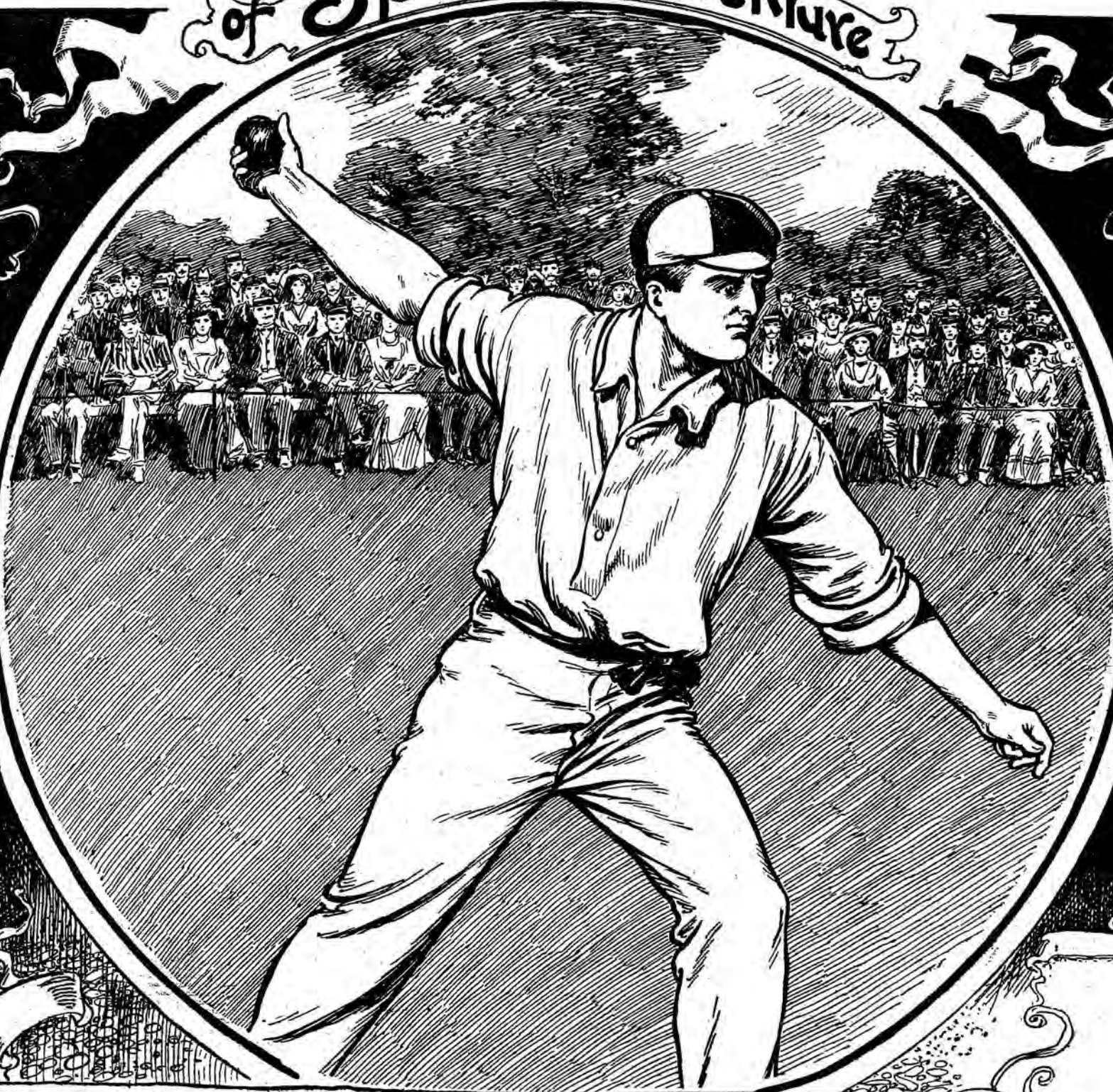


SPECIAL ARTICLE BY W. GEORGE (WORLD'S RUNNING CHAMPION).

The Boys' Realm 1d

of Sport & Adventure



BOWLED OUT!

A TALE OF COUNTY CRICKET & NELSON LEE, DETECTIVE.

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EVERY SATURDAY—ONE PENNY.

[SATURDAY, JULY 17, 1909.]



REDFERN MINOR.

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

THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS ARE:

SIDNEY REDFERN, a bright, fun-loving lad who is a new pupil at St. Dorothy's School. Sidney has an elder brother at St. Dorothy's.

ARTHUR REDFERN, who is a prefect in the Sixth Form. Arthur Redfern is inclined to be easily led, and is under the by-no-means-good influence of

RANSOME, another Sixth-Former, a slacker and a good-for-nothing.

SKELTON and BROWN, two Fourth-Formers, and leaders of the Classical side at St. Dorothy's.

TAFFY MORGAN, VERNON, and RAKE, the leaders of the Modern side at St. Dorothy's, deadly rivals of Skelton and Brown.

At St. Dorothy's there is a deadly and everlasting feud existing between the Classical and Modern sides. At the time of the arrival of Sidney Redfern, the captain of the Fourth Form, who has always been elected from the Classical side, has just left, and affairs are in a complicated state. There are exactly as many Classics in the Fourth as there are Moderns, and the result of the election for a new captain is bound to be a tie. Now Sidney Redfern has arrived, however, his vote will turn the scale one way or the other.

After much persuasion from both sides, Sidney votes for the Classics, to the rage and humiliation of the Moderns.

Ransome chooses Sidney as his tag, and tells the lad to meet him that evening by the lodge gates, when he will give him a message to take down to the village.

Owing to the excitement attending the Fourth Form election, Sidney is late in keeping this appointment, and it is quite dark when he reaches the lodge gates. Ransome is in a towering rage.

"You young cad! What do you mean by keeping me waiting?" he cries, gripping Sidney by the shoulder.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

Breaking Bounds.

REDFERN started back, wrenching himself from the grasp of the Sixth-Former. It was Ransome who had gripped him in the shadow of the gate—but a very different Ransome from the cool, smiling senior he had seen before. His face was hard and savage, and his eyes glittered as if he would spring upon the junior.

"You young sweep! I've been waiting here—"

"I couldn't help it," said Redfern, eyeing the senior warily. "You told me to keep it dark. If I had come earlier I should have had a crowd of the Fourth with me. We've been having an election, and—"

"That will do!" Ransome gritted his teeth. "If you couldn't come before—but never mind! But the gate's closed now."

"I suppose the porter will open it if you ask him," said Redfern, in wonder. "A prefect's pass makes it all right, doesn't it?"

Ransome muttered something under his breath.

"I don't want to bother the porter now," he said, after a moment. "You can't go on the bicycle. But it isn't a long walk to Wyndale. You can manage it all right; and I'll give you your directions. Come this way."

He turned from the gateway, and passed along the school wall, under the shadow of the big, overhanging trees that grew there. Redfern followed him with a vague uneasiness in his breast. What did all this secrecy mean? If he was going to Wyndale on a message from a Sixth-Form prefect, why should he skulk away in the shadows, and why was Ransome alarmed? For he certainly was alarmed.

The senior halted in the deep shadow of a tree that overhung the wall. He dropped his hand on Redfern's shoulder in the gloom.

"I'm going to show you a little secret, Redfern. You can climb this tree—you'll find a coil of rope in the hollow at the top of the trunk. You can let it down from the branch and slide into the road."

"But—"

"You are not afraid of a climb, I suppose?"

"No, I'm not afraid, but I don't like this. What is there to be so secret about? Why shouldn't I go out openly?"

"Don't ask questions. Can't you trust your brother?"

"I don't see why I should skulk over the

wall like a thief!" said Redfern. "I suppose you've got the pass for me, haven't you?"

"Yes, here it is," Ransome crushed a paper into his hand. "Take care of it, but don't produce it unless you are forced to. Look here, you've said enough—get off with you. You're my tag, and you'll do as I tell you—or you'll be sorry for it."

"I suppose it isn't a tag's business to climb over walls after locking-up?"

"Are you looking for trouble, you whelp?" said Ransome, in a suppressed voice. "Do you think I'm in a humour to be fooled with by a Fourth-Form tag?"

"I don't care what humour you're in," said Redfern sturdily. "I don't like this business, and I've a jolly good mind to cut straight back to the house."

There was silence for a moment. The junior could hear his companion breathing hard in the gloom, but he could not see his face. When Ransome spoke again, his tones were unexpectedly friendly.

"Look here, young Redfern, I can't explain now—but this matter is important for your brother. Isn't that enough for you? If you don't take this note to Wyndale it will mean trouble for Redfern major—real trouble. I should think you'd like to help him out."

It was exactly the appeal to make to the junior, and it effected what bullying or menaces would never have effected.

"I'll go," said Redfern.

"Good. Take this note—put it in a safe place at once, in case you lose it. It's important!"

Redfern took the envelope and stowed it safely into an inside pocket, Ransome watching him with peering eyes.

"Good! Take that to Wyndale—to the Green Man Inn—it's just at the entrance of the town. Ask for Mr. Cunliffe, and give him that note, and wait for an answer. You understand?"

"Yes."

"Keep down the road towards Okeholme till you come to the finger-post, and then turn to the right," said Ransome. "You can't lose the way. It's less than a couple of miles altogether. Buck up."

Redfern climbed the tree without another word. He did not like the mission, but he had made up his mind to it now. The climb was nothing to the active lad, and in a few moments he was upon the limb of the tree that stretched over the wall and shadowed the road.

The rope in the hollow of the wood was soon groped out, and Redfern let the end fall into the road. It dangled down close against the wall on the outside. He peered down at Ransome.

"Shall I leave the rope hanging?"

"Yes; it can't be seen in the dark there. Coil it up in the same place when you come in. Buzz off!"

"I'm going!"

"Hush! Cave!"

The words were muttered cautiously, and the next instant Ransome vanished into the shadows. Redfern peered down in surprise, wondering what alarmed the senior. He heard the sound of heavy footsteps approaching the spot.

The junior's heart beat hard.

Was it a master—or a prefect? Yet even so, why should he fear? Had he not a prefect's pass in his pocket?

But the secrecy and the strangeness of the whole proceeding had not been without their effect on Redfern. Without exactly putting it into words, in his own mind he realised that he was engaged upon something that it was necessary to keep from the light of day. Prefect as his brother was, he did not want this business to come to general knowledge.

Redfern, on the top of the wall, remained silent. He dared not slide down the rope, for he would inevitably have made some slight noise in doing so, which would have reached the ears of the approaching person. He laid down on the top of the wall, flattening himself as well as he could on the stone, and he had little doubt that he was invisible from below.

The footsteps stopped near the tree.

"Who's that?"

It was a voice from below—a voice Redfern had heard before. Taffy Morgan had pointed out to him a big, athletic Sixth-Former on the cricket-field, and told him that it was Lunsford, the captain of St. Dorothy's. Redfern had heard the school captain speaking, and he knew at once those deep, crisp tones again.

He lay quite still, without making a sound—scarcely venturing to breathe.

"Is anybody there?"

Redfern felt a weight lifted from his mind. The captain of St. Dorothy's was not sure, as that question showed.

Lunsford stood for some moments looking up at the dark wall, and then, muttering something to himself, he slowly walked away.

Redfern breathed freely.

He waited till the captain of St. Dorothy's was quite gone, and the last echo of his footsteps had died away.

Then he slid down the rope into the road. Without pausing a moment, he hurried away, eager to get his unpleasant errand over and to return to St. Dorothy's at the earliest possible moment.

Redfern Major's Friend.

THE two miles that separated Wyndale from St. Dorothy's was very little to the active junior. Redfern had had an exciting afternoon, but he was not tired; but the thought of a cosy study tea with Skelton and Brown made him realise keenly that he was hungry. He stepped out briskly, and he found the road easily enough. In a very short time the lights of Wyndale glimmered on his vision.

Wyndale was evidently a larger and busier place than Okeholme. Redfern had expected to find the Green Man a little country inn; and he was about to pass the first public-house on the road, not dreaming that it was his destination, when the signboard in the glare of the light caught his eye.

The Green Man!

Redfern halted, and stared blankly at the place. Could this be the Green Man he was directed to? He looked at the disreputable-looking building, the low windows gleaming with light, and listened to the sound of coarse voices bawling a tipsy song from the tap-room.

Yet there could be no mistake.

Ransome had plainly said that it was the first inn as he entered Wyndale, and there could not be two houses of the same name in the same spot. This was the Green Man to which Redfern major's letter was to be taken. For a moment the junior resolved that he would go straight back to St. Dorothy's, taking the letter with him. What message could his brother be sending to anybody who lived in such a place? Then he remembered what Ransome had said—that it would mean trouble for Redfern major if the note were not delivered. The boy's heart sank. Into what toils, into what degrading associations had his brother drifted at St. Dorothy's—his brother, who had always been his hero, whom he had always regarded with affection and admiration mingled with awe?

With slow and hesitating steps, Redfern approached the building. In the light from the windows he could read upon the sign the name of the proprietor under that of the inn. The name was "J. Cunliffe."

His brother's note was to the landlord of this wretched place!

There was a side door to the Green Man, and Redfern, who naturally shrank from running the gauntlet of the glances of the noisy crowd, went to it, and knocked. It was opened by a red-faced man in his shirt-sleeves, who had evidently just come from behind the bar in answer to the knock.

"Can I see Mr. Cunliffe, please?" asked Redfern.

The barman jerked his thumb towards a door further down the passage.

"Yes, you'll find 'im in there."

"But—"

But the man had immediately hurried away. A loud rapping of tankards in the bar told that he was wanted. Redfern was left to his own devices, and for some moments he stood hesitating.

He did not want to enter the place, but if he was to deliver the note there was no choice about the matter. He decided in a moment or two, and stepping inside, he closed the door. Then he went quietly along to the door the barman had pointed out, and tapped on it.

There was no reply from within, and he tapped again.

"Can't you come in?" said a voice.

Redfern opened the door, and went in, cap in hand.

He was almost blinded for a moment by the haze of tobacco smoke and the fumes of spirits. The room was a low-ceiled one, the ceiling black with age and smoke. There were three occupants of the room—one, a fat, ruddy-faced man with a dirty white waistcoat, and a somewhat good-humoured expression upon his fat face, and two younger men, dressed in clothes of a "sporting" cut. There were cards upon the table, and a great deal of loose silver and glasses of brandy-and-water. All three turned round to look at Redfern as he stood in consternation in the doorway.

"What do you want?" asked the stout man, in the white waistcoat.

"If—if you please, I've brought a note."

"Hand it over, then."

"I am to give it to Mr. Cunliffe."

"Well, I'm Mr. Cunliffe—J. Cunliffe, proprietor. Look 'ere, my pippins," went on Mr.

Cunliffe to his two friends, "you step into the bar a minute while I speak to my young friend."

The two sporting gentlemen, exchanging droll looks, quitted the room. Mr. Cunliffe pointed to a chair.

"Sit down, sonny," he said.

"I—I'd rather not, thank you! I want to get back!" stammered Redfern, fumbling in his pocket for the letter.

"Ain't I seed you before?" asked Mr. Cunliffe. "I know your face."

Redfern shook his head, and handed over the note. Mr. Cunliffe opened it, and read it through, and smiled grimly. Then he looked at Redfern again.

"I thought I knew your face," he said. "You're a relation of Redfern, eh?"

"I'm his brother."

"Oh, you want an answer to this, I suppose. Tell him it's all right. Old Joe Cunliffe ain't hard on his friends."

"Thank you!" said Redfern; and he made a motion to go.

"Old on!" said Mr. Cunliffe. "No 'urry! You've had a long walk from the school. Sit down and rest a bit."

"I—I'm not tired, thank you!"

"You must be. Sit down."

As Mr. Cunliffe showed signs of being offended, Redfern sank into a chair. He was feverishly anxious to get out of the place, and yet under the circumstances he did not care to anger Mr. Cunliffe.

"You ain't been at the school long?" said the landlord of the Green Man, eyeing the junior narrowly.

"No."

"You like the place, eh?"

"Ye-es."

"Made a lot of friends already, I dessay?"

"Ye-es."

The monosyllabic replies did not seem to discourage Mr. Cunliffe. He grinned, and sipped his brandy-and-water.

"You'll often be taking a little run, no doubt," he said. "If you like to drop into the Green Man you'll always find a welcome."

Redfern stared at him. It seemed to him that Mr. Cunliffe must be joking. New as he was to public schools, he knew that no boy from St. Dorothy's could venture to frequent such places as the Green Man without imminent danger of expulsion.

The boy's expression of astonishment seemed to affect Mr. Cunliffe curiously. He chuckled into his brandy-and-water, and spilt a considerable amount of it over his white waistcoat, adding to the stains already numerous there.

"There'll always be a 'earty welcome," said Mr. Cunliffe, grinning. "You bring any of your friends, and I'll make them feel at 'ome. You've got a lot to learn yet, sonny; but you'll learn it. Do you play nap?"

"I can play it."

"Perhaps you'd like to stay, and take a hand for 'arf an hour?" suggested Mr. Cunliffe. "A friendly little game for halfpenny points, eh?"

Redfern rose to his feet. Mr. Cunliffe was so good-tempered that the boy did not like to tell him what he thought of the suggestion that he should play cards for money. It was evident that Mr. Cunliffe saw nothing wrong in it.

"I must be off," said the junior abruptly. "Good-night, sir!"

And, without waiting for Mr. Cunliffe to reply, he quitted the room and closed the door. In another minute he was outside the house, and striding away. Mr. Cunliffe sat sipping his brandy-and-water with an expression of great surprise on his face.

"Ang' it!" he murmured. "There's a youngster who ain't much like his brother. He, he! Ang' it!"

Redfern hurried away down the dark road to St. Dorothy's. His brain was almost in a whirl. What was his brother's connection with these people? What was in the letter he had delivered to Mr. Cunliffe? What did it all mean?

Things were becoming clearer to the mind of the junior, but at present he hardly dared own to himself what he was beginning to understand.

Fairly Caught.

WHAT'S the young Redfern?"

"Seen that new kid?"

"Where has that kid Redfern got to?"

The Classical juniors were asking these questions up and down and throughout the length and breadth of St. Dorothy's.

Skelton and Brown were looking for him, and they could not find him. They asked for information right and left, without receiving any. Other fellows took up the search, with equal lack of result. The Classics were suspicious, and their suspicions were naturally directed towards the Mods.

The result of the Form election had been very gratifying to the Classics. They had elected a Classical Form captain to the Fourth, with the aid of the new boy, to turn the even scale with his extra vote. Naturally they were inclined to make much of Sidney Redfern. He had enabled them to triumph, and Skelton, the new captain of the Fourth, was especially elated and cordial. He had had his rubs with Redfern minor; but that was nothing. That was all forgotten now. As Brown nobly said, what did a dot on the nose matter at a time like this? And Skelton agreed readily that it did not matter.

In their study, the chums of the Fourth had prepared a little extra feed in honour of the occasion. Redfern had gone to tag for Ransome, and when he was at liberty again, the Fourth-Formers meant to surprise him with a little treat. The new boy was destined to share

their study, and under the joyful circumstances they did not resent the intrusion as they might have done at any other time. The chap whose vote had turned the scale, and given the Fourth a Classical captain, was a chap to be cherished. And so, when all was ready in the study, Skelton and Brown went to look for the new fellow. But, as we have said, they failed to find him. They sought him up and down the House—in vain.

"He was fagging for Ransome," said Skelton presently. "I suppose he can't be still fagging for him?"

"Let's go and look," suggested Brown. They went and looked. Ransome's study was empty, so it was pretty clear that Redfern wasn't fagging there. Thence the juniors proceeded to Redfern major's study. It was very probable that the Sixth-Former had asked his younger brother into his room for a jaw.

Skelton tapped at the door, and looked in. There were two persons in the study—Arthur Redfern and Ransome, of the Sixth. But Redfern minor was not to be seen.

Arthur looked across at the juniors angrily. He did not seem to be in a pleasant temper.

"What do you youngsters want? Sharp!"

"We're looking for Redfern minor, please," said Skelton. "I thought he might be here."

"Well, he isn't. Cut!"

"Do you know where he is, Ransome?"

"No!" said Ransome shortly.

"He left us to fag for you, you know. We've got a ripping spread in the study," said Skelton confidentially. "There's herrings

They're going to make him sit up for turning the scale at the election against them."

"My hat! I shouldn't wonder!"

"It stands to reason! Where can he be? We've been looking for him more than half an hour. He's not fagging for Ransome now, and his brother doesn't know where he is. I'll bet anything they've got him somewhere, the Modern rotters!"

"We'll jolly soon see! Come along!"

And Skelton ran off to Study X, the quarters of Taffy, Vernon, and Rake—the leaders of the Modern juniors in the Fourth Form at St. Dolly's. If the pew boy were a prisoner in the hands of the enemy, that was where they would find him.

Skelton kicked open the door without any preliminary of knocking, and a glance showed that the study was full of juniors. The Moderns were there in force, and there was a howl at the sight of Skelton.

"Classical cad!"

"Turn him out!"

"Where's young Redfern?" shouted Skelton.

"Where's— I say—ow—wow—yah!"

Hands were laid upon him, and he was hurled forth like a stone from a catapult. He crashed into Brown, and sent him reeling along the passage, and the two chums fell sprawling on the linoleum.

The door of Study X slammed, amid yells of laughter from the Modern juniors.

Skelton sat up rather dizzily. He was resting on something soft, and as he sat rubbing his swimming head, he didn't realise what he

Commercials. The Classical youths stamped and yelled in the passage. But they could not burst a strong lock and a door of solid oak.

"The rotters!" exclaimed Skelton breathlessly. "They've got him there as sure as a gun. Do you remember the time they captured Phipps, and painted him green? They're treating young Redfern the same most likely."

"We've got to have him out!"

"Suppose you ask them if he's there?" suggested Phipps.

"Rats! Do you think they would tell us?"

Bang, bang, bang!

Bump, bump, bump!

The assault on the door made a terrific din, which rang and echoed far beyond the limits of the Fourth-Form passage—a circumstance of which the Classical juniors were too excited to take heed just then.

Kick! Thump! Bang!

Shouts of laughter and catcalls from within the study answered the attacks from without. The Classical juniors were simply wild. Benson excitedly proposed bringing along the oaken stool from the end of the passage, and using it as a battering-ram, and the idea was no sooner suggested than adopted. Half a dozen juniors dragged the heavy stool along, and with a tremendous crash it was launched at the lock of Study X.

The door shivered and trembled.

"Hallo, out there!" called out Taffy.

"Draw it mild, look out!"

"Open the door, then!"

"Rats!"

The captain of St. Dolly's staggered back, with the junior's fists crashing on his chest.

"Oh, Skelton! Are you mad?"

"Eh—what? Lunsford!"

"Yes, you young sweep!" roared the captain of St. Dolly's.

"Oh, I say, Lunsford, I'm sorry!" gasped Skelton, almost petrified with terror at finding that he had been pommelling the head of the Sixth. "I—I didn't see whom it was. I—I took you for a Modern cad. I'm sorry!"

"Stop this row at once!"

The row stopped. Lunsford eyed Skelton dubiously. He was half inclined to take the Classical leader by the collar and administer the soundest thrashing Skelton had ever received in his life; but Skelton's evident horror somewhat mollified the skipper.

"You young ass!" he growled. "You'd better look where you're hitting next time. Look here, you youngsters are making too much row over your precious election. You've got to keep order in this passage!"

"Well, it's so jolly hard to keep order with these Modern sweeps here!" said Skelton. "They ain't fit to be in a school like this, you know. We do our best to set 'em a good example, of course."

"We'll keep order, Lunsford," said Taffy. "You leave it to us. The only way is by licking these Classical kids. We've licked them before, and it's done 'em worlds of good. Now—"

"You haven't!" roared Skelton. "We've always licked you!"

"Rats!"

"You Modern rotter!"

"You Classical ass!"

"You—your image!" gasped Skelton.

"Where's young Redfern? What have you done with him? We're going to have him!"

"You can have him, and welcome!" said Taffy disdainfully. "I don't want any of your Classical freaks!"

"You've got him in your study."

"Eh? I wouldn't pollute my study with Classical duffers."

"Do you mean to say he isn't there?"

"Of course he isn't! Why—"

"Look here," said Lunsford, "one word. No more rows to-night. I mean that!"

"Right you are, Lunsford!" said Skelton. "We thought these Modern rotters had young Redfern in their study, but I suppose Taffy's telling the truth."

"Honour bright!" said Taffy.

"Blessed if I know where he's got to, then!" grunted Skelton. "I suppose you haven't seen him, have you, Lunsford?"

"I saw the kid after he came," said Lunsford, with a wrinkle in his brow. "Do you mean to say that he can't be found?"

"Absolutely disappeared!" said Skelton, mystified. "Blessed if I can make it out. He left me just after the election to fag for Ransome. Ransome says he don't know where he is. His brother hasn't seen him; nobody's seen him."

A grim look came over Lunsford's face.

"How long has he been missing?"

"Ever since the election. I say, you don't think anything can have happened to him, do you, Lunsford?" asked Skelton, startled by the expression upon the captain's face.

"I hope not," said Lunsford briefly; and he walked away, and went immediately downstairs.

"My word!" said Taffy. "I hope nothing's wrong with the new kid, Skilly. He's a decent chap, though he's a Classical cad. Make it pax, old man. We don't want to row you when there's anything up, you know."

Skelton grinned.

"That's all right, Taffy; it's pax. But what on earth has become of Redfern? He can't have gone out, because he didn't leave me till after locking-up. Where, in the name of goodness, has he got to?"

"Let's look for him, chappies!" suggested Vernon.

"Well, we may as well."

And the juniors—Classicals and Moderns together—searched for the new boy high and low. But they found him not. Meanwhile, Lunsford had gone out into the quadrangle with a dark frown on his face. He remembered clearly enough the suspicious sounds he had heard in the shadow of the tree at the school wall. It seemed almost impossible that a junior would dare to break bounds after dark on his first night at the school.

Lunsford crossed the shadowy quad. to the wall. Under the dark shade of the tree which Sidney Redfern had climbed, the Sixth-Former leaned against the wall, and waited. He was patient, but he had not long to wait.

There was a sound of scraping on the brick-work outside, and Lunsford smiled grimly in the darkness. He heard the climber clamber on the wall; he heard him scraping along the bough of the tree. A dark figure descended the trunk.

"Thank goodness, that's over!"

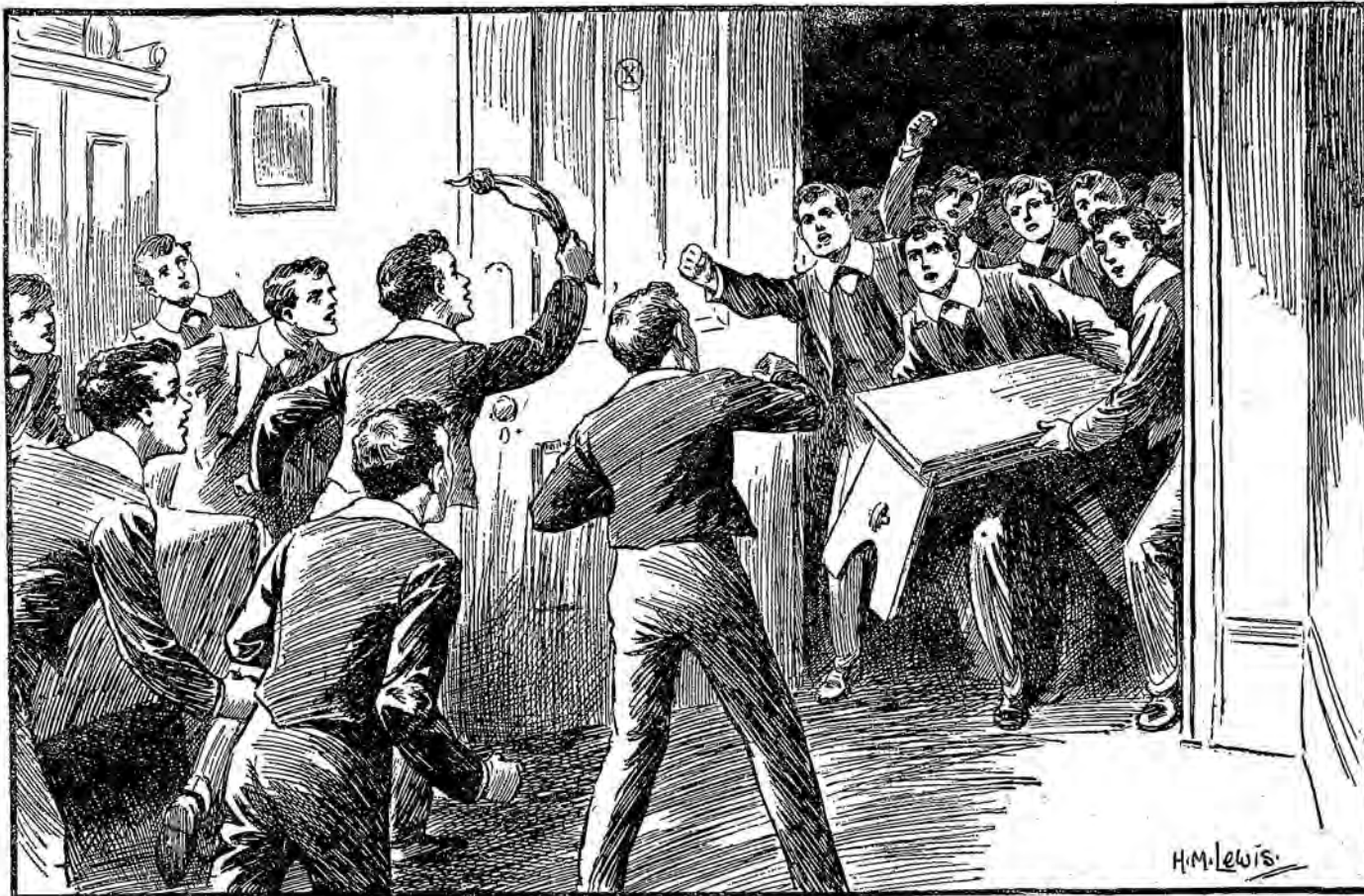
It was Redfern who spoke. He was turning towards the schoolhouse, from which the lights glimmered over the dusky quad, when Lunsford stepped out from the wall. At the sound of his movement Redfern swung round.

"So you've come back!" said Lunsford grimly. "Follow me to my study!"

He strode away towards the house. Redfern, with a sinking heart, followed him. The captain of St. Dolly's did not speak again, or even turn his head, till he was in his study. Then he fixed his eyes grimly upon the unquiet face of the junior.

"Well, what have you to say?"

(Another rattling long instalment next week.)



Crash! There were few locks that could have withstood such a crash as that. The door yielded, and the Classics rushed in. But the Mods were ready for them.

"Get out!"

"And strawberry jam—"

Ransome half-rose from his chair, and the junior shut the door quickly. They scuttled away down the passage.

"What on earth has become of the chap?" said Skelton, puzzled. "Hallo, Vernon!" he called out, as he caught sight of the Modern junior.

"Have you seen anything of the new kid—Redfern minor?"

"Really, chappy, I never notice you inky little wasters," said Vernon. "I don't know one of you from another, you know, except in the morning just after you've washed."

The two Classics made a rush at him, and Vernon skipped away to Taffy's study.

Brown III caught Skelton by the arm, and stopped him, as a new idea flashed into his mind.

"They've got him!"

"What? Who've got whom?"

"The Mods, ass!"

"Don't you call your Form captain an ass, young Brown," said Skelton severely. "A Form captain has to be spoken to respectfully."

"Look here, don't be a cuckoo!"

Skelton pushed back his cuffs.

"Where will you have it?" he asked politely.

"Look here, Skelton, don't rot! I tell you I'm up to the little game!" said Brown eagerly. "They've got him!"

"You take jolly good care how you speak to your Form captain, my son. I'm going to keep up the giddy dignity of the position."

"I tell you the Mods have got young Redfern!" bawled Brown. "Why can't you listen? That's where he's disappeared to."

was sitting on till he heard a muffled voice underneath him.

"Gerroff—gerroff, you fathead!"

"M-m-m-my hat!" gasped Skelton.

He got off, and Brown III squirmed to his feet. He rubbed his nose, from which a thin stream of "claret" was oozing, and blinked at his leader.

"Groo! I'm hurt!"

"So am I!" gasped Skelton. "There's a whole crowd of the beasts in there. What is Morgan holding a meeting for?"

"They've got the new kid there, of course! Didn't you see him?"

"No," said Skelton.

"Why, didn't you look?"

"How could I look, when they collared me like winking and fired me out?" roared his chum. "Don't be an ass! But I think he's there."

"Easy enough to call the fellows and see."

"Yes, rather!"

The Classical juniors were mostly in their studies at prep, and it was easy enough to call a crowd of them together. In five minutes a dozen Classics were hammering at the door of Study X.

But it was locked on the inside now, and they hammered in vain.

"Open this door!" roared Skelton.

"Rats!" came back the cheerful voice of Taffy through the keyhole. "We can't let you ragamuffins in here."

"We'll bust the lock!"

"Bust away!"

"We're going to come in."

"All right; try the keyhole."

And there was a burst of laughter from the

"Look here, Taffy, I order you to let me in—your Form captain."

"Form rats!"

"Why, you cheeky bounder," shouted Skelton, utterly exasperated by this open disrespect to his new rank, "I'll put you through it! Bang that lock in!"

Crash!

The door flew open—there were few locks that could have withstood such a crash as that. The door yielded, and the Classics rushed in.

But the Mods were ready for them.

Taffy had been holding a meeting in his study to discuss the result of the election, and there were nearly a dozen Modern juniors in the room. They met the inrush of the Classics gallantly, and drove them back into the passage.

In the wider space of the passage the combat raged, and both parties were too wildly excited to hear approaching footsteps, or to see Lunsford, of the Sixth, coming on the scene with a frown on his face and a cane in his hand.

Lunsford, as a rule, allowed the fags to have their rows out without interference, but when they grew too noisy he or some of the prefects would "wade in," and make an example of some of them.

When he reached the scene of the combat he did not stop to inquire what the row was about, he laid on with the cane.

Skelton gave a terrific yell as he caught a stinging lash on his calves, and he turned upon his assailant, hitting out wildly.

"Yah, you Modern cad! Use your fists!" he bawled, hitting out furiously at Lunsford without seeing whom it was.