

"THE THROSTLES!" SPECIAL PHOTO AND ARTICLE. (SEE INSIDE.)

The Boys' Realm

of Sport & Adventure.



CAPTAIN JACK

A
STIRRING STORY
OF LEAGUE FOOTBALL
By
A.S. HARDY.



ARTHUR REDFERN'S VOW.

A Rollicking New School Tale by Popular CHARLES HAMILTON.

Knowles staggered to his feet. Ransome gave him a helping hand, and the Modern prefect stood unsteadily leaning upon his friend.

"May I see the letter, sir?" asked Arthur.

"There is no need for you to see it," said the Head. "The writer especially asks me to keep his identity a secret, as he fears punishment from one of you—he does not specify exactly whom. I have no suspicion as to who the writer is, but the letter might betray him to you. I shall keep his secret. I do not, as I have said, approve of this method of communicating intelligence, but this boy, whomsoever he might be, has done his duty."

Knowles's lips curled in a sneer. "His duty!" he murmured. "Who was it, Ransome? Who has sneaked?"

Ransome shrugged his shoulders, and did not reply.

"Have you anything to say, Knowles and Redfern?" asked the Head. "I have discovered you in the act of fighting like two quarrelsome fags. What have you to say?"

The two seniors were silent. "You place me in an exceedingly difficult position," said Dr. Cranston. "Can I allow a boy to continue to hold the position of prefect after discovering him thus? Can I allow you, Redfern, to remain captain of the school?"

Redfern major started again. Ransome's eyes gleamed for a moment.

"I shall take time to come to a decision," said Dr. Cranston, after a pause. "If you have any explanation to make, in the meantime, you can make it to me. Now both of you go in at once. If this affair proceeds any further, I shall resort to the severest measures."

"It will not proceed further, sir," said Arthur.

Knowles was silent.

The doctor strode away with rustling gown.

The four seniors looked at one another, and three of them at least looked exceedingly sheepish.

"This is rotten," said Courtney, the first to speak.

"I can't understand it," muttered Arthur.

"How could an anonymous letter have been sent? No one but ourselves knew of the matter."

"It's pretty clear to me," said Ransome quietly.

The other three looked at him.

"What do you make of it, then?" asked Courtney.

"What the Head says about the chap writing that letter from a sense of duty is all piffle. A chap doesn't sneak from a sense of duty."

"That's right enough."

"The writer has done it for one reason—and one reason only—to favour either you or Redfern," said Ransome, speaking to Knowles.

"I imagine it is some friend of one of you, who—"

"It was hardly a friendly act, I should think," said Arthur.

"You don't follow me. Suppose some friend of yours, for instance, thought that you were certain to be licked by Knowles. I only say suppose. He might write this letter to the Head to get the fight stopped, to save the captain of St. Dolly's from having to acknowledge a licking."

Arthur flushed red.

"You have no right to suppose anything of the sort!" he exclaimed hotly.

"Well, how else do you account for it?"

"I don't account for it. Besides, your remark would only fit Courtney, as he is the only friend of mine who knows anything about it."

"Exactly!" said Courtney, with a nod.

"It might have been a friend of Knowles's, anxious for him, as I said," replied Ransome, with a shrug of the shoulders. "I'm pretty certain that's correct, and I think the rotter ought to be found out."

"I don't see how he's to be found out, if the Head won't let us see the letter."

"We might get to see it, all the same. Besides, if you carefully go over in your mind all the fellows who knew anything about this—"

"I told nobody," said Knowles.

"And you, Redfern?"

"No one."

"Not even your minor?" asked Ransome.

Arthur started.

He had not told Sidney Redfern, but there was no doubt that he had said enough to his minor to give the junior a pretty clear idea as to how matters stood. Sidney might have kept his eyes and ears open sufficiently to be informed about that meeting behind the chapel.

Ransome watched the captain's face with a sneering smile.

"Well?" he said.

"You have no right to mention my minor's name!" exclaimed Arthur hotly. "There is not the slightest reason to suppose anything of the sort."

"I shouldn't be surprised at it," said Knowles spitefully.

"Rot!" exclaimed Courtney, in his direct way. "Why should young Reddy have any fears for his major? You were licked when the Head came up, Knowles. I don't suppose Reddy doubted for an instant that you would be licked, if he knew anything about this at all."

Knowles gritted his teeth.

"I think it ought to be looked into," said Ransome.

"Well, look into it, and don't begin mentioning names till you've got something more than bare suspicion to go upon!" exclaimed Courtney.

"Come on, Arthur."

Redfern major and his second left the spot.

Knowles slowly donned his waistcoat and jacket, with Ransome's assistance. He did not speak until they were leaving the spot. Then he looked suddenly at Ransome, as the cad of the Sixth walked at his side.

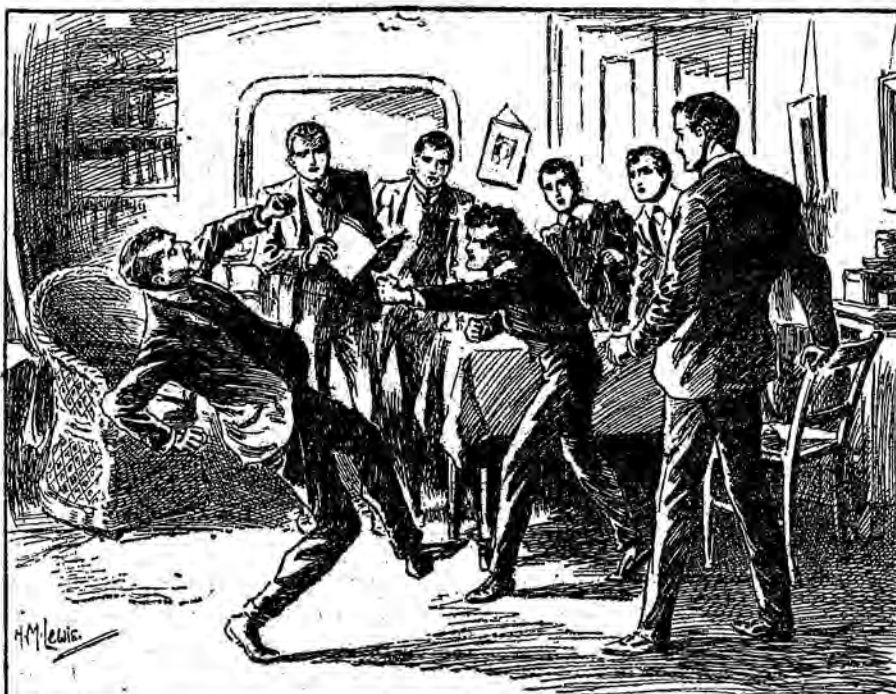
"Do you think Redfern minor wrote that anonymous letter, Ransome?" he asked.

Ransome nodded.

"You do?"

"Yes."

"But Arthur Redfern had the better of me."



Sidney clenched his fists, then out shot his left and caught Ransome a stinger on the point of the jaw. "Sneak yourself!" he retorted hotly, as Ransome reeled back against the wall.

"You were unlucky; anybody would have said you had the better chance. Young Redfern is wrapped up in his brother. He would do that, or anything else, to assist him. And, of course, he never counted upon Redfern major getting into a row with the Head. A kid like that wouldn't think of anything."

Knowles nodded, and no more was said on the subject then.

But the faces of the two seniors were a sufficient indication to all the fellows at St. Dolly's that there had been trouble; and somehow or other it was soon whispered about that Redfern major and Knowles had had a desperate encounter, which had been interrupted by the Head; the Head having been directed to the spot by an anonymous letter suspected to have been written by Redfern minor. That was what the seniors were saying among themselves, and naturally enough the intelligence soon reached the junior Forms.

Redfern Minor's New Wheeze.

"GENTLEMEN of the Fourth Form at St. Dolly's—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Gentlemen—"

"Hurray!"

"I rise to remark—"

"Bravo, Reddy!"

Thunders of applause filled the box-room.

It was a numerous meeting of the Classics. They were gathered there among the empty boxes and other lumber, with a bare gas-jet shedding light upon the scene.

Redfern minor was mounted upon a box by way of rostrum. He had a cricket-stump in his hand, which he rapped on the box to call the meeting to order.

The box was only an old packing-case, and none too strong, and when Redfern became very emphatic, and stamped his foot to lend additional weight to his remarks, it really looked as if there might be a catastrophe.

The meeting was enthusiastic, not to say noisy. They had been called together by their young leader—for, although Skelton was captain of the Fourth, the real leader was Redfern minor. The Classics owed a titular allegiance to Skelton, but they followed Redfern; and Skelton, to do him justice, fully acknowledged the keener brain and readier decision of his chum, and was only too willing to be guided by him.

The Classical Fourth-Formers knew that they were called together upon some most important matter, but what the matter was they did not know. Skelton and Brown knew, because they were Redfern minor's chums and study mates. Taffy & Co. would have liked to know, but they were barred because they were Moderns.

"Gentlemen—"

"Hurray!"

"Cheers are welcome and expected, but please give me a chance to speak," said Redfern minor. "I'm not standing up on this packing-case wholly to be shouted at."

And the Classics shouted and laughed and cheered again.

Redfern minor waited for the din to subside a little.

"Gentlemen of the Fourth—I say the Fourth, because we really regard the Classics as making up the Form—the Moderns being only outsiders and hangers-on, and not of much account, anyway."

"Hear, hear!"

"Gentlemen, we are all here, with the exception of one, a fat boulder, named Spratt, who has been kicked out for selling his birth-right for a mess of pottage."

"Hear, hear!"

"In other words, Spratt attempted to introduce a Modern into the meeting, an enemy into the camp, and it's pretty certain he was bribed to do it by some grub. Spratt would sell his grandmother for a bag of tarts. He's kicked out. And now we can get to biznays."

"Good!"

"Go ahead!"

"On the ball, Reddy!"

Redfern minor cleared his throat. He certainly could not have had a more enthusiastic meeting to hear his remarks. The enthusiasm was mostly caused by the belief that he was about to propound some scheme for getting ahead of the Moderns, and making Taffy & Co. sing small. That was, in fact, exactly what Redfern minor was about to do.

"Order! Everybody shut up!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Gentlemen, we are met upon a most important occasion. This meeting has become known to the Modern worms, who have tried to get in, but they have been baffled and ejected."

"Down with the Mods!"

"I have a scheme—"

"Hear, hear!"

"A jolly good scheme—"

"Hurray!"

"For getting ahead of the Moderns—putting them in their places—making them sing small, and hide their diminished heads."

"Bravo!"

"Oh, good!" said Benson. "But what's the scheme?"

"I dare say you have heard," went on Redfern minor, "that the old wheeze of roller-skating has revived of late, and that this winter rinks are being opened in all parts of the country. It's just the same abroad. Everywhere they're rinking. Now, why shouldn't we rink at St. Dolly's?"

"Rink?" gasped the meeting.

"Exactly. Some of you skate on ice. If you can skate on ice, you can skate on rollers. Those of you who can't can learn."

THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS ARE:

ARTHUR REDFERN, a Sixth-Former and a prefect at St. Dolly's School.

SIDNEY REDFERN, or "Redfern minor," Arthur's brother. A bright, fun-loving lad. St. Dolly's is divided into two educational sections—Modern and Classical. Sidney is a Classical, and firm chums with Skelton and Brown, of the Fourth. A deadly feud exists between the Classics and the Moderns, the latter being led by

TAFFY MORGAN, VERNON, and RAKE of the Fourth.

RANSOME, a Sixth-Former. A slacker and a good-for-nothing, who, exercising a strong influence over Arthur Redfern, gets the prefect mixed up with a betting gang. Thanks to his younger brother, Arthur gets clear of this unsavoury crowd, and promises Sidney that he will have nothing further to do with Ransome's shady transactions.

Ransome, resenting this, vows vengeance, and seeks to draw other St. Dollyites under his wing.

The opening of a new term finds the school captainship vacant, and Arthur Redfern and another lad named Knowles are proposed for election. Additional interest is added to the election by the fact that Arthur is a Classical and Knowles a Modern.

Ransome, though a Classical himself, intends voting for Knowles, the Modern candidate, and endeavours to persuade other Classics to do likewise; but with no great success, thanks to Redfern minor and Skelton.

The day of the election comes, and despite Ransome's efforts, Arthur Redfern heads the poll, and becomes the new captain of St. Dolly's.

Knowles, chagrined at his defeat, is an easy prey for Ransome, who lures him into his clutches, and encourages him to set at naught Arthur Redfern's authority.

The result of this is that Knowles and Arthur come to loggerheads, and have a desperate quarrel. They arrange to fight it out the same evening in the quad. Ransome acts as Knowles's second.

Arthur gets the better of the contest, and just as he has stretched Knowles out with a heavy blow, a deep voice breaks in, and he swings round to find himself confronted by the head-master!

(Now read this week's instalment.)

An Anonymous Letter.

"THE Head!"

Arthur Redfern stood dumb-founded, his starting eyes fixed upon the grave, severe figure of the Head of St. Dorothy's.

Knowles, still dazed and dizzy, blinked up from the ground, still making no attempt to rise. Courtney seemed thunderstruck. If anyone kept his coolness, it was Ransome. Ransome was so cool that one might have suspected that the sudden appearance of the Head was not wholly unexpected by him.

There was a grim silence for some moments.

Dr. Cranston's severe glance took in the whole scene—the two seniors in their shirt-sleeves, the sponge and the basin, the bruised faces—and Knowles stretched on the sward. He did not need telling what had been passing there.

"Redfern!" he said at last. "Redfern! You!"

Arthur hung his head.

There was more of reproach than severity in the doctor's voice. And what could the captain of St. Dolly's say to him—the captain, appointed to keep the rules of the school respected, and now caught in the act of flagrantly breaking them?

"Redfern, I can hardly believe my eyes! You are captain of the school; Knowles is a prefect. I was told that I should find a disgraceful scene proceeding here, but I never expected to find this."

Arthur Redfern started.

"You were told, sir?"

"Yes. I received an anonymous letter," said the Head. "Anonymous letters I usually should regard with contempt, but the writer of this one apparently had the cause of order in the school at heart, and wished to prevent a disgraceful encounter. At all events, as the warning was plainly given, I considered it my duty to heed it; and I am glad now that I did so. I have learned in what hands I am reposing trust; I have discovered what the captain of St. Dorothy's and a prefect of the school are capable of."

"Hear, hear!" said Brown III.
"We can beg, borrow, or buy roller skates, and get ahead with the practice. When we're in fine form, we'll get permission to use some large room, and give an exhibition of roller-skating, and make the Moderns green with envy. Taffy & Co. will be ready to kick each other if we get ahead of them like that."

"Hurray!"
"But hold on!" exclaimed Benson, who seemed to have constituted himself objector-in-chief. "Where are we to practice? We haven't a rink."

"We can make one."

"Make one?"

"Certainly. We must clear the things out of the largest box-room, wax the floor, and start. The only thing is to keep it a dead secret from the Moderns. They mustn't have a hint of it till we are quite ready to give the show as a triumph of Classical skill and enterprise."

"Taffy will be on the track."

"We must keep him off it. The roller-skates can be got in secretly, and kept in a locked trunk in the room. We'll practise behind locked doors. Now, then, kids, what do you think of the wheeze?"

"Splendid!" exclaimed Skelton enthusiastically.

And the meeting cheered. Whether they beat the Moderns or not, certainly there was plenty of fun in roller-skating. As the river obstinately refused to freeze, the skaters had had a very poor show of late, and Redfern's idea came just in the nick of time for them.

They cheered him to the echo.

"Hurray for Redfern!"

"Hurray for Reddy and rinking!"

"Shut up about the rinking," said Redfern minor.

"There may be some blessed Moderns hanging about in the passage. Mum's the word."

"Hear, hear!"

"I put it to the meeting that the motion is adopted and passed unanimously," said Skelton.

"Hear, hear!"

"Good old Reddy!"

"Gentlemen," said Redfern minor, "I am much gratified by your support—"

"Go it, Reddy!"

"Talks like a giddy dictionary, doesn't he?" said Benson.

"Of course, he looked out all the words first, and he's got some of them pencilled on his cuff."

Redfern turned pink.

"If I am to be constantly interrupted by that hooligan—" he began.

"Order!"

"Chuck him out!"

"Gentlemen, in spite of disorderly detractors"—here Redfern fixed a withering glance upon Benson—"in spite of fat-headed interrupters, this is a great occasion. The Classics have always been the top side at St. Dolly's."

"Hear, hear!"

"But now we are going fairly ahead, and this term we are going to make the Moderns sing absolutely small. We're going to beat them at footer, at running, at walking, at roller-skating, and everything else."

"Hurray!"

"Gentlemen, in a short time the Moderns will be crawling at our feet." Redfern waved his hand dramatically.

"We shall be the Fourth Form, and the Moderns"—he stamped his foot emphatically—"the Moderns will be nowhere. Nowhere," repeated Redfern, with a more emphatic stamp than ever—"nowhere. Oh!"

The last ejaculation was unintentional. It was caused by Redfern's stamping foot going through the top of the packing-case he was standing upon.

There was a crash, and Redfern minor disappeared.

The meeting gasped, and then roared. The sudden ending to Redfern's peroration was so absurd that they could not help it.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A red, flustered face looked out of the packing-case, and the audience shrieked again:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My hat!" said Redfern minor.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jolly good!" said Benson. "If you had said you were going to do that, I shouldn't have minded waiting for my tea. Let's see you do it again."

But Redfern minor declined to do it again. He was feeling considerably sore. Skelton and Brown dragged him out of the packing-case, and he limped away with them, and the meeting broke up.

The juniors departed, to eagerly discuss the project of rinking at St. Dolly's, and to find endless delight in baffling the curious inquiries of the Moderns as to what had taken place at the meeting.

Guilty.

It seems to be pretty clear that Redfern's minor wrote it."

Arthur Redfern stopped as he heard the words.

It was the day after the fight behind the chapel. The captain of St. Dolly's had not seen the Head since, excepting in class in the Sixth-Form room. What Dr. Cranston's decision was he did not know. Knowles, too, who had fully expected to have his name struck off the list of prefects, was waiting for the blow to fall; but it had not yet fallen.

Meanwhile, the story of the anonymous letter was all over the school. The Fourth Form knew it from beginning to end, though no one had mentioned it to Redfern minor

so far. There was a certain delicacy about mentioning it to Redfern minor. Suspicion had fastened upon him; no one quite knew how or why, though, doubtless, Ransome could have explained.

Arthur Redfern knew it; but he had not seen his minor yet, and he did not know whether to mention it to him. He did not believe for a single instant that Sidney had written the letter, yet he was puzzled to know who could have written it.

The words he now heard came suddenly upon his ears as he came down the steps of the School House after morning lessons. In spite of all he had done to remove them, the signs of the late conflict were very plain upon his face. Arthur glanced round quickly, and saw Vane and Fellowes standing together near the steps. It was Vane who had spoken.

Arthur fixed his eyes upon Vane, who looked a little uneasy.

"I heard what you said, Vane," said Arthur quietly.

Vane shrugged his shoulders with an air of defiance.

"Well, what then?"

"You were speaking of the anonymous letter written to the Head to cause him to stop the fight yesterday."

"Yes."

"You said my minor wrote it."

"I said it seems pretty clear."

"And why?" asked Arthur, suppressing his anger.

"How does it seem clear?"

"Well, it seems that your minor knows most of your business, from all accounts," said Vane.

"And certainly no one else knew anything about the matter, except the principals concerned. Knowles never said a word, he says, and I know Courtney wouldn't. Ransome didn't mention it—he'd have told me, as I'm his chum, if he'd told anybody—and I never had the faintest idea anything was going on, till I saw you and Knowles come in with your faces bashed. You must have let something fall to your minor, I think."

"I might have—but he never wrote that letter."

"Well, if you want the fellows to believe that, you'd better find out who did write it," said Fellowes, with a yawn.

"It looks to most of us as if your minor did it; and some of the chaps say—"

He paused.

"Well," said Arthur, with a scornful glance at the ornament of the St. Dolly's Smart Set.

"What do the chaps say?"

"Well," said Fellowes, stung by his look. "It has been whispered that your minor did it with your knowledge, because you didn't care to face Knowles to a finish."

Arthur laughed contemptuously.

"So they say that, do they—you among the others, I suppose?"

"Oh, no," said Fellowes, retreating a pace or two. "I don't say anything. I've an open mind on the subject."

"I should advise you to stop gossiping about it," said Arthur scornfully.

"It's easy to say that another chap has said something; but you may get the punishment of a slanderer if you repeat the slander."

And Arthur walked away, leaving Fellowes scowling angrily. Vane broke into a sneering laugh.

"By Jove, it looks as if there were something in it!" he said.

"That Redfern made his minor write the letter?"

"Yes."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Fellowes spitefully. "A ripping captain for a school like St. Dolly's. I don't think."

"He mayn't be captain long," said Vane.

"He hasn't made a good beginning. I should be surprised if Redfern major didn't resign before long."

Arthur Redfern's brow was contracted as he walked away. He was quite certain that his minor was innocent of the act he was suspected of, but exactly how to make that clear to others was a problem. If the Head had allowed him to see the anonymous letter, something might have been done. But that letter was safe in Dr. Cranston's keeping, if indeed it had not been destroyed.

He passed Ransome in the quadrangle, walking with Knowles. They were speaking together in low voices, and Arthur thought he knew the subject of their talk. He hesitated for a few moments, and then turned back to speak to them. They stopped. A slight sneering smile was lurking on Ransome's face.

"I want to speak to you fellows," said Arthur abruptly. "Someone has been setting a yarn afoot that my minor wrote the anonymous letter to the doctor."

"Well, these things will get out," said Ransome.

"You mean to say that you believe it?"

"I don't know about that; but it looks very probable. Redfern minor was the only one beside ourselves who knew that you were to fight Knowles. It looks to me as if only he could have written the letter. Anyway, the fellow who did it ought to be found out and cut by the whole school; and I think the matter ought to be investigated. Knowles was just saying so, too."

"Well, you were saying so, but I agree with you," said Knowles. "It's due to all of us to have the thing sifted out. Some of the fellows will begin saying that we ourselves, or some of us, wrote that rotten letter. It's a jolly unpleasant business, but it ought to be cleared up, I think."

"How can it be cleared up? I know my minor never wrote the letter."

"Suppose we got the letter from the Head?" suggested Ransome. "It stands to reason that

there must be some clue in it—the handwriting—"

"I suppose that would be disguised," said Knowles.

"Yes. But there would be a trace or two. Besides, the paper, the ink—lots of things might give the writer away without his foreseeing it."

"The Head has the letter," said Arthur quietly. "He refused to show it to us."

"Well, we ought to get it somehow. If you tell him that your minor is suspected by everybody, he will give you the letter, to help you clear him. You can promise that the name of the writer shall be kept a secret if you discover him. All you need do is to discover who wrote the letter, for our own satisfaction."

Arthur Redfern nodded.

"I will speak to the Head."

He walked away without another word. He had seen the Head go into his study, and he followed him there. Dr. Cranston's deep voice bade him enter, and Arthur stepped into the study. The Head's clear eyes met his.

"Redfern!"

"Yes, sir," Arthur coloured awkwardly before the steady gaze of the Head. "I—I haven't come here to speak about myself, sir. Though, if you think fit, I am quite ready to resign the captaincy of the school."

Dr. Cranston shook his head.

"I have not asked you to do that, Redfern. But what is it you wish to speak to me about?"

"About the anonymous letter, sir."

"What of that?"

"The fellows are saying that my minor wrote it. I know it is not true. Will you allow some of the Sixth to see the letter, sir, so that they can prove whether my minor wrote it?"

"The letter was written with good intentions."

"The fellows don't look at it like that, sir. They look on it as sneaking. If my minor isn't cleared, he will be sent to Coventry."

The Head frowned.

"But in that case, if you discover the real writer, I take it that he will be sent to Coventry, Redfern."

"We would keep it a secret, sir, if you think fit. I only wish to be able to clear Sidney. I know he did not write the letter. If he did, he ought to take the consequences. At present he is under the imputation, without a chance to defend himself."

"I am sorry for this. You will see, Redfern, how one wrong action leads to another. But for your quarrel with Knowles this could not have happened."

Arthur was silent. The Head rose, and unlocked a drawer of his desk, and took out a sheet of scribbled paper. He handed it to Redfern major.

"That is the letter, Redfern. You can use it for purposes of investigation; but return it to me as soon as possible. At the same time, I charge you not to make known the name of the writer when you find him, if you do."

"I only want to clear Sidney, sir."

And Arthur left the study with the letter. Knowles and Ransome were waiting for him, and Courtney had joined them. Arthur explained briefly to the three seniors what the doctor had said. Then he showed them the letter.

It was written in pencil on a sheet of common ruled paper, torn from an exercise-book. The torn edge was very ragged. The writing was a large round hand, and looked as if it had been adopted for purposes of disguise, for here and there it grew unconsciously smaller. The letter ran as follows:

"Sir,—A disgraceful scene will take place this evening behind the chapel soon after seven o'clock.—A Friend to Order."

"The rotten cad, whoever he was!" said Knowles, between his teeth.

Ransome scanned the letter.

"I've seen that writing before," he said. "It looks like the scrawl of a Second-Form fag; but that's the disguise. Look here, where the chap goes smaller and smaller every now and then. It's a pity the letter isn't longer. But—"

"I cannot see any clue in it," said Arthur.

"I can, Redfern. Look here! There are two g's in the letter. Have you ever seen g's, with curly tails like that?"

Arthur Redfern started. He had. He remembered perfectly well that extra curly tail to the small g, which he had seen in his brother's exercises when he corrected them for him.

"My fag used to do notes for me," said Ransome. "I remember his writing. My fag was Redfern minor, as you know."

The seniors looked at one another.

"It's pretty clear," said Knowles.

"There's more evidence to come," said Ransome. "Better make a thing like this perfectly clear. This sheet has been torn from an exercise-book. The fags always write their notes that way—they never have any notepaper. You see how the edge is torn?"

"Yes; it's ragged."

"That edge ought to fit into some exercise-book," said Ransome quietly. "You see the point? The chap whose exercise-book it fits wrote the letter."

"Good!" said Courtney.

"Come!" said Arthur Redfern roughly.

He strode away to his minor's study. He looked in, with the others at his heels, and found the three chums there. Redfern minor, Skelton, and Brown were sitting round a Gamage price-list, looking out the prices of roller-skates. They started up in surprise when the four seniors came in.

"Hullo!" said Redfern minor. "Anything up? What on earth are you looking like that for, Arthur?"

"Where is your exercise-book?"

"What?"

"Your exercise-book—quick! I want to see it."

"But—but I don't understand—"

"None of your dodging," exclaimed Ransome. "Get the book, and be quick."

Redfern minor's eyes gleamed.

"Who's dodging! What do you mean, you cad?"

Arthur Redfern pushed Ransome back, and spoke in a quieter voice. His face was harassed.

"Sidney, it's important. Get me your exercise-book at once."

"Oh, all right!" said Sidney, in wonder.

He laid the book on the table. Arthur opened it, and turned the leaves slowly, till he came to a place where one was missing. The others watched him in dead silence. There was a deep breath as the ragged edge, where the missing leaf had been torn off, was seen.

In silence Arthur Redfern laid the scrawled sheet in the book, and fitted the edges together. They fitted perfectly! There was not the slightest doubt that the sheet had been torn from Redfern minor's exercise-book—not the slightest doubt in any mind in the study.

"It fits exactly!" said Ransome.

Arthur's face was haggard.

"Well, what does it all mean?" broke out Redfern minor. "I don't see what it matters. Do you mean to say that that sheet has been torn from my book?"

"Yes," said Arthur.

"And what is that sheet, then?"

"It's the anonymous letter that was sent to the Head."

Redfern minor's face blanched. He saw in a flash what it meant. He would be branded as a sneak!

"So you wrote the letter, you little sneak!" cried Ransome angrily.

Sidney clenched his fists, then out shot his left and caught Ransome a stinger on the point of the jaw.

"Sneak yourself!" he retorted hotly, as Ransome reeled back against the wall.

"You cad, you shall pay for this!" hissed Ransome, his face livid with rage. "You'll be sacked for striking a prefect. Come to the Head, you rotten sneak!"

And he dragged Sidney towards the door.

(Another rattling long instalment of this enthralling school yarn will appear in next week's BOYS' REALM. If you like this story you will also like the grand complete school tales in our Thursday companion paper "THE BOYS' REALM" FOOTBALL LIBRARY—1d. Get a copy to-day.)

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