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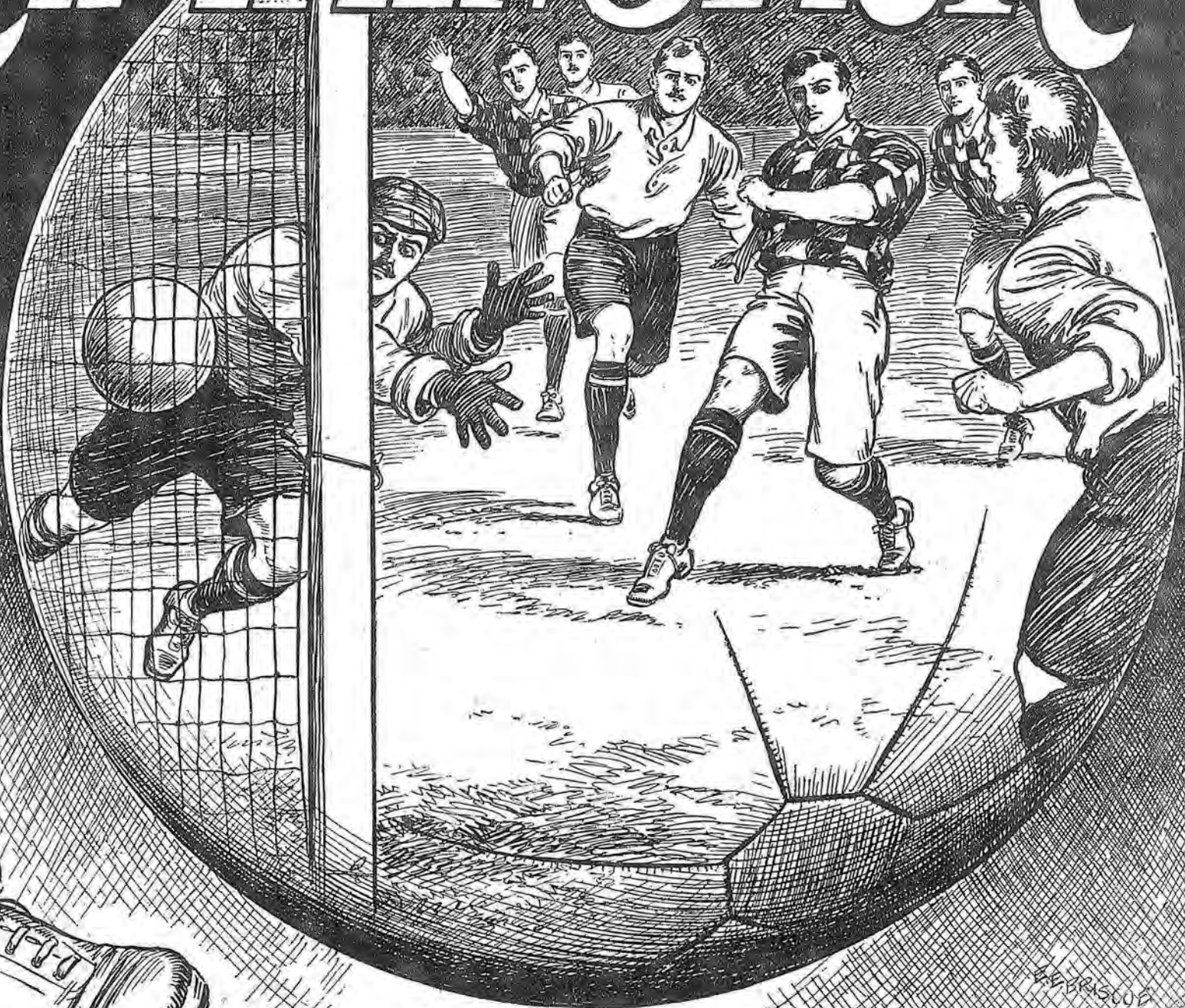


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EVERY SATURDAY—ONE PENNY.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1909.

CAPTAIN JACK



By A. S. Hardy.



REDFERN MINOR.

A Rattling Long Instalment of Charles Hamilton's Fascinating 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 of 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.

A few weeks later St. Dorothy's is playing a cricket match away with a rival school named Lexham. This is a very important match, and all St. Dolly's intend being present.

Arthur Redfern is playing for St. Dolly's, and as both he and Ransome are greatly in debt to a book-maker named Cunliffe, Ransome tries to persuade Arthur to sell the game, so that by betting on Lexham they can win enough money to pay Cunliffe.

This at first Arthur refuses to do; but later, under stress of circumstance, he gives way, and mainly through him, after at one time being in a winning position, St. Dolly's lose the match.

Taffy and the Modernites in general are in a very bad temper. They had hired a brake to drive them all over to the Lexham ground, but this vehicle the Classics had collared and made use of themselves, leaving the Modernites to make the journey on foot.

After the match the Classics prepare to drive back to the school in the stolen brake; and the Modernites, burning for revenge, concoct a plan for the humiliation of their rivals. They decide to hold the brake up at the gates of a railway level-crossing and drag out a hose from the signalman's house, so that they may direct a powerful jet of water at the Classics and put them to rout.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

The Ambush.

WORD was rapidly passed among the Moderns, and the idea caught on like wildfire. They were simply delighted at the prospect. Their defeat at the hands of the Classics rankled still. They remembered the long, dusty tramp from St. Dolly's to Lexham, made more painful still by the knowledge that their brake was carrying the triumphant Classics there in comfort. The idea of reversing the order of things on the return journey was very attractive.

And so it happened that Skelton and Brown, looking for the Moderns with the idea of relieving their feelings by a serenade or two, found them not. The Moderns were gone, except for a few stragglers who had not been informed of the great wheeze that was on hand.

"They're gone!" Skelton grunted discontentedly. "Well, after all, I suppose it wouldn't do to have a row here. One thing, we've got the brake."

"And I jolly well don't envy them their tramp home," chuckled Brown.

"Shouldn't wonder if they're up to some dodge—an ambush or something. We shall have to look out. Where's Reddy, I wonder?" Skelton asked anxiously.

"Better look for him."

They looked for Redfern minor; but he was not to be found. They hunted high and low over the deserted cricket-ground, and in the lanes, but Redfern minor was gone.

"I suppose he's walked home," said Skelton at last.

"Might have told us he was going to," grumbled Brown. "Blessed if I like it. What does he mean by marching off without saying a word?"

"Worried about that rotten affair, perhaps."

"Well, that's no reason why he shouldn't say he was going. I'm jolly well not going to look for him any more. Let's get to the brake. I told the man to put the horses in as soon as the match was over."

The Classical juniors returned to the brake. It was already crowded with their friends, but Redfern minor was not amongst them.

The horses had been put to. They had been put up in a field during the match for a rest and a feed, and they were quite fresh now. The Classical juniors were in high spirits. The loss of the match did not worry them so much as the seniors. And the prospect of a jolly drive home in the dusk, and of passing the unhappy Moderns on the road, and chipping them unmercifully, was very pleasant.

"We've been waiting for you chaps," said Benson. "Is Reddy with you?"

"No; he must have gone."

"Silly ass! I'd rather drive myself. Get in, if you can find room."

"I'm going to drive," said Skelton.

"Oh, no! I'm going to drive."

"You're going to get a thick ear if I have any of your rot," said Skelton, taking the reins. "Who's captain of this Form, I'd like to know?"

"Well, don't shove us into a ditch," said Benson.

Skelton sported, and cracked the whip.

"Gee-up!"

The team "gee-ed" up.

The brake rolled off in the gathering dusk, crammed with juniors. The few Moderns who had straggled behind, and who were now "hoofing" it or cycling it home, sent catcalls after the brake, and were replied to with yells and energetic boos.

The cricketers' brake had already been long gone, and the seniors would be home a good half-hour before the juniors. Still, if the latter were in before looking-up, they would be all right; and if they were not, the prefects would not be very hard on them on the day of the Lexham match.

Skelton, who prided himself on his driving, brought the team along in good style, and at a good rate, whether it was a safe one or not. "Keep a good look-out, you chaps," said Brown III., peering to and fro into the dusky hedges. "I'll bet anything those Modern cads have hung up on the road for us somewhere to try and rush the brake."

"They won't have much chance," grinned Benson. "They can't get in unless we get out first, anyway. I'd rather like a row with them on the way."

"Hallo! That's a light on the road," said Spratt.

"Look out, Skelton!"

Skelton grunted.

"I'm looking out, fathead! It's the Fern-dale level crossing. The gates are shut. Blessed if I know why. The line doesn't run there now, since Wyndale Bridge was built."

And he slackened down.

Brown looked quickly round into the summer dusk.

"We shall have to hang up here," he said. "The old gates have been closed for a joke—are fastened, I expect."

The brake came to a halt close by the shut gates.

Skelton yelled across to the signal-box.

"Carter! Hallo, old Carter!"

The gardener looked out of his window. He blinked at the lights of the brake.

"Hallo, youngster! Good-night!"

"Blow good-night! How long are we going to stick here?"

"What do you mean?"

"Somebody's shut the gate!"

"What! They're not used now!"

"They're shut, I tell you!" yelled Skelton.

"Look out!" said Benson. "It's a Modern ambush! They've shut the gates to stop us here! Look out!"

The juniors rose to their feet in the brake in high excitement. They were quite ready for a rush.

"I can see them!" yelled Brown. "They're in the garden—look!"

"Look out!"

"Hallo—I—oooooh!"

"Ow!"

"Yow!"

"Ooooooh!"

From the dusky garden came a stream of water, jetting forth from a powerful hose. It descended into the very centre of the brake, splashing the startled and dismayed Classics, and drenching them from head to foot at the first burst.

Wild yells arose from the Classics. They scrambled and struggled to and fro in frantic excitement to escape the drenching stream. But it was in vain. Taffy was playing the hose upon them, and he played it with all the skill of an expert fireman.

"Ow!"

"Yow!"

"Wow!"

Splash! Siz-z-z-z! Splash!

Washed Out.

M"M-M-MY hat!" "What's that?" "W-w-w-what's that? Great Scott!"

Swish!

Splish!

Splash!

"Ow! Hold on! Stop it!"

"Oh, oh! Groo!"

The horses, startled by the sudden outbreak of yelling and shouting behind them, were beginning to plunge, and Skelton had all his work out to hold them in. The Classical juniors in the brake were taken utterly by surprise, and for some moments they did not know what was happening—except that they were getting wet. From the dark garden beside the road came the steady stream of water, played upon the brake with great skill by Taffy.

It searched out every corner of the vehicle,

and came with such force that every fellow it struck reeled under it.

The Classics scrambled out of the brake on all sides, and those who were knocked over in the scramble lay in a heap in the bottom of the vehicle, flooded with water.

The babel of yells and shrieks from the astonished and dismayed Classics was answered by roars of laughter from the Moderns in the garden.

Never had there been a more complete surprise; never a more complete success. The Classics were fairly washed out of the brake.

Drenched, dripping, dismayed, they scrambled out, rolling in the soaked dust of the road, hardly knowing whether they were on their heads or their heels.

But even in the road they were not safe. Still the deadly stream of water played upon them from the big hose, handled by Taffy, who was laughing so much that he could hardly aim.

Two or three Moderns had rushed to the heads of the horses, and stopped their plunging, and Skelton was able to leave his seat.

He jumped down into the road, red with wrath, and as he did so Taffy turned the hose upon him, and he was swept fairly off his feet.

He went down with a yell, but he was up again like a jack-in-the-box.

"Come on!" he roared. "It's the Modern cads! Give them beans!"

"Sock into them!" gasped Brown.

And they headed a rush for the garden.

But Taffy stood firm.

His comrades were round him ready to back him up if necessary; but it wasn't necessary. The steady stream of water fairly swept the Classics back. They went reeling to right and left, and rolled over one another in water and mud.

"The brake's clear, chappies!" panted Vernon, nearly speechless with laughter.

"Collar it!" muttered Taffy.

The Moderns rushed for the brake.

The Classics were in no condition to resist them. They were fairly knocked out. Vernon and Rake and the rest climbed into the brake unopposed, while Taffy poured the steady stream upon the few Classics who stood their ground.

Mr. Carter was looking from his window in blank amazement. But the Modern juniors took no notice of him. Taffy intended to compensate him with a liberal tip the next day for the liberties taken with his garden and his hose. A Modern had opened the gates, and Vernon was putting the team into motion. Taffy dropped the hose as the brake began to move, and ran for it. He scrambled in behind, with a helping hand from Rake.

"Go it, Verry!"

"Buck up!"

"Right you are, chappies!" said the dandy of the Fourth cheerily.

The brake rolled through the level-crossing. Some of the Classics made a rush for it, but in a very dispirited way. They had no chance. The brake rolled on, and the Classics were left to argue it out with Mr. Carter.

The Moderns raised a tremendous shout of victory as they disappeared into the gloom.

"Hurrah for us!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

Skelton, with water running down in streams into his boots, knuckled mud out of his eyes with one hand, and shook the other clenched after the brake.

"You Modern worms!" he roared. "You horrid sweeps! Come back and fight it out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who boned the brake?" yelled Rake.

"The Classics!" chorused his friends.

"Who got kicked out of it?"

"The Classics!"

"Who've had the biggest licking of the term?"

And there was a tremendous roar.

"The Classics! Ha, ha, ha!"

And the brake disappeared.

"My only hat!" said Skelton, as his dragged olums gathered round him, full of fiery but hopeless wrath. "I think this takes the cake."

"The whole giddy bakery!" groaned Brown III.

"What will Reddy say?" grunted Benson.

"Blow Reddy!" exclaimed Skelton, feeling this remark as a reflection upon himself as Form captain. "Never mind, Reddy. I suppose it would have happened all the same if Reddy had been with us!"

"Bet you it wouldn't!" growled Benson.

"Are you looking for a thick ear, young Benson?"

"Oh, rats! Go and lick the Moderns!"



The ball swooped upon the desk, and there was a terrific smashing and crashing. Then it landed on Taffy's chest, and he went over backwards, and lay puffing and spluttering, nearly choked by a doughnut.

"I'll jolly well lick you, if—"

"Yah! Rats!"

Skelton wasted no more time in words. He went for Benson, and they rolled in the mud. Tempers among the Classics had not been improved by the defeat. Both Skelton and Benson found a certain relief in pommelling one another.

"Hallo! What's the row?"

It was a familiar voice. Redfern minor loomed out of the gloom of the road, from the direction of Lexham. He stopped, and stared in blank amazement at the dragged and dishevelled Classics.

"Hallo," said Miller, "I thought you had gone on!"

"I've been having a stroll round Lexham," said Redfern briefly. "I found the brake gone, and started to walk home. Where's the brake?"

"The Moderns have got it."

"Phew!"

There was a worried expression upon Redfern's face, but he could not help laughing. Skelton and Benson separated, and stood up, dusty and muddy and wrathful.

"Was it Benson's fault?" asked Redfern, laughing.

"N-not exactly," said Skelton. "I was licking him for cheeking his Form captain!"

"Oh, I see!"

"You jolly well weren't licking me!" grunted Benson. "I—"

"Oh, ring off!" said Brown. "Nuff of this! I think we'd better run to St. Dolly's to keep ourselves warm, or we shall catch a lovely set of colds!"

And the drenched and shivering Classics agreed that they had better. Redfern minor set the pace, and they kept it up pretty swiftly till the old school came in sight. The gates were still open, a point being stretched on the day of the Lexham match. Inside the gates were a crowd of Modern juniors to greet the returning Classics, and the chipping the unfortunate Classics received as they went in was merciless.

"Well," said Brown III., as he rubbed himself with a rough towel in the Fourth-Form dormitory, "I don't know what you fellows think, but I call this rotten!"

And the Classics, busy cleaning themselves and their clothes after that unexpected and painful adventure, agreed that it was very rotten indeed.

The Tempter.

RANSOME came into Arthur Redfern's study with a somewhat uncertain expression upon his face.

Exactly how the prefect would receive him he did not know. He had gained his point; the Lexham match had been lost, and Arthur had lost it. Ransome had calculated his gains, and he was more than satisfied. But if the affair had cost him the friendship of his victim, his gain would not be so great after all. Arthur Redfern was very valuable to the cad of the Sixth. It was not only that he was generally flush with money; and it was not only that, as a prefect, he had power to help his friend frequently when he needed it. Ransome was not regarded with any great favour by the rest of the Form; while Arthur, with all his faults, was generally liked. The friendship of a fellow of Arthur's standing in the Sixth meant a great deal to Ransome.

Arthur Redfern was in the study. He was seated in the armchair, his hands in his trousers' pockets, his legs stretched out. His face was black, and he did not look up as Ransome entered, though he knew perfectly well who it was. He looked as if he were sunk in the depths of a black depression, as, indeed, was the case. Ransome stood for some moments looking at him.

Then he closed the door softly, and came over towards Arthur.

"Well, old fellow?"

Arthur did not look up.

"Feeling knocked up?" asked Ransome.

The prefect looked up at last.

"No," he said. "I'm not feeling knocked up. I'm feeling that I wish I were at the bottom of the river."

"Why?"

Then the unhappy lad broke out.

"Why? Because I feel a cur; because I can't look any of the fellows in the face." His voice rose excitedly. "Because I've sold a match, and I'm not fit for any decent chap to speak to."

"Stuff, old fellow!" said Ransome coolly, seating himself on a corner of the table. "After all, you did a good thing. You did it as much for me as for yourself, and I sha'n't forget it. Besides, there are other points to be considered. I put money on the match, as I told you—for you and me. We have twenty pounds to divide."

"I won't touch a penny of it!"

"Not to pay Cunliffe?"

Arthur hesitated.

"Well, I suppose I had better pay him with it," he said. "It's no good selling the match to avoid ruin, and being ruined all the same."

"Not a bit of good," said Ransome cheerily.

"I don't say it was a pleasant thing for me, any more than for you, but—"

"You don't care," said Arthur, looking straight at him. "You don't even understand."

Ransome shrugged his shoulders.

"Your manners haven't improved lately, Arthur," he remarked. "Look here, I've called for you to go over to Wyndale with me."

Redfern major started.

"To Wyndale?"

"Yes."

"To Cunliffe's place, do you mean?"

"Why not?"

"Never! Never again! Do you think I've sold myself for nothing? I'll have nothing more to do with that crew."

"Of course, you can take your choice about that. You had better see Cunliffe, and pay him up, and tell him it's all off. He's entitled to that, I suppose. After all, he's been straight enough with us. He's only asked for his due."

"The villain!"

"Besides," said Ransome, pretending not to hear. "He's not a bad sort. He's won a lot over the match. He'll be in a good humour, and we shall get all our paper back if we tackle him at once. Better strike while the iron's hot."

"I don't care whether he's in a good humour."

"Of course you don't. Still, we may as well secure ourselves. As you said yourself, we haven't done this rather shady business for nothing. We may as well make it turn out as well as possible for ourselves."

"I suppose you're right, so far."

"Besides, it will cheer you up to have a little run," said Ransome. "You know you are lucky with the cards sometimes. It would be rather a joke to clear Cunliffe out of some that he's won by what he forced you to do."

Arthur looked a little more interested.

"Not much chance of that," he said.

"I don't know. Cunliffe's certain to be a little bit screwed, and you must admit he deserves to be cleaned out."

Arthur laughed bitterly.

"Better come," urged Ransome. "On Lexham match night we can stretch it a bit, and stay out. You will get into the rottenest dumps if you stay in. Lunsford and the other fellows will be coming in to jaw to you, too."

Arthur shuddered.

"Oh, I couldn't face them now. I—I couldn't bear it."

"Of course you couldn't. Get your hat and come along, before they come in."

"I suppose I might as well."

"What's the good of moping here?" said Ransome. "A little flutter will set you up. Take a friend's advice, and never think and mope over what can't be helped."

There was a reckless expression upon Arthur's face as he clapped his straw hat on his head, and followed Ransome. He was in no safe mood to venture into temptation, but the misery that was eating into his heart made him eager for any change, any excitement, that would save him from his own thoughts.

He passed Redfern minor in the Lower Hall. He glanced at his young brother, and as he remembered the scene in the pavilion at Lexham, a black frown came over his face. He felt that he hated the boy at that moment—only because he was conscious that he had sunk in Redfern's opinion. He passed his brother by with a dark look, and went out into the gloom with the cad of the Sixth. Redfern minor looked after him, with a heavy heart and a strange glistering on his eyelids.

The First Football Match at St. Dolly's.

LEXHAM match is the last big cricket match of the season here," Skelton remarked, in his study in the Fourth-Form passage. "We shall be thinking about football now. Do you play footer, Reddy?"

Redfern minor came out of a brown study.

The Classics chums were having a late tea in their quarters—a very late tea, for it was close upon bedtime. They had reached the school hungry enough after the journey home from Lexham.

"Eh? Did you speak, Skelty?"

Redfern was what Brown III. described as "mooing" over his teacup. He was thinking. It was not easy for him to get the events of the afternoon out of his mind.

"Yes, I did speak," said Skelton. "I asked you if you played footer?"

Redfern smiled.

"Yes, a little bit," he said.

"Good! We shall be having an inter-Form match with the Modern cads, you know, and if you can play, we'll play you," said Skelton, rising from the table. "We'll see what you can do to-night."

Redfern stared.

"To-night! Off your rocker?"

"Not a bit! We always have a bit of a high old time on Lexham match night. The seniors come in at all hours, and the juniors kick up a hullabaloo in the Form-room. Let's get along to it. I've got a footer here."

"Wants inflating. I should say," Brown remarked, with a glance at the footer.

"That won't take long."

Redfern roused himself from his gloomy mood. After all, what was the good of worrying? He could not help what his brother had done. He could not help it if Arthur were in bad hands.

It was useless to worry, and it was worse than useless to worry his friends with a doleful face, so he jumped up briskly.

"I'm on," he said. "We've got nearly half an hour before bedtime."

"That's all right, too!" chuckled Skelton, as they left the study. "It's Redfern major's turn to see lights out for the Fourth to-night. You know the prefects take it in turns."

"What difference does that make?"

"Your major's gone out, that's all."

"I suppose he will be back in time."

"I don't think! He went out with Ransome, and I saw Ransome, too. I know what his look meant. They won't be back till late. Lexham night, you know. Your major's forgotten all

about looking after the Fourth, and I suppose Ransome doesn't know."

Redfern minor nodded without speaking. He did not feel in the least inclined for bed himself, and he was as keen as anybody to keep up the fun as long as possible. Yet he hoped that Arthur would not forget his duty as a prefect.

The Fourth-Form room presented a lively spectacle.

Taffy & Co. were standing a little feed on some of the desks, and there was a general popping of corks and gurgling of gingerbeer. Taffy looked across at the three Classics as they entered, and grinned.

"Feeling dryer?" he asked.

"By Jove, I hear it's been wet on the Lexham road this evening," remarked Vernon.

"Just what I was going to say," remarked Rake.

And the Modern juniors chuckled.

Skelton assumed an air of elaborate unconsciousness.

"Clear the place, you fellows!" he said, addressing the Classical Fourth-Formers, who were mostly in the room. "This is the first footer practice of the season, and we shall want some room. If any Modern worms get in the way, tread on 'em!"

"What-ho!"

"You can't play footer in here, look you!" exclaimed Taffy, glancing up from a glass of gingerbeer. "We can't have you kids making a row!"

"Rats!"

And the Classics proceeded to form sides. The desk at the end of the room was decided upon for one goal, and the spot where the Moderns were feasting upon gingerbeer and doughnuts was the other.

The Classics lined up in two sides, captained respectively by Redfern and Skelton. As a matter of fact, the division was only formal. They knew very well that they would soon be united again in a general scramble with their Modern rivals.

"Kick off!" said Skelton.

Redfern, who was facing the goal occupied by Taffy & Co., grinned and kicked off. The opposing forwards and halves did not try to stop the ball. Redfern had kicked it straight for goal, and it landed there.

The ball swooped upon a desk where gingerbeer-bottles stood in plentiful array, and there was a terrific crashing and smashing.

Then it landed on Taffy's chest, and Taffy went over backwards, and lay puffing and spluttering, nearly choked by a doughnut.

"Goal!" shrieked Brown III.

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Reddy!"

A yell of wrath rose from the Moderns.

"Yah! Classical cads!"

"Keep your rotten footer away!"

"Go for 'em!"

"Give us that ball!" shouted Skelton.

"Rats!"

"Hand it over!"

"More rats!"

Rake had the ball under his arm, and was holding it fast. The Moderns, indignant at the loss of their gingerbeer, rallied round him. Skelton & Co. came crowding round.

"Give us our ball!"

"Go and eat coke!"

Taffy jumped up, as red as a beetroot with spluttering. But he was in a perfectly good temper, though full of excitement.

"Here, line up!" he exclaimed. "If they want footer, we'll give 'em footer, and wipe up the floor with 'em!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Right you are!" exclaimed Skelton. "We'll make a match of it. We don't particularly want to lick you."

"Lucky for you, isn't it?"

"If you think we couldn't—"

"Yah!" roared the Moderns.

"Look here—"

"Order!" exclaimed Redfern. "If we're going to play footer, play footer, and let the slanging alone!"

"Right-ho! Come on, you Modern worms!" "Order! Let's get the ground marked out, and play in proper style."

"Oh, just as you like!"

"Really, chappies, it's a good idea!"

"Just what I was going to—"

"Oh, ring off, Rake! We know you were just going to say it; you always are."

"Chalk!" said Redfern.

Somebody produced chalk, and Redfern marked out the ground. There was a considerable clear space in the Form-room—room enough, at all events, for a little fun. The "elevens" did not number eleven, as every fellow present insisted upon his right to play, and the skippers did not say their nay. With sides of over a score each, the match resembled an old-fashioned Rugby match.

But it was all in the game. Skelton marshalled his merry men on one side, Taffy on the other. Taffy kicked off.

"On the ball!" roared Skelton.

And the Classics were "on the ball" in next to no time.

Redfern minor captured it, and took it up the room in fine style, bumping over several Moderns who tried to rob him of it. Then Taffy, forgetting that he wasn't playing Rugger—a game he was used to at home in Wales in the holidays—tackled Redfern low, and brought him down with a tremendous bump on the floor.

There was a roar at once from the Classics.

"Foul!"

"Penalty!"

"Where's the referee?"

Benson, armed with a police-whistle, was

acting referee. He blew a blast that could have been heard as far as the gates of St. Dolly's.

The play stopped. Several of the opposing forwards were engaged in settling private differences with their fists among the desks, but otherwise the proceedings ceased.

Redfern staggered up, and rubbed his bones ruefully.

"I say, I'm sorry!" exclaimed Taffy, "I forgot. That bump on the floor must have hurt you. I was sort of carried away, you know, and forgot we weren't on a footer-field. I'm sorry!"

Redfern grinned.

"Oh, it's all right. I don't mind a hard knock."

"That's all very well," said Skelton; "but it was a foul, all the same, and we claim a penalty."

"Rats!" chorussed the Moderns.

"Penalty!" hooted the Classics.

"Referee!"

"I award a penalty!" said Benson, with another blast on the whistle, by way of flourish. "I award a penalty against the Modern worms!"

"Rats! You're a beastly Classical yourself!"

"I'm referee!"

"Booh!"

"Yah!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Taffy. "I uphold the referee. It's all right. Give 'em the penalty. Go ahead, you worms!"

The voice of their leader quieted the Moderns. The penalty was taken, and Brown III. was given the kick. The Moderns watched him hungrily. Rake, in goal—behind a desk—kept his eyes fixed upon him.

Brown kicked. Right at the goal flew the leather, and Rake swept his fist through the air at it, missed it, and hit the lid of the desk a sounding thump.

"Ow!" yelled Rake.

The next moment he was dancing up and down in goal, clapping his right hand under his arm, and sucking it alternately, and emitting a strange series of squeaks and grunts.

"Throw out that ball!" shouted Skelton, while his followers roared "Goal!" jubilantly. "Throw it out! This isn't a dancing-hall, young Rake!"

"Ow—yow!"

"Oh, bother your 'ow—yows'! We're waiting to play!"

Vernon fielded the ball, so to speak, and it was thrown out to the centre of the floor again.

Rake, sucking his hand, took up his position in goal again, mentally resolving to be a little less reckless next time.

The Classics had scored one, and Benson chalked it up in a good size on the blackboard, with a big, round nought for the Moderns.

Taffy kicked off again, and the Moderns followed up the kick-off with a rush that carried them right through the Classics.

They rushed the ball goalward, till Redfern robbed them of it, and got away to midfield again; but there he was promptly tackled by Taffy and Vernon. He was charged over, and Taffy gained possession of the ball, and was promptly charged over in his turn by Benson, who kicked the leather away to the Classics. There was a roar from the Moderns.

"Foul!"

"Stop the game!"

Benson stood covered with confusion, and even Skelton & Co. could not uphold him. He had forgotten that he was a referee, and remembered only that he was a Classical, and he had played up for the Classical side.

The Moderns were simply boiling with indignation, not without cause.

"Down with the ref!"

"Kick him off the field!"

"Here, hold on!" shouted Skelton.

"Rats! Kick him out!"

"Snatch him baldheaded!"

And the Moderns, careless of the game, crowded round the unhappy Benson, who vainly protested that he had forgotten, that he hadn't meant it, and that he wouldn't do it any more.

"Frog's march him!" shouted Taffy; and the idea was taken up with enthusiasm.

"Frog's march the referee! Hurrah!"

"Let him alone!"

"Yah! Stand back!"

"Rescue!" howled Benson, as he was rolled over in many hands. "Rescue!"

"Frog's march him!"

"Roll him over!"

"Ow! Rescue!"

"Hang it, we're not going to stand this!" exclaimed Redfern minor. "To the rescue, and knock the Modern cads to bits!"

"Hurrah! Down with the Commers!"

And the Classics rushed to the rescue of Benson from all sides.

In a few seconds the football match was changed into a wild and excited scrimmage, in which fists were freely used, and eyes and noses gave plain signs of rough usage as many minutes had passed.

The din was simply terrific.

On that special night the masters were accustomed to wink at a certain amount of noise in the Form rooms and passages, but the excited Classics and Moderns of the Fourth were passing all bounds now.

The trampling, the yelling, the shouting, the cat-calling made a pandemonium of the Fourth-room, and the noise of it could be heard far and wide.

Little did the juniors reck.

In the midst of the terrific din the door of the Form-room opened, and an awe-inspiring figure in cap and gown appeared on the threshold.

It was the doctor.
But in their excitement the juniors never noticed the opening of the door—never noticed the steady, indignant stare fixed upon them.

They rallied to the scrimmage with more vim than ever.

"Go it, Mods!"
"Yah! Down with the Commercials!"
"Sock it to 'em!"
"Knock 'em sky-high!"
"Hurrah!"
"Boys!"

The doctor's voice was not loud, but it seemed to penetrate into the din in the Form-room like a knife.

The scrimmage suddenly ceased.
Three or four fellows, who were rolling under the desks, went on pommelling one another, otherwise a dreadful silence fell.

The doctor looked at the boys; the boys looked at the doctor.

"Boys!"
The last sound of the scrimmage died away. Dusty and dishevelled fellows crawled from under the desks, and stood looking sheepish and dismayed.

Dr. Cranston looked at his watch with a slow and deliberate motion that meant much. The juniors had forgotten all about bedtime, and the prefect whose duty it was to see them off to their dormitories was absent.

"It is a quarter to ten," said Dr. Cranston. The juniors were silent. Skelton surreptitiously wiped away a thin stream of red that was trickling from his nose. Benson caressed a discoloured eye.

"What is the bedtime of the Fourth Form, Skelton?" said Dr. Cranston, addressing Skelton, as captain of the Form.

"Half-past nine, sir."

"It is a quarter to ten now."

"Ye-es, sir."

"Why are you not in bed?"

"We—we haven't gone, sir," said Skelton vaguely.

Some of the juniors smiled at that rather obvious explanation; but the doctor's face remained cold and hard. He was plainly not so much annoyed by the disturbance the juniors had made, though it had brought him away from his work in his study, as by the evident fact that there had been a serious neglect of duty by a prefect.

"I can see that you haven't gone to bed, Skelton," said the doctor quietly. "I want to know the reason why."

"I—I—we forgot, sir. You see, sir, we were a little excited," stammered Skelton. "We—we always are, sir, on the Lexham match night."

"I am aware of that also, though I must observe that you have carried the usual licence a little too far. Every boy present will take one hundred lines for his part in this disturbance."

"Ye-es, sir."

"For not going to bed at the proper time I do not blame you. It was a prefect's duty to see that you did so. Which prefect should have seen lights out in the Fourth-Form dormitory to-night?"

Skelton gave a helpless look at Redfern minor, whose face was very pale and troubled. There was no avoiding the question.

"Redfern major, sir."

"Ah! Where is Redfern major now? Do you know?"

"No, sir."

Dr. Cranston compressed his lips. "Very well," he said quietly, "I will speak to Redfern major. Go to your dormitory now, and I will send another prefect to see lights out."

And he moved away. The juniors did not move till the rustle of the gown had died away in the passage; then they slowly made their way upstairs. There was a hush on the Fourth Form, strangely in contrast with the din a few minutes ago.

"My hat!" muttered Skelton. "I shouldn't care to be in Redfern major's shoes to-night!"

(Another grand instalment next week. Don't forget to remind your chums that THE BOYS' REALM Football Library will be ready on Thursday.)



THE 1st CHAPTER.
Ben Walker's Jealousy—Bobby Keeps Up His End.

"YOU'RE a jealous chap, Ben Walker," said Joe Abbott, pulling a wry face as he sucked at a piece of lemon. "There's no getting away from it. I think Bobby Gill's played a rattling good game. He's saved three or four regular stingers. Don't forget that the Invictas are hot stuff."

"Rats! Don't I know that as well as you?" sneered Walker, a tall, well-built lad, with cunning, shifty eyes. "Bobby Gill hasn't let a goal go through this half, I'll admit; but how would he have got on if he hadn't a pair of backs like you and me in front of him? It's us what do all the work, and him what gets the credit. Every time he stops a shot, it's 'Good old Bobby!' It fair makes me sick, it do, straight!"

"I wish I could play like him, anyway!" reflected Abbott. "There's nothing underhand about old Bob. Straight as a die, he is, and as clean a player as ever kicked a footer."

Walker flung his lemon-pearl on the ground, and stamped upon it with his heel.

"Regular prize-book hero, ain't he?" he

sneered. "One of the sort who couldn't melt butter in their mouths. Joe Abbott, you, who's been my greatest pal, I'm surprised at you! I did think you could see through a chap better than that. Supposin' I was to tell you that Bobby Gill's been swanking all the afternoon 'cause he's got to hear as how some of the West Ham United fellows are on the ground?"

"You wouldn't find him playing a rotten game if they weren't here," retorted Abbott. "And supposin' he is trying to get into the United team, what of it? Wouldn't you or me give anything to get a trial? Four pounds a week as a pro., travelling all over the country every other week, with a chance of getting your cap to play for England, and everybody looking at you with envious eyes—ain't that better than a quid a week as a layer-on in a stinkin', hot machine-room at the printing works? Why—"

He stopped suddenly, and turned round. Ben Walker, too angry to contain his feelings, had moved abruptly off, with a scowling face.

"Well, he is a funny chap!" remarked Abbott. "He never can stand hearing a good word about old Bob, he's that jealous. I wonder what's at the bottom of it all?"

A fresh-coloured lad, with a broad pair of shoulders and happy-go-lucky features, stepped up behind the footballer and slapped him on the back.

"Hallo, my hearty!" he cried cheerily. "You and Ben have been putting up a topping game. Keep it up, old man, and we shall beat the Invictas without a goal against us."

"Hallo, Bobby!" replied Abbott, turning. "I was just thinking about you. I was thinking how you'd look between the posts at the Boleyn Castle Ground."

"What, playing for West Ham?" roared

out Bobby Gill. "Now, don't make me laugh, old man! They'd throw out old George Kitchen to give me his place, eh—I don't think!"

"I reckon you're worth a trial, anyway," remarked Abbott.

"I know what it is," grinned Bobby Gill. "You want to borrow a bob. Come on, Joe; stop talking silly, and get on the warpath! There's nothing like footer for knocking silly notions out of a chap's head."

Arm-in-arm, the goalkeeper and the full-back stepped out from beside the tent where the foregoing conversation had taken place, and crossed to the pitch where already the rival teams had reassembled.

It was a Thursday afternoon match at Wanstead Flats between the Plaistow Invictas and the Stratford Printers, who were therefore keen local rivals.

The football season was only a fortnight old, and both sets of lads were determined on having an unspoiled record. However, though Bobby Gill, the Printers' goalie, had been severely tested, he had kept his opponents off, whilst the Invictas' custodian had been compelled to give a goal.

As their name implied, the Stratford Printers were chosen from the employees of the big Stratford Printing Works, three of whom—Bobby Gill, Joe Abbott, and Ben Walker—were all workers together in the same basement room, where amid a maze of whirling bands and wheels they stroked thousands of sheets of paper into the great Wharfedale printing machines.

It was dangerous and dirty work, and, like most lads keen on the great winter game, it was the ambition of all of them to become professional footballers.

A fairly large crowd had gathered round the field, for both teams were well known in the district. The referee piped at his whistle, and the game recommenced.

The Plaistow Invictas were a nippy side, and soon worked the ball down to Bobby Gill's goal. Their centre had a nice pass, and, with no wind behind him, he worked the leather past the half-backs till he reached the penalty-line.

"Go for him, Ben!" cried Bobby Gill.

"Charge him off it!"

Walker had watched the manoeuvre with a scowling face, which he had purposely kept turned away from his fellow-back, Abbott. Thus roused, he moved lazily up the field to tackle the forward, but in a trice the centre was past him. With a quick change of feet, he sent a regular pile-driver along the grass to the Printers' goal.

But Bob was there.

Somehow or other, he got his foot to the ball, and, to the surprise of the crowd and the disappointment of the Invictas, it was punted back to the half-way line.

"Now, then, Ben, old man," cried the goalie cheerily, "wake yourself up! You nearly let 'em through that time."

The back's ears went red, but he never uttered a word. He moved away down the field. Joe Abbott trotted across to the goalie.

"Ben's ratty over something," he said. "You'll have to jump about a bit extra lively, I'm afraid, Bob."

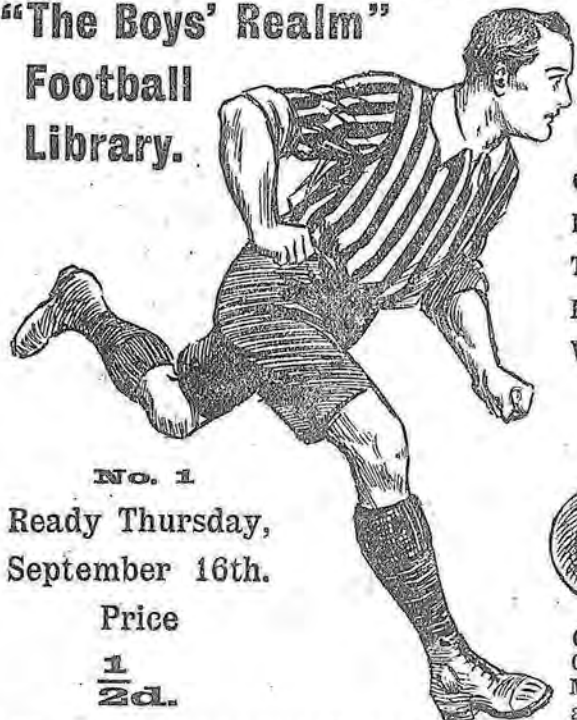
"But Ben's going to play up? He isn't going to sell the game 'cause he's in a wax?" asked the goalie.

Joe Abbott walked away. He did not wish to discuss the matter. Besides, the Invictas had the ball for a throw-in from a dangerous position on the touchline, and, sure enough, he was just in time to prevent an oblique pass going to the inside-right, who stood unmarked in an inside position.

(Continued on the next page.)

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ST. SILAS' JUNIORS F.C. require home and away matches for the coming season. Good ground and dressing.—Only respectable clubs need apply to Hon. Secretary, R. Munro, 20, Brighton Terrace, Blackburn.

PUDSEY OLD BOYS' A.F.C. (average age 16½) want a few good dates home and away.—Apply to Hon. Secretary, W. H. Sugden, 14, Manor Row, Pudsey.

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YOUTH (age 18) would like to join a good football club (juvenile) within three miles' radius of Paisley, for coming season. Play any position on right wing.—Apply to Wm. McLuskie, 1, Brown Place, Paisley, Scotland.

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DEVONPORT AND DISTRICT WEDNESDAY LEAGUE.—This league has just been started for lads under 19.—All particulars can be had from the Hon. Secretary, J. Badge, 16, Cannon Street, Devonport; or A. Smith, 4, Hood Street, Devonport.

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