to one.

Tommy Trundle disappears from home after an unpleasant scene with his unlovely stepfather and stepmother. He is missing for several days ere Fred receives a letter from him, giving no address, informing him of matters he has discovered, and stating that Fred will hear from him again in a very short time.

The next Saturday the Excelsior Club journey to East Frommidge to play the team of that name. The game starts off with a rush, and Sharratt, the East Frommidge outside-right, scores with a crashing shot.

Almost at once a second goal is scored against them. John Warman is practically a passenger during the first half, owing to his having omitted to bring his football boots with him, a fact that he does not discover until a few minutes before the match commences.

After half-time, however, the tables are turned. The Excelsior team quickly get to work, and soon equalise the score. Warman, who has now procured a new pair of boots, plays a marvellous game. A few seconds before time they score a third and winning goal.

On the following Monday Archell calls on Fred and his partner, Mr. Watkins, who are in the cycle trade together, and proposes that he shall go into partnership with them. Upon meeting with a refusal he shows traces of his old malignant spirit, and at length Reckless puts him out of the shop by sheer force, so angry is he with him.

John Warman informs Fred that he has been told to stand down for the next League match. Fred recognises Archell's hand in the business, for Archell now occupies a position on the board of directors of the Bramchurch Excelsior Football Club.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

"This is rough luck, Fred. We shall have it bang in our faces."

And the mayor's look of pleasure died away—though he could not hear what Dalny had said—the next moment; for he, too, had realised that what had seemed a good omen really meant a big handicap for the home team!

THE 11th CHAPTER.
Defeat!

WHEN Fred kicked off for the home team after half-time, very few people on the ground doubted that, in spite of the wind, the Excelsiors would win.

There seemed, indeed, little room for doubt. That they were the better team all who knew anything about the game could see. They had had far more than their share of the play. They were performing at home before an enthusiastic crowd; and that is always a big advantage.

Most of those present settled themselves down comfortably in the conviction of a win by at least three to one. They felt some suspense, indeed, but that was only until the goal that should put Bramchurch ahead was scored. After that, their minds would be quite easy.

But on a sudden all their confidence was dashed to the ground. Collar pulled up Burton, and sent the ball swinging down the field. The wind carried it right to Morrell, chest-high. He breasted it, and, letting it run down his body and right leg to his toes, or so it seemed to those who saw, was off in an instant.

Ben Ankerdine tackled gamely, but was passed. Telfer rushed in. Morrell tapped the leather neatly to Bob Jobson, slipped past Telfer, and received again from his inside-right, who had gone ahead so as to keep him on-side.

Some of the spectators did not understand these tactics, and there was a yell of "Off-side!"

But the referee took no notice. When Morrell had passed to Jobson the two backs and the goalkeeper were all ahead of them. When Jobson had passed back to Morrell, the inside-right had been nearer the goal-line than the man to whom he had passed, and consequently the centre was on-side.

Jonathan Cox was among the shouters, naturally.

"'Ow much did they pay yer, referee? Gerway 'ome an' learn the rules, do! Don't yer know off-side when yer see it? Or carn't yer see at all—is that it?"

"There's that rascal Cox on the ground again!" said the mayor. "I cannot think why the gatemen do not obey orders and refuse him admittance. I shall have to send someone to put him out."

"I shouldn't," answered Mr. Bynoe. "It will only create a bigger disturbance. And the crowd is very thick there. It would be difficult to get at him."

"Shut up!" said the mayor.

Which was rude of his worship, but very natural. For at that moment something was happening.

Telfer tricked, Morrell had only Darnall and the goalkeeper to beat. He had no time to waste, for Telfer had wheeled round and would be on him again in a few seconds.

But the Crossop centre was as cool as a cucumber. He seemed to be running straight at Darnall, who waited standing still for him to come. But just at the instant when a collision appeared inevitable, Morrell swerved suddenly and dodged round the back.

But where was the ball? He had not taken it with him, and yet—yet, by jingo, he had it again! Before the spectators could realise just what had happened it was crashing into the net, from a shot at such close range as gave Philip Raynton practically no chance.

Morrell had put into execution as cool and audacious a trick as could well be imagined.

He had noticed how Darnall's legs were straddled wide as he waited, and he had simply tapped the ball between them!

Telfer's disgust was too deep for words this time. If Darnall had only backed him up, tackling Jobson as he tackled Morrell, or if he had rushed the centre instead of waiting stock-still to be tricked, the goalkeeper would have had a chance to save. But——

"Well, I've seen rotten backs before," said Telfer that evening, "but I never in my life saw one that stood an' did the blessed graven image trick while the ball was kicked through his legs!"

Up in the members' stand, among the committee, there was a good deal said.

"We'll put the abject idiot on the free transfer list!" fumed the mayor.

"It strikes me that we'll have to pay someone to take him," answered Warren.

"Bury him! That's what we ought to do!" snorted Bynoe.

Archell said nothing. He was not sorry to see the goal scored; but he would greatly have preferred that Telfer should have been responsible for letting Morrell through. He was glad now that all his scheming to get John Warman left out in favour of Darnall had been done in such a manner that no one was likely to believe him the chief agent of the change.

He had said very little at the meeting when the team was chosen; but before it he had ably encouraged an idea the mayor had conceived of making an example of John in the interests of discipline, and had worked on the crazy that he knew Warren and Bynoe to have for seeing the new players in the team. These four comprised the committee of selection. It was the mayor who had put forward the proposition that Warman ought not to be played that week. It was Bynoe who had advocated the giving Darnall a trial, and Warren who had backed him up eagerly. Archell had said very little; yet in reality he had been at the bottom of it all.

"I say, chaps, 'ow did 'e do it? Tell me, somebody. I don't unnerstand it. I feel like as if I was dreamin'. 'Ow did 'e do it, tell me that?"

"Yer've 'ad too much beer, Jonathan, that's the long an' short of it," said Cox's friend Halkett, who stood by his side. "Else yer could see very well. 'E just opened o' 'is legs, perlite like, an' let t'other chap slip the ball a-tween them. Never see nothink neater, in a way; but, by blazes, if I was a-near 'im, I'd scrag the beggar for't!"

"Let's go for 'im. Come along, Halkett! I'm game!"

"Not now, yer fool! But just yer wait. If 'e lets us down agen, it'll be a pretty bad thing for Mister Darnall, so I tell yer straight!"

Halkett, a brawny, powerful fellow, with a savage face, was even more ferocious than Cox, for he was not the worse for drink, whereas Cox's threats were as much the liquor talking as anything.

Even now the spectators did not give up hope. They remembered that there was quite a long period in the first half of the game when the Excelsior forwards had pressed continuously, and Darnall had had no opportunity to display his ineptitude. The same thing might well happen again.

It did. But hot though the attack of the Bramchurch front line was, and cleverly as the halves backed it up, sending the ball in again whenever it came out of the steam scrimmage

Then into the press drove a strong, tall figure, and John Warman, striking out right and left, scattered the crowd of roughs for a moment, and bestrode the body of Darnell.

that went on in the penalty area, no goal accrued.

For the Crossop men had packed their goal now, and were putting into play every device they could think of to keep the lead they had gained. Frequently they kicked into touch; and, with the wind blowing strongly at their backs, they did not hesitate to kick behind, too. Chesworthy and Hills were both wonderfully good at corner-kicks; but the wind was too violent and gusty for much danger to be feared from them to-day; and every time a corner-kick had to be taken valuable time was wasted.

It was marvellous how the home team, with that high wind against them, penned the visitors in so completely.

But to all who thoroughly understood the game, it was obvious that the wind alone was certain sooner or later to give the Crossop vanguard a chance of breaking away. And some noticed that Morrell was not taking any very active part in the defence. The other forwards had dropped back; but he hung about in the neighbourhood of the home halves. He, at least, had not given up hope of scoring once more.

"Look out, Ankerdine!" shouted someone in the crowd. "There's a chap near you that wants a policeman on his track."

And just at that moment Morrell's chance came.

Darting, clearing, kicked hard and high. The wind seized the leather, and took it far down the ground. Morrell was after it like an antelope; and after him went the Bramchurch halves. But he gained on them with every stride.

Telfer had rushed forward; and the eyes of all were on the two as they closed in on the ball, which had reached the ground now and was rolling gently along, on its own, as it were.

Which would get it first? Morrell was a couple of yards nearer; but the sphere was moving away from him and towards the back.

Ah, he had it, though! And a yard ahead of Telfer he reached it, and tapped it to his right, and sprang after it, and was away down the field again for all he was worth.

"Look out, Morrell! Man on you!" yelled Pomrey.

Morrell looked ahead. Darnall was about ten yards from him. He glanced over his shoulder. Behind him, moving at the pace of a Sheffield handicap sprinter, already well ahead of the beaten halves, sped a lithe figure that the Crossop men recognised as the centre of the opposing team.

Fred was putting into it every ounce of energy. His feet seemed almost to skim the ground. Even those who knew best the pace of which he was capable wondered at him then.

But a stern chase is a long chase. Morrell had a start, and was himself possessed of a very useful turn of speed. Could Fred possibly reach him in time?

There was Darnall in the way. With help coming up, Darnall ought to have been able to check the centre's career, at least, and give his comrades a chance of dispossessing him.

But—and small wonder—Morrell thought himself able to laugh at the best the Bramchurch left back could do.

Darnall charged at him. Morrell swerved, and swept on.

Then Darnall wheeled round and ran his hardest. Whatever his failings as a player, the fellow had pace.

He gained on Morrell. And now Fred overhauled him. And now flying forward and pursuers alike were within the penalty area; and Philip Raynton waited, his eyes glued to the ball, feet, hands, body, all ready for instant action.

"Take him on the right!" cried Fred, himself making for Morrell's left. If he and Darnall could thus hem in the Crossop man, it ought not to be difficult for them either to bring him to a standstill and rob him of the ball, or to make him shoot while still far enough from the goal to give the watchful custodian every chance.

Another stride, and Fred would be those few inches ahead that would enable him to tackle Morrell fairly. But just then, Darnall charged with all his force right into the back of the white-clothed figure, and sent him crashing to ground face foremost, uttering a low cry of pain and amazement as he fell.

A yell of execration arose from the section of the crowd that loved fair play. It was succeeded by another yell from the other section—those who cared little for fair play, but much for winning. For the referee had hurried up, and pointed to the penalty mark.

"The ruffian!" said the mayor angrily.

"The utter fool!" said Mr. Bynoe, with contempt. "If it had been the only way now-well, there would have been some excuse."

"There would be no excuse whatever, Mr. Bynoe!" rapped out Mr. Alderman Admead.

"But, sir, it's constantly done—you read of it almost every Saturday. There was no excuse for Darnall, because Reckless had every chance of stopping the forward. Otherwise, his action would have been justified. Man, a good man has done it before."

"Many a coward!" muttered the mayor. "I know your theory—save a goal and chance a goal, from the penalty—but you're all wrong, Bynoe, all wrong! It's not the game, sir—it's not the game!"

Bynoe would have continued the argument; but just then Warren struck in with:

"I say, I hope Morrell isn't hurt!"

But Morrell was hurt. That was very evident. Fred Reckless had turned him over and lifted him on to his back. The Crossop trainer was hurrying across, with a flask under his arm and a basin of water between his hands.

Morrell's head hung limp. He breathed heavily and with difficulty. He had fallen on the top of his skull, with an awful jar to his spine and the muscles of his neck.

The referee turned, his eyes flashing angrily, and spoke to Darnall. Then the left-back, his sallow face sullen and wicked, walked towards the dressing-room.

Ordered off the field! An utter failure as a player, he had, in all probability, lost his side the match. He had certainly disgraced it. And now he was ordered off!

That was the end of all his high hopes. Buoyed up by cheap success against inferior teams, he had believed himself fully John Warman's equal, had fancied that he had only to win a trial in order to make his place secure in the team. And he had done this.

His heart was full of blind, unreasoning hatred—of Morrell, of his comrades, or everyone but himself—as he went.

Fred and the Crossop captain helped Morrell off between them. He would play no more that day. Possibly it might be weeks before he was fit again.

The penalty-kick was taken, and a goal resulted from it. Some said afterwards that Philip Raynton made no real attempt to stop the ball, and blamed him for such a display of quixotic chivalry. But they were wrong. It was the queer fight that it took, as the wind carried it in, that deceived and beat him.

"If Darnall had been the only man near Morrell, I might, perhaps, have let the penalty shot through purposely," he said afterwards. "I am not sure. I hope that I shall never have to decide what to do in such a case. But, as it was, I firmly believe that Fred would have stopped the man but for that blundering blackguard's dirty trick; and I should have prevented the goal had I been able."

For the rest of the game, the Excelsior forwards pressed strongly; and just before the whistle went, Fred got through. But there was no time for another, and so the home side had to retire beaten by three goals to two, after a game in which they had been the better team practically from start to finish.

As they made their way to the dressing-room, a sudden cry of fear and pain rang out. There was a path leading from the back of the dressing-room to the players' entrance in the corner of the ground nearest the town; and it was from that path that the cry had come.

Fred ran quickly round the building. Telfer followed him more leisurely.

"It's Darnall! Some beggars have set on to him!" cried Reckless.

"Serve him right!" answered Telfer. "I'm not goin' to help him!"

But he did go, after all that. When he saw Raikes and Dalny, Chesworthy and Ankerdine, all rushing to the rescue, he could not hold back.

But someone else was before them, before Fred even. Someone else was letting drive with a pair of sledgehammer fists at the roughs who had assaulted the disgraced player.

Darnall had changed, and had sat, sulky and glum, in the dressing-room until the whistle told him that the game was over. Then, having no wish to meet any of his colleagues, he had slunk out.

A few yards along the path to the gate, screened by the buildings that shut it out from the playing portion of the ground, he had found his way barred.

"Ere 'e is!" cried Jonathan Cox. "'Ere's the bloke that lost us the game. Sock 'im, chaps—sock 'im good an' hard!"

He lurched forward, breathing into Darnall's face, and aimed at him a heavy blow. Darnall ducked and then struck, catching Cox under the chin. Then Halkett's heavy hand smote him in the face; and the others closed in on him. There were half a dozen of them, hard cases every one; and Darnall, seeing himself utterly overmatched, gave a shout for help that was almost a scream.

He was struck again, and fell. Cox kicked at him savagely, and, overbalancing, came down on top of him.

Then into the press drove a strong, tall figure, and John Warman, striking out right and left, scattered the crowd of roughs for a moment, and bestrode the body of his supplanter.

(Another fine, long instalment next Saturday.)

LOOK OUT FOR
THE BLUE CRUSADERS
AND
A NEW STAGE STORY
NEXT SATURDAY!
ORDER YOUR COPY AT ONCE!

FROM YOUR EDITOR'S CHAIR.

Latest Portrait of YOUR EDITOR (H. E.).
Controller of
THE BOYS' REALM—Saturday.
THE BOYS' FRIEND—Tuesday.
THE BOYS' HERALD—Wednesday.

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.
Back numbers of THE BOYS' REALM may be had by any reader for distribution amongst his chums on receipt of a postcard.
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.

Our New School Story.

IN this issue of our paper the opening chapters of our enthralling new school story are presented to my readers. I have been at great pains to secure this yarn for the REALM, and have carefully worked out the plot of the story with the author, so that it shall be in every way a powerful and entrancing yarn from start to finish. And I feel certain that when my friends have perused the long opening instalment this week they will agree with me that, if it goes on as it has commenced, it will be indeed one of the greatest stories of school life which has ever been published. I have pleasure in telling my readers that it will not only continue to be as interesting from week to week as is Iridhia first long instalment, but will grow more exciting and more thrilling as every chapter appears.

I shall esteem it a great favour if my loyal supporters will pass this issue of our paper on to some of their chums who do not read THE BOYS' REALM, so that they may have an opportunity of reading this great new school tale.

ANDY, THE ACTOR.

Next week I shall publish the opening chapters of yet another new serial, this time from the pen of Mr. Max Hamilton. I have spoken to my friends for a long time past about this story, which will be entitled "Andy, the Actor," and which I am certain will be read with avidity by every one of my readers. Many, many times have I warned lads and young men who have written to me for advice about going on the stage not to do so because I am acquainted with the many pitfalls that abound for those who enter this profession. It is a hard life, a life teeming with temptations and trials, a life which can by no means be described as a bed of roses. Even if the young aspirant for fame on the boards is possessed of considerable ability he is by no means assured of obtaining a good position, and for many, many years he will probably have to struggle along on a miserable pittance, depriving himself of everything but the bare necessities of life.

The profession is very much overcrowded, and, therefore, on this score alone, it is very unwise for a lad to seek to enter upon the career of an actor.

It is because I am acquainted with the sort of life led by the theatrical profession as a whole, and because I know of the many hardships that most actors have to endure, that I have asked Mr. Max Hamilton to write me this story for THE BOYS' REALM. I feel certain that when my friends have read about the trials and troubles of Andy, the actor, a lad filled with a great desire to attain fame on the boards, they will think twice before they take the first step towards trying to carve out a career for themselves in this profession. Remember that this powerful new stage story positively starts next week.

How to Make Theatrical Wigs.

A VERY great difficulty with boys who go in for amateur theatricals is the obtaining of the necessary wigs, for they are very costly affairs. However, in the issue of my companion paper, "The Boys' Herald," which will be on sale next Wednesday, there will appear a splendid article by a young actor, in which the different kinds of wigs in use for all stage purposes will be fully described.

In this week's number of "The Boys' Herald" now on sale, there appears the opening chapters of "Sexton Blake at School," one of the grandest school stories it has been my good fortune to read. You are certain to like this new school and detective story, and I advise you to begin it now.

Nor must I forget to give you a tip about the good things in "The Boys' Friend," the finest boys' fiction paper of those on sale in any part of the world. Four grand serials and two complete tales are published in it every week, while to a fortnight from now there will commence a great drama of modern Jewish life that will eclipse every story that has appeared in "The Boys' Friend."

"Only a Jew Boy" is its striking title, and it will end on Saturday next.

As a loyal supporter of THE BOYS' REALM, you should get this week's copies of our two companion papers, and I shall be surprised if you do not become a reader of them always.

He Wants to Grow Tall.

A BRADFORD reader, whose initials are W. E. H., puts to me two questions. The first is a very usual one, being, "How can I grow taller?" The second one is, I must say, rather unusual, and is: "How can I get fat?"

To deal with the questions in rotation.

My friend states that he is eighteen years of age, and only stands just over five feet in height.

There are many boys who inherit shortness, either their father or mother being small, and when this is the case it is almost impossible for them to increase their stature by means of exercise, etc. Nature and temperament play a great part in the size of a man. But when I take the first question of my Bradford chum in conjunction with his second, I should hardly say that this is the case with him. I should rather say that the smallness of his stature is due to want of exercise, and consequently, want of condition.

My friend should go in for exercise strongly. Here are two very good exercises for increasing the height which you should practise night and morning. Stand upright, stretching the hands as far above the head as possible. Now bend from the hips until you touch your toes, keeping the knees perfectly stiff.

The only way in which my friend can become fat is by eating good, wholesome food, such as steak and porridge; but on no account should he allow himself to become podgy.

A Cure for Stammering.

STAMMERING is a very distressing complaint, from which, I am very sorry to say, a great number of boys suffer. It is needless for me to point out the difficulties under which a person labours when he stutters, so I will at once give a possible cure for the stammering of my friend H. B., who writes to me from Beeston, Leeds.

Stammering is very often put down entirely to nervousness. This is not true, however, for stammering is due in pretty well every case to an excessively long uvula. As my readers know, the uvula is a round, spongy body suspended from the palate. Now, every time a sound is uttered, this uvula is lifted up from the glottis, thus allowing the free passage of that sound.

In the case of the stutterer, however, the uvula being excessively long, it is only lifted a very little way from the glottis, and is then lowered with a trembling motion. This trembling motion is the cause for the stuttering; for, as the uvula trembles, or, in other words, is rapidly raised and lowered, the passage of sound is alternately opened and closed.

My Beeston chum will see from the above, that in order to cure his stutter, he must, in some way, lift the uvula well away from the glottis, and the manner of doing this is very simple. Before uttering any word, my friend must draw in a sharp breath through his mouth. To see the effect of this indrawing of breath, H. B., or any other of my friends suffering from the same complaint, should stand in front of a looking-glass, where he can clearly see his uvula, and then draw in a breath. He will then see the uvula is instantly lifted up, thus giving a clear passage for sound.

Of course, this intaking of breath prior to the utterance of any word, will necessarily make my friend's conversation of a rather wearying nature, but if he persevere in it, he will, after a time, be able to say his shorter words without taking the breath, and finally his stutter will disappear.

Any boys who stutter will find breathing exercise very beneficial, and I strongly advise them to practise it night and morning.

When conversing, the stutterer should think out every sentence he is going to utter before commencing it, and should not hurry his utterance on any occasion.

Stammering is very apt to make a boy of a nervous nature, and, for this reason, I must impress upon my reader the importance of curing himself as soon as possible, and wish him every success in the effort I am sure he will make.

YOUR EDITOR (H. E.).

This ripping story is just starting in my companion paper, "The Boys' Herald." Start reading it now.

Now raise yourself upon your toes, and slowly lower yourself to the former position. Repeat several times.

Stand at attention with hands above head.

OUR LEAGUE CORNER.

Secretaries of Junior Leagues are invited to send in interesting items of news, etc., for publication in these columns, which will be reserved for them in future. No charge is made for the insertion of such paragraphs. It should be borne in mind that, owing to the fact that THE BOYS' REALM goes to press so long in advance of the day of publication, no item of news can appear until three weeks have elapsed.

NORTH STAFFS CHURCH LEAGUE.

Table up to and including January 11th.

DIVISION I.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
Silverdale St. Luke's	14	13	1	0	44	15	26
Cobridge Church	17	11	5	1	51	32	23
Ashton Church	12	11	1	0	58	18	22
Florence Sh. Luke's	11	9	2	0	30	12	18
Hanley B.C.	12	7	3	2	34	17	16
Hanley St. Jude's	15	7	7	1	28	35	15
Longton St. Chad's	14	5	7	2	25	30	12
Shelton Brotherhood	12	5	7	0	28	32	10
Tunstall R.C.	15	4	10	1	26	42	9
Hanley St. Chad's	12	4	8	0	18	38	8
Stoke R.C.	14	3	9	2	25	47	8
Tunstall Christ Church	12	3	9	0	16	32	6
Stoke St. Andrew's	14	0	12	2	10	56	2

FINSBURY PARK AND DISTRICT LEAGUE.

Table up to and including January 11th.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
Stoke Newington Glendale	10	9	1	0	33	10	18
Crofton Rovers	9	8	1	0	38	13	16
Belmont Lodge	5	4	1	0	10	9	8
Bolton United	7	3	2	2	20	15	8
Craven Park Athletic	8	2	4	2	7	11	6
Crown Rovers F.C.	8	1	5	2	7	20	4
Paradise F.C.	7	1	5	1	14	28	3
Amhurst Athletic	5	1	4	0	0	17	2

ANNFIELD PLAIN MINOR LEAGUE.

Greenerofi Black Watch have withdrawn from the above organisation.

PORTSMOUTH AND DISTRICT LADS' LEAGUE.

Table up to and including January 11th.

SENIOR DIVISION.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
Emsworth	14	10	2	2	53	16	22
St. Jude's	11	8	1	2	30	4	18
Camper and Nicholson's	12	9	3	0	54	15	18
Buckland Congregational	14	8	4	2	18	38	18
*Cathedral Guild	15	8	4	3	29	10	17
Royal Sailors' Rest	13	8	5	0	37	16	16
Crown Athletic	11	2	4	5	9	32	9
All Saints'	16	2	12	2	15	45	6
St. Matthew's	12	1	11	0	9	44	2
St. Matthew's	12	1	11	0	8	89	2

*Two points deducted for playing ineligible player.

JUNIOR DIVISION.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
Immanuel Baptist	8	7	0	1	32	12	15
St. Matthew's	7	5	1	1	41	4	11
St. Michael's	7	3	1	3	17	18	9
St. George's	8	2	2	4	6	18	8
Cathedral Guild	5	2	3	0	15	10	4
Lake Road Baptist	7	0	4	3	5	30	3
R.S. Rest Naval Brigade	8	0	5	3	13	23	3

"THE BOYS' REALM" NORTH LONDON LEAGUE.

Week ending January 11th.

JUNIOR.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
St. Martin's Juniors	13	13	0	0	127	11	26
Upper Chelsea F.C.	13	12	2	0	49	14	24
St. Paul's F.C.	11	11	0	0	74	5	22
Clarewood	12	10	1	1	83	11	21
Aylesbury United	15	9	2	3	56	31	21
Grosvenor	16	9	4	3	39	22	21
Cornish Rovers	13	9	3	0	48	17	20
Clifton Hall	10	8	0	2	46	13	18
Charterhouse Swifts	16	8	6	2	28	37	18
Paddington St. Paul's	12	6	2	4	36	21	16

SENIOR.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
Norwood Juniors	17	15	2	0	107	21	30
Stoke Newington Avondale	17	11	2	4	48	10	26
Goldney United	16	11	2	3	66	33	25
Victor Swifts	13	12	1	0	43	9	24
Berry's Juniors	14	10	0	4	40	15	24
Charlesworth	12	11	0	1	82	7	23
Denbigh	12	9	1	2	86	12	20
Norland	11	10	1	0	49	13	20
St. Mary's Old Boys	11	9	1	1	59	15	19

"THE BOYS' REALM" SOUTH LONDON LEAGUE.

JUNIOR.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
Woodman	17	16	0	1	91	16	33
St. Mary's A.F.C.	16	15	1	0	76	20	30
Holy Trinity	13	13	0	3	91	23	29
Ivy A.F.C.	13	12	0	1	58	16	25
St. Nicholas	12	12	0	0	92	10	24
Elmhurst	14	9	3	2	59	23	20
Albion Invicta	10	7	1	2	50	12	16
Elmwood	9	7	1	1	30	17	15
Beaufort	12	11	0	1	52	14	13

SENIOR.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
St. Mary's Church F.C.	15	12	2	1	64	28	25
Claverton	14	11	1	2	60	19	24
Jarbies F.C.	14	11	1	2	48	11	23
Holmesdale	14	9	2	3	40	21	21
London House Reserves	13	10	3	0	52	20	20
Church Institute Juniors	12	8	2	2	49	21	18

ORAN JUVENILE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION.

Table up to and including January 11th.

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts.
2nd Glenmore	5	4	1	0	16	7	8
Thursday	5	3	1	1	7	3	7
Dungallon	4	1	2	1	5	18	3

There is a handsome silver medal presented by the Association for the highest goal scorer in the league.

OUT TO-DAY! PRICE 3d. EACH!

Two New Volumes of

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" LIBRARY.

No. 39—

"SEXTON BLAKE IN SIBERIA."

A New Long, Complete Detective Tale.

No. 40—

"THE FOURTH FORM OF GREYMINSTER."

A Grand Complete School Story by HENRY ST. JOHN.

BUY YOUR COPIES AT ONCE.

GOOD OLD TAFFY!

A Fine Complete Tale of School and Football by Popular CHARLES HAMILTON.

THE 1st CHAPTER.
The Cap for the First Fifteen.

"SORRY, Kempton; but——"

There was no need for Conroy, the captain of St. Friars, to finish. And Kempton, of the Sixth, did not allow him time to do so.

"You mean that you can't put me into the fifteen, Conroy?" he broke in hotly.

The captain of St. Friars nodded.

"That's it, Kemp!"

"Why not?"

"It stood between you and young Llewellyn," said Conroy slowly. "I've been wavering in my mind, but I've had to make it up at last. Llewellyn goes in."

"Llewellyn, of the Fifth? And I——"

"And you're in the Sixth, and a prefect! I know what you're going to say. But you know that considerations of that sort cannot count on the footer field."

"I was going to say that it's mere rot to tell me that a kid in the Fifth can play Rugger better than a Sixth-Former who has been here twice as long, and always kept his end up on the field."

"If my opinion is mere rot," said Conroy stiffly, "there's no good in arguing about it, that I can see."

Kempton coloured.

"I didn't mean that, Con. But—but this comes rather hard on me. If I had been passed over for a fellow in my own Form, I shouldn't have minded so much. But to have a chap in the Fifth put over my head——"

"Of course, it's a disappointment," said Conroy. "Half the fellows at St. Friars would give their ears to play in the first fifteen—especially against Highcliffe, our biggest match of the year. If we could play the old-fashioned Rugby game with fifty a side, I dare say I could manage to please everybody. But, as I only want fifteen, I naturally pick out the best men."

"And Llewellyn is better than I am, is he?" said Kempton.

"Well, you see, comparisons are odious, as they say; but this chap Llewellyn is a Welshman, and he's played Rugger almost since he could walk; and, as a matter of fact, Kemp, I think that as a three-quarter he's better than at least one fellow already in the team, who has played for St. Friars for two seasons. I know you are in good form, but—— Well, I've chosen Llewellyn, after thinking about it a lot, too."

"Of course, if you've decided, I've nothing more to say," said Kempton, with an effort. "If Llewellyn goes in, I stay out; and that's the end of it. You have a right to please yourself as a football captain."

"I don't want to please myself. I want to win matches, and keep up the name of the school; and that's what I'm trying to do."

"Well, it's settled then?"

"Yes; quite settled. I was just going to write out the names to put the notice up on the board when you came in."

Kempton nodded, and walked out of the captain's study.

But, although he was outwardly calm, he was inwardly chafing. He had counted upon a cap for the first fifteen of St. Friars. One of the team had lately shown such bad form that he had to be replaced, and the choice was only between Kempton, of the Sixth, and Llewellyn, of the Fifth. As the latter was in the lower Form, and had only been a couple of terms at St. Friars, Kempton felt that he had an advantage. But Conroy looked only to a player's form. The considerations Kempton counted upon did not influence him in the least.

Kempton's thoughts were very bitter as he walked down the passage. He felt slighted and wounded. In his own opinion he was a better three-quarter than Owen Llewellyn, and quite equal to some in the team, especially Thurlow. But he had been passed over.

"Hallo, Kempton!"

He looked up sullkily at the voice of Llewellyn, of the Fifth.

Owen Llewellyn, a sturdy, well-set, lithe-limbed young Welshman, with a frank, good-tempered face and bright, merry eyes, looked curiously at the Sixth-Former.

"Anything wrong?" he asked.

"No!" said Kempton snappishly. "What should be?"

"Thought you looked out of sorts."

"Rot!"

And, having snapped out that polite monosyllable, Kempton was about to walk on, when the astonished Llewellyn tapped him on the arm, and detained him.

"I say, have you seen the skipper lately?" he asked.

"Yes!" growled Kempton.

"Do you know what's decided? You know, the vacant place in the first fifteen is between us two. Conroy was going to put up the list this evening——"

"Yes; it's decided, if you want to know," said Kempton bitterly. "You're in the team, Llewellyn."

Llewellyn's eyes flashed.

"You mean it, Kemp?"

"Yes! As you're far and away the better player, Conroy has given you the place," said Kempton sarcastically.

Owen started a little at his bitter tone.

"Oh, that's rot!" he said. "Perhaps I cover the ground a bit more quickly than you do, Kemp, but there's not much to choose between us, and if Conroy has decided in my favour, it's only on a slight difference of form."

"You're very modest," sneered Kempton. "You can afford to be, as you've got all you want, and all you've been currying favour with Conroy for."

Llewellyn bit his lip.

"I haven't been currying favour with anybody!" he said hotly; "and I don't think you'd care to say in Conroy's presence that he favoured anyone, either. I'm sorry you take it like this. If you had been put in, I should have been disappointed, but I hope I should have kept my temper."

A hot retort leaped to Kempton's lips, but he did not utter it. He turned on his heel, and swung away savagely. He knew that he would only cover himself with ridicule by a quarrel with his successful rival for the Rugger cap.

Llewellyn looked after him for some moments with a shade on his brow.

"Well, I'm glad I'm in the fifteen," he muttered. "I suppose Kempton is a bit cut up about it, and it's no good taking notice of anything he said. I don't want to quarrel with him, I'm sure."

And Owen Llewellyn broke into a cheerful whistle as he went on his way. The match with Highcliffe was for the morrow, and he was in great spirits at the prospect of playing for the college for the first time. But Arthur Kempton's face was dark with anger and chagrin as he swung out at the gates of St. Friars, and strode down the lane, and his thoughts were black and bitter.

THE 2nd CHAPTER.
Black Treachery.

"WHERE are you off to, Kemp?"

Kempton was striding along the lane with his eyes on the ground, his hands deep in his pockets, when he was hailed. It was Thurlow who hailed him, and Kempton stopped to speak to the three-quarter of the first fifteen.

"Only going for a stroll," he replied. "I feel rather rotten, as a matter of fact; and I think a walk will do me good."

Thurlow looked at him curiously. He could see that there was something wrong with the Sixth-Former, but Kempton's manner did not invite questions.

"Well, I shouldn't go through the wood," he said. "That's the way you're going, isn't it?"

"Yes! Why shouldn't I?"

"There's a big tramp hanging about there," said Thurlow. "He stopped me, and asked for money. I didn't give him any, and he threatened me, and I let him have my left in his eye, and cut off before he got up."

Kempton laughed.

"Good idea! I'll do the same if he bothers me."

"Well, he's a big brute," said Thurlow doubtfully. "He went for Llewellyn yesterday, and young Owen had to run for it. I hear the police are looking for the brute."

"Oh, I'm not afraid of him. Did he go for Llewellyn—hurt him, I mean?"

"Oh, no! It was the other way about. Owen got in an upper-cut in time, and floored him, a good deal as I've just done," said Thurlow, with a grin. "But I tell you, if he sees a fellow with a St. Friars' cap, he'll——"

"Oh, rats! I'd like a scrap just now; it would relieve my feelings!" said Kempton.

"Well, I've warned you!" said Thurlow, and he walked on.

Kempton continued on his way. He was in a reckless mood, and did not care if he encountered the dangerous ruffian, or a dozen of them. But as he followed the winding footpath into the dark shades of the wood, his feelings changed a little. The spot was very lonely, and out of sight. Kempton kept his eyes warily about him as he walked on.

There was a rustle in the thicket, and a burly form sprang out. Kempton sprang to the other side of the path, and faced the newcomer. The man was huge and burly, and his brutal face was half covered by a stubby growth of beard. He had a stick in his hand, and there was a dark swelling round one of his eyes.

"You'd better keep your distance!" said Kempton.

The tramp glared at him. The big Sixth-Former of St. Friars looked so well able to take care of himself that the ruffian hesitated, and he thought, too, that Thurlow was probably within call. He looked uncertain.

Kempton looked at him grimly.

"Can't you 'elp a poor cove, guv'nor?" said the tramp, in a whining voice.

"I've got nothing for you," said Kempton.

"But——" His broke off, his eyes gleaming as a sudden thought came into his head. The tramp stared at him. Kempton came closer to the man. "You can put your cudgel down," he said. "You'll get nothing from me by threats, but you may get something if you earn it. What's your name?"

"Ben Walker."

"Would you like to earn a sovereign?"

The ruffian's eyes snapped.

"Oh, I've not got it on me!" said Kempton, laughing. "You couldn't get it now, even if you were able to overpower me. But I will give you a sovereign to-morrow afternoon if you will do something for me."

"Wot do you want, guv'nor?" asked the tramp suspiciously.

"Do you remember meeting one of the fellows from our school yesterday?" said Kempton slowly. "You stopped him, and he gave you an upper-cut!"

Ben Walker scowled savagely, and his hand went up involuntarily to his jaw, as though he still felt an ache there, as probably he did.

"I remember 'im, guv'nor!"

"You'd know him again?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Suppose I asked you to look out for that fellow, and do him an ill-turn," said Kempton, "would you do it for a sovereign?"

"I'd bash his head for nothin' if I could get near 'im!"

"If you bash him," said Kempton, "you'll get nothing from me, except that I shall set the police on your track, and get you six months' hard!"

"Wot do you want?"

"I want the fellow collared, and kept a prisoner in some quiet corner for a few hours, that is all."

Ben Walker looked utterly amazed.

"Wot good will that do you?"

"I want him prevented from playing in a football match that commences to-morrow afternoon at half-past two."

The tramp nodded comprehendingly.

"I see, guv'nor."

"If you can manage it, and will, I'll meet you to-morrow afternoon after the match, and hand over the sovereign."

"I kin manage it easy enough, guv'nor, if he comes out of the school."

"He will do that before the match."

"Good! I'll collar 'im easy enough, and tie 'im up to a tree. But 'ow do I know you will pay up?"

"I give you my word," said Kempton haughtily. "I will give you five shillings now if you like. Do you agree?"

"Yes, I does!"

Kempton handed over the money.

"I'll meet you here after the match," he said, "if Llewellyn does not appear. Mind, if he is hurt I pay you nothing."

"I won't 'urt 'im."

"It's settled, then."

Kempton walked back the way he had come. He was feeling very satisfied in his mind. He left Ben Walker counting the shillings, and staring after him.

As he re-entered St. Friars, Kempton caught sight of Llewellyn talking to some of the members of the fifteen. Oakshoot, the heavy forward, was congratulating him on getting his cap for St. Friars as Kempton passed.

The words he heard were sufficient to banish any feeling of remorse from Kempton's heart.

Llewellyn was in his place, Llewellyn had supplanted him, so he persisted in regarding it, and he would remove the interloper by any means in his power. That was how he put the matter to himself.

Yet, in spite of his sophistry, a twinge of conscience disturbed Kempton's peace of mind every now and then.

THE 3rd CHAPTER.
The Unexpected Happens.

"HAVE you seen Llewellyn?"

Thurlow asked the question. Kempton was coming out of the hall of St. Friars on Saturday. Morning school was over, and the whole school was talking of nothing but the afternoon's match.

"No," said Kempton, looking at his friend. "He wasn't here to dinner."

"No; he went out about half an hour before, and he hasn't come in."

"Well, he won't feel any the better this afternoon for missing his dinner," Kempton remarked carelessly.

"I don't believe he's missed it on purpose."

"What do you think, then?"

"Well, I hope he hasn't fallen in with that tramp fellow," said Thurlow. "He was a vicious brute, and a crack with that big stick of his——"

"Oh, rot!" said Kempton uneasily. "Nothing's likely to have happened to Llewellyn. He was quite able to take care of himself."

"Well, I hope so. It's queer he hasn't come in, that's all."

Kempton nodded, and walked on. He kept his features under stern control, but his heart was beating with satisfaction.

Ben Walker had evidently succeeded.

Somewhere in the dusky wood that lay round the old college Owen Llewellyn was a prisoner, and he would not turn up for the Rugby match.

And with the Welsh three-quarter missing, there was not much doubt as to what Conroy would do.

He would have no alternative but to play Kempton in Llewellyn's place.

The Sixth-Former's ambition would be accomplished. And if he played up well for the school, there was no doubt that he would be retained in the first

Scrum followed scrum in the second half, and ere long a drop-kick by Conroy almost from the centre of the field materialised for St. Friars, and they counted seven.

fifteen, and Owen's chance would be gone for good.

Several other fellows were remarking on the absence of Llewellyn.

The fellows from Highcliffe were expected over soon, and Kempton noticed that the young Welshman's absence was commented on with more and more wonder.

But Conroy did not seem to be anxious.

He had a firm faith in Llewellyn, and there was still time to spare before the match. He was quite sure that Owen would turn up in time. As for any accident, he declared that the three-quarter knew better than to get himself hurt just before an important match. Kempton smiled as he heard it.

As a matter of fact, another affair entirely was troubling the mind of the football captain in those very moments.

In practice that morning Thurlow had shown worse form than ever. His form had been going off for some time, partly owing to lack of keenness, partly to an old injury to his knee, which had cropped up again lately.

Conroy was worried about it.

To leave Thurlow out of the team was a step he hesitated to take, and at his best the fellow was much better than Kempton, the only alternative. But was he likely to play his best of his worst that afternoon? Thurlow had been thinking about it seriously himself, too. Conroy had just been to take a last look over the match-ground when the three-quarter came up to him with a serious expression.

"I want to speak to you, Con," he said slowly.

"Go ahead!" said the captain of St. Friars tersely.

"I don't want you to think I'm funking the match with the Highcliffians, you know," said Thurlow sweetly, "but——"

Conroy's expression changed.

"Out with it!" he said quickly. "Tell me what you've got on your mind."

"Well, my knee has been troubling me a lot more lately, and it nearly let me down this morning," said Thurlow. "I want to leave the decision in your hands, Con. If you think I ought to play, I'll play up for St. Friars if I bust something! But do you think you'd better shove another man on in my place?"

There was silence then for a few moments. "I dare say you know how I feel about the matter," went on Thurlow. "It will be a bitter, hard blow to me to stand out of the match; but it would be worse still to play and let the side down on the field."

"Rather!" said Conroy emphatically.

"Well, what do you think?"

"The only fellow I could put on in your place is Arthur Kempton," the captain of St. Friars remarked thoughtfully.

Thurlow nodded.

"That's the chap I was going to suggest," he replied. "Not because he's my chum, you know," he added. "But, really, he's very near up to Llewellyn's form, and with my knee so shaky, I believe he's certain to do better for the side than I can."

"It's settled, then," said the captain shortly. "If you feel like that about it, Thurlow, it's no good playing you. I shall be glad to give Kempton a chance, too, in a way. I'll speak to him."

Kempton was standing by himself, looking moodily over the football ground, when the captain of St. Friars came towards him.

Kempton looked at him, and his heart beat faster with a sense of guilt as he saw the serious expression on his face. Had Conroy discovered anything? That one sickening moment of guilt and fear was punishment enough for all that Kempton had done. He would have given worlds then to undo his evil work—to have Owen Llewellyn standing safe and fred there, ready to play against Highcliffe.

"We shall be a man short for the match, Kemp," said Conroy. "I shall want you."

Kempton gave almost a gasp of relief.

"You want me to play, Con?"

"Yes. You're ready, I suppose?"

"Yes, rather! Llewellyn hasn't returned yet, then?"

Conroy stared at him.

"Llewellyn—what about Llewellyn?"

Kempton stared, too.

"You want me to play in Llewellyn's place, I suppose, don't you?" he stammered.

"No; of course not! Llewellyn is playing."

"Oh, I—I didn't—didn't understand!" stammered Kempton. "I—I thought, as he hasn't turned up——"

"He will turn up for the match. There will be a crowd of us, when I rely upon him!" exclaimed Conroy. "No; I haven't any doubt on that point. It's Thurlow's place you are taking, Kemp."

Kempton gave a violent start.

"Isn't Thurlow playing?"

"No; his knee is still giving him trouble, and we are leaving him out. It was his own suggestion; he felt that he wasn't up to the Highcliffe mark."

Kempton was silent.

The remorse he had felt before was nothing to the utter misery that overwhelmed him at this moment.

He was to play, after all—in Thurlow's place!

His treachery had gone for nothing!

He was to play, but not in Llewellyn's place! Llewellyn was still expected. But he would not come. St. Friars would be a man short in the most important match of the season!

Kempton could have groaned aloud at this unexpected and utterly dismaying result of his wretched plotting.

The expression of his face could not escape the captain's notice.

"Don't you want your cap for the match, after all?" exclaimed Conroy.

"Yes, yes, yes!"

"What are you looking so down in the mouth about, then?"

"I—I suppose it's rather hard cheese for Thurlow!" stammered Kempton.

"Oh, I see! But it was his own suggestion, and there's nothing for you to feel rotten about. Hallo! That's the Highcliffe brake! Better get your things out."

And the captain of St. Friars hurried away.

He left Kempton deadly pale, gnawing his lip, with remorse and misery in his breast. What could he do?

There was no time for him to effect Llewellyn's release—no time for him to interfere in the matter. He could not leave the ground without being instantly missed. It was time for him to prepare for the match.

"What shall I do?" he groaned aloud. "A man short for the match, and we shall have to play some rotter, and Highcliffe will lick us! St. Friars will lose the match, and it will be my doing!"

THE 4th CHAPTER.
A Late Repentance.

KEMPTON moved slowly away from the spot. His heart was heavy, and his brain was in a whirl. What was to be done?

St. Friars needed all their strength to face a team like Highcliffe. With a rotter in the three-quarter line, the balance of chances would be heavily against the school. Even from a selfish point of view, Kempton had reason to repent. For the first match in which he played in the first fifteen would be a defeat and not a victory; he would share the defeat, and his dreams of distinction on the Rugger field would fade like empty visions.

"Hallo! Aren't you feeling fit, old man?"

It was Thurlow's hearty voice, as he tapped Kempton on the shoulder. Kempton turned upon him a face so haggard that he started back.

"Kemp, in Heaven's name, what's the matter with you?"

Kempton did not reply.

"Kemp!" Thurlow laid a hand upon his shoulder. They had been chums and study mates through the Fourth and the Fifth, and were the same new both were in the Sixth.

"Kemp, old man, tell me what's the trouble?"

Kempton's eyes searched his face eagerly.

"Can I—can I trust you?" he muttered hoarsely.

Thurlow looked at him in amazement.

"I shouldn't think that was a question necessary for you to ask at this time of day, Kemp!"

"I—I didn't mean that! But—but— I say, has Llewellyn come back yet?"

"No. Kick-off's due in twenty-five minutes now, and even Con is getting anxious," said Thurlow. "I wish I knew what had become of him. But surely that's not what's the matter with you, Kemp—anxiety about Llewellyn?"

"Yes," muttered Kempton.

"But—but I didn't know that you cared about him at all. You disliked him——"

"You don't mean, Kemp, that—that you have had anything to do with Llewellyn being kept away from—from the match?" he stammered. "You can't mean that?"

"Suppose I do mean it!"

Thurlow was silent.

"You'd shrink away from me," said Kempton bitterly, "and I should deserve it. Well, do so, and go and spread it through the school, if you like, and get me sent to Coventry! I deserve it!"

"I shouldn't do anything of the kind, Kemp," said Thurlow quietly. "You—you took my breath away for a moment! If—if you've done anything like this——"

"Well, I have done it!"

"You mean that?"

"Do I look as if I were joking?"

"No," said Thurlow, looking at Kempton's haggard face; "you don't. But I can hardly believe it of you, Kemp. But it may be you were not yourself at the time, and I stick to you, anyway. It may not be too late to undo it yet."

Kempton gasped for relief.

"Will you help me, Thurlow, and keep it dark?"

"I will do both, or anything else, to save the match for St. Friars!"

"You remember that tramp fellow——"

"Yes, rather! What——"

"He's got Llewellyn in the wood. No, no; he hasn't hurt him!" exclaimed Kempton hastily. "He's bound him to a tree—at least, he agreed to—to keep him away for the time of the match. I met him last night, and he told me how he had planned it. Owen Llewellyn is tied to the big oak in the wood. You know it."

"Kemp! And you—you——"

"Oh, I was a fool—a cad! I don't care what you think of me, but go and get Llewellyn loose! Get him here in time for the match! If the ruffian's there, give him this sovereign, and tell him Tye changed my mind. If he isn't, just cut Llewellyn loose, and bring him along. You will have to sprint."

And Thurlow was off like a shot.

"I'll do it unless my knee busts!"

Kempton watched him go; he was out of the gates like lightning. Kempton had done all that he could. He joined the footballers, and shook hands with Price, the Highcliffe captain, an old acquaintance. Conroy was looking worried.

"Llewellyn hasn't come in yet," he said.

"Oh, he'll be here in time for the match!" said Kempton, trying to speak lightly, but with the red of shame creeping into his cheeks as he spoke.

But the captain of St. Friars was still looking anxious, and his face grew more and more overcast as the minutes crept by.

The time fixed for the match to commence was fast approaching, and still Owen Llewellyn, the fastest three-quarter of the St. Friars fifteen, was absent.

THE 5th CHAPTER.
Just in Time—On the Rugger Field—The Winning Goal.

"LLEWELLYN'S not here yet!"

"Where can he be?"

"Must have been an accident!"

Conroy looked at his watch. It wanted three minutes to half-past two. It was high time for the captains to toss for choice of goal. Price had a coin in his hand.

Where was Owen Llewellyn?

"We shall have to play a substitute," said Conroy.

"Don't!" said Kempton. "Llewellyn is sure to turn up—wait for him. Give him till the last moment, anyway."

"Well, that won't do any harm. Where is Thurlow?"

"Gone to look for Llewellyn."

The captain made a gesture of annoyance. The coin was tossed, and the choice fell to the skipper of Highcliffe.

There was a keen wind blowing from the north end of the ground, and Price naturally chose that goal. The kick-off fell to St. Friars, and Conroy put the ball under his arm.

"Hallo!"

"Look!"

"Llewellyn!"

It was a wild shout from the anxious crowd of St. Friars' fellows.

Two figures had suddenly appeared in the distance, tearing towards the ground. They were easily recognised.

"Llewellyn! Thurlow!"

"Thurlow's found him!"

Kempton's heart gave a great throb of relief. There was another shout. Thurlow was seen to suddenly stagger and fall over; his weak knee had given way under the strain. He sat up, however, on the grass, and waved his hand cheerily as he gazed after Llewellyn. The young Welshman had not stopped for a moment.

He came up with a dash, gasping.

"I—I'm in time?"

Conroy wrinkled his brows sternly.

"How dared you——"

"I—I couldn't help it!" panted Llewellyn. "There was that beastly tramp—he collared me and dragged me into the wood, and tied me up to the big oak, and I couldn't get away till Thurlow found me."

"The hound!" exclaimed Conroy wrathfully. "They'll be a reckoning for the scoundrel over this. But never mind that now. Get into your things."

Llewellyn disappeared into the pavilion.

"No hurry," said the Highcliffe skipper coolly. "Take your time; we can wait."

But Llewellyn was not many minutes changing. He had had a rapid run from the wood home after he had been released by Thurlow. But he did not seem much the worse for it as he joined his comrades, in the red and white of St. Friars.

Conroy looked him over with a satisfied expression.

"By Jove, you're looking fit, Llewellyn!" Owen laughed lightly.

"I'm feeling fit," he said.

"Good! Come on!" And they went into the field.

Round the ropes the boys of St. Friars were crowded, as well as a considerable number of Highcliffians who had followed the brake over. They gave the teams a cheer, and then the ball was set rolling by a place-kick, and the match commenced.

It was soon apparent that St. Friars needed all their playing fit to-day.

The Highcliffe team were heavier, and they played good Rugger. In the scrum they had a decided advantage, and at the same time their three-quarters were active and on the look-out for chances.

In the first five minutes of the game a try was taken for Highcliffe, and though Price failed to convert, it was a start, and the Highcliffe sympathisers shouted loudly.

Then another scrum was ordered on the home twenty-five, and the heavy Highcliffe pack shoved and strained, and fairly pushed away the Saints before them.

St. Friars fought hard, but they were overweighted, and back and back they went, till Highcliffe, amid a ringing cheer from their friends, surged over the goal-line with the ball among their feet, and it was one more try to the enemy.

Conroy's face was very grim now.

Two tries to Highcliffe and nil to St. Friars was a bad beginning.

But St. Friars' time was coming.

What the Saints lacked in might they made up in keenness, and their game was to keep the play open; and in this they were fairly successful.

Just before half-time, Owen Llewellyn had his first real chance of showing his quality, and he showed it in a way that made Conroy glad enough that he had chosen the young Welshman to play for St. Friars' first.

From a scrum only a few yards off the home twenty-five the ball came out, right to Owen Llewellyn, and he was off with it like a streak of lightning.

"Bravo!"

"Llewellyn's off!"

Off he was indeed! He streaked through two or three heavy forwards like a deer, dodged the backs in a way that seemed miraculous to them, and streaked for goal.

"Hurrah!"

"Try! Try!"

It looked like being a try; but a Highcliffe three-quarter was close on the track, and the full-back was rushing to save his goal.

Llewellyn kept straight on, right for the centre of the goal, his eyes fixed straight before him, as if he were unaware of his danger from either quarters.

But suddenly—so suddenly that the eye could hardly follow his movements—he swerved off to the right, and darted off towards the corner of the goal-line.

The three-quarter, full pelt behind, had just reached out to grasp, and it seemed as if the Welsh lad had known it by instinct.

Unable to stop himself in time, the pursuer rushed on, and there was a yell of laughter as he dashed into the full-back and sent him flying.

Right on dashed Owen Llewellyn, and was over the line in a twinkling, and he touched down amid a roar from the crowd.

"Try! Try! Try!"

"Good old Taffy!"

The angle was too difficult for the try to be converted; but it was a try to the home team, and the ice had been broken. The first half ended with Highcliffe six points to the St. Friars three, and no goal yet scored on either side.

But St. Friars' hopes were high.

They had a splendid three-quarter in Owen Llewellyn, better than anything the Highcliffe team could boast, and they expected great things of him.

But scrum followed scrum in the second half, and ere long a try, which was converted, fell to Highcliffe, and their score leaped to eleven.

But a dribble kick by Conroy almost from the centre of the field materialised for St. Friars, and they counted seven.

Then minute followed minute in hard and obstinate play, with plenty of exciting incident and many a gallant attempt, but nothing to show for it on the score-sheet. And at last the spectators were looking dubiously at their watches, and counting the minutes to the finish, and Highcliffe were still eleven points to seven.

Was it to be a defeat for St. Friars, after all? The Saints were determined that it should not be, and they bucked up manfully; but the Highcliffians were playing gamely, too, and there was no getting through.

"Scrum again!" groaned Thurlow. "We're done! No, by George! Kemp's off!"

A home half had captured the ball, and he let Kempton have it, as he was swamped under the Highcliffe forwards. Kempton swung away with the ball in his hands, escaping two or three clutches as if by a miracle. He was off so fast that it seemed that he would have no backing; but a little figure shot after him. There was a cry:

"Llewellyn! Bravo!"

Llewellyn kept just behind, ready for a pass. It had to come, for the enemy had marked Kempton well, and he sank to the ground with two pairs of arms round him. But ere he sank he passed back to Llewellyn.

And Owen had the ball, and was dashing on.

Two three-quarters were springing upon him, and the full-back stood directly in his path as he raced for goal.

But there was no time for anything but a desperate attempt, for the whistle might blow any second now.

Right on went Llewellyn.

One of the quarter-backs made his tackle, but the Welsh lad eluded it like an eel, and still sped gallantly on, and a ringing cheer followed him.

But the other was close behind, and the full-back was in front. Llewellyn swerved, and the full-back, with a grin, was ready for that swerve this time. But as he sprang to counter it, Llewellyn swerved like lightning back again, and dashed right on, and passed the full-back like lightning. But he had lost a moment, and that moment was enough for the Highcliffe three-quarter—his tackle was upon the Welsh lad.

There was a groan from St. Friars: but it changed to a cheer. With a last desperate effort Llewellyn had sprung on, fairly carrying the Highcliffe man on his back, and fallen. But his hands were over the goal-line, right under the bar, with the ball in them.

"Try! Try! Try! Hurrah!"

To convert such a try was, of course, simplicity itself. A minute later St. Friars was yelling itself hoarse over the goal; and the whistle rang out, telling that the hard-fought match was over, and that St. Friars had won, by twelve points to eleven.

And as Llewellyn came off the field, the first of his comrades to grip him by the hand was Kempton. And comrades they remained, to fight many another gallant fight for St. Friars, in the ranks of the first fifteen

THE END.

(A fine tale of the Blue Crusaders next week.)

FOOTBALL FAULTS.

Mr. W. I. BASSETT, the Famous International, tells about some methods which young players should avoid.

WHILE oral or written instruction will never take the place of actual experience, it is just as well that a young player should enter upon his football career with certain fundamental principles clearly and definitely in his mind. Many a young fellow fails to do himself and his club as much credit as he might, merely because he neglects to order his football on well-defined lines. I have had opportunities of discovering the methods upon which some of the soundest players we have ever had have worked, and a few lines upon this important topic may not be out of place.

First of all, a team ought to take the field in the best possible spirit of good fellowship. If there are discordant elements, they will almost certainly be in evidence on the field of play. Let all officials see that the eleven players who represent them are of the companionable sort, and if any are at loggerheads, they ought to be induced to settle their grievances without delay. I have known some directorates who wondered why their eleven did not do themselves justice—I am speaking now of senior teams, of course—and they have neglected to inquire as to

the absence of friendly feeling

between certain sections of the players. A house divided against itself cannot stand, neither can the football eleven which is split up into little coteries and cliques.

One of the greatest mistakes young players make is in respect of trying to score goals from impossible positions. Many a good chance is lost by the outside winger trying to score when he should centre and leave the task of goal-getting to an inside man. I do like to see a player go for goal. The general fault of present-day football is that men do not go for the goal enough; but the outside man should centre rather than shoot. It is very galling for inside men, who carefully follow the wing man up, ever ready for a centre, to see the ball sent over the goal-bar time after time. They get sick of that sort of thing before the afternoon is over.

Then again, I am not in favour of the player who never reads the rules of the game, and boasts that he has never done so. That is a silly kind of bravado. I am quite aware that men have won their International caps without having ever perused the rules of the game, but that does not mean that every player who neglects to read the rules will get

his International cap.

By no means. A man may play good football without knowing the rules, but he will play all the better for knowing them, and he will take all the more interest in the pastime because he knows them.

I suppose players don't know how silly they look when they persistently get off-side. The player who is whistled up for off-side ten times within the half-hour, thinks himself very aggrieved, and his theatrical appeals to the presiding official are meant to proclaim that he regards himself as a long-suffering individual. But the onlookers do not regard him as anything of the kind. They do not look upon him as a martyr—as a victim to the little eccentricities of the referee. No, far from it. They look upon him as a very silly fellow as a man who has it in his power to help his side greatly, but who for some inexplicable reason prefers to hang on the touchline and receive the ball when it comes to him, instead of going for it, or, at any rate, keeping in a legitimate position for receiving it as others have worked hard to obtain it for his benefit. The crowd do not like the player who looks aggrieved, and is clearly anathematising the referee. On the contrary, they regard him as a foolish person, as one who, if he would only take the trouble to keep behind the ball, would do his own side better service, and would enable the game to go on, free from many irritating stoppages.

And not only is that true, but the matter cuts another way. The man who poaches gets himself a bad name, and the referee is always looking out for him to infringe the rule relative to off-side.

There are many tricks which the great player has in his repertoire which the average man does not apparently deem it worth while to practice. But why not? Surely everything that a man can do well helps to make up the sum total of his proficiency. How many can back-heel well? How many men kick overhead well? How many players can head accurately? Charles Campbell,

the great Scottish half,

could place the ball as well with his head as with his foot. He was not at all difficult to head if only the player learns the value of direction, because the man who tries to head a goal, offence than not starts by standing in a most favourable position, a position in which the goalkeeper will be very much handicapped in his effort to get to the ball.

Then players pass the ball far too squarely, as a rule. They compel the man who receives the pass to stop to gather the ball, instead of allowing him to take the ball on the run. I never knew a man who passed as well as Steve Bloomer. When I used to play with him in big games, he always put the ball a trifle ahead, so that I could take it while in my stride, and I was away like a flash. That is a matter of great moment to a wing forward.

(More splendid football articles on Saturday next.)

THE HALF-BACK.

Mr. WALTER BULL, the well-known Hotspur Half-back, gives advice to Junior Players in this position.

ONE secret of successful half-back play is the existence of a proper understanding between the various members of the defence. Without such an understanding nothing can be achieved in the shape of combined play.

I myself, when playing centre-half, have had many a gruelling afternoon through being left to tackle three inside-forwards practically singlehanded; and what man playing to-day can satisfactorily accomplish a feat such as this? The fault has been on the part of the wing halves, each of whom has persistently hung on to the outside man opposed to him, and in so doing each has shown no understanding with the back behind.

If you would become an efficient combination player, you and your fellow-players must act in concert. In defence, for example, the halves and backs should work according to a preconceived plan of campaign. When the wing-half proceed to tackle the outside man the centre-half should fall into position in order to mark one or more of the opposing inside forwards, and, further, he must be ready to try and intercept the centre, which the outside man generally seeks to put across.

If, however, the extreme winger slips the half attending him, and gets clear away, it becomes the duty of the full-back to leave his lines, and, if necessary, to go right out after the man with the ball. The latter, if he knows his business, will probably put in a well-calculated middle as the full-back approaches him; for the forward, of course, will get rid of the ball to avoid the heavy charge that would otherwise be delivered.

In the meantime, the defending halves, having seen their back go out to the touchline in pursuit of the threatening winger, will have run back to cover their goalkeeper, and to deal with the opposing inside forwards, who will be taking up their places in expectation of a centre's coming directly across the goal-mouth.

Without a proper understanding, not only at half-back, but fore and aft—in fact, throughout the whole side—no team can ever become a first-class combination. Instead, the players will fritter away their dash in aimless hunting, and mixed-up kicking all over the field of play. Football played on these lines is neither scientific nor attractive.

It is a splendid thing for a half-back to possess the gift of anticipation. How often may two players be seen who are both fast and strong-built men, and also

first-rate tacklers,

yet while one seems to be rushing about the field taking a lot out of himself, the other is on the ball quite as much, if not more, and does not expend one half the energy that the first one does.

The explanation is perfectly simple. The second player is able in a much greater degree to divine his opponents' intentions. This being so, he instinctively falls into just the right places, and as a result he is enabled to snap the ball or to reduce the chances that the members of the other side are making. The gift of intuition is, indeed, an invaluable one, and every half-back possessing it should study and develop his faculties in this direction to the utmost extent in his power.

A first-class half always carefully observes and remembers the different styles of play of the individual opponents he is called upon to meet. Particular feints are habitual to particular players, and the tricks adopted by some footballers for getting the ball or misleading the defence are clever in the extreme, as I myself can testify. Football, of course, is a battle between defence and attack, and many an intelligent forward is constantly thinking out new dodges for the purpose of hoodwinking the defending players. It behoves every half-back, therefore, to familiarise himself with the methods of opposing forwards, and to make himself master of every fresh move they may individually or collectively attempt.

(More splendid football articles on Saturday next.)

JUNIOR CLUB FINANCES.

By Mr. G. L. B. COVERDALE, Honorary Secretary East Riding of Yorkshire Football Association.

BE a club an amateur one in the strictest sense of the word, it requires money for its successful working, and there is no gainsaying this fact. The young lads' club should have one of its best and most faithful members as its treasurer, and I am sure he will have anxieties and worries almost on a par with those of the finance managers of one of the big professional organisations.

The question arises "On how little money can a club be successfully run?" that is composed of youths of say sixteen to nineteen years. These clubs should be divided into two classes—i.e. those that have a private ground, and those who play on recreation grounds, parks, and the playing spaces in our big towns.

Taking the first class, those having a private ground, these, if situated in or near a large town have little or no chance of getting a "gate," as football followers go to see the best fare, and consequently go and watch the senior club in the town play. The extra expense, therefore, of hiring a ground upon which to play, has to be borne by the members themselves, and it becomes hard work for many of these clubs to keep their heads above water. I am sorry to say that often when a new season commences you ask where such-and-such a club is, and the reply is, "Oh, it's dropped through." Why? Go and ask the landlord of their ground, and you will find the last year's rent is wholly or partially unpaid.

Turning over some old papers in my possession, I came upon the balance-sheet of a club which in that particular year had a very successful season from a playing point of view, for in spite of the members being most enthusiastic, and the officials all honest, fair-minded fellows, there only remained a very small balance in hand. The total receipts amounted to £8 11s. 6d., and the expenditure £6 3s. 7d., leaving a balance of 7s. 11d. to be carried forward. The receipts were accounted for by 27 subscriptions at 5s. each, making £6 15s., and the remainder was composed of donations from patrons, £1 16s. 6d. On the expenses side, the principle item is that of rent of ground, £4 10s.; rent of club-room, 15s.; new footballs, £1 18s.—one ball each at 8s. 6d., 9s., 9s. 6d., and 11s. Affiliation fee accounted for 5s., and 6s. as entrance fee to leagues—3s. 6d. first team, and 2s. 6d. second team. Postage and telegrams amounted to 9s. 7d.

It will be readily seen that the club in question was not at all extravagant, and none of the items could be "cut down" to any appreciable extent. The rent of a suitable ground will, of course, vary considerably, but I think £4 to £6 is about fair for one situated in anything like proximity to a large town. Village clubs are certainly not charged as much, and a good ground may be found for £2, or even less.

A club who plays on a "free" ground or park has all the expenses enumerated above, with the exception of the rent of field—say, £4 10s.—consequently, such a club can afford to reduce its subscription to 2s., and its patrons will probably be the same as the club that is in a position to pay for a field.

In this article I will touch on the condition of the grounds as regards "rented" and "free" playing areas. The ownership of a private ground certainly gives a club a better standing, but it has its responsibilities and its additional expenses. Take the case when the goalposts are smashed—and this, I am sorry to say, sometimes happens—done most probably by roughs during the week. The "private grounder" has to pay for this.

A set of goalposts will cost anything from 5s. to £1.

The corner flags are not an expensive item; four broom-sticks with your club colours nailed on, and you have the best possible article for less than the nimble sixpence.

The clubs playing on public parks and "free" grounds have usually their goalposts found free also.

(Another splendid instructive article next week.)

THE PROFESSIONAL.

Mr. ALAN R. HAIG-BROWN, the famous Corinthian, gives a brief insight into the life of a professional footballer.

THE professional football player is a man who comes in for a good many hard knocks, both literally and metaphorically. He is lucky if he gets through the season without being put on the invalid list; he is luckier still if he does not come across during the same time some description of himself as a "gladiator" or a paid "assassin" from the pen of an ardent amateur, one narrow-minded to understand his existence. But I, for my part, having often played with and often against him, can find nothing degrading in his profession, nothing unsportsmanlike, brutal, or ungentlemanly in his general behaviour. His is a keen and arduous life, and you, who probably know no more of him than what you have seen on the field of play, will, I hope, be interested in a short story of his life.

How first does a man become a paid player of football? Well, usually in this way. The managers of professional teams are gentlemen with their eyes open, and constantly looking out for

young and local talent.

They know well if there is any promising material in the neighbourhood, and in the many offers they have from the local youths to join their club they know at once which to take and which to reject. Instances, too, are not unknown of the professional officials approaching young amateurs with definite offers—I know of a Corinthian who was offered £3 a week and a public-house!—and in the past men have been bought out of the Army on the strength of football. Occasionally, I think that no outside influence should ever be brought to bear upon a youth to induce him to become a professional; if he likes to enter the trade of his own free will, well and good. "Amateur" is not the term which leads to employment all through life. The most a paid player is allowed to earn is £4 a week, or £208 a year. Many of them get considerably less, and practically all of them are past their speed and work when thirty-five years old. Some of them, who are of a saving nature, have by this time laid by a nice little nest-egg, and can take an inn, or buy a business; others have kept to an additional trade, and when their career is over they can fall back on this as a means of livelihood; others, again, have no trade and no savings, and when their employment as footballers is over are in sore straits.

Club managers differ in their opinions as to the desirability of their men having

an extra trade.

Some like to have the complete control of their players; others like to see their members in some regular employment, as it keeps them fit and steady. I have no doubts on the question at all, and I would be an excellent thing if the F.A. passed a rule compelling all professional footballers to have some other means of livelihood as well.

The football season starts in September, but during the month of August the professionals are being got into trim by practice games. At the end of that month League matches start, and the players are in the thick of it. The keynote of the professionals' life is constant exercise. Practically, the only exception, when there is no match, he is taken for a long walk, or else he goes down to the ground and runs about in charge, this exercise being followed by a bath and a good rub down from the trainer's brawny arms. If you glance into the professionals' changing-room just before a match, at half-time, or just after the game, you will find all the men undergoing this treatment; many of them, too, put on a clean shirt at half-time, which has the most refreshing effect. Practically no restrictions are put on the paid footballer's diet, except when he is being very

specially trained,

and he is allowed to smoke, have the favourite "refresher" at half-time, and afterwards often. When a Cup-tie or a very important League match is in view the players are taken away for a change of air.

And so the season wears on, with usually two matches in every week, and sometimes more. Towards the end of April players begin to sign on for the next year with their old club, if they are wanted to, and want to; if not, they are free to seek pastures new, and, at this time of year there is often a kind of "general post" in footballers. Often also a player is transferred from one club to another during the course of the season, and where transference takes place the club who gets the player pays the club from whom they take him a sum of money called a transfer fee. This up to last year may have been anything up to £500, or even more, but which is now restricted to £350. But no player can be transferred unless he wants to be, and no club may suggest to a player to leave his own club and join a new one without first giving notice to the said player's directors. When a player has been with one club for some time, and has done very well for them, he often gets a "benefit" match, and all the gate money taken is handed over to him. But the man, who gain this reward are few and far between, and, taken all round, the life of the professional player, in spite of the fact that for a season or two he is a popular hero, is not a very enviable one.

(Another splendid article on Saturday next.)

"THE BOYS' REALM" PORTRAIT GALLERY.

CHAPEL HILL F.C. (LONGRIDGE), 1907-8. Secretary: W. ECKTON.

THE DRUDGE OF SCRUBY HALL

A WONDERFUL NEW STORY OF SCHOOL LIFE.

By ANDREW GRAY, Author of "The Firing of Froggie," etc., etc.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
In the Australian Bush.

"THAT'S the finish of it! Poor old Scrag! He won't never hurt old man kangaroo no more!"

The gaunt, cross-breed mastiff, stretched upon the floor of the half-ruined sheep-shearers' hut, contorted its limbs in one last convulsive struggle, and then lay still.

The man on whose knee the faithful head rested smeared away a teardrop which had been gathering on the end of his nose, and, looking across to his chum, gave utterance to the above remark.

He was almost as shaggy of head and chin as the dog at his feet. Hair and beard were iron-grey, and tousled in short, matted curls. Such of his face as could be seen was of a deep copper colour, setting off in startling contrast the bright blue of his eyes. In figure he was short and squat, broad of shoulder, and with enormous hands and feet.

The other occupant of these strange quarters was a youngster of about sixteen, tall and lithe, thin flanked, and an athlete by every line of his tough young frame. Though likewise tanned deeply by wind and sun, he was, nevertheless, fresh in complexion; his hair was dark, his eyebrows strong and strangely marked, giving his grey eyes a thoughtful, penetrating look, rather startling in one of his years.

Both were attired in Australian bush rig—old patched shirts of flannel, cord breeches and stout gaiters, stained with damp and plentifully bespattered with mud. A couple of shotguns, some blankets and rugs of skin, a bundle or two of belongings, a frying-pan and two tin pannikins, about completed the inventory of furniture in the hut.

Just as there are mole-catchers in England, so in Australia there are men who move from range to run, hunting down the packs of dingoes, or wild dogs, and killing off the kangaroo, who in their leaping flight make sad havoc of the wire fences. Such was the trade of these two.

Overhead the rain drummed on the corrugated iron roof, trickling through a dozen rust-eaten holes, and making a clean sweep down in one corner where the wind had twisted one sheet bodily from its rivets.

In the centre of the hut a wood fire spat and sputtered like an angry tom-cat.

"Poor old Scrag!" said the youngster huskily, putting his hand on the mastiff's heart to make sure that death had really come at last. "Well, he did his day's work if ever a creature did, and died doing his duty."

"Ay, that he did!" grunted the other.

"I was afraid he'd never get over it. The brute ripped him with his hind claws twice like lightning, just as he dashed in to avenge old Towler's death. Then I got up and let drive, though too late to save him."

"Well," said the man, rising and dragging the dead hound to the door of the hut, "what's done can't be helped. That's the last of the old pack. Grip, Rusher, Teaze, Towler, and now Scrag; and I allus said that when they was gone it was time Kangaroo Bob give up, too. I've hunted dingo and kangaroo now for fifteen year, though why I never know quite, 'cause there ain't no real money in it; and I've a pile, besides, big enough to see me out to the end of my days. Still, the life suited me, and, taking thick and thin, they've been good times, hain't they?"

"They have, Bob—real good times," said the other from the bottom of his heart.

"Ah, well, we'll knock off now, Jack, I think, and let somebody else have a turn. We'll leave the bush, you and me, and go—where d'ye think?"

"Think? Oh, I don't know! So long as you take me, too, Bob, I don't care much where it is."

"Take ye, lad? Why, of course I'll take 'ee. Hain't you been son o' mine now for—let's see, how many year is it?"

"Getting on for nine years," answered Jack, with a quiver in his voice. "It was just such another night as this, you remember. Two such nights and two such days. We lost the trail somehow, dad and I. We had neither food nor shelter. He was ill already; just recovering from a bad go of rheumatic fever. He had scarcely more strength than I had, and I was only a nipper of seven. Starvation and exposure finished him, and he died, I remember, just as the daylight went out and the second night shut down. I sat by his side in the mud and the darkness for two hours, too frightened to move or speak. Then I screamed, and after that I fainted."

"Ay, you screamed and fainted," said old Bob. "That was the luckiest screech you ever let go in your life, I heard it, and, following it up, tripped almost slap on top of you. A mighty lucky trip that was, too. I might have missed you, for it was as dark as pitch. After that——"

Bob pulled himself up short, for he had suddenly awakened to the fact that his young chum's head was on his knees, and that his shoulders were shaking with suppressed sobs.

"Ding my whiskers, if I ain't an old fool for raking up old bygones. Hey, lad, steady yourself now, and let's talk of something else. Let's talk of England—Old England, where the green grass fields is, and the daisies, and the cows, and the larks all a-singin'. You don't remember England, maybe, 'cause you never was there, but it's a fine country. Bust me if I don't pack up now and clear out and take ye along wi' me! Talkin' o' larks reminds me of something I allus said I'd do afore I died."

"What's that?" asked Jack, looking up with reddened eyes.

"Why, buy a birdshop," answered Bob, a little doubtfully.

"Bird shop!" asked Jack, in amazement, for he had lived in the Australian bush all his life.

"Why, yes, a shop where you sells birds. Larks and linnets, chaffinches an' parrots, and cock kinaries, an' hempseed, an' cages, an' mousetraps, and everything else. Somehow, it allus took my fancy to think that some day, when I was old, I'd buy a bird shop an' a pair of carpet slippers, and sit there in the doorway, smoking my pipe and listening to all the little darlings a-whistlin' and pipin', and hoppin' out and down their little perches, and pickin' bits of egg-crumbs off my whiskers."

Finding Jack's eye upon him, Bob paused, and looked a trifle sheepish.

"It do sound a bit dotty, don't it?" he suggested apologetically.

"Dotty! Not a bit," laughed Jack, surprised, nevertheless, to find that such an iron heart as Kangaroo Bob's could cherish so simple an ideal. "It's splendid! But what should I have to do?"

"Oh, you! Let's see. You could clean the cages and whistle 'em tunes for 'em to learn, and—oh, lots o' things! I'd keep you busy enough."

Jack burst into a hearty laugh at this.

"No, Bob; I'd have to find a more useful job than that, I think. I don't want to be a burden to you all my life. You've done a thousand times too much for me already, and——"

"Burden! Done too much for you. Why, ring my whiskers, if you ain't the most ungrateful young vegabond I ever seed."

"No, no!" cried Jack. "It's just because I am not ungrateful that I want to set to work in real earnest as soon as possible to earn my own living and repay you in some small measure what I owe. The debt of gratitude will always remain, but——"

"Avast! Silence!" roared old Bob, getting quite frenzied in his annoyance at this reminder of his own kindness. "What have I done, I'd like to ask, more'n any other white man 'ud have done in my place. Didn't I find yer, a poor, starved kid, all alone in the world with no one to look arter yer, and didn't I take yer and bring you up, and make you work as soon as you could for your living, and took the money you earned an' stuck to it, an'—an'——"

Old Bob at this point awoke to the fact that his protege was simply rolling on his bed of skins in a paroxysm of laughter, so he ended his remarks in a long growl, and contented himself with launching a kick at the smouldering fire, which, proving more forcible than he intended, scattered the damp, green logs over half the floor of the hut.

"Now you've done it!" cried Jack, jumping up and sweeping the dying embers back with his foot. "Quick, or it'll be out altogether. Smash up the rest of that old box nailed to the wall yonder. It's a trifle drier than these beastly twigs, anyway."

Some former occupant of the tin shanty—shepherd or sheep-shearer—had nailed a derelict soap-box to the wall by way of a cupboard. What was left of this was soon wrenched down by old Bob and tossed to Jack to feed the expiring flames.

As the boy cracked the thin wood across his knee he noticed that the bottom of the box had been lined once with paper. The firelight falling upon the faded type showed that this had been the advertisement sheet of a newspaper. He scanned it idly before thrusting it under the smouldering logs, and then his eyes opened wider and wider, and his lips parted in a little gasp of surprise.

"John Begthorp Reid," he saw printed in bold type at the head of one of the paragraphs.

"Why, that was dad's real name!" he cried aloud.

"What was? Eh? What do you mean, lad? What's that you've got hold of there?" asked old Bob quickly.

"It's an advertisement. Listen. 'Should this come to the notice of John Begthorp Reid, who left the town of Rotherham, England, and emigrated to Australia in 1870, or to the notice of his heirs, it is requested that communication will be made instantly to Messrs. Scriven, Studsby, Brownbridge, & Scriven, of 214, Old Square, Lincoln's Inn, London, England. Any information leading to the tracing of the above will be rewarded.'"

"John Begthorp Reid, Rotherham, England, 1870," repeated Jack breathlessly. "Why, it could only be the dad! The facts are exact. What ever can it mean?"

"Mean?" gasped old Bob, looking almost frightened. "There ain't nothing about hearing something to his advantage, is there?"

"No; only that information will be rewarded."

"No? Well, if there had been, I should have said it meant that someone had left him his money. As it is——"

"Well?"

"I don't know what to make of it. How old's that paper?"

Jack turned the board about for some sign of a date, and then suddenly spotted that portion of the sheet on a splinter which had just burnt into flame.

Whipping it out, he extinguished the sparks, and held it down to the firelight.

"August 6th, 1904," he said.

"Three years ago," said Old Bob. "Hush! Well, whatever it was, I guess it's all over an' done with now. If it was money, that's rough luck; but if it was anything else—the police, perhaps."

"Bob!" cried young Jack, leaping up more in amazement than anger.

"No, of course, I didn't mean that! I forgot. I was speaking of your father. He changed his name, though, didn't he?" he added lamely as an afterthought; as if this fact excused in some measure his clumsiness.

"Yes, he changed his name, but where's the harm in that?" demanded Jack. "Plenty of men coming to a new land without money and with all their way to make have done the same. My father had no other reason for choosing to be known out here as John Begg than a sense of pride; else if you like—and I fear that by failure and poverty he might disgrace an honoured name."

"Ay, ay, my lad! I am sure there was none else," said Bob, hastening to repair his false slip and set his young chum at his ease. "I'm sure of that!"

But Jack had plumped himself down afresh, and was poring over the faded lines.

"August 5th, 1904," he repeated half aloud, and then sat up. "I say, Bob," he said slowly, "just think back about three years from now! Do you remember a man named Smiley?"

"Smiley—Smiley? Why, you bet I do, and so do you!"

"Well, don't jump to conclusions too quickly. You know we never proved that it was he who fired that shot or stole those papers."

"Never proved, perhaps, but you know, as well as I do, that no one else could or would have done it. Why, there wasn't another man for fifteen miles either side of us. Didn't he come slinkin' round our camp feedin' on our wittles, and all the time askin' questions, suspicious like, and there——"

Old Bob's jaw dropped, and he glared across at Jack as if he had seen a ghost.

"Why, that's what his little game was! It must be a fortune you've come into, arter all. He knew all about this advertisement. He'd found out that you was John B. Reid's son, and meaning to spoke your chance, he put a charge of shot into you and swiped the packet of papers. Then he hooked off home to England and collared the swag. It's as plain as paint."

"No; that's just what it isn't!" persisted Jack. "I grant you that the chances are that Smiley was responsible for the dastardly attack which nearly cost me my life; but it's just possible, nevertheless, that he is innocent. He was certainly hanging round our camp at the time, but I went off that day into the bush alone. Who

Jailbird junior, in a frenzy of spleen and rage, caught the whip from its socket, and, reaching over the side of the vehicle, began to lash the miserable creature now staggering to his hands and knees.

the coward was that so nearly took my life I may never know. The shot came from behind, and bowled me over like a ninepin. That robbery was the motive is certain. The oilskin packet of papers left me by the dad was torn from the cord which suspended it round my neck, though nothing else was taken."

"And arter that Smiley vanished and was never seen or heard of again, for all the police could do to track him," answered Bob.

"Oh, yes, Smiley was an angel, wasn't he? Anyhow, we're going to get to the bottom of this, even if I have to spend my last cent and the birdshop scheme goes up the gum-tree."

"The first thing to do would be to write to these people in England."

"Yes, and I bet you'll find that Smiley stepped in, and either swore that he was you——"

"He could hardly do that, for he was over thirty while at that time I was only thirteen."

"Very well, then he's proved with those papers that you're dead, and that he's your uncle, or aunt, or something, and the next-of-kin."

"But I never had an aunt, and dad's only brother died long ago."

"It ain't no use your argyfying, Jack!" said Bob gruffly. "You can beat me at that, I know; but we shall see what we shall see, and mark my words if I ain't right. To-morrow we'll chuck the bush for good and all. We'll bump our swag down to Launceston, sell out, and clear for Brisbane. Then we'll cable these lawyer chaps to stand by, and take the first steamer for England."

"But look here, Bob," began the lad doubtfully. "Suppose we have arrived in London. What happens then? I go to these lawyers, and say I am Jack Reid—son of John Begthorp Reid. How am I, without these papers, going to prove it?"

"Prove it? Why, refer 'em to me!"

Jack laughed over this simple method of identification.

"I am afraid that won't convince a hard-headed attorney anywhere, much less in England."

"Oh, won't it!" said Bob hotly. "We'll see about that. I know the rascally breed. You leave 'em to me! I'll show 'em if Kangaroo Bob is going to let any oily-faced lawyer wipe his boots on him!"

"All right, then; we'll assume that settled!" said Jack, smiling. "Next, supposing it is no fortune at all that is waiting for me? Supposing it's all a wild-goose chase?"

"Wild goose, eh? Well, that's in the bird line, anyway. We'll just start that little shop of ours, that's all. And if it does turn out to be a fortune arter all, why, o' course——"

Kangaroo Bob rubbed his copper-coloured nose nervously with the back of his hand.

"Of course what?" urged Jack grimly.

"Well, nat'rally this 'ere partnership of ours would have to be dissolved. You being a gentleman again—which, of course, you always was—and having a position like to keep up among the other nobs—why, it wouldn't be 'exactly the thing for you to be seen keeping friendly with the likes o' me, would it?"

"Thanks, Bob! I'm glad you put it so frankly!" answered Jack.

"Quite so!" continued the old man bravely, and not a bit taken aback. "You see, it's all right me being chummy with you out here, where there's no one knows no better, but in England things are different. Still, if I was to open that birdshop, and you was to come in occasional like and buy a greenfinch, or a kinary, maybe—that is, of course, if you didn't mind risking being seen by your noo friends——"

Old Bob paused, pursing up his lips and glancing anxiously at his young chum's face to see how he was taking this rather audacious suggestion of his. If Jack's face had been cold as marble, it would scarcely have been more than the old man in his simplicity of heart expected. As it was, the youngster's face was flushed, and his eyes aglow.

"I say again, Bob, I'm glad you've put it so frankly. Now I know exactly where we stand, and how much I've got to run into your old thick head before I consent to stir a finger in this matter. We'll suppose just for one moment that it is a fortune that awaits me. Do you think that I, for all the gold in the world, would ever turn my back on the truest, trustiest, kindest friend that ever a lad could have. I owe my life—everything to you, and Heaven forgive me if I ever forget the debt! No, we'll come to an understanding now, before we start. If anything that happens out of this affair is to break our friendship—which I shall always be proud of, and had been looking to to last me all my life—you may as well make up our minds to break it now. Unless you promise me that you'll stick by me as of old, rain or shine, thick or thin, no matter what lies in store for us, I'll stop where I am in Australia, and let things in the old country rip as they please. Understand, Bob, that's what I say and I mean."

Kangaroo Bob took his pipe from between his lips just in time to prevent it falling, for his big heart was jammed somewhere in his throat, and he could not close his iron jaws.

Then their two hands met shakily through the smoke of the greenwood fire.

Still, as Bob lay rolled up in his blankets that night listening to the rain drumming on the tin roof, he could only come to the conclusion that Jack was wrong.

"It 'ud never do. It 'ud never do!" he kept telling himself. "I should have to eddykate him out of it. He'd get to see it in time, p'raps, how people was a-laughing at him, and saying it was a disgrace to have a dirty old ruffian like me hanging about the place. Still, I'll stand by him as long as he wants me, and if Smiley's collared the swag and we can't get it back anyhow, I'll skin the blag-

THE ARRIVAL OF JACK REID AT SCRUBY HALL.

The ancient vehicle gave a lurch forward, at the very moment that Master Jallophat junior was fumbling with the door-handle, causing him to turn a complete somersault and alight in a sitting posture on the frozen road.

were now even at his threshold clamouring for his blood.

Mr. Scriven got ready for a dive beneath the table.

The glass on the office water-bottle jumped and jingled as somebody without smote the inquiry counter with a mighty fist, and thwacked it with an umbrella.

"Stand where you are, young man!" roared a voice. "Move an inch, and, by Paddy O'Hara's pig, I'll knock your head into the middle of last week!"

Mr. Tobias Scriven perceived himself to breathe afresh. Even a suffragette could not be suspected to possess a voice like that. It was as powerful as a lightship's foghorn. Then his heart gave another little jump, for a second voice had chipped in, and it was so light that it might have been a woman's.

"Hey up, Bob!" it said. "You're only frightening this gentleman, making an ass of yourself. How can you expect him to take in our names if you tell him to stand still, and not move an inch?"

"You leave this to me, Jack!" roared the foghorn voice. "I know what I'm up to. By Jimmy, I'll frighten him and the whole bang lot of 'em! I know 'em, the rascally breed; and they'll know me, too, afore we've done with 'em! Don't let 'em think they're going to try any of their downey, lawyer tricks on the like of us! We won't have 'em. No; let 'em understand that now, here, afore we start. My name's Bob Marlin, and——"

"Now once for all, Bob," said the other speaker, with determination, "if you don't 'Pon my word, you're the most exasperating——"

But Jenkins had fled. Mr. Tobias Scriven refrained from hurling the rest of what he had to say into the empty air, and saved his breath for the business to come.

"Mr. John Reid!" he repeated to himself. "Why, it must be that claimant to the estate of John Begthorp Reid, whose heirs I have been advertising for the past three years or more. Let me see; his letter only reached me a week ago, and he said that he was following on by the next steamer—a lad of action evidently. Wonder who his friend is, though? Most irregular individual must be most extraordinary irregular. Er—good-afternoon, Mr. John Reid! Pleased to meet you!"

The door had opened again to admit young Jack and Kangaroo Bob.

The latter's shirt, cord breeches, and gaiters had been discarded in Jack's case for a neat suit, obviously ready made of the pattern known as pepper and salt.

Old Bob was also attired in a suit of ready-me-downs, the sleeves and legs of which, being some inches too long for him, he had rolled up round his wrists and ankles. On the back of his head was a tall hat, brand-new, and at least one size too small for him, and in his fist a cheap alpaca umbrella, badly rolled, and obviously demoralised in its ribs by the thrashing it had been administering to the office counter.

Leaving his youthful friend to advance and shake hands with Mr. Tobias Scriven, old Bob contented himself with glaring, first at the lawyer, then out of the window, and, lastly, all round the room. Finally, as one who in strange and doubtful places makes a point of acquainting himself with all possible avenues of attack, and securing the shortest line of retreat he picked up a chair, banged it down decidedly at a point commanding both desk and door, and plumped himself into it.

"Delighted to make your acquaintance, Mr. Reid!" said the lawyer, rather abstractedly, and keeping one eye nervously on the dumpy man during his strange performance. "This gentleman, your friend, is——"

"Mr. Robert Marlin," answered Jack Reid promptly.

The dumpy man, who was now engaged in cutting a quid from a very black plug of tobacco with a very big knife, looked up with a defiant gleam in his blue eyes.

"Yes, that's me! Bob Marlin, of Worra Worra—Kangaroo Bob—a man as never allowed anyone yet—lawyer, liar, or thief—to get over him, and ain't going to start now. So watch it!"

By way of emphasising his point, he struck the sailor's knife, point downwards, into the polished rosewood top of Mr. Scriven's desk, and looking from it to the lawyer, as much as to say "See that?" he transferred the fresh quid to his cheek, the old one to the coalbox, and the plug to his pocket.

Mr. Tobias was dumbfounded, not only at this broadside of Bob's, but by the fact that his young client seemed to be engaged in a desperate effort to choke himself with his handkerchief.

"Really," exclaimed the lawyer, recovering himself, and addressing the dumpy man, "I must ask you, sir, in what capacity you honour me with your presence? Are you by any chance Mr. Reid's—er—legal adviser?"

"Never you mind what I am!" snapped old Bob, clutching his umbrella as if it were a broadsword. "And don't you go insulting me by suggesting that I'm a legal anything, or, by gosh, I'll knock your head off! I'm here 'cause I am here—first to see fair play as be-tween mine an' mate; second, to testify that this here young genelman is John Eustace Reid, son of John Begthorp Reid, as died in the bush back of Worra Worra, on the night of July 17th, Anno Domini, 1891. Now, then, you know me and my business, so go ahead, old sealing-wax!"

The senior partner of Scriven, Studsby, Browbridge, & Scriven was so shaken up by this extraordinary onslaught that he did not quite know whether he was on his head or his heels. All that he could gasp for the moment was "sealing-wax!—old sealing-wax!"

"One minute, sir. Please let me apologise

THE 2nd CHAPTER.
Startling Discoveries.

"THIS is really highly irregular! What ever can it mean? Surely it can't be that——"

Mr. Scriven, senior partner of the firm of Scriven, Studsby, Browbridge, & Scriven, of Lincoln's Inn, put on his spectacles, and, sitting back in his chair, fixed a startled eye on the door leading to the outer office.

His first impressions that the house was on fire, or that the peaceful precincts of the Inn had been stormed by a riotous mob, had suddenly paled into utter insignificance before one thought far more awful than these.

As chairman of the Wombledon Political Association, it had fallen to Mr. Scriven's lot, at the great meeting held only the night before, to order the instant ejection of no less than seventeen suffragettes, each demanding "Votes for women!" at the top of her voice.

Could it be that these seventeen screeching females had marched into Lincoln's Inn with banners flying, had stormed his staircase, and shut up I shall be seriously annoyed with you. You seem to think that an English lawyer's office is a shade worse than any Chinese 'fan-tan' den on Larrikin Point."

"Think!" roared the foghorn. "I know it! Didn't I once——"

"Never mind what you did once! You dry up now, and leave me to manage this affair my own way, please."

The only reply to this that Mr. Tobias Scriven could catch was a rumbling growl, and then, after a brief pause, a tap came to the door. Jenkins, the clerk, entered, looking as scared and bewildered as his master.

The lawyer promptly laid hold of an ebony ruler, and glared at Jenkins through his spectacles in a way that plainly showed that he was prepared to sell his life dearly.

"Who—who is it?" he demanded, in a voice that was not altogether convincing.

"Please, sir, Mister—please, sir, Mister Jack Reid to see you, please sir. Two of 'em."

"Two Mr. Jack Reids——"

"No, sir: one, sir, please sir."

"One, sir, please, sir!" mimicked Mr. Scriven, suddenly experiencing such a sense of relief at this announcement that he could have kicked himself and his clerk, too, for all his fears. "Confound you, sir, and your one, sir, two, sirs, please, sir! Why don't you talk plain English, sir? Show Mr. Reid in!"

"Both of 'em, sir?" stammered the clerk.

"No—yes! Confound it all, I mean yes!

for my friend's rather rough-and-ready way of—"

"No need to apologise for me, Jack!" laughed Bob harshly. "I know these lawyer chaps, I—"

Now look here, Bob," said Jack, growing very white and serious all of a sudden, "either you keep quiet from this moment on, or you go outside!"

Bob retorted with a hysterical snigger of defiance, and proceeded to nop his bald head with a large vermilion handkerchief, all studded with little white anchors and big round spots.

"I hope you won't take too much amiss what my friend Bob Marlin has said, sir. The Australian bush is not the best school for society manners, and I am afraid that both of us are rather lacking in that respect."

"No, no!" said Mr. Scriven, with a wave of the hand; but his tone seemed to suggest that it was very much a case of "Yes, yes," all the same.

"Perhaps, then," continued Jack quietly, "I had better get to business at once. You received a letter from me regarding an advertisement of yours in a Colonial paper asking for the heirs of John Begthorp Reid. I came across it for the first time only a few weeks ago, and in a peculiar way, as you will guess."

Jack laid the piece of broken leaflet, on which the newspaper had been pasted, on the table before the lawyer, and described the circumstances of the discovery.

"Now, I am John Eustace Reid, the only son of John Begthorp Reid, who, as my old friend has already informed you, died on the night of July 17th, 1891."

"I am delighted to meet you. Your appearance on the scene is most opportune, as I shall explain later," said Mr. Tobias Scriven, preparing to unbend a little now that old Bob had been put in his place. "Of course, you are furnished with papers of identification?"

"Unfortunately, no. But the reason for that I can explain readily enough," replied Jack, and proceeded to relate, briefly, the story of his father's death, his own rescue by Bob Marlin, and then the base attempt upon his life, and the theft of the oilskin packet, which, ever since he was old enough to wear it, Bob had allowed him to keep in his own charge.

Throughout this straightforward narrative the lawyer kept the face of a sphinx, neither in a line or a curve suggesting credence or disbelief.

"There was a man we both suspected might be responsible for this attack upon me. His name is Smiley. If so, and if his object was to secure these papers, no doubt in the three years that have passed he has attempted to make use of them. Perhaps he has called upon you?"

"Smiley—Smiley," repeated the lawyer thoughtfully. "I know no one of that name."

"A man of thirty or thirty-five, light haired, pale eyed—"

"Pasty-faced, pimply, pug-nosed, pigeon-toed, pudden-eaded pig!" added Bob Marlin, by way of lending Jack a hand.

"I know nobody answering to that description in connection with this matter. By the way, you have, no doubt, already made yourself acquainted with the details of this business," suggested the lawyer.

"Not a line," answered Jack promptly. "I saw your advertisement, and answered it. My friend, Mr. Marlin, had already made up his mind to come back to England, so we booked our passage straight away."

"Hum! Well, the advertisement in question concerns the will of one Jeremiah Timothy Reid, deceased."

"My father's uncle. I have heard him speak of him," said Jack, in a quiet voice, aside.

"A retired manufacturer, of Rotherham," continued Mr. Tobias Scriven gently, ignoring the interruption, "who died in 1880, bequeathing to John Begthorp Reid, or his heirs, his entire fortune, representing, at this date, something over a quarter of a million of money."

"A quarter of a million!" gasped Jack, his breath quite taken away by the magnitude of his good luck.

"Quarter of *ex* million!" blurted old Bob, equally dabbergasted. "Why, Jack, me lad, it's tremendigeous, it's splendidjeous, it's—it's wonderful! Your hand, my hearty! May you live long to—"

"One moment please!" interrupted the lawyer drily. "Let me advise you to count no chickens until they are hatched. I do not suggest for a moment that you are not John Eustace, only son of John Begthorp Reid, eldest son of Jeremiah Timothy Reid; but the law will demand proof. Those papers, for instance. This unfortunate fact that your father chose, for some reason of his own, to pass in Australia under the name of Begg, will make it indispensable, I fear, that those papers should be recovered, at all costs, to prove your identity and claim. I take it that even Mr. Marlin here did not know your father before his decease, except under the name of Begg; that your only witness at present is quite unable to testify. Is that so?"

It was so. For all that Bob was prepared to be "chiselled by them lawyer sharks," as he had so often put it, he had to admit that this point was sound, and a "stumper." He could only repeat what Jack had told him as to his father's revelation of his secret.

As to the papers in the oilskin packet, he had seen and read these; but there was no one else who could say the same, except the thief who had stolen them. Bob had been only too careful all along to keep them from prying eyes.

"There is another point," said Mr. Scriven, who was by no means insensible to the look of despair and bewilderment in the eyes of his visitors. "This matter has stood over for a good many years now. Should no legal proof of the existence of the said John Begthorp Reid, or his heirs, be forthcoming, it is within the power of the next-of-kin to apply to the Court for permission—shall I put it?—for his death to be assumed, and that he left no children to whom the money could pass. I may as well inform you that I have reason to believe such an application is already on foot."

"And who is the next-of-kin, may I ask?" demanded Jack.

"That I confess I am unable to inform you. The claim has not been placed in my hands, though I shall have to deal with it in due course. The prime mover, however, and the gentleman who is no doubt financing the claimant, is a Mr. Jalliphat."

"Jalliphat—Jalliphat!" echoed old Bob furiously, knitting his brows. "Why, where in blumpf-nomopts have I seen that name? Not an hour ago, neither."

"Very possibly," answered Mr. Scriven, with a dry smile. "You will find it on that open page in front of you. Mr. Jalliphat is the proprietor of a school for young gentlemen in—in Northumberland, I think it is. I happened to be looking it up in a scholastic year-book as you were announced."

The scholastic year-book was already in old Bob's enormous paws, and he was scanning every line of the takingly-worded advertisement. It was illustrated with three or four choice photographs, showing the school itself—an imposing building—with the glimpse of a lake below, the workshops for technical instruction, the gymnasium, etc.

But old Bob's blue eyes took scant notice of these. One photograph in the corner showed a group of the masters, all in gowns and mortar-boards, with Mr. Simeon Jalliphat seated in their midst, a most engaging smile upon his smooth, sleek face.

In the back row stood one whom Kangaroo Bob regarded as if turned to stone. Then he suddenly turned purple, banged the book down on the table before him, brought his fist down with a crash on Mr. Jalliphat's nose, and whooped like a lunatic Indian.

"Jack, we've tracked him! We've run him to earth, me lad! We'll corner him like the mangiest dingo alive! Ding my whiskers, if it ain't Smiley—there—there!" he yelled, pointing a horny finger. "Number two from the left."

"Smiley!" exclaimed Jack, diving for the book.

"Smiley as ever was! Smiley, the pasty-faced, pimply, pudden-eaded, pug-nosed hippopotamus! So—so it is! And, by Heaven, I see what his game was now!" cried Jack. "There's someone waiting to do me out of my own. They think I'm dead—that that shot killed me. If it did not, they are confident that by stealing those papers they have crippled the chances of ever proving my claim. Don't you see it all, sir?" he demanded, turning to the lawyer.

"I?" echoed Mr. Tobias Scriven, in amaze. "Oh—er—quite so—at least, it may be so. You see, my dear sir, I am not to express an opinion, for I am only administering the estate. I must leave proof of identity, and all other things, to you. As a private individual, however, I may say that I am decidedly interested."

"Interested! Ding my dingy whiskers," roared Bob. "I should hope you were, sir. Come, Jack, we've got to do something to lay this scoundrel by the heels, and save your apple-cart. What's to be done?"

"I've got it," answered Jack, after a long pause. Bob, once again, for the hundredth thousandth time, I am going to look to you for help. I hate to do it, but, from all I know of you, and from all you have said, I am sure I shall not look in vain. I want money—more than the few pounds I possess of my own."

"Money, lad? Ay, my whole pile! It's only a few hundred, but every cent is yours. Now, what are we going to do?"

"I've got it," answered Jack, after a long pause. Bob, once again, for the hundredth thousandth time, I am going to look to you for help. I hate to do it, but, from all I know of you, and from all you have said, I am sure I shall not look in vain. I want money—more than the few pounds I possess of my own."

"Money, lad? Ay, my whole pile! It's only a few hundred, but every cent is yours. Now, what are we going to do?"

"I've got it," answered Jack, after a long pause. Bob, once again, for the hundredth thousandth time, I am going to look to you for help. I hate to do it, but, from all I know of you, and from all you have said, I am sure I shall not look in vain. I want money—more than the few pounds I possess of my own."

"Money, lad? Ay, my whole pile! It's only a few hundred, but every cent is yours. Now, what are we going to do?"

"I am going to school—to Jalliphat's. I never was at school in my life, but I'm going now. I'm going to hunt up Smiley. He won't know me after four years, I guess, for I've grown a foot or more, and I'll call myself Jack Robinson. I'm going to get those papers back from him, even if I have to break every bone in his body to find 'em! Then I'm going to claim my own!"

"Hurroo!" bawled old Bob, throwing his new top-hat into the air, and skewing it with his right boot-heel. "I'm on for the game, Jack, lad, I'm with you there, every inch of the way. We'll start at once—to-night!"

"Not to-night, I should advise," interposed Mr. Scriven gently. "There are preliminaries to be arranged, if you care to avail yourself of my services as a friend, without allowing my connection with the matter to transpire. I will undertake to communicate with Mr. Jalliphat, saying that I have a pupil for him, and arranging terms for that gentleman's board."

"If you will do that, sir, I shall be greatly obliged," answered Jack. "Let me see, Scruby Hall is the name of the school?"

"Yes. Nineteen miles from Bayverton, I notice. It's a long way," said Mr. Scriven.

"Ding my whiskers, it's a tur'ble long way! Ain't there no village nearer than that—a village big enough to support a birdshop, perhaps?" asked old Bob, cocking an inquiring eye at the lawyer.

"Birdshop!" exclaimed Mr. Scriven, in amazement.

"Yes. Where you buy kinaries, an' cages, an' bullfinches, an' larks, and hempseed, and sich. Bust it, me lad, Jack, you young jackass, what are yer laughin' at?"

THE 3rd CHAPTER.
Jack Journeys to Scruby Hall, and Meets With a Strange Reception.

SCRUBY HALL SCHOOL, BAVERTON, NORTHUMBERLAND.

Principal: Mr. SIMEON JALLIPHAT (Son of the late Hezekiah Jalliphat, M.A.)

Assisted by a thoroughly qualified resident staff of masters.

A HIGH-CLASS ACADEMY FOR SONS OF GENTLEMEN DOMICILED ABROAD.

Premises: A Magnificent Mansion, Delightfully Situated on a Picturesque Coast: 645 feet above sea level; replete with every luxury; elaborately adapted for Educational Training on the most modern lines.

Workshops for Technical Instruction, Gymnasium, Swimming-bath, etc.

Cricket, Football, Hockey, and Recreation Grounds, 700 acres.

Particular and Personal Attention reserved for Backward and Delicate Boys.

Specially Moderate Fees for pupils desired to remain all the year round.

An exception made in favour of a strictly limited number of boys of parents or guardians resident in the United Kingdom.

Prospectus and all particulars on application to Mr. Simeon Jalliphat.

Having read and re-read the pamphlet setting forth these particulars a dozen times, and again satisfied himself with the aid of a magnifying glass that the face in the back row of the master's group was really that of Smiley, Jack Robinson—as he must now be called—sat back in the corner-seat and gazed out on the bleak and wintry landscape through which he was being whirled.

"Well, apart from my guest, it seems to promise right," he said to himself. "The school looks to be a fine one from the photograph, and apparently they go in strongly for sport. I suppose Mr. Jalliphat will include me in the Backward Boy department, seeing that I know very little else besides reading, writing, and arithmetic.

"Jalliphat—Jalliphat! It sounds all wobble and grease. I wonder what sort of a chap he'll turn out to be. An out-and-out rogue, I should say, that is, if he is actually working in with Smiley. I must take care the beauties don't spot me, that's all. They're not likely to be on their guard at first, but when they do find out that Jack Reid, who was supposed to have been effectually accounted for with a charge of Number 4 shot three years ago at Worra Worra, and Jack Robinson, the new boy, are one and the same, the fun will commence. I'll have to keep my eyes skinned then, and I don't suppose they'll stick at anything to get me out of their path to that quarter million. Old Bob will have to lend a hand, then. He was wise to change carriages at the last station and leave me to finish the journey alone. We mustn't engage so much as a wink or a nod until we are sure the coast is clear."

And so his thoughts ran on to the thunder of the wheels. Higher and still higher; up slippery inclines, through glen and valley, past moor and dale, the coupled locomotives tugged the heavy train.

At last the summit of the gradient was reached. Then it was a swift, fast dash down hill; then the brakes clinched and bit upon the wheels, and the train pulled up at a little wind-swept station.

"Baverton! Here we are at last!" exclaimed Jack, jumping up and making a dive for his bag.

Only one other passenger alighted from the train; a short, dumpy man, with a blue jowl, strangely light in complexion compared with his bright, copper nose and cheeks, suggesting that a full beard had lately been shorn off by the razor.

The disguise was complete. Even Jack, who had only taken leave of old Bob at the last station, where he had suggested the precaution of changing carriages, could scarcely recognise his old chum.

Neither acknowledged the other by so much as a lift of an eyelid, and for all that any stranger could tell, they had never met before in their lives.

"Box, sir? Yes, sir! Wheer for, sir? Oh, Scruby Hall, eh?"

The porter's face, as he echoed Jack's answer was a study. It was a study of blank dismay, as if this was an old joke that was being sprung upon him, but a good one all the same.

"Yes, Scruby Hall," answered Jack sharply. "If there's a conveyance of any sort outside, oblige me by telling it to wait a little while about it, my man, just stop grinning, and try to look a little less like a stuffed monkey."

The man chuckled over this rebuke, and, picking up the heavy trunk, started down the platform with Jack striding after him. Old Bob, he noticed, had already left the station, and could be seen plodding away down the snow-covered road.

They had just passed through the booking-office when an ancient waggonette of curious design, drawn by an equally ancient and curious-looking horse, came creaking up.

"Hallo, there you are! Your name's Robinson—ain't it?" demanded one of the two occupants of the vehicle, who was sitting huddled-up in a mangy rug, as close under shelter of the driver's back as he could squeeze.

As far as Jack could judge—for only a pair of watery-green eyes, sunk in blue cheeks, and surmounting a very red pug-nose, were visible over the turned-up coat collar—the speaker was a youth about his own age.

"Yes, my name's Robinson," answered Jack quietly.

"Then I've been sent to fetch you. So hop in, and be sharp about it!" snapped the watery-eyed youth, without offering to stir a hand from his pockets by way of welcome or assistance.

"Now, then, back up!" he snarled, as Jack stood his ground, obviously inclined to resent this peremptory command. "Here, porter, sling that box inside, quick! And you, Slinker, you beast, what are you sitting there for? Why ain't you down and helping? Do you want me to tap it the whip about your ears, you lazy, snivelling worm?"

The "lazy, snivelling worm," who was the driver of the strange turn-out, and who looked more like a frozen scarecrow than a live, human being, roused himself as if from a dream under this volley of abuse. Hastily unwrapping the single threadbare blanket from round his bony knees, he scrambled off the box and promptly pitched forward on his nose.

The miserable picture he presented as he grovelled there, obviously too cramped and crippled by cold to gather his limbs under him, moved Jack's warm heart to pity.

His face, pinched and white as it was, was the face of a lad of an old man; but his clothes were those of a youngster of fourteen. Though the bitter cold wind cut like knives, he was wearing no overcoat. Only an ancient Eton jacket, three sizes too small, covered his narrow, angular shoulders, leaving bare six inches of blue, bony arm above the wrist.

A pair of patched trousers clothed the rest of his body, starting as low down about his middle as nature's very well could start, and ending in a tattered fringe half-way up his pipe-shank shins.

Round his middle was wrapped a faded, woollen scarf; obviously designed to fill the exposed gap between his shrunken jacket and trousers.

But if poor Slinker's plight moved Jack to pity, it had the very opposite effect upon the young autocrat in the waggonette.

Suddenly leaping out of his wrappings, in a frenzy of spleen and rage, he caught the whip from its socket, and reaching over the side of the vehicle, he began to lash the miserable creature, now staggering to his hands and knees.

"You lazy, snivelling worm, you cruel!" he shrieked, making the thong whistle and curl and crack round his victim's face and legs indiscriminately. "You shirking, miking, miserable cur! Get up! Get up—d'ye hear? Or I'll flay every inch of skin off you!"

"Steady, you young savage!" What the dickens do you mean?" demanded Jack, white-hot at this exhibition of ruthless brutality, grabbing at the descending arm.

"What business is it of yours, I'd like to—you dare to lay hands on me! Let me go, you fool—you cad! Do you know who I am?"

"No, and don't care!" answered Jack shortly, gripping his wrist till the bones cracked, and taking the whip from him, as easily as if he were taking a rattle from a baby's fist.

"Don't care—don't care!" yelled his antagonist, stamping in childish rage. "Oh, you don't care, don't you? Then you will! I'm Jalliphat junior, I am! I'll tell my pa about you, see if I don't! I'll get you skinned for this for a starter—and Slinker, to!"

Jack, however, with a shrug of contempt, had tossed the whip to the crouched object cowering in the snow. The thin, pitiful face was striped with blue where the whip had left its marks, and blood was trickling from the cracked lips.

"Get up, old chap! Don't mind that young rat!" he said, dragging Slinker on to his feet. "If ever he sets about you again like this, knock him down—even if he is Jalliphat's son! You can do it if you try. By the way, you are expected indeed suddenly, wondering whether this was man or boy, servant or pupil, that he was addressing.

"Slinker—only Slinker!" stammered the scarecrow, never removing his terrified eyes from this new savage who had crawled back into his rugs once more to sulk and seethe.

"Slinker," echoed Jack. "Is that your name, or only a nickname."

"Yes—no—yes," stuttered the scarecrow, cowering away in terror of a further onslaught.

"Slinker, that's all; only Slinker. Don't talk to me. You'll only pay for it. Oh, what have I done—what have I done?" he moaned, and snivelled like a spiritless urchin.

"Huh!" sneered Jalliphat junior, in venomous spite and glee. "Yes, what have you done—eh? You wait! You'll catch it when I get you home. You—you—toad, you! If you don't hop up on that box quicker than—"

Slinker did not wait for the threat to be completed. He scrambled on to the ramshackle seat as fast as his shaking bones would permit him, and, catching up the reins, jogged the ancient horse with his foot into the nearest approach to a gallop of which the emaciated creature was capable.

So terrified was Slinker, and so anxious to appease his tyrant, that he never waited for Jack to climb to his seat, and, to Jalliphat junior's huge delight, the new boy had to sprint hard before he could spring upon the step and scramble in.

Down the hill the waggonette rolled and rocked, leaving the two porters, who had been witnesses of the degrading scene, cracking their sides with laughter.

The town of Bayerton, wherever it was, was effectually hidden away from view in some fold of the surrounding hills. Turning to the right, they rattled away along a road which led them through country bleak and bare, frozen moorland, dotted here and there with starved groups of pines.

Mile after mile they jogged along, the old white horse quickly settling down to a snail's pace, from which no effort of Slinker's could rouse him.

Jalliphat junior, meanwhile sat in scornful silence, wrapped in all the rugs belonging to the vehicle. As even these did not seem to supply the desired warmth, he coolly reached over the hot-seat and jerked away the miserable wrap which Slinker had ventured to tuck about his knees.

At last the eighteenth mile stone was passed, and a sudden bend in the road brought them in sight of the sea. It was the view shown in the photograph illustrating the Scruby Hall advertisement. On the right, nestling among sloping pine-woods, was the big house.

It looked gaunt and bare enough in reality, but Jack's spirits rose a little at the sight of it.

As the waggonette approached the lodge-gate, he laid hold of his bag ready to alight. But the old, white horse held on unchecked by the shrieking scarecrow, who dangled rather than held the reins.

Somewhat puzzled by this, Jack looked across at Jalliphat junior, whereat the young gentleman burst into a hilarious guffaw of enjoyment.

"Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!" he coughed and spluttered. "You've bought it, like all the rest of the silly noodles. You thought that house we just passed was the school, didn't you? You saw it in the photograph—ha, ha, ha!—but you didn't notice the other little place beyond in the trees. Ho, ho! What a joke! Scruby Hall. 'Magnificent mansion replete with every luxury'—eh? Hee, hee! You wait!"

"Then it comes to this, Master Jalliphat," said Jack, his dander rising. "That advertisement of it is, and your father—ha, ha, ha!—but you—you—you—"

But Jack had suddenly become aware of the presence of a scattered group of boys, standing regarding their approach listlessly from the side of the road. Some were small, and some long and lank, but if they were not all such scarecrows of humanity as Slinker, something of the same look of hunger and dejection haunted their eyes.

The new boy had scarcely time to realise all this when the waggonette lurched round and entered a weed-grown drive darkened by gaunt, scrubby trees.

A few yards further, and the old, grey horse pulled up with a jerk.

A long, low building, originally a farmhouse, but to which various topsy-turvy wings and crazy, barn-like structures had been added, confronted them.

Master Jalliphat junior was preparing to alight from the vehicle, and Jack was sitting gazing around him with undisguised disgust, when a large, sleek man, in a shiny black master's gown and a battered mortar-board hat, appeared dramatically upon the doorstep beneath the cracked portico.

Whether it was that Slinker who always seemed ready to tumble over his own stumbling feet, stumbled at that moment and butted into the horse, or whether the latter was startled by the sudden apparition in the doorway, it is impossible to say.

At any rate, the ancient vehicle gave a lurch forward at the very moment Master Jalliphat junior was fumbling with the door handle, causing him to turn a complete somersault and alight in a sitting posture on the frozen road.

Young Jalliphat yelled with pain and fury; the fat, sleek man's face was crossed up into a greasy scowl; but Jack, for the life of him, cold not help bursting into a roar of laughter at the downfall of the bully.

"He shoved me!" shrieked young Jalliphat, feeling tenderly for his bruises. "He's been shoving me and punching me all the way! Really truly, pa! And so has Slinker! I told 'em I'd tell you, and, truly, they only laughed, sneered, jeered! He said you were a liar and a fraud! Him!"—indicating Jack.

"Ha!" said the large, sleek man viciously, producing a lithe ash-plant suddenly from under his coat-tails, as if he were a conjurer. "He said that, did he, Johnny? Very well! Very well! I'll take Slinker first, though! Slinker, my lad, come here. Come here—nearer, nearer still. That's right!"

The wretched Slinker crawled forward yard by yard, hesitating and moving nearer and nearer at every command, like a hound that knows well the force of the huntsman's whip.

"You look cold, my boy!" said Mr. Jalliphat, for such Jack now knew him to be, moistening the palms of his hand and getting a firm grip of the stick. "You look as if something warm would do you good. Try some of this!"

As he said "this" he suddenly whirled the ash-plant round, and seemed to cut Slinker's spindle legs completely under him with the force of the vicious blow.

The next instant Jack would have been out of the waggonette and at the throat of the brute; but a second face appeared suddenly in the doorway, and for the moment Jack could see nothing else.

It was Smiley.

(This enthralling, new School Story will be continued in next week's issue of the "Boys' Realm.")

LONDON LIFE

A Dramatic Tale of the Throbbing Metropolis.

By ERNEST PROTHEROE.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS IN BRIEF.

DAVID FRASER, a lad attending St. Chad's Voluntary School in Lambeth. He resides with his mother and little sister at No. 1, Fullerton's Rents, a dilapidated slum.

MRS. FRASER, David's mother. Mr. Fraser has been given up for dead, having been reported lost with the ship Washington, which has been missing for many months.

JACOB HALE, the unlovely landlord of Fullerton's Rents.

JAMES HALE, commonly known as Ginger 'Ale—Jacob Hale's son. An ugly, ill-favoured lad.

MRS. MICHAEL MALONEY, a good-natured Irishwoman, who lives in Fullerton's Rents on the floor beneath the Frasers.

Among the many schools entering in swimming competition for the Leander Cup are St. Chad's Voluntary and Vincent Street Council School. David Fraser represents St. Chad's. Jacob Hale has put a lot of money on his son, Ginger 'Ale, who is swimming for Vincent Street School. Later, Jacob Hale comes to the conclusion that David's swimming powers are far superior to his son's, and that therefore he stands to lose all the money he has placed on the latter. At his instigation Ginger informs David that his mother is unable to pay the rent that week, and unless David consents to drop out of the competition for the cup, Mrs. Fraser and her family will be turned out into the streets.

David is greatly worried, and is at loss to know what to do, but upon later discovering that the rent money has been scraped together, he swims that night. He is victorious in a very fine effort, and besides winning two silver medals, he also wins for his school, St. Chad's, the much-coveted Leander Cup.

Jacob Hale's rage at this result knows no bounds, and his threats cause Mrs. Fraser to fear for David's welfare.

In order to add to his mother's scanty earnings, David on Saturdays does odd jobs for Mr. Bates, a kind-hearted butcher, who takes a great interest in the lad.

Ginger 'Ale forces a fight on David to avenge his defeat at swimming, but David holds his own, and Ginger gets more than he expects.

David returns home one Saturday night to find his mother insensible on the floor. In a panic he rushes for a doctor, who has her taken to the hospital. Mrs. Maloney agrees to look after David and his little sister until Mrs. Fraser's return. Jacob Hale arrives on the scene demanding the last week's rent, but he is quickly put to rout by Mrs. Maloney.

He returns, and engages in a fierce fight with Mr. Maloney, during which David, taking his little sister Phyllis, steals from the building intent upon putting the greatest possible distance between himself and Fullerton's Rents. The two wander about London through the long hours of the night.

They enter the neighbourhood of Fleet Street—"Newspaper Land." David's troubles are forgotten as he gazes with wondering eyes at the novel and exciting scene. Through a grating he watches the huge roaring, rumbling printing-presses, vomiting forth their thousands of copies per minute, folded and gathered in bundles of a dozen. The scene is to him one of unparalleled interest. The sudden glimpse of a policeman at these quarters, however, sends him speeding with his little sister to seek refuge on the Embankment.

(You read this week's instalment.)

An Early Meal.

UPON the pavement on the far side of the Embankment David discerned a seat, towards which he walked across the road with faltering steps. The seat was not for him. Stretched at full length upon it was a heap of rags that told of another outcast of the great City.

David was so startled as to draw himself up with a jerk that once more aroused Phyllis. He placed her feet upon the pavement, but for a moment her little, cramped legs refused to support her. She commenced to cry, and, if only from sheer physical weariness, the boy could not help mingling his tears with hers. His weakness was but momentary; his solicitude for his sister bade him defy his own emotion. He had only to look around to attract the child's thoughts from herself.

Over the parapet of the Embankment, and only a score or so of yards distant, was a three-masted vessel, the Buzzard, used as a training-ship for naval volunteers. Though there was now no moon, the lamps upon the pavement lighted up the vessel sufficiently to allow the observation of all its main features. The three masts stood out sharp and clear. Fore and aft were laurerns, dimly burning. From the water's edge there rose a deep red band, from which, to level with the upper deck the sides of the vessel were painted black. All else was white, even to the miniature cannon that seemed to be trained upon the boy, holding up his sister upon the parapet directly in front of it.

The sight interested Phil but for a moment; it did not ease her nervousness, or really moderate her grief. The loneliness of the spot alone provided more terrors than the infantile mind could meet with fortitude. She pleaded to be taken to the great lights again. David himself was in a more sombre mood than he had before felt; he simply did not possess the necessary force and energy to attempt to banish the child's fears by argument or persuasion. Nothing mattered if he could only pacify her, and forthwith they commenced to retrace their steps to Whitefriars Street.

Once more under the "Daily Mirror" are lamps, Phyllis regained her composure, and even looked down into the basements, where the machines were still devouring paper, and still pouring out the illustrated sheets at the rate of about thirty per second.

Upon the opposite side of the street was a "Lockhart's," in and out of which there constantly passed a stream of youths and men. In the windows could be seen cakes and buns and confectionery of various kinds. Little Phil's eyes lighted up with pleasure. This spot certainly afforded a happier prospect than that "nasty place," in which term was summed up her opinion of the Embankment.

"Ickle Phil wants a cake, Davie!"

David bit his lip at the intimation of trouble from an unexpected quarter. He tried to draw her attention to the countless bundles of paper that were literally tumbling out of the building into the apparently never-ending news-carts; but the child was not to be beguiled from the more attractive prospect over the way.

Several times she repeated her demand, each one more insistent and more tearful than the last. David tried in vain to lead her away. He held out all kinds of specious promises of no end of good things on the morrow; but Phil, with all the unreasonableness of which a child is capable, never varied, as she did not lessen, her demand.

But a study of the white opaline lettering upon the restaurant gave the boy hope of being able, at least partially, to satisfy his sister. The solitary halfpenny he possessed would purchase a cup of tea, coffee, or cocoa. Cocoa would be the best, he decided; and he carried his sister across the street, and up into the great apartment, along one side of which was a counter, with steaming urns, and heaps of bread-and-butter, cakes, and other eatables.

Though Phyllis had declared that the cocoa would be accepted in full satisfaction of her desires, her resolution failed her when she found herself in close proximity to all kinds of good things, that only increased her longing.

Seated at one of the marble-topped tables, David cooled for her the hot cocoa, of which he took a sparing drink himself. Phil sipped the warm, invigorating liquid approvingly, and then quaveringly commenced to renew her initial request.

"Ickle Phil wants a cake, Davie!"

The more he whispered entreaties for her to wait a while, the more piteously did she insist upon immediate satisfaction.

The room was filled with men and boys—printers, compositors, engineers, vanmen, clerks, and others whose work and station were less plainly indicated. Some were snatching a hasty meal in a break in their work; while others, who had completed their night's labours, discussed substantial breakfasts—ham and eggs, fish and chops—in more leisured content.

At the other end of the table, where the children were seated, was a man reading a newspaper, over the top of which he furtively took stock of his young companions.

"Waiter," he called, "bring me a large cup of cocoa, and a couple of buns."

The attendant could not repress a glance at the empty cups and plates in front of him, which, indeed, appeared to indicate that the customer had already made a meal of some substantiality. The man caught the look of surprise, but only smilingly nodded a confirmation of his order.

Presently a big mug and a plate containing the buns were placed in front of him; and when he had received payment the attendant retired to answer calls of constantly-arriving customers. To David's intense astonishment, the man pushed the mug and plate to his end of the table.

"There you are, my lad," said he. "They're for you and the little 'un."

A flush dyed the boy's cheeks.

"But I've no money, sir," he protested, in a low tone.

"Never mind; that's why they're yours."

David tried to express his thanks, but the good fellow did not stop to hear them. A glance at the clock had caused him to snatch up his hat. With a pleasant nod to the boy, and a pat on the head to his sister, he passed out, almost at a run.

David watched him threading his way across the room, and only when he had disappeared from view did the boy's eyes return to the table. He could not repress a smile when he

"Hallo! Who are you?" the man exclaimed. He was raising a recumbent form from the stop—not a man, as he had expected—but a mere slip of a boy.

Powerful New Stage Story Starts Next Week.

found that Phil had lost no time in commencing a frontal attack upon the big bun that lay nearest to her.

"Commenced, have you, you young puss?" inquired he.

Phil's eyes answered the question; her mouth was not at that moment available for speech.

David had not realised how much he was in need of food, and still more of rest and warmth. By the end of twenty minutes he felt a new boy; but his eyes were heavy, and he had the greatest difficulty in keeping awake. The clock pointed to ten minutes to four, and he was yet a long way from Flood Street. It would take them nearly an hour to walk it, even if Phil could step out the distance, which was most unlikely. If he had to carry her, the time occupied would be longer, for it would be necessary for him to rest at regular intervals.

When David and his sister again stepped into Whitefriars Street, he could not quite decide whether it was commencing to rain, or just leaving off; but, taking Phil by the hand, he decided to venture on his way. At the bottom of the street, instead of keeping straight on as he had done before, the boy inadvertently turned to the right along Tudor Street. Only when he reached Temple Avenue did he recognise the mistake he had made; but it did not very much matter; it would lead him to the Embankment and Blackfriars Bridge just the same.

Even during the short distance the rain had increased to such an extent that it was necessary to shelter under a wall, for there appeared to be no doorway available. It was, however, poor protection, and there was every indication that the downpour would increase rather than lessen. Snatching up the child, David ran down the street, in the hope of finding a porch, or even a doorway, in which to shelter until the storm abated. At length he reached one, only to find that heavy glass doors cut off all the steps save two. This, however, was better than the fully exposed pavement. In the corner he placed his sister, taking care to wrap her clothes round her to keep her little limbs off the cold step. This done, he sat down in front of her, nestling close up to her, to shelter her still further from the wind and driving rain.

The darkness, the silence, save for the pattering of the rain upon the pavement, and the mental strain and the bodily fatigues of the night, proved too much for poor David Fraser. Phyllis was asleep almost before he had comfortably arranged her; and in less than five minutes her brother, too, had been snatched into the arms of Morpheus, the kindly god who oft brings balm to weary bodies no less than to sore hearts and troubled spirits.

And fifty yards away the lights of the Embankment blinked their bewildering beams across the racing flood of old Father Thames.

A Friend in Need.

It was very nearly half-past four. In the lower end of Temple Avenue there was no light except from the street lamps, and this all too small to dissipate the deep shadows cast by the tallor buildings.

With his head bent down to meet the driving rain, came a man—from the direction of Fleet Street—hastening towards the Embankment. He stumbled over a foot projecting from the entrance to the National Telephone Company's offices.

"Hallo! Who are you?" he exclaimed. He was raising a recumbent form from the step—not a man, as he had expected—but a mere slip of a boy.

David Fraser rubbed his eyes, utterly at a loss to grasp the situation. Then, silhouetted against the light from the nearest lamp, he recognised that a peaked cap crowned the individual who was interrogating him.

The boy sprang instantly into wakefulness, as it flashed into his mind that the fear that had haunted him through the night was now realised. He was in the hands of the police!

It was Mrs. Maloney's suggestion of the inadvisability of seeking police protection that had mainly caused the boy to flee into the unknown terrors of the night. Yet, after all the stress and strain that he had suffered, he had only achieved that which he might equally well have awaited in Fullerton's Rents.

For a moment he was crushed by the apparent futility of attempting any longer to struggle against his fate.

The feeling was but momentary. His young brain worked rapidly. A plan shot into his mind. His captor was evidently unaware of the presence of Phyllis. Tucked up in the corner, it was not easy to discern her. If he could rid himself of the detaining clutch upon his arm, he might effect his escape. The man would set out in chase. Surely it would not be difficult to outstrip him, or in some other way elude him in the darkness. Then he could return to Phyllis, and carry her away out of danger of further molestation until he could reach Flood Street, and seek the advice of Bill Edwards.

All this passed through the boy's mind in a twentieth of the time it takes to set it forth. His plan was a forlorn hope, but on the instant he acted upon the resolution he had formed.

David braced himself up; and by a sudden adroit movement, freed his arm. His captor made a clutch at him, but the boy ducked to avoid it, as he shot out of reach.

He flitted off at full speed, with the man in hot pursuit.

As he passed under a lamp, he stopped in the middle of his stride. He was fleeing from a bogey, which his imagination had created out of his imperfect view of this official-looking head-gear. The man was not a policeman. Round the dark blue cap was a red band, with lettering upon it, and underneath the coat was a scarlet jersey. David heaved a huge sigh of relief as he murmured to himself:

"Salvation Army!" He turned, and took a step towards the panting man. "I thought you were a policeman, sir. That was why I ran."

The tones of the boy were very different to those the man had expected to hear. Probably that was why he did not think it necessary to renew his hold of him.

"What have you done wrong that you should fear the police?" The voice was not unkind, but there was certainly a tinge of suspicion in it.

"Nothing, sir! Really, I haven't! Only—only——"

"Only what?" interrogated the officer. "Better tell me all about it." There was added kindness in the tones, and still more in the encircling arm that was dropped round David's shoulders.

"I have no father," he faltered, "and mother has been taken to the hospital, sir. The landlord turned us out." This last was not quite an accurate representation of the fact, but it would convey understanding to the man better than could be afforded him without a very lengthy explanation. "We have been out in the streets all night," the boy added brokenly.

"Seems to me the police would have been your best friends," replied the man. "But who is 'us,' and 'we'?"

"My little sister is in the doorway down the street," said David, stifling a sob. "She is such a little mite to be served so cruelly."

"How old is she?"

"Only four years, sir!"

"Well, come on!" said the officer. "We will go to her, and then we will see what the police have to say to your landlord."

"Not the police, sir!" pleaded David. "Mother would fret if Phyllis were taken to the police-station. I think it would break her heart!"

In the corner of the doorway, little Phil lay fast asleep. She was quite dry, for though she had been deprived of the shelter of her brother's body, the angle had shielded her from the rain during the few minutes that she had been unprotected. The downpour, too, was now less heavy; in fact, it was ceasing altogether. The man stooped down, and tenderly lifted the child up into his arms.

"Come up on the step," advised he. "The rain is easing off."

David stepped into the corner which his sister had occupied.

"Have you got no friends you can go to?" asked the man.

"—don't—know, sir. It wouldn't have been so bad if it had happened in the daytime. I might have gone to Mr. Berry and told him all about it. He could, perhaps, have done something for me. He's very kind."

"Who is Mr. Berry?"

"He's the headmaster of St. Chad's, the school I attend," replied David. "But I couldn't go to him in the middle of the night, even if I had thought about it. I'm afraid I didn't stop to think much about anything," he added.

"Well, is there anybody else?"

"On Saturdays I work for Mr. Bates, the butcher, in Flood Street. He is another very kind man. I want to be there at eight o'clock, ready for work. I didn't quite see how I was going to manage about Phyllis, so I intended to go at five o'clock to talk it over with Bill Edwards. He is Mr. Bates's apprentice," David explained.

"Now I think I understand all about it," said the officer; "we'll get on the move. Step out! If you are very tired you can hang on to me."

"Where are we going, sir?" asked David, pausing perceptibly in his step.

"I'm going to take you to our Shelter at Westminster. It's the best I can do for you till morning. Well, it's morning now, but you know what I mean."

They turned on to the Embankment, and David's step was little less brisk than that of the man himself. The unexpected arrival of a friend had filled the boy with new-found vigour. A very great deal of his trouble seemed to have been removed to shoulders better able to support the weight.

The rain had ceased, but the air was filled with reeking moisture, and there was a bite in the wind that caused the boy's teeth to chatter; but, nevertheless, he stepped out bravely to keep up with the vigorous swing of the officer.

They were on the pavement that ran round from Blackfriars Bridge. They passed Temple Gardens and the green enclosure in front of the London County Council education offices, and very shortly were at Waterloo Bridge.

David cast a harried glance up the steps that led to the road above, and there still lay the huddled figures that had so affrighted him when he attempted to pass down that way.

By the time they passed down Charing Cross Bridge at Northumberland Avenue, the boy was obviously in difficulties, but his pluck bore him up, and he plodded along, albeit a little unsteadily.

Quite a mile had been traversed, and they had met with very few pedestrians, and these were all navvies and youths, and even mere boys, going to or hastening from work. At various points policemen kept their weary vigil, but they did not pass sufficiently close to court attention. The boy was glad of that, although he no longer viewed them with such dread.

Westminster Bridge was in sight, and they were nearing the long rows of lamps, that shone out into the gloom. Big Ben's illuminated dial looked down upon them from the looming mass of its immense tower. David, however, did not see it; he had not the energy to lift his gaze so high.

At the corner of a large building stood a knot of men. Two were evidently gentlemen, if long tweed ulsters and silk hats were any guide; one was a workman, in blue overalls; and the fourth might have been a Covent Garden porter, stevedore, or of any other similar occupation. As the man and boy came along, the men moved to allow them to pass, one of the silk-hatted individuals making an inquiry of David's friend.

"Hallo, lieutenant! Loaded up, ain't you? Been robbing an orphanage?" His three companions chuckled aloud at the badinage.

David could not catch the reply of his friend, which was couched in lower tones; but he again heard the louder voice of the tall individual.

"Ah, just so. Best thing for them, poor little kids!"

The boy noted the sympathy in the tones, and even though he was half-dazed he felt quite grateful to the stranger. Had David but known it, he was nearer falling into the hands of the police than had been the case at any other point in his tramp through the streets. The big building was Scotland Yard, and the four men were some of its cleverest detectives, disguised, so as to be the better able to outwit criminals for whom they are ever on the watch. Big Ben behind the hour. Five measured strokes boomed out. Here the city was awakening into life; vehicles were rattling over the bridge; the pavements were dotted with hurrying figures. And yet dark wisaged night was not even fluttering her sable wings.

David's step had been gradually flagging. Since he was assured that he was in friendly hands, there was no longer the incentive to fight against his weariness. He felt that he could sleep as he stood.

Just before they crossed the road to the railings of the Palace Yard, the lieutenant paused to ease his arms. Phyllis was no little weight, and as she had slept soundly ever since he picked her up in Temple Avenue, he had endured the full benefit of it.

In the better light afforded by the more numerous lamps, he could not fail to notice the droop in David's shoulders. He threw him a word of encouragement.

"Rear up, old man; not much further now."

"Where is it, sir?" asked David, with a brave effort to respond successfully to the injunction.

"Just past the 'Lords,' in Millbank Street, not quite so far as Lambeth Bridge. You can do that—eh?"

David inclined his head, but the movement was not very emphatic. He could do his best, but his feet seemed as if weighted with lead; he could scarcely put one foot before the other. He was practically upon the verge of physical breakdown. But still he stumbled on gamely, clutching his companion's jacket to assist his progress.

The length of the Houses of Parliament from the Palace Yard entrance to the House of Commons to the Victoria Tower, where is the King's state entrance to the House of Lords, is something under a thousand feet. To David Fraser it appeared almost endless; it seemed as though he would never get clear of the great pile, to show that he was really nearing the goal.

The lieutenant felt the increasing drag upon his coat, and gathered that the lad was almost spent. He raised Phyllis into an upright posture in one arm, as David as could give her brother a hand. The change of position woke the little girl up, but he could not avoid it. Neither did it very much matter, now that they were so close to their destination.

"Hold up! Steady!" The man slipped his arm round David only just in time to prevent his total collapse. And thus it was that three minutes later they stood in front of the severely plain building into which have crept thousands of souls, weighed down by weight of woe, sick and sore from long contending with adversity.

Phyllis was sufficiently wide awake to recognise that she was in the arms of a stranger. She looked down at David as if in piteous interrogation, and receiving not so much as a glance from him, burst into tears.

"Hush, little woman! You'll be all right in a moment," said the man soothingly, as he rang the bell by the side of the big gate; and the child was comforted by some quality in the voice that appealed to her childish instincts.

A wicket opened almost immediately, and the old man appeared.

"My word, lieutenant," he cried, "we are a-goin' strong! We're that full up there ain't room to swing a cat round, and you must go and gather in a couple o' babbies!"

"Never mind about that now, chattering," replied the officer, who had stepped into the gateway. "Come and give me a hand. Here, take hold of the lad, and carry him into No. 12."

The old man sprang to his aid almost ere the bidding was completed. He lifted David up, and passed forward a few paces before turning up a couple of steps on his right. With his unconscious burden in his arms, the man stood in an apartment only some twenty-five feet by ten. The lieutenant stood at the door to give further instructions.

"I won't come inside," he said. "The little one is awake, and she might be frightened. I'll see to her for a couple of hours until somebody is about to attend to her better. Put the lad on the little cot in the corner. Make him as comfortable as you can, and then come to me."

The room into which David had been carried was the smaller dormitory in the Shelter and Rescue Home. It was one where the officials placed the more select of the unfortunate beings to whom the Salvation Army is ever ready to extend a friendly hand, whether it be by day or by night. In other bigger dormitories at that moment were four hundred and fifty inmates, the flotsam and jetsam of the greatest city the sun ever shone upon, the very dregs of humanity.

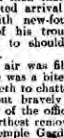
In a far corner up against the wall was a little iron cot, with bedstead, with a mattress and blanket and sheets. The old man lowered David from his arms and placed him upon the bed. He slipped off his jacket, after he had ascertained that it was soaked with moisture, and then he took off his boots. He laid the boy down at full length, drew the clothes over him, and then quietly left the room.

(To be continued next week, when a powerful new stage story commences. Order your copy now.)

BLUSHING.

FREE to all sufferers, particulars of a proved home treatment that certainly removes all embarrassing redness and permanently cures blushing and flushing of the face and neck. Send stamp for my package to Mrs. H. TEMPLE (Specialist), 4, Blenheim Street, Bond Street, London, W.

A WATCH FOR SKILL



In the Central Square of the Diagram we have placed the figure 5. Arrange the figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 in the remaining squares in such a manner that the minutes and 12 up and down, across, and diagonally from corner to corner. If correct, and you carry out our simple conditions in accordance with the puzzle we shall send you, A MAGNIFICENT WATCH (Lady's or Gent's) which is sent to you entirely free of charge. Write your solution on a plain sheet of notepaper, with your name and address clearly written underneath. Enclose your solution and stamp for reply to—

The F. R. IRONMONGER CO. (Dept. 25), Station Road, ILKESTON.

A NEW and USEFUL INVENTION. A useful and handy article for a companion. Indispensable to every lady. Folds flat for pocket; extends in a few minutes. Fitted with Opera, Reading Glasses, Magnifying Glasses, Shoe Horn, Telescope, Button Hook, all combined. Fitted in case, and 2d. for packing and postage, to introduce "Bargains by Post" Catalogue, which contains hundreds of other useful articles for fashion or for half 2d. 2d. refunded.

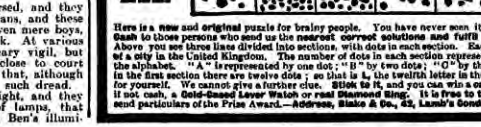
FAIN BROS. (Dept. M 8), PRESCOTT HOUSE, HASTINGS (ENG.)

A WONDERFUL BARGAIN.

All who apply for my world-famed approval sheets and enclose 1d. stamp for postage will receive a packet of 100 different stamps FREE, including Guatemala, Hexagonius, Transvaal (obsolete), Orange River Colony (new issue), Hyderabad, &c. Write at once, as only a limited number will be given away. Don't forget 1d. postage.—H. C. WATKINS (Dept. B. E), Granville Road, Barnet.

THE NEW PUZZLE.

THE £100 IN GOLD FREE. Closes February 29.



CAN YOU SEE IT?

Here is a new and original puzzle for brainy people. You have never seen it before. We will give £100 in Cash to those persons who send us the nearest correct solutions and fulfil the conditions of the contest. Above you see three lines divided into sections, with dots in each section. Each line of dots spells the name of a city in the United Kingdom. The number of dots in each section represents the position of a letter in the alphabet. "A" is represented by one dot; "B" by two dots; "C" by three, etc. Thus in the top line in the first section there are twelve dots; so that is L, the twelfth letter in the alphabet. Now study it out for yourself. We cannot give a further clue. Stick to it, and you can win a cash prize with a little luck, or if not cash, a Gold-Cased Lever Watch or real Diamond Ring. It is free to try. On receipt of solution we send particulars of the Prize Award.—Address, Blake & Co., 42, Lamb's Conduit Street (Dept. 25), London.

Another Story of The Blue Crusaders, by A. S. Hardy, Next Week.

A Titled Amateur.

A Story of the West London Football Club. By A. S. HARDY.

THE 1st CHAPTER.
A Motor Ride—The Snow Fight—At the King's Hotel.

FOR miles around Hagglestone the country lay buried beneath a heavy fall of snow. The white mantle lay inches deep upon the highways, and upon the exposed portions of the fields; but in the hollows, and protected places it was not a question of inches but of feet.

There was a bitter north-easterly wind blowing, too, which made travelling other than on foot decidedly unpleasant. A seemingly unending mass of purple clouds raced by overhead. They were surcharged with moisture, and it was evident that grim Winter intended to hold the country in its grip for some days yet.

One would have thought that, under the circumstances, all excepting those who were obliged to journey abroad would remain snugly shut behind their doors, screened by kindly walls from the violence of the wind; or, if they intended to travel, that they would confine their travelling to the railways.

And yet, on the morning after the heavy fall—a Saturday morning—a motor-car of high power, magnificently enamelled and fitted, driven by its solitary occupant, flashed onward, over the yielding surface of the snow, in the direction of Hagglestone Town.

The faster the man drove, the colder the conditions became, and yet this man whirled the car along as if he were possessed by a veritable fury. The snow spun from the crushing forewheels in a misty shower. It was dashed into his face, and yet the keen, eager eyes gazed relentlessly through the glasses of the goggles, and the car swept on.

The driver's moustache was frozen white. Rime had settled upon his cap, his coat, his hair, the leathern rug that had been tucked tightly about his legs, enclosing a hot water-bottle that he had recently had filled with boiling water at an inn en route.

A heavy frieze overcoat, with deep collar and throat protector, even with its heavy lining of leather, could not keep the driver warm, and yet, despite his physical agony—which was acute at times—he drove recklessly onward, until a rise, terminating in the summit of a dangerous hill, disclosed the big, industrial town of Hagglestone to his view.

There it lay with its countless smoke-stacks and factory chimneys; its countless acres of slate roofs, now covered with snow, and its dozens of church spires, offering to embrace him and his car, as it were, as he rushed it at break-neck pace down the hill.

The man would have appeared mad to the average onlooker had they seen him literally hurl his car over the frozen surface of the snow-bound hill, whose only two wheel tracks were visible. The perilous bends were negotiated at a tremendous pace, at one time the off-side wheels of the car being lifted clear of the ground. But the driver knew what he was doing, and at length, breathless with the exhilaration of his ride, with numbed fingers that seemed frozen on to the steering-wheel, and ears that seemed to be falling off, he flashed past the outlying villas, and had practically reached his destination.

It is in the heart of the town where Hagglestone is black, bleakest, and most forbidding. On the outskirts there are hedges and trees that seem to flourish despite the smoke, and pretty gardens to the little villas. The road-ways are broad and pleasing. They seem to have been especially constructed to deceive.

The driver of the car slowed down here. The shelter afforded by the houses deadened the force of the wind, and taking off his cap and goggles, he rubbed his ears with one hand, whilst he steered with the other, slowing down the meantime.

The face now fully revealed was that of a gentleman. The features were decidedly refined in type, and handsome. The complexion was fresh, and heightened by the drive against the cutting wind. The eyes were bold, fearless, and kindly in expression. The mouth was well-shaped; in fact, it was a splendid head.

The driver's clothing was all of an expensive character. The car was a car such as only a wealthy man could afford to run. Having relieved himself by his momentary slackening of speed, the driver replaced his cap and goggles, and forged his car on ahead at a fast pace again.

Then, as—after sounding his hooter—he flashed round the corner, he saw a crowd of grown-up men in the road right in front of him, engaged in a fierce snow-fight. They were healthy-looking, thick-set men, and the snowballs were flying to right and left, aimed by hands and arms that sent them straight, and with great force at the object aimed at. Every one of the combatants was covered with patches of adhering snow. The fighters filled the centre of the road. It was impossible to proceed without knocking some of them down if they failed to move out of the way.

The motor-man slowed down, and pressed the rubber bulb of his hooter fiercely.

Toot! Toot! Toot!

The men paused in their snow-fight. One of them made a remark which caused the others to rear with laughter, and the flying snowballs were urged on their way again.

Toot! Toot! Toot!

The car was right amongst them, but as some of them refused to budge, the driver brought it to a stand.

"Get out of the way," he cried fiercely, "unless you want to be run down!"

He was answered by a roar of laughter, and a well-aimed snowball caught him full in the face, knocking off his goggles.

His eyes flashed angrily.

"Shame!" said one of the men mockingly. "Why don't you get out of the way and let the gentleman pass?"

There was another roar of laughter, and a perfect hail of snowballs fell upon the driver of the car, bursting upon his jacket and cap and face, stinging him and causing him to grow red in the face with fury.

The assault was so unprovoked that he made a movement as if he would leave his car and go for them. But in time he realised that he would not stand a ghost of a chance against the gang of hooligans, and so he threw in his clutch and hurried the car forward.

"Look out," he cried, "or I shall run you down!"

The car flashed on to them at tremendous speed. The man who had shied the first snowball at the driver of the car was almost caught on the wing of the mudguard, and went sprawling full length in the snow with a yell of fright as the car swept by.

The others sent a hail of snowballs after the disappearing vehicle, and then stared at it in consternation as it vanished out of sight.

"A nice thing!" growled the man who had fallen in the snow, as he picked himself up. "But I got the number all right. That car don't belong to Hagglestone, but if I meet the man who was driving it I'll lay my hands on him, and not too lightly, neither."

"Shut up, Kingswell!" said one of the others. "We brought it on our-selves. The man had a perfect right to use the road, and we ought not to have interfered with him. It's no joke to have a snowball hurled in your face when you're not taking part in a snow-fight. I reckon we'd better forget all about it."

"He might have killed me!" growled the fellow who had been addressed as Kingswell.

He was a man of about twenty-five, broad - shouldered, bull - necked, with large hands and thick wrists, that denoted great physical strength.

His face was red with the glow of health, but the disagreeable expression that habitually ruled his features marred an otherwise not ill-looking face.

The brush with the driver of the car put an end to the snow-fight, and the men who had been fiercely waging war with the snow thrust their hands into their pockets and trudged off in the direction of the town.

They had covered about three-quarters of a mile, and had penetrated into the main streets of Hagglestone proper, when, of a sudden, they came upon the offending motor-car. It was standing at the side of the road outside the entrance to the King's Hotel.

The King's Hotel is one of the principal hotels in Hagglestone. It is situated at the head of Orange Street, and from the roof a tall flagstaff reared itself into the air. A flag was flying on the head of the staff, a blue-and-white flag, bearing upon it the letters, in capitals, H.F.C.

A hundred yards further down Orange Street one came upon the first of the entrance-gates of the Hagglestone Football Club's enclosure. A mast set within the ground carried another blue-and-white flag bearing the same initials as that set upon the roof of the King's Hotel.

"Well, I'm blowed!" cried Kingswell, pointing to the car. "Look at that! The West London team are staying here. I wonder if that bloke in the car has anything to do with 'em?"

"I shouldn't be at all surprised!" answered one of the others. "He is a stranger here. He may be one of the directors. He can't be one of the players, for they couldn't afford such a magnificent car as that. You'll look funny, Kingswell, if he's a toff, and he recognises you and reports you to your manager. You know how strict Mr. Bardswell is about our conduct in and about town. You've already been warned. You might get the sack."

Kingswell turned on the speaker like a flash.

"You mind your own business, Parson," he cried, "or it'll be the worse for you! Do you think I care a hang for West London, or its directors, or its manager, either? I'm going to get my own back on that bloke who tried to run me down, or I'll know the reason why! Before he leaves Hagglestone he'll be sorry he ever meddled with me!"

"Rats!" retorted Parson. "We were in the wrong. We interfered with him. If he does happen to recognise you when you turn out for the team this afternoon, I should think you'd be wise to apologise, and say it was only intended as a joke. It would be a manly thing to do, and you'd put yourself in the right then."

"Mind your own business!" cried Kingswell angrily, turning away, and walking quickly onward, he left them without another word.

Parson looked aggrieved.

"Did you ever see such a difficult, silly ass as Kingswell?" he cried regretfully, as he glanced at his chums. "Upon my word, I almost wish he would clear out of Hagglestone. He's the cleverest half-back we've ever had, but he's no control over his temper. In my opinion, that's why he's never been kept by any of the big league clubs he's played for. Oh, well, we can't worry any more about him! Let's go and get something to eat, for we shall need to be at our best against West London this afternoon!"

THE 2nd CHAPTER.
In the Billiard-room—A Distinguished Footballer — Kingswell's Threatening Attitude.

IN the meantime, the driver of the car having reached the King's Hotel, his destination, had stopped the engine, and made his way into the comfortable and well-appointed hotel. Drawing off his thick fur gloves and loosening his overcoat, he entered the billiard-room, where he heard the click of the ivory balls. A game was in progress, and he knew that it was a hundred to one that they were members of the West London Reserve team who were playing.

His surmise proved correct. There were four men playing, and a half-dozen more were seated on the comfortable lounges, watching the progress of the four-handed game.

As the door opened they looked up, and, recognising the new arrival, they set up a cheer.

Two of them got up and hurried forward. The taller of the two, a handsome, refined-looking youth, extended his hand to the stranger.

"Sefton," he said, "I'm jolly glad you've come. I've been arguing the point with our trainer, Brown, and with Reginald Barry here. They said you'd never turn up. I swore you would. 'My cousin is a man of his word,' I said, 'and if he says he'll turn out with us to-day against Hagglestone, he'll do it. The snow and frost won't stop him.' I couldn't convince Barry, however. 'Why should Sefton turn out in such cruel weather as this, and risk a broken limb, or anything else?' he said. 'I know jolly well if were in his position I wouldn't do it.'"

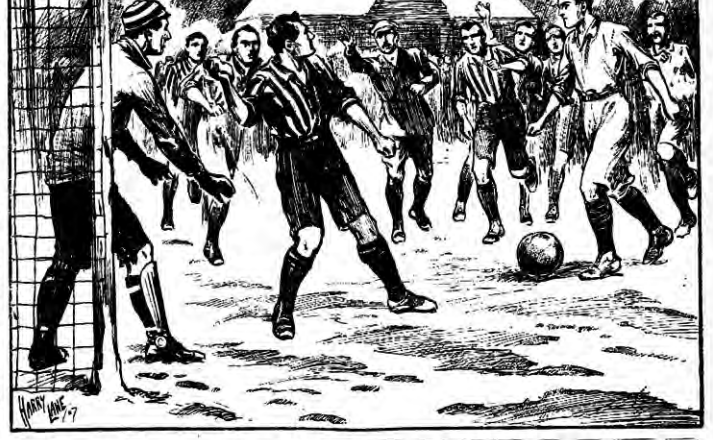
The man addressed as Sefton smiled, and his eyes had a merry look in them as he noticed that the rest of the West London players were regarding him in awe, and that the four who were playing billiards had stopped playing their game, as if embarrassed.

"Go on playing, boys!" he cried, in a genial, friendly kind of way. "Don't mind me."

The billiard game was started again; and Sefton, crossing to the fire, removed his heavy coat, and drew an armchair up to it, holding out his chilled fingers towards the comforting blaze.

"You might have looked upon my coming as a certainty, Barry," he said, smiling at the good-looking youth who had sat himself down on a lounge close by, "if you had known how keen I am on playing this Soccer game. My doctor told me that since I had been taking training spins with your football team, and had gone in for strict physical training, my health had improved beyond all knowledge. He thought football playing would be good for me. The only thing that he didn't approve of was my intention to play for a professional football

(Continued on the next page.)



Of a sudden, as Sefton cleverly tricked him, Kingswell roached down and took up a handful of frozen ice and snow, and hurled the mass full in Sefton's face.

Another Story of The Blue Crusaders, by A. S. Hardy, Next Week.

club. I ought to join the Corinthians, or an amateur organisation, he said. You were no class."

Sefton laughed. Then, turning to the lad who had addressed him as cousin, he asked:

"Well, Guy, and how is your knee going on?"

"You can see," answered the lad, with a smile. "I have got over the wrench so capitally that I am going to visit it by playing on the frostbound ground to-day."

"Do you think it wise, Northcote?" asked the other earnestly.

"Oh, I think so! I'm not afraid, and confidence is half the battle. Besides, Barry's been being ill, and the first team is not doing at all well just now. They miss Barry and myself. Barry has only just got over his badly-sprained ankle, and so we are both going to have a trial to-day in the reserves."

Sefton leaned back in his comfortable chair and laughed.

"It's strange," he murmured. "I'm going to put up a double record for West London to-day. I shall be the first earl that ever played for a professional Soccer team, and I'm the first president of a big League club to actively participate in his club's games."

"If they only knew who you were," cried Reginald Barry, "what a gate there would be in Haggiestone this afternoon!"

"Thank goodness, they don't!" laughed the earl. "I couldn't stand it. Supposing I made a mess of it? I should be laughed at and jeered at during the game, and goodness knows what would happen when I left the field. No; I prefer to play under the assumed name of A. Noble; and that is near enough to my identity to please me."

"Cousin Northcote," he went on presently, "do you remember our first meeting at Renton College? What an arrant snob I was in those times! And William Jepson? By Jove, I wish Jepson was playing with us to-day, and Harwood, too! Do you know, it seems to me that a player worth his salt must do better in the better teams. When you have skilled players on either side of you, who cleverly make an opening before a pass is given, it seems to me that it must necessarily be much easier to score goals, and to show your best form."

"I quite agree with you, sir," said Barry. "But you will have two first team men out with you to-day, Sefton, and if Guy and myself don't help you to attack, write us down a pair of duffers who don't know their business, and ought never to be allowed on a football field."

"All right," laughed the earl, rising. "I'm warm now. I'll just go and have my bag taken up to my room, and change my things before lunch. And remember"—with a smile—"I shall place my reliance in you."

He walked to the door, and the West London trainer opened it for him to pass out.

"How are you, Brown?" said the earl, with a nod of recognition. "I expect you are sore for taking you away from the first team to-day, and dragging you down to this dead-and-alive hole."

"Not me, sir," answered the trainer, with a smile. "Stanger Stevens said to me only yesterday before we come away, 'Brown,' he says, says 'e, 'I want you to go with the reserves to Haggiestone. I've got Barry and Northcote crippled, and there's the earl will want looking after. I'll take Andrews along to Hull. I look upon you as my right 'and man,' he says, 'and I know I can trust you.'"

"Thank you, Brown!" said the earl, with a smile. "The fact that I have a seat in the House of Peers doesn't guarantee that I am going to shine at football. But I used to be looked upon as a decent sort of player at Renton where Jepson, your crack centre-forward, and Northcote came from, and I intend to do my best."

"I'm not afraid of that, sir," answered Brown. "We're sure to beat Haggiestone."

But no sooner had the earl disappeared on the other side of the door than Brown, the trainer, walked, muttering, to his seat, and filled a pipe full of strong tobacco.

"I don't know what the profession's comin' to," he muttered, "what with public school boys turning professionals, and a heart playing the game like a commoner! The heart is bound to hupset the combination of the team this afternoon. They are all scared to death of 'im and 'is rank—as if 'e were anything else but a mere man, like themselves!—and, of course, they won't play their best. There's one consolation, though, the 'eart is sure to give me a big tip for paying attention to him."

Indeed, there had seemed to be an air of restraint amongst the professional football players during the earl's stay in the billiard-room, and the restraint was emphasised by the freedom and laughter of the men as soon as the earl had left the room.

They were a merry party, however, when, half an hour before the advertised time of the kick-off, they made their way, bag in hand, through the crowd that was thronging onward towards the big football enclosure.

A crowd had gathered about the doors of the hotel to see them come out. It was a customary practice amongst the youths of Haggiestone to wait and give the visiting team an ironical cheer, and all the way to the players' entrance they were greeted with sarcastic references as to their ability as football players, and the number of goals that were going to be scored against them.

Sefton breathed a sigh of relief when he had got safely behind the screening walls of the ground.

"By Jove," he cried, the colour mantling to his cheek, "they are rough and ready, these followers of the Soccer game."

"Yes," cried a voice at his elbow, "and the players are rough and ready, too, Mister Dandy! You take my advice, and keep off the field, unless you want to get hurt!"

Sefton strolled sharply round, and saw the man he had nearly run down with his car glaring offensively at him, with a sneer upon his lips.

Sefton regarded him coolly.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" he said.

"Yes," retorted Kingswell, "it's me. I'm playing centre half-back, and if you come anywhere near me, you look to yourself, mister! I'm an ugly customer when I'm roused!"

"You're ugly enough at any time, it seems to me," responded Sefton coolly, as he turned his back upon the man.

The fellow uttered a threat beneath his breath, and sprang at Sefton, intending to strike him from behind; but Trainer Brown caught him by the collar of the coat and hold him fast.

"Now, then, my lad," he said, "none of that! You'd better behave yourself, or I'll report you to your manager for misconduct and threatening violence against players. You'd be more careful you'll stand down from this match."

The Haggiestone player glared into the trainer's eyes, and what he saw there convinced him that Brown was a man of resolution and pluck.

Kingswell was the type of bully who was only brave when he felt that his opponents were afraid of him. He had met his master in the old West London player.

"All right!" he cried. "No offence. You needn't get riled. Only that chap tried to run me down with his motor-car, and made me savage."

Brown let him go, and Kingswell slunk off in the direction of the home team's dressing-room.

"Who was that, Sefton?" asked Guy Northcote, in surprise.

"Oh," answered the earl, "he's a man I met just outside the town. He was engaged in a snow-fight with a lot of other men, who, like himself, I suppose, were members of the Haggiestone team. They wouldn't get out of the way of the car, and when I stopped they snowballed me. If there hadn't been so many of them there is nothing would have pleased me so much as to have got out of the car and given them a sound thrashing. I think I could have managed one or two of them, Guy."

They entered the dressing-room, which was well appointed, and began to prepare for the match. When Sefton had taken his boots from out his pigskin handbag, Trainer Brown pounced on them. Turning up the soles, he regarded the bars that extended across them with an eye of approval. The bars were shallow and well made. There would be no tumbling about on them.

"It's the old fashion, sir," the trainer cried; "but they're a sight more useful than studs on a frost-bound field. I expect you'll get most of the lads to adopt them. Northcote and Barry have the good sense, though. Do you wear bars in wet weather, sir?"

"Oh, no!" answered Sefton. "I have six pairs of football boots, and only two pairs of them are fitted with the bars. The others have short studs or long studs, for use in either a sodden or a dry ground, as the case may be. There's everything in the football boot, Trainer Brown."

"You're right, sir," said the trainer, putting the boots down.

And he walked off to attend to one of the players, thinking more respectfully of Sefton as a footballer than he had hitherto done.

"All the same," he remarked to Noon, the goalkeeper. "I'm afraid he'll only be a mug at it. He's president. He's got a pot o' money, and Manager Stevens panders to him, as is only natural. I don't quite agree with that myself. If a man's a heart, let him remain a heart, and not become a footballer, doing some professional out of a job."

THE 3rd CHAPTER.

The Match—A Cowardly Act—Kingswell Finds He Has Made a Mistake—Discharged.

THE West London Football Club, as most people are aware, were members of the Football League Second Division, who gained promotion in their first season to the premier competition. They had also won the championship of the Southern League twice. Their second team operated in the South-Eastern League, and a next league in the Midland League. The match with Haggiestone was arranged in connection with the Midland League.

Haggiestone were almost at the top of the table, and were a very strong side, that had sent many a good player to swell the ranks and improve the playing quality of some of the big clubs. They always played a good game, even in their worst seasons, and it was no mean task that the West London reserves had on hand.

The people of Haggiestone were loyal to their club. No matter what the weather conditions were like they turned up in their thousands every Saturday afternoon, and great was their delight when some first-class and much-fancied side was badly beaten on the Orange Street ground.

West London's fame had served to draw an extra big gate, despite the cold, and there was scarcely a vacant space in the enclosure when the teams turned out for the match.

West London were clad in their usual white shirts and black knickers, with stockings having two white bars on the tops of them. They looked a smart and good-class lot, and were given a rousing cheer.

Sefton, who wore red stockings—the Renton School colours—and who was down on the programme as A. Noble, was the only man in the team to depart from the general rule, and he became at once a conspicuous object, the crowd picking him out for special attention, and christening him "Robin," with that rough-and-ready wit that a football crowd displays.

The Haggiestone team wore blue-and-white-striped shirts and dark blue knickers, and a smart and serviceable lot they looked as they ran with the ball down the field.

It was bitterly cold. Well swept though the enclosure had been, patches of half-frozen snow remained, and along the touch-lines it was heaped up, dirty and soiled. The touch-lines, goal-lines, penalty area, and ten yards' circle were outlined in blue. The pitch was not too level. There were lumps and bumps upon it that threatened danger to the bold and reckless player, and there was more than one man who turned out to play the game who wished that he were off the field.

And it was on such a ground as this, to play upon which one invited injury, that Barry and Guy Northcote, two of West London's most famous forwards, who had been out of the game for a week or two and put on the injured list, elected to make a trial to see whether they were sound again, and Sefton, the Earl of Sefton, who had recently shown a keen desire to play football of the highest class, was prepared to play his first match against professionals.

The referee wasted no time, but ordered the captains to the centre, and a cheer from the few visitors from London—there were not more than about a dozen of them—announced the fact that Noon, the goalkeeper, had won the toss. There was a slight wind blowing, and West London decided to play with this at their backs. It was an advantage, despite the fact that the sun shone almost directly in their eyes.

On West London's side Kingswell, who had kept his eyes on the handsome, boyish figure of the earl ever since the players had turned out, was anxious for the ball to be set in motion. He would show that dandy gentleman of the car who he was dealing with, and, biting his teeth with rage, the Haggiestone centre half-back hardly waited for the ball to be kicked forward ere he made a wild rush at Sefton.

Kingswell as a footballer was a first-class man. He was skilful, dashing, fearless; but he was the type of man who would never think of paying any attention to his footgear, or of putting a stitch in any of his playing things when a stitch was needed.

He was running on leather studs now that were long, and an ominous slip as he advanced ought to have told him to tread cautiously. As Barry sent the ball low to Sefton in the centre, Kingswell, the thirsting only of charging Sefton heavily, lurched forward. His position had been quite evident to the earl, and the amateur eluded his man easily, with a swerve that was very taking, and Kingswell went down to the ground with that pulled the referee up and caused him to sound his whistle. Two Haggiestone men were quickly bending over the fallen half-back, and when they hauled him up, and the referee signalled to the trainer to come out, a dreadful sight met their eyes. He was covered with blood. He had rammed it on to the frostbound ground with such force that he was almost unconscious.

It was five minutes ere the shivering players could start the game again, and from the throw-down the West London forwards got cleverly away; and Trainer Brown, watching the play from the touchline, saw Guy Northcote make a perfect opening for Sefton, and pass his cousin the ball. The amateur rushed onward at a speed that astounded the home backs, and rendered them helpless, and the way in which Sefton finished his run by slashing the ball under the Haggiestone crossbar was a revelation to the onlookers.

It reminded them of what they had heard of the doings of G. O. Smith, one time England's own and greatest centre-forward. It had been perfect play of an unorthodox kind, and Sefton received a cheer as he walked back to the centre of the field. Kingswell had seen when that goal was scored. As he saw Sefton's friends gathering round the centre-forward to congratulate him now, he made up his mind that he would have his revenge.

"It was through him I hurt myself just now," he muttered. "Let him look out for himself when I'm near!"

Parson, his Haggiestone chum, overheard the muttered threat.

"Shut up, Kingswell!" he cried. "You make me tired! The chap's a champion footballer. Why can't you leave the man alone?"

The game began to quicken. From the first it had been the Haggiestone side that had shown the greater general respect for the conditions, and West London the more vim and dash.

That goal, scored by the man the professionals had made up their mind would be the passenger of the game, had roused them finely. Helped by the wind, they pressed the home team stone team in their own half of the field; and after Barry had scored with a magnificent shot that struck the under side of the crossbar, Sefton went through again with a magnificent dribble, weaving his way through the defence, and sending one of the backs down with a shoulder charge that was worthy of the olden days, when sound charging was permitted. The referee held the charge to be fair, and the Haggiestone goalkeeper had no chance with the shot that Sefton sent in.

Sefton's comrades literally hugged him back to the centre. There was not one of them to whom Sefton's identity was unknown, and the fact that an earl who could play first-class football had condescended to turn out for West London Reserves placed the man all to pieces. Sefton had indeed played a smart game. His dribbling and command of the ball, his swerving style and sure footwork, were an object-lesson to some of the pros.

"He's as good as Vivian Woodward!" cried Barry enthusiastically, after the scoring of that third goal. "We've found a treasure!"

Sefton's success angered Kingswell beyond endurance.

"A Noble!" he muttered. "I'll Noble him!"

From that moment Kingswell became Sefton's shadow. He would never leave him, and each time Sefton got the ball Kingswell was guilty of one foul trick or another that did not always catch the eye of the referee.

Free-kicks were given against him which often placed his goal in jeopardy, and he was twice warned. Kingswell, however, was not the type of man upon whom any warning would have a good effect. He hated the referee who interfered with him almost as much as he hated the opposing centre-forward who was too good a man for him; and of a sudden, as Sefton cleverly tricked him, he reached down and took up a handful of frozen ice and snow, and as the lad was about to go ahead with the ball he hurled the mess full in Sefton's face. The centre-forward reeled back with a cry of pain as some of the grit went into his eye, and, bending over, rocked in agony, whilst Barry put his arm about him and Guy Northcote rushed up.

Some of the West London men made for the Haggiestone hooligan; but the referee was equal to the task. The crowd were already booing their own centre-half, for they loved fair play.

"Leave the field, Kingswell!" cried the referee.

"Sha'n't!" cried the half-back, in a rage.

"Leave the field," repeated the referee again, "or it will be the worse for you!"

"You'd better go, lad," said Parson persuasively.

Kingswell hesitated. Then he thought of the power of the Football Association and the Football League, and reluctantly turned upon his heel.

"I've not done with him yet!" he cried, as he went off, with the hoots of the crowd ringing in his ears.

Trainer Brown was meanwhile sponging Sefton's eyes. The hurt was not serious, and in a few minutes play proceeded again.

Then West London broke through again, and Sefton took revenge with another fine goal. At half-time the teams retired with the score reading West London 4 goals, Haggiestone 0.

Scarcely had the team gained their dressing-room than Kingswell, who had been waiting, pushed the door open and rushed in. He made straight for Sefton. Sefton was seated on a locker, and Brown was holding a basin of hot water in his hands, whilst the earl was sponging his injured eye with a clean sponge, which he had taken out of his travelling-bag.

Kingswell struck behind the trainer. He was about to push the trainer on one side and go for the centre-forward, when Brown spoke.

"How's the eye now, my lord?" he said.

"Oh, all right, thank you, Brown," answered the amateur, with a smile.

Kingswell stood stock-still. Then Barry and some of the others recognised him, and, getting between him and Sefton, pushed him towards the door.

"You get to your own dressing-room," said Noon, the goalkeeper. "We've had quite enough of you for one day, my lad."

"You've nearly blinded the earl," put in Barry, "and it may cost you dear, Kingswell."

"Earl! What earl?" cried the centre half-back, beginning to feel that he had got himself into a mess.

"The Earl of Sefton, our president," answered Noon.

"Is that who he is?" gasped the professional footballer.

"Yes," said Noon.

And Kingswell, breaking away from them, got out of the dressing-room as quickly as he could.

He ran into the arms of his own manager outside. His face flushed angrily at sight of him.

"So you've been in the visiting team's dressing-room, have you, Kingswell?" he said. "No wonder I couldn't find you. Well, listen to this, my lad. You'll never play another game for Haggiestone. You can get another job as soon as you like. We'll grant you a free transfer, and be only too glad to get rid of you. We don't want any hooligans in our team!"

Kingswell turned away without a word. Parson was waiting for him at the dressing-room door.

"I told you what it would be, Kingswell," he said. "And all I can say is that you've brought it all on yourself."

The Haggiestone centre-half had left the ground by the time the teams turned out again, and he saw no more of the play. It would have crushed even his unruly spirit to see Barry, Sefton, and Northcote, who in this match played inside-left instead of centre-half, weaving patterns through the defence. West London won by 6 goals to nil. The match was a triumph for the young footballing earl, but a bitter pill for Kingswell to swallow. He had made one more retrograde step in his profession, for he discovered in a little while that no good-class team wanted him, and he was only too glad to accept a position in a fifth-rate club as manager a month or so later.

(A fine tale of The Blue Crusaders will appear next week.)

TEDDY LESTER'S CHUMS.

A Tale of Slapton School. By JOHN FINNEMORE.

Conclusion.

THE meeting was at six o'clock, and was made a banquet as far as pockets at this end of term could stretch to banqueting grub. Those who had money foraged to their last copper at the tuck-shop, and those who had none were made welcome to a share of their comrades' good things on this great day of rejoicing.

The prefects and the fifteen sat at a raised table running across the upper end of the hall, and facing the tables where sat the rest of the House, with their feast spread before them.

In the centre of the upper table stood the two big, shining cups which testified to the prowess of Jayne's House at the two great British sports.

Behind the cups was the seat of Tom Sandys, and on either side of him were kept seats for the two glorious little half-backs. They had been given these places of honour by the special wish of the rest of the fifteen.

The boys at the lower tables had taken care to be there in good time in order that they might receive the heroes of the evening in rousing fashion.

As each member of the victorious team arrived and took his seat at the upper table he was greeted with salvos of applause. Every deed he had done on the field was recalled, and his comrades gave him a hearty cheer.

Foulkes and the Bat came in together, and were received with especial favour for the share they had taken in those last few tremendous minutes when Seymour's great and powerful team had been worried to death and defeat by the stayers of Jayne's fifteen.

"Good old Cuck-eye!" they roared. "Well run and well kicked, sir! Noble old Cock-eye!"

And the Bat grinned through his spectacles with the utmost amiability. The nickname now was one of pure affection. There was not the shadow of a taunt in it.

But scarcely had these been received when the boys nearest the door set up a deafening yell of welcome, and every fellow there leapt to his feet to receive the heroes of the season, for Teddy and Ito were only a little behind the Bat, and Tom Sandys came in just behind them.

Yet, great and glorious player as was the mighty Slapton captain, the tremendous enthusiasm which now burst out was not for him, and Tom knew it, and joined in the cheering for the idols of the House—the worshipped half-backs who had pulled the game out of the fire in one hard-fought match after another.

"Three cheers for Lester, prince of half-backs!" shouted a big fellow. And the cheers were given with a will.

"Three again for Nagao!" yelled the fugleman—"a fit companion for Lester!" And again the resounding peal of plaudits broke out, and boys hammered on the tables and kicked on the floor, and made noise enough to be heard in every House in the place, as they acclaimed their favourites, without whose wonderful play there would have been no Rugger cup shining on their table that evening.

For the next hour the fun was fast and furious. The spread upon the tables was attacked with a will, and favourites of the House were called upon for a song. Those songs were most popular which had a chorus, and into the chorus the House would swing, and fairly lift the roof.

Then arose shouts of "Speech—speech, Sandys! Speech!"

To this appeal Tom rose, and there was perfect silence at once through the hall.

He told them in a few earnest words how proud he had been to lead Jayne's fifteen that season, how well every man had done his work, and made his place good, what a jolly, friendly team they had made, and how keenly he felt the necessity of his standing down in the great final match.

"Nor," said Tom, "that I was despondent or unhopeful about our chances, for I knew that every man that turned out in Jayne's pink was a real nailer, and that in one line we were miles ahead of anything that could be brought against us, and I need hardly say that I mean our half-backs. (Tremendous cheering.) I am sure," continued Tom, "that the rest of the fifteen will agree with me when I say that Lester and Nagao, before all other fellows, pulled us through."

Tom sat down, amid universal applause, and then loud cries of "Lester—Lester!" arose from the joyful crowd.

Teddy grinned and shook his head, but the cries continued till he was forced to get up. His speech was short, and to the point.

"I know you chaps are only rotting me," he said. "I'm no use in the world to fetch up on my hindlegs to jaw to you. But as you've dragged me up, there's one thing I want to say. The skipper was good enough to pick out my partner and myself for special mention. Well, we don't agree with that. Speaking for self and partner, I say that the credit belongs to the fifteen, and to all of the fifteen. We pulled jolly well together, and we were a happy crew, always ready to lend each other a hand. That's how we won the cheerful pot which shines before us to-night!"

Down sat Teddy, and this modest speech was greeted with three times three.

Then some joker at the back of the hall set up a yell for Jimmy West. The idea caught on at once, and there was a general roar for a speech from the Bat. As he could not get out two words without a most terrific stutter, and when excited could hardly speak at all, it seemed likely there would be some fun if he could be got on his legs.

And that was. For a time he blinked at them cheerfully through his big spectacles; then at last he rose, very, very slowly, and made a speech. It was very short, but an immense success.

"N-n-n-n-n-not m-m-m-me!" said the Bat, and sat down again. Whereupon the crowd, which had at once become perfectly silent on seeing him slowly rise, saw how nearly they had been done, and yelled with laughter, and then gave him a hearty cheer.

And so a merry couple of hours was spent in honour of the fifteen's victory, and then hands were joined round the hall, and they made the roof ring, first with "Auld Lang Syne," and then with "Dulce Domum," for to-morrow was breaking up day, and all were off for the holidays.

After the meeting broke up Teddy, Ito, and the Bat went up to their study and sat down to chat over the evening's fun and the coming holidays.

They were looking eagerly forward to the latter, for they were not to be parted in them. Ito was going to spend them at Teddy's home, for he had no near friends of his own in England, and the Bat lived close at hand.

"What a jolly term," said Teddy.

"We've bagged the cup."

"And you bagged the Hillsford gold medal," said Ito quietly.

"Yes," said Teddy; "and old Curzon got no good out of making it, either."

"All's w-w-w-well that ends w-w-w-well!" said Jimmy West.

"Right you are, old chap!" said Teddy.

The next day the three chums formed part of a carriageful of merry boys, cracking jokes and yelling farewells to other fellows as the train pulled out of the station.

"Well, Jimmy, my son," said Teddy, "we've done with Slapton for a bit now. Taking it all round, are you glad you've had a turn there?"

"R-r-r-rather!" said the Bat.

"So, on the whole, it's suited you?"

"P-p-p-p-proper!" said the Bat. "I shall b-b-b-be j-j-jolly glad w-w-when the holidays are over, s-s-s-and we c-can get b-b-back!"

"Yes," said Teddy, "it's all right, old Slapton. We've had some good times there, and we will again."

"We will!" said the little Jap.

"W-w-w-we w-w-w-will!" said the Bat.

But now home and holidays lay before them, and the boys were soon busily chatting about country sports—about skating, if the frost held, about hunting and runs with the beagles, if it thawed, about many other home pleasures, and for the time being Slapton passed from their minds, and they thought no more of the grey old school lying quiet and deserted for awhile, amidst its pleasant playing-fields and silent heathland.

THE END.

ORDER NOW!

No. 1. NEW STORY BOOK!

SLAVES OF THE SHOP

A STORY OF BUSINESS LIFE IN LONDON

By Charles Westcombe.

START IT TO-DAY!

THE FIRST INSTALMENTS TOLD IN BRIEF.

ADAM PARKERTON, a miser. He has cheated his brother's widow out of the share of the business which was her husband's, there being no papers left behind to show that the two were in partnership.

JIM PARKERTON, son of the deceased Edward Parkerton. He is sent by his uncle to London to become a shop-assistant in the firm of Delworths, Ltd. His mother is against his going, but Adam Parkerton insists.

Soon after Jim's arrival at Delworth's, Foggart, one of the assistants, is sacked from the emporium for a minor misdemeanour.

Foggart drifts from bad to worse. He is unable to get a situation anywhere, and lives on scraps and pickings, sleeps where he can, and begs in the street. Some time previously, he had overheard a conversation between Moyses, the manager of Jim, and Adam Parkerton, who was on a visit to London. They had then let slip some sentences regarding the possession of a will left by Edward Parkerton, which had never been produced at the latter's death, though knowing nothing practically of the matter, Foggart decides to blackmail Moyses on the strength of what little knowledge he has.

Foggart boards Moyses in his private room at Delworth's. Upon Foggart's revealing what he knows, Moyses is overcome with fear.

The manager arranges a meeting with Foggart for the following day, and then consults Adam Parkerton, whom he has summoned to town posthaste. It is decided by the two scoundrels to kidnap Foggart and to keep him a prisoner in the house of an accomplice of theirs at Merton.

The first part of the plot succeeds to perfection. Foggart is drugged and conveyed to Merton in a cab, but there the horse runs away, and is stopped by Burnaby, another assistant at Delworth's, who, with one or two friends, has been to a concert at Merton.

Moyses and Parkerton jump from the vehicle and take to flight. They seek safety at the house of their accomplice. Burnaby discovers Foggart in the cab. He puts him in the hands of a doctor.

The following day Spiles receives proofs that Moyses had a hand in the kidnapping of Foggart the previous night. He takes the manager of Delworth's on the matter, and Moyses' confession of him serves to strengthen his suspicions.

Foggart sends for Jim, and reveals to him all he knows relating to the will. The lad is surprised and horrified. Burnaby leaves the house to find a lawyer. He falls into the hands of Mortimer Pardoe, the accomplice of Adam Parkerton and Moyses, who resides in Merton. The two latter are concealed at his house, where Burnaby is kept prisoner.

Meanwhile, Foggart has passed away, leaving his verbal statement only as evidence. Dr. Burden, who attended the unlucky assistant, takes Jim's case into his hand and engages a solicitor, Mr. Rupert Clancy, to investigate the matter. The doctor and Jim pay a call on the lawyer at his office in Buddler's Inn to discuss the affair with him.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

Mr. Clancy, of Buddler's Inn.

THEY passed up the dark, dirty, narrow stairs. You pay for grime in those old legal inns, and it would seem that the grimier the staircase, the higher the rent, in which case Mr. Clancy's rent must have been colossal.

The outer office in which the two visitors presently found themselves amply fulfilled the promises held out by the staircase. It was a small, odd-shaped apartment, all corners and recesses, and in appearance resembled an elaborate and intricate dustbole.

Mr. Clancy's practice was extensive, but its peculiar nature enabled him to get on very well with just one clerk and an office-boy.

This former, a fat, lazy-looking man, with big feet and small, cunning eyes, looked round on Dr. Burden's entry.

"Good-morning, Mr. Wick!" greeted the visitor civilly. "Is Mr. Clancy in?"

"Not sure," answered the clerk, jumping from his stool with a celerity that belied his lazy appearance. "But you have the advantage of me, sir. I don't remember you."

Now Mr. Wick was a man who never forgot anything, but it was part of the system of that office never to recall a face too easily. Dr. Burden reminded him that he had called some five weeks back, and hinted at the business on which he had called.

"This is James Parkerton," he concluded.

"Oh, yes, I think I remember now!" answered Mr. Wick. "One moment, sir. As you're here by appointment, Mr. Clancy's sure to be in. I'll see."

Mr. Clancy was in, as the clerk knew perfectly well, and in a minute or two the doctor and Jim were shown in to him.

A man he was who might have been anything between forty and sixty. Clean-shaven, save for two little dabs of curr whiskers; his face equalled that of a fox in sharpness; while his brain exceeded that animal in cunning a thousand times over. Oh, Mr. Clancy was a very cunning man indeed; up to every move on the board, and several moves that had never been on the board at all.

His narrow slits of eyes looked up as he stood with his back to the light.

"Morning, Dr. Burden! What can I do for you, sir?" His words, though polite enough, were like such as might have been addressed to someone he had never seen before.

The doctor looked up a little surprised.

"You wrote me to call and see you, Mr. Clancy," he said.

"Wrote you? Oh, did I? I—" He was going to say: "I call for that letter," but remembering that he wasn't cross-examining in a police-court, altered the form of words to: "Have you brought my note with you?" Then he went on, as the doctor handed him the note: "Ah, now we have something to go on! Nothing like having something to go on, doctor. A document is often of the greatest value. Ah, now I remember what you have come about! Mr. Jim's uncle, the will case with which a certain Adam Parkerton is alleged to have made up. Well, what have you got to tell me?"

"Why, I rather hoped that you would have something to tell me."

"No—did you? Well, there's nothing, I'm afraid. I've had men out scouring the country—costly business that—in search of the said Parkerton"—he was looking at documents now—"and Moyses, but they've been no more successful than the police up to the present. No sign of the men—no clue at all."

"And Burnaby," put in Jim Parkerton. "Have you been able to discover him?"

"No; he seems to have disappeared into space like the others. And when we try to find people who have disappeared into space, why, it becomes a very costly business, doesn't it?"

"But you have money available, sir?"

"Have I—have I, really?" asked the lawyer, looking as if he had never heard of such a thing before.

"I gave you a cheque at your request for a hundred pounds on account."

"So you did, I dare say, but the account has run out, sir—accounts have a habit of doing that, haven't they, sir? And this business [illegible] happens for goodness sake, sir," chimed in the doctor, more than a little annoyed at the other's callous manner. "It would be the rankest injustice if these villains were to get off through the want of money to bring about their arrest. I am not a rich man, but I am ready to give you, say, another fifty pounds."

"Better make it a hundred, my dear sir," put in the lawyer. "There are some High Court proceedings pending, and they will cost, say thirty pounds. Then, of course, we will go on with our inquiries, and do our best to lay these villains by the heels."

"I hope we shall. But these High Court proceedings, what are they?"

"Oh, nothing much, my dear sir! Just an application to restrain Adam Parkerton from selling or anticipating his business or profits. Our young friend here claims a share in those profits you know, and we must take care that the other side does not dispose of the business till that claim is settled."

"I didn't think of that," remarked the doctor. "I suppose it's necessary, but the law is a mystery to me."

"Ah, yes—yes!" remarked the lawyer in a burst of unusual candour. "It's the mystery that makes it so fascinating. Ah, that's the cheque! Thank you! I'll send on a formal acknowledgment. Good-day, Mr. Burden!"

Then he sat down to his desk, and entered in his diary a few words which, in their extended form in the bill of costs to be presented later on would read something like this:

	s.	d.
Writing you arranging appointment ...	3	6
Attending you on your calling and informing you in regard to what had been done since previous interview ...	6	8
Attending Mr. James Parkerton and answering his inquiries regarding Mr. Burnaby	6	8
Conferring with you on subject generally and advising you re proceedings for injunction of restraint and future action	6	8

(Continued on the next page.)

Which exceedingly pretty method of making out an imposing little item of twenty-three shillings and sixpence for doing nothing is in high favour among some members of the legal profession.

Jim accompanied Dr. Hurden back to the corner of Chancery Lane in a somewhat doleful mood. He was disappointed with the result of their visit to the solicitor, though full of gratitude to the doctor for his great kindness.

"Tut, tut, Jim; don't talk about that!" the medico answered. "What I can do to see you righted, I'll do with pleasure. The law's an expensive commodity, as you say; but it can't be helped. We shall be amply repaid if we bring those villains to punishment."

Jim concurred heartily.

"Still, all the same, sir," he said, "it's the fate of poor Burnaby that worries me more than anything else. He was such a jolly good sort to me, and to think——"

"Well, well, cheer up, Jim, and hope for the best. Now I must be getting off. You can rely on hearing from me if I get any news from Mr. Claney. Good-bye!"

He was off in a moment. Then Jim, who stared after him till he was out of sight, turned his steps towards Oxford Street.

He was still at Dobworth's. Indeed, since the disappearance of his uncle, the necessity of keeping his job had become all the greater. For now his mother would get her allowance no longer; and, though there was very little doubt about her right and Jim's to participate in the profits of the business, still, pending the finding of Adam Parkerton, this could not be put to the proof.

Where were Adam Parkerton and Moyses? Above all, where was Burnaby?

The latter's disappearance worried Jim more than all the rest, even as he had said. Willingly would he have sacrificed all his expectations to know that his friend was safe and sound. But upon this point he had the gravest doubt. He felt convinced that somehow or other Burnaby had fallen into the hands of his enemies, and in that case, he trembled for what might have happened to him. The men who had drugged Foggart because of what he knew about the will, would not hesitate in dealing with Burnaby or anybody else who might threaten their safety.

So Jim was sad. And his sadness was increased by the knowledge that in spite of all the efforts of the police, added to those of Mr. Claney, no elucidation of any part of the mystery had been arrived at.

Jim, who had made his way by back ways, had just emerged from Soho Square, and was turning into Oxford Street, when he heard himself hailed by name.

He found himself face to face with Cleaver, who put out his hand and said:

"Hallo! You're quite a stranger!"

Now there was no particular reason why he should be good friends with Cleaver. Quite the contrary, in fact. But Jim was not of a vindictive disposition, and his later and greater troubles had made him forget his smaller enmities. So he took the other's hand and said something about being pleased to see him.

"Thanks, old chap! Awfully sorry to hear about poor old Burnaby. No news of him, or of Moyses, either, I s'pose? Moyses was a scoundrel, and no mistake. An out and outer. 'Twas through him I left."

"Oh, was it? I never heard the truth about that matter; and your going puzzled everybody; even Dobworth himself, I believe."

"I dare say; but 'twas through Moyses," returned Cleaver darkly. "Do you know, I've been thinking lately of asking Dobworth to give me a job. What's the new manager's name?"

"There isn't one at the moment. There has been one since Moyses, but he got shot out at the end of a week. He was no good, so I've been told."

"No use my putting in for the manager's job, I s'pose?" said Cleaver, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Don't think so. Dobworth's getting into a nervous state. Trade's fallen off, and the balance-sheet isn't what it ought to be. They say he's going over to New York to find a Yankee to come over and boss the show."

Cleaver burst out into a laugh.

"Oh, for, that's a bad game. I've been in America, and I know what a Yankee's like. He'll come over and talk and swank, and make everybody believe he's doing it all; though when you come to measure him up, you'll find all he'll do will be to suck good men who might challenge his position, and get worse men in their places. A Yankee, eh? Well, if he does, I'm sorry for you all. So long! Don't be surprised if you see me back soon."

That very night Cleaver wrote to his former employer, asking for a job at thirty pounds a year, to live in.

Cleaver Has an Idea.

WHAT Jim had said was quite true. The great John Dobworth was in a blue funk. Trade had fallen off considerably, mainly owing to the agitation against the living-in system which Owen Lloyd had worked up; and the coming dividend threatened to be several per cent. lower than the previous year.

Dobworth had taken on a new manager, and because he found him incompetent, grew distrustful of his own countrymen, and resolved to look elsewhere for a right-hand man.

His reading just then brought to his notice the unusual activity of commercial Americans; and the idea grew in his brain that it required a Yankee to set his house in order. A perfectly ridiculous idea, of course—for you may search the world through, and not find a better business man than the Britisher. When Napoleon—himself a by no means bad business man—called us a nation of shopkeepers, he knew what he was talking about.

However, there it was. The nerve-stricken Dobworth wanted a Yankee, and meant having one. In a few weeks' time he would go to the States, make a round of the big soft-goods stores, and regardless of expense, take his choice.

It was while he was contemplating this important errand that one morning a letter reached him, applying for a situation as a counter-hand. It was from Cleaver.

John D. Dobworth sent for Blagrove, who had improved his position since the departure of Moyses.

"Blagrove," said the chief, "I have here a letter from a man named Cleaver."

The shopwalker found himself growing white and nervous. For the moment he feared that Cleaver had carried out his oft-repeated threat to apprise Dobworth of the existence of the underground passage. He was reassured the next moment, when Dobworth resumed:

"He was formerly in our employ, but was discharged by Moyses. He asks to be reinstated in his position, and asks thirty pounds a year. Is he worth taking back?"

Blagrove hesitated. He didn't like the idea of Cleaver's coming back at all. As things were now, he was the only one in the building who knew of the existence of the tunnel, and he had made up his mind to reap the full dishonest proceeds of his knowledge by robbing the firm in the way Moyses had taught him. At the same time, with Cleaver outside, there was always the danger that he might betray it. It was a ticklish question, and it was little wonder that he hesitated in deciding it.

"Come, come!" urged the chief. "I see you have something to say, but are reluctant to do so. You do not wish to say a word that might prejudice the chances of a former colleague. Isn't that so?"

"Yes, sir—yes," answered the shopwalker, glad of so good an excuse for his hesitation. "That's it, exactly, sir!"

"Well, it does credit to your heart, Blagrove. At the same time, your first duty is towards the firm—towards me—and, therefore, if you know any reason why this young man should not be taken, you are bound to tell me."

"Yes, sir; I see that. Only——"

"Speak out, Blagrove. Whatever you tell me, I shall treat as strictly confidential, of course. What about this Cleaver?"

"He is not worth engaging, sir. Most incompetent and untrustworthy. Worse than that, sir"—in addition as some slight safeguard against possible developments in the future—"most unreliable in his work and in his word."

"Ha! Untruthful, eh, Blagrove?"

"Most remarkably so, sir!"

"Ha! I'm very glad I consulted you; I might have taken him on. Now, perhaps you'll reply to his letter, will you? Just tell him we've no vacancies. You need not, of course, say any more. That will do."

Blagrove went out in a state of villainous exultation. He had spoked Cleaver's wheel in a highly effective way. Supposing in the future Cleaver should think it worth while to split on him, the boss would remember his words about Cleaver being a liar.

So Blagrove was pleased with what luck had put in his way, and promptly sat down and wrote quite a nasty little note to Cleaver, declining his services.

When Cleaver got the letter that night, he read it in amazement. The idea that Blagrove had been deputed to write it for Dobworth, stung him far more than the refusal of a job. He sat where he was—he was in lodgings in Lisson Grove by this time—and nursed his anger for an hour.

Suddenly he sprang to his feet, with a look in his eye that an inspired poet might get, only more wicked. He had got an idea. Such an idea. Chock full of genius it was. The kind of idea that only comes to a man once in a lifetime—thank goodness!

"If only the thing comes off," he exclaimed—"if only it comes off, what a time I'll have, and how I'll feather my nest! And won't I just make that bounder Blagrove sit up! Oh, dear me; what an idea! What a stroke of genius! Surely never before did anybody ever have an idea like this! But now to carry it out!"

"Who are you, sir?" asked the astounded Dobworth again. "I'm Grover J. Delmas, of N'York City."

The New Manager.

MR. JOHN DEBWORTH intended to go to America to seek a new manager, but he didn't go. He was saved the trouble. America came to him instead, or, rather, he found, or thought he did, just the very man he wanted without going a step out of his way.

Business had been on the decline for some time past, and from bad it was going to worse. Debworth was worse than worried, he was getting panic-stricken.

There came a morning when he was particularly irritable and short-tempered. He had interviewed, one after the other, all his heads of departments. For no reason in particular he had called them all and severally over the coals, and they had departed to do what always happens in cases of that sort—viz., to bully their subordinates in turn.

The great man sat alone in his private office. His brow was knit in a frown; his thick fingers wandered irritably among his bristly whiskers; his eyes had a look of vague apprehension in them. Presently he began to talk to himself half aloud.

"I haven't a man worth his salt in the place," he muttered—"not one. Among the several hundreds I employ here, there isn't one with an atom of initiative, not one with any independence of judgment, not one but who, directly I give my opinion about anything, falls in with it unquestioningly, and follows my lead like a sheep. That, of course, is all very well in its way—it's good for discipline, of course. But what I want here is a strong man, who can think and act for himself, and so relieve me. Why, what in the name of everything wonderful? Who are you? And what do you mean by this intrusion?"

These questions, asked in a tone of snappy annoyance, were occasioned by an unexpected incident. Even while Debworth was communing aloud with himself, the door had opened, and, without any preliminary knock, a man had walked in.

A man of somewhat striking appearance. A smart moustache, very stark and Kaiser-tilted, adorned his upper lip, while a tiny goatee—more like a dab of cobweb it looked—was in the very centre of his chin. His hair, which was very thick, was parted with mathematical exactitude in the very centre, and by the aid of oil was plastered very smoothly down on either side of his head. For the rest, he was well dressed in frock-coat and creased trousers, while his tall hat, which he replaced after removing it for a moment, was set upon his head at a jaunty angle. Between his teeth he gripped a half-chewed cigar.

At his unasked-for appearance, Debworth looked up amazed.

"Who are you?" he repeated.

"I'm Grover J. Delmas, of N'York City."

Debworth's eyes glinted. He was in a mood now when he positively detested on Yankees, and he forgave the man all his cheek at once.

"I don't know you, sir," he began, "but still——"

"You will very soon—eh? Good! I've come to you, sir, to run this one-hoss show of yours for you."

Again a look of anger came into Debworth's eyes.

"I'd have you know, sir," he answered sternly, "that this business made over sixty thousand pounds profit last year."

"My! But that figure's no great shakes in the way of a dollar heap, is it? I'll double that for you in the next twelve months. I'm here, and I'm ready to take charge right away. You'll be cutting off to the Riviera, I take it. You look, my dear sir, as if you want a rest."

Debworth at that moment certainly looked as if he wanted something. He was gasping. The Yankee's unprecedented impudence had taken his breath away.

"I must say, sir——" he was beginning; but the other, with his everlasting smile, chipped in:

"Reckon that's where you make a mistake. Talking ain't compulsory, and you needn't do it. If you want to know about Grover J. Delmas, just read the commercial history of N'York for the past ten years. I guess you'll find my name writ pretty large. I've made things hum since I've been in the soft goods line of business. I've come to do the same thing here in this dormouse hutch of yours."

Debworth's eyes were very wide open. He was conscious that he had never been spoken to in this fashion before. Why, almost every word Delmas said was an insult to him and his business. Yet, somehow or other, he could utter no words of resentment. He was one of those men who mistook blatant brag for self-assurance and real mental strength. He forgot that the genuine article is always allied with a becoming modesty, and was completely taken in by the other's extraordinary bounce. This, which had angered him at first, now fascinated him. He thought that he saw before him the very man he wanted. This Grover J. Delmas would be the very man for manager.

"Well, Mr. Delmas," he said quite enthusiastically, "I'm more than glad to talk to you. I think it likely we may do business together. Now, what about terms? What sort of salary are you asking?"

"None at all."

"What! I don't think I understand,"

"I am going, sir, to give you my services for six months for nothing, as a guarantee of my belief in my own power. I ask no salary, but I do ask some guarantee of your belief in that power I have mentioned."

"Why, of course," answered the mystified Debworth; "any assurance I can give you."

"It ain't exactly assurances I want," returned Delmas drily, "it's a cheque for five thousand dollars."

"A thousand pounds! But I thought you required no salary?"

The Yankee put on a look which made Debworth blink with shame.

"You don't think, sir," he said, "that a measly sixty dollars or a thousand dollars is anything like an equivalent for what I shall do during the first six months, do you? You don't mean to insult me in that way, do you? If you do, just say so right away, and I'll go along to another store, where they'll appreciate Grover J. Delmas at his true worth." And the offended Yankee actually made a step towards the door.

But John Debworth hastily interposed with profuse apologetics. This man was a treasure, who must be secured at any cost.

"My dear sir," he gushed, "of course, I meant no insult. I will give you a cheque for a thousand pounds."

"Right! It will be a sort of guarantee of good faith on your part. At the end of six months you will have the option of retaining me for a period of years at ten thousand dollars per annum, and ten per cent. of the net profits over the amount you made last year. Is that a deal?"

(This splendid story of shop life will be continued next week.)

Printed and published weekly by the Proprietors, the Amalgamated Press, Ltd., of 1, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, England. Subscription, 7s. per annum. Registered for transmission to Canada at Magazine Postage Rates. Saturday, February 8th, 1908. Communications for the Editor should be addressed—"The Editor, The Boys' Realm, 2, Carmelite House, Carmelite Street, London, E.C."