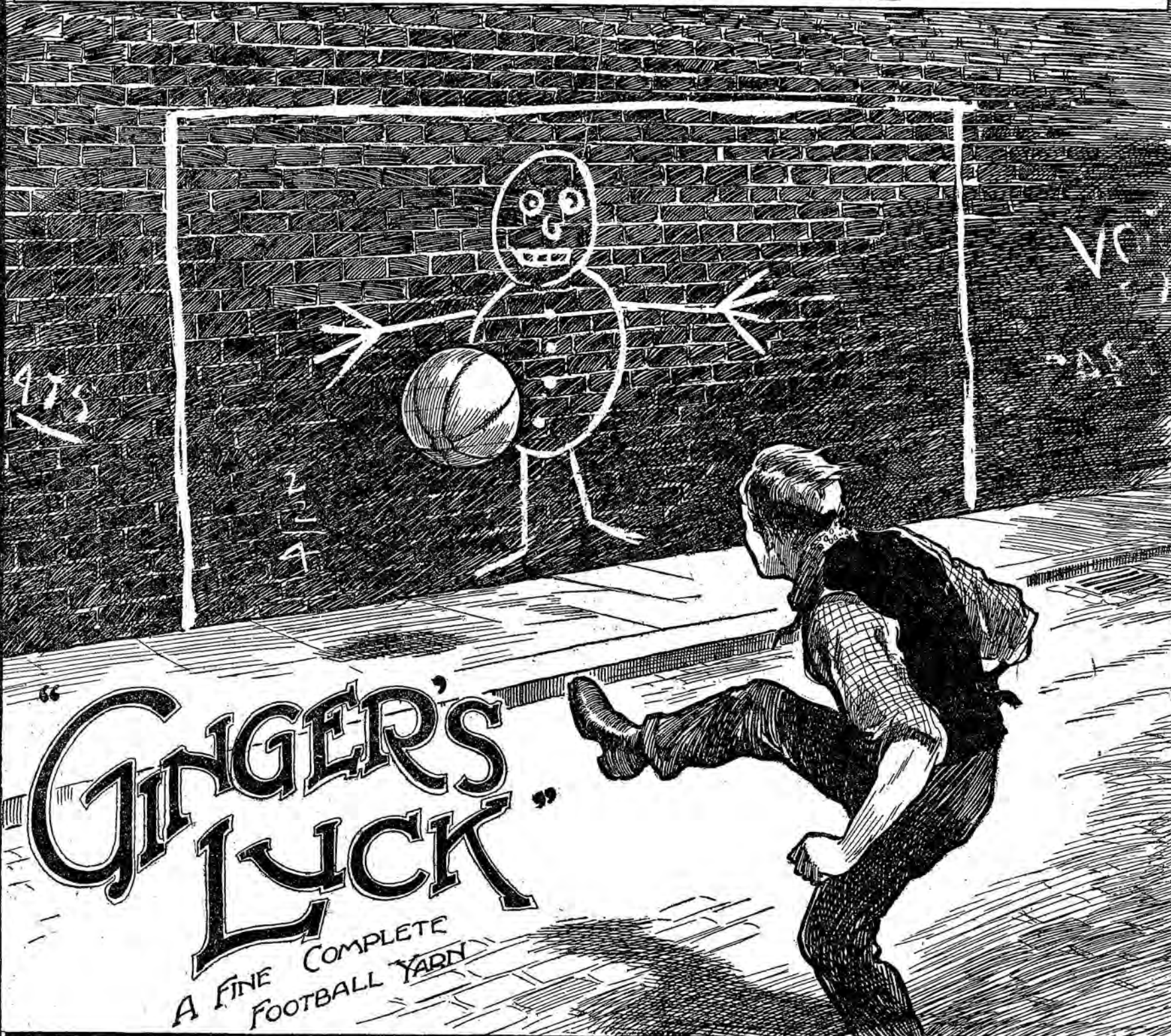


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The Boys' Realm. 1st

OF ~ SPORT ~ AND ~ ADVENTURE ~



THE **GREAT SATURDAY SPORTS PAPER**

Four Grand Serials. Two Stirring, Complete Football Tales.

ARTHUR REDFERN'S VOW.

A Rollicking Tale of School Life. By CHARLES HAMILTON.

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 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.

Knowles and Ransome invade Redfern minor's study, and find more trouble than they bargain for. In the scuffle which ensues, Knowles drops a five-pound note, which Sidney does not discover till after the two Sixth-Formers have departed. Not knowing who it belongs to, he takes it to Ransome. That worthy, who at the time is in need of money, succumbs to the temptation, and claims the note as his own, though he knows very well that it belongs to Knowles.

Knowles later discovers his loss, and comes to the conclusion that he must have dropped the note in Redfern minor's study.

Arthur Redfern, learning of this, goes in search of his brother to question him in regard to the matter.

(Now read this week's instalment.)

A Terrible Accusation.

"KNOWLES has lost a banknote," said Arthur abruptly. "He thinks he may have lost it during the scuffle in your study yesterday."

"Oh, that banknote!" said Redfern. "It wasn't Knowles's, was it?"

"Have you found it?"

"We found one," said Redfern, in wonder. "It couldn't have been Knowles's, though, because when I took it to Ransome, he found out by the number that it was his."

"Ransome?"

"Yes."

"Do you mean to say that you found a banknote in your study, after the scuffle, and took it to Ransome, and he said it was his?"

"Certainly."

"Did he keep it?"

"I left it with him," said Redfern minor, in wonder. "I suppose it was his, or he wouldn't say it was, would he? He had the number, too! What's the matter, Arthur?"

"Here's Ransome!" said Redfern major abruptly. "Ransome!"

The cad of the Sixth was entering the house. He had a telegram in his hand; he had gone to meet the messenger, and had opened the telegram in the quad. His face was white, and the telegram was crushed in his hand.

He looked absently and irritably at the captain of St. Dolly's.

"Eh, what is it? Did you speak to me?"

"Yes. Did you lose a banknote in my minor's study yesterday?"

Ransome started, and drew a quick, deep breath. It had come at last!

"No," he said quietly and deliberately. "Sidney says he found one, and brought it to you, and you declared that it was yours."

"If he found one, I should say it was Knowles's."

"He brought it to you—"

"To me?"

"Yes," said Redfern minor warmly. "You remember. You looked in your pocket-book, and found out the number."

Ransome gave him a hard look.

"You are dreaming, or lying," he said. "You brought no banknote to me. I never lost one. I never had one to lose!"

"But—but you said—"

"I said nothing. If you found a banknote in your study, I know nothing about it!"

"Do you mean to say that my minor did not bring it to you, Ransome?" asked Arthur, in a curiously strained voice.

"Certainly!"

"But—"

"It is no business of mine," said Ransome, with a shrug of the shoulders. "But if Redfern minor found a banknote, and told a yarn about handing it over to me, I should say that he could only have invented such a flimsy yarn for one reason."

"And that?"

"He has kept the banknote!"

Redfern minor looked at him almost wildly. In an instant the hideous position he was in flashed upon his mind. If Ransome denied taking the note, who was to prove that Redfern minor had ever given it to him?

It was as if a flash of lightning had suddenly revealed to him a yawning gulf at his feet. Redfern was quite giddy for the moment—his head seemed to turn round—but his brother's strong arm caught him as he staggered.

"Steady, Sid!"

There was no doubt, no hesitation, in Arthur's voice or look. In that terrible moment there was at least one who would be staunch and true to Redfern minor, and that was Redfern major.

Under Suspicion.

"REDFERN MINOR!"

"Yes!"

"Rats!"

"So say I!"

"And I!"

"Same here!"

"Well, that's what they're saying," said Benson of the Fourth, to a group of excited and greatly interested Classical youths. "They say he found a banknote in his study. Knowles had dropped it there. It seems there was a scrap in the study—Knowles and Ransome had gone there to bully Reddy."

"Well, that was like them."

"That part's true enough, very likely," said Fatty Spratt. "But about the banknote—"

"Reddy might have found it; but if he did, he took it back to the owner," said Miller.

"I should say so."

"Well, they say he kept it."

"It's gammon!"

"Sheer rot!"

"Hallo, here's Skelton and Brown! Let's ask them!"

Skelton and Brown were surrounded by a rush of the excited juniors of St. Dolly's. Both of them looked white and savage.

"What's the truth of this yarn about Reddy?" demanded Benson. "You ought to know, Skelton."

Skelton glared at him.

"So ought you, Benson. You ought to know as well as I do. You know jolly well that Reddy isn't a thief."

"Of course he isn't! But—"

"The truth is, that there's a plot against him, and Ransome of the Sixth is at the bottom of it, and I don't care who hears me say so!"

exclaimed Skelton, with flashing eyes.

"My hat!"

"That's what I say," said Brown. "I found

the banknote in our study after the scrap. Reddy said he would take it to Knowles and Ransome, and see which it belonged to. He took it to Ransome, and Ransome said it was his, and kept it."

"Phew!"

"Did you see him?"

"No. Reddy told us when he came back to the study."

"And now Ransome denies having had the note," said Skelton fiercely. "It's just a plot to get Reddy into trouble—like the anonymous letter business. I jolly well know who wrote that letter, and who stole it from the doctor's desk afterwards."

"Who, then?"

"Ransome!"

"I say, you'd better be careful!" said Benson, with a nervous glance round. "I—"

"I'm not going to be careful. I don't care who hears me. I say that if there's a thief at St. Dolly's, he's not in the Fourth, he's in the Sixth; and his name's not Redfern, either, it's Ransome!"

Skelton almost shouted out the words in his excitement and indignation. Mr. Ford, the master of the Fourth, stepped out of his study.

"Skelton!"

"You've done it now!" muttered Benson.

"Ford's heard you!"

Skelton gritted his teeth.

"I don't care! If they expel Reddy, they can expel me, too, for all I care. I'm going to stick to Reddy. Yes, sir! Did you call me?"

"Come into my study, Skelton!"

"Yes, sir!"

Skelton followed his Form-master in, and the door was closed. Mr. Ford looked attentively at the pale and excited face of the junior.

"You were speaking in a most wild and reckless way just now, Skelton," said Mr. Ford quietly. "Have you anything to back up the statements you were making?"

"I know that Ransome's a cad and a liar, sir," said Skelton grimly. "If he says Reddy never gave him the banknote, it's a lie! He's destroyed it, perhaps, to get Reddy into trouble with that yarn. He hates Reddy. He's always hated him, ever since Redfern major got in as captain of St. Dolly's. I shouldn't wonder if he's kept the banknote himself, and stolen it."

"That is a very serious thing to say, Skelton."

"Not any more serious than what he's said about Reddy," said Skelton fiercely. "You don't know Reddy as I do, sir. He's as open and honest as daylight—one of the best chums a fellow could have. And now to see him accused of such a dirty mean thing as stealing,

I have seen played upon an unsuspecting man. A description cannot be of any service to you. I often wonder whether the formation of leagues and the winning of cups and medals had anything to do with the growth of unfair tactics. Probably it had. They did little harm at first, as they only lent an additional charm without detracting from the interest taken in ordinary fixtures, but now there are cups and medals on all sides, and the result is, that without them exciting matches do not take place."

I am sure, even in your junior clubs, you notice that people seem to think it is not worth while to come and see you play in any but your league games. This sort of thing spreads to the players, and they know they must

make a special effort

to win the trophy and, at the same time, retain the support of the onlookers. "Win at all costs" seems to be the cry on both sides. Small wonder, then, that football stands a very good chance of developing into a brutal pastime, or practically killed by the many protecting laws which the Association will find it necessary to make."

Now, I do beg of you, my young friends, to take heed of my remarks. I am afraid my series of articles has not been as bright as I would have wished; in fact, I have come to the conclusion that I can think a powerful lot better than I can write. But, never mind; if I have only persuaded you to keep your bodies fit, practice more often, play to the best of your ability, and, above all things, play in the right spirit, I have not wasted the many "corners" your editor has so kindly put at my disposal.

As a wind up, I don't think I can do better than tell you of a humorous yet pathetic experience I once had, many years ago. I had been asked to assist a scratch team in a game with a side at a lunatic asylum. Of course, the thing wasn't going to be taken very seriously, and on the appointed afternoon we turned up at the asylum ground wondering just what sort of experiences we were going to have. Of these I will tell you next week.

Steve Bloomer

HOW TO PLAY "SOCCER."

By STEVE BLOOMER, the Great International Player.

Low-Down Methods.

I WANT this week to say a little about low-down tactics, and to warn my readers, with all my heart and soul, not at any time to sink to unfairness, however much tempted.

There is often that spirit of getting your own back shown after another man has fouled a player. It comes off without the referee seeing it. This is where the danger creeps in. Just because the referee hasn't seen a foul the player is tempted to repeat it. Now, will you try to remember my words, for I can honestly assure you no good ever came out of unfair play or taking advantage of an opponent by some low-down tricks?

There are many opportunities and temptations in the course of a match to practise foul play, especially when the winning of a certain game may mean the championship of your league, that many fall into the sin with only a feeling of elation when the trick has resulted in a distinct advantage to the side. The worst of this shocking state of things, which is sure to grow into a habit whenever you play the game, is that, with such a little beginning, it is likely to stick right through life; and a young man starts his business career cursed with a distinct hankering to always get the better of his fellows, no matter by what methods.

For this reason alone surely you will all see

the evil of unfair play,

and to those of you who are captains I say, no matter how expert a player is, drop him out of your team directly he shows the slightest inclination to play a dirty game. You may lose a man who is worth a lot to your side, but, at the same time, you will be losing something which, in a little while, may pollute the whole of your team. It is my contention that unfairness always spreads, whilst a real example of gentlemanly play and behaviour is frequently copied even by your opponents.

I shall not attempt to describe the many tricks

and to think he may be expelled all through that cad—"

Skelton's voice broke.

"I can understand your feelings," said Mr. Ford quietly. "I, too, find it very hard to credit this accusation against Redfern minor. I can assure you, Skelton, that the matter will be carefully investigated, and sifted out thoroughly, before any decided step is taken. If necessary, the aid of the police will be called in."

Skelton gritted his teeth.

"All the better, sir. I know jolly well that Reddy's innocent, and a detective might be able to find out the truth."

"I trust so."

Mr. Ford dismissed Skelton with a gesture. The Fourth-Form master remained some moments in deep thought. Then he left the room, and took his way to the Head's study.

Redfern minor was waiting in that room. Knowles, Ransome, and Redfern major were with him. Arthur had decided that the matter must be at once laid before the Head—it was all over St. Dolly's already. The three seniors and Redfern minor were waiting for the doctor to come in. They all looked round as Mr. Ford entered.

Arthur Redfern was looking pale and haggard. But his trust in his brother had never wavered for a moment. He knew that it was a plot against Sidney, and he knew very well that if Sidney had spoken the truth, Ransome must have lied. He had not, therefore, very far to look for someone to suspect. But how was he to prove that his suspicion of Ransome was well-founded? Where was the banknote? Redfern minor was looking stunned.

He had had a narrow escape in the affair of the anonymous letter; but he had escaped. Now it seemed that the toils had closed in upon him for good and all. There was only his statement that he had taken the banknote to Ransome. Ransome denied it. The boy could see no light.

"Does the Head know you are waiting for him?" asked Mr. Ford.

"I have sent word to him, sir," said Arthur. "I sent him a note by the page, explaining the circumstances, and asking him if he could look into the matter now."

"Very good. The sooner it is settled the better."

A few minutes later Dr. Cranston entered the study.

He was looking very disturbed, and it was evident that Arthur's note had shaken him a good deal.

He glanced round at the faces of the waiting boys, nodded to the Fourth-Form master, and took his seat at his writing-table.

"Your note amazed me, Redfern major!" he exclaimed. "It seems to me impossible that there can be a thief at St. Dolly's."

"I'm afraid there's no doubt about it, sir. But the thief is not my brother."

"Tell me the circumstances."

"Speak out, Sidney!"

"There was some trouble in our study, sir," said Redfern minor, in a low, but steady voice. "Knowles and Ransome were mixed up in it. We found a banknote afterwards, and thought that one of them must have dropped it. I took it back to them, and went into Ransome's study first, to ask him—"

"It is false," said Ransome.

The Head made a gesture.

"Let Redfern minor finish, Ransome. I will hear you afterwards."

"Very well, sir."

"I took it to Ransome, and explained how I came by it," said Redfern minor, his voice shaking a little now. "He told me it was his, and said he knew by the number. He kept it. I never thought any more about the matter."

"Is that all?"

"That's all, sir."

"Now, Ransome, what is your statement?"

"Very simple, sir. Redfern minor may have pretended to come to my study, for the sake of throwing dust in the eyes of those who knew he had the banknote, but he certainly did not come there. He did not hand me a banknote, and if he had, I should certainly not have kept it, as I had not lost one."

The Head's face was deeply lined with trouble.

He had hoped that there might be some mistake in the matter—some terrible mistake, which might be rectified by strict investigation. But evidently there was no hope of that.

One side or the other was deliberately lying. Either Redfern minor or Ransome was a thief, and was relating a cunning falsehood to cover up his guilt.

But which?

Of Ransome's real character the Head knew nothing. He certainly did not fill a very high place in the esteem of the masters at St. Dolly's, but his ways were little suspected. He was generally cunning enough to cover up his tricks, whatever he did.

Redfern minor's record was as clean as need be. Yet the Head knew how possible it was for a lad to yield to temptation when he found a large sum of money in his hands.

Had Redfern minor retained the banknote, and invented the story of handing it to Ransome?

"I might add, sir," went on Ransome quietly, "that I have been for some time on bad terms with both the Redferns, and that that is probably the reason why I have been picked upon for this false accusation. Redfern minor probably depended on his brother to back him up against a fellow both of them dislike."

Arthur's eyes flashed.

"That is enough," Ransome, he said. "Dr. Cranston, I have a confession to make. I

ARTHUR REDFERN'S VOW.

(Continued from the previous page.)

should never have said a word about that villain—"

"Redfern!"

"I repeat the word, sir—he is a villain, if ever there was one!" exclaimed Arthur passionately. "I should never have said a word about him but for this wicked attempt to ruin my brother. But now I will tell the truth."

Ransome's lips went paler, but he shrugged his shoulders. He was playing for a desperate stake, and he was prepared to play it out to the end with cool effrontery.

"You know, sir," went on Arthur, speaking hurriedly and passionately—"you know what I was mixed up in last term—what you kindly forgave, and what I have tried to atone for

"There is no need to speak of that now, Redfern. You have more than atoned for the follies of the past."

"But I must speak of it, sir. I never told you, but all the time that I was mixed up with those betting rascals I had a companion—a companion who first introduced me among them—a companion who sneered and mocked whenever I made an attempt to lead a better life—a companion who always dragged me back into that if I escaped from it—a companion who has ever since been my bitter enemy, because I have been determined to do my duty, and fulfil the vow I made when you allowed me a chance to retrieve my mistakes. That companion was Ransome, the villain who is now accusing my younger brother of theft. You believe what I say, sir? Is he the kind of fellow whose accusation should be credited?"

The Head glanced sternly at Ransome.

"What have you to say to this, Ransome?"

"It is false, sir!"

But while his lips framed the denial, the Sixth-Former's ashen cheeks and lowering eyes told only too plainly of the truth of Arthur's words.

Knowles looked from one to the other in amazement. He made a slight movement to draw himself away from Ransome. The cad of the Sixth saw it, and smiled a bitter smile. Even Knowles, the tool he had used in his plotting against the captain of St. Dolly's, was deserting him now.

There was a silence in the Head's study for some moments. Dr. Cranston spoke at last.

"I certainly believe every word you say, Redfern major. At this time of day, however, it is too late to refer to Ransome's actions at that time, so long as he has been more careful this term. But what you say certainly throws great doubt upon his statement. What to believe, I do not know; but I can promise you that the truth will be discovered. I shall send for the police at once, and the belongings of both Ransome and Redfern minor will be searched immediately. Neither boy will enter his study again till after the search."

Ransome turned paler. He had not expected so drastic a step so suddenly taken. The whole thing had come upon him suddenly, before he had time to prepare for it. He had no fear, of course, of the banknote being found in his study.

That banknote had long been passed into the hands of Jimmy Crew, the bookmaker in Okeholme. But in his desk in his study were various papers that would throw only too plain a light upon his way of life—to say nothing of boxes of cigarettes and the bottle of whisky in his locker.

But there was no help for it now. Dr. Cranston touched a bell, and Phipps, the house-porter, appeared.

"Phipps, you will look the doors of the studies belonging to Master Ransome and Master Sidney Redfern," he said. "Take care that no one enters either room on any pretext whatever."

"Yes, sir."

"I shall now telephone to the police-station in Okeholme," said Dr. Cranston quietly.

The boys left the study. Ransome's face was like chalk.

Brought to Light.

"PHIPPS!"

"Yes, Master Ransome."

"Will you lend me the key of my room for a minute or two?"

The house-porter stared in amazement at the Sixth-Former.

"I can't, Master Ransome. It's against the Head's orders."

Ransome forced a laugh.

"I don't want to do any harm there, Phipps. You can come in with me if you like. But there are some papers I don't want the Head to see, that's all—only some private papers."

"The Head wouldn't be likely to look into your private papers, sir," said Phipps, with strong suspicion written in his face.

"Look here, Phipps—"

Ransome showed a half-sovereign glittering in his palm, but the house-porter did not make a movement to accept it. He was generally easily to be tipped, but on the present occasion he dared not. He knew that it might be as much as his place was worth.

"Thank you, sir—no!"

"I will let you go in with me, Phipps, and you shall see everything I take."

"I dare not, sir!"

"But—"

"It's no good, sir. I dursn't do it!"

Ransome gritted his teeth, and walked away. He had hardly expected Phipps to do as he wished, but it was a chance.

How was he to get the betting-book and the whisky and the smokes out of the study in time? And the letter, he remembered, from Jim Crew, on the subject of the Burford Stakes—the very race on which he had lost the five pounds.

It was ruin if the Head found them. Ransome thrust his hands deep in his pockets, and strolled out into the dusky quad. He glanced up at the window of his study.

He had climbed into that window before, when returning from some excursion out of bounds after "Lights out." He could easily do it again, but—

What if he were caught? It would be taken as a plain proof of his guilt. Yet otherwise—if he did not move the tell-tale papers, at least—was not his guilt certain to be taken for granted?

The cad of the Sixth looked nervously and uneasily about him. The quadrangle was very dusky, and there was no one in sight. He could climb into the study window unobserved, and then—

His resolution was taken. He grasped the rain-pipe that ran up the wall beside the window, and clambered up, and in a few seconds was on the window-sill. The window was

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partly open, and it was easy for Ransome to open it further, and jump in.

The moment he had disappeared into the room several dusky figures loomed up in the gloom of the quadrangle.

There were Redfern minor, Skelton, and Brown, and Taffy & Co., all together. They exchanged looks of suppressed excitement and triumph as they gathered under the window.

"He's gone in!" said Taffy.

Taffy, Rake, and Vernon seemed to be on the best of terms now with their old Classical foes. As Taffy nobly said, at a time like this it was the proper caper for the Fourth Form to stand by one another. As for believing that Redfern minor was a thief, Taffy was ready to punch the head of any fellow, Classical or Modern, who suggested it.

"I thought he would!" said Redfern minor between his teeth. "I guessed that he would have something in the study he wouldn't like the Head to see, considering his habits. The banknote itself may be there. When I spotted him talking to Phipps, I guessed what he was after."

"Well, he's fairly in it now, chappies!" remarked Vernon.

"Just what I was going to say!" said Rake, with a nod.

"Fetch a prefect, one of you!" said Redfern minor. "We've got to have proof that Ransome has gone into his study, and he would deny it if we accused him."

"Right-ho!" said Brown.

And he disappeared into the darkness. In a few minutes he returned with Courtney, who was looking a little excited.

"Do you mean to say that Ransome has climbed into his study?" demanded Courtney.

"Yes, rather! He's in there now!"

"By Jove, that looks like—"

"Look!" exclaimed Redfern minor, clutching his arm.

Courtney looked up at the window. The face of someone within was seen for a moment as a sash was raised. It disappeared in a moment. Ransome had caught sight of the juniors and the prefect below.

The cad of the Sixth drew back into the

study, his heart beating like a hammer. He was caught—fairly caught at last.

He could not leave the study by the window without detection; he could not leave it by the door at all.

He could only wait there till the Head came, with the detective from Okeholme, to discover him!

His brain swam as he thought of it.

His desperate attempt to retrieve his position had made matters worse. How could he explain that surreptitious entrance into the study?

There was a sound of footsteps in the passage as the cad of the Sixth stood hesitating. A hand tried the door; a key grated in the lock.

Ransome panted for breath.

As if he had seen it done, he guessed all. The prefect below the window had sent the news within that Ransome was in his study, fearing that he might destroy the banknote, perhaps, if it was there. The Head, instead of waiting for the police, was coming instantly to Ransome's room. As clearly as if he could see him, Ransome knew that it was the Head who was at the study door.

He looked wildly round.

Under the window, in the gloom, he could see the group of dark, indistinct figures.

There was no escape that way.

The study door was opening.

Was there a chance of escaping past the



Ransome with a face like chalk, stepped out from behind the wardrobe. "I am here, sir!" he said. The Head turned a stern glance of inquiry upon him.

Head as he opened the door, of dodging away in the darkness?

No!

The portly form in the rustling gown filled the doorway, and Phipps, the house-porter, was behind.

There was no escape.

Ransome temples throbbed wildly. It was yet dark; he had not been seen. He sprang silently towards the wardrobe in a corner of the room, and squeezed himself behind it.

There was a chance that he would escape detection yet. His heart was beating so hard that it made him almost sick.

"Phipps, light the gas."

It was the doctor's deep voice.

"Yessir."

A match scratched out.

Phipps stepped into the study, and there was a faint smell of gas as he turned the burner on, and then a flood of light.

It made Ransome blink in his hiding-place behind the wardrobe.

Dr. Cranston glanced round the room.

A look of relief appeared upon his face.

"He is not here."

"The window's open, sir," said Phipps.

"Ah, true!"

Ransome bit his lips till the blood came. In his haste and terror he had overlooked that. The lower sash of the window was still up, just as he had raised it to get out, before he discovered that the study window was watched.

Dr. Cranston stepped to the window and glanced out.

"Are you there, Courtney?"

The prefect looked up.

"Yes, sir."

"Has anyone descended from the window?"

"No, sir."

"Very good."

Dr. Cranston turned back into the study.

"Close the door, Phipps," he said.

"Yessir."

Ransome's heart was like lead as he heard the door shut. This could only mean that the study was to be searched; that he could count the time to his discovery by seconds.

"Look about the room, Phipps, and see if Master Ransome is concealed here."

"Yessir."

Ransome, with a face like chalk, stepped out from behind the wardrobe.

"I am here, sir!" he said.

The Head turned a stern glance of inquiry upon him.

"Ah, you are here, Ransome, in spite of my positive order that you were not to enter the study!"

"I am sorry, sir. I—I came to remove some private papers—papers of no importance to the matter in hand, sir, but—concerning someone else."

"You lay yourself open to the suspicion of having come here to remove the stolen banknote," said the Head sternly.

Ransome almost smiled—a ghastly smile. The stolen banknote was far enough away.

"Oh, sir, nothing of the sort! Merely some private papers."

"I am afraid it will be necessary for me to see those private papers," said Dr. Cranston grimly. "Kindly hand them to me, Ransome."

"If—if you please, sir—" stammered Ransome.

The Head's brow grew very dark.

"You will either hand them to me, Ransome, or Phipps shall search you."

"I—I—"

"Enough! You will kindly examine Master Ransome's pockets, Phipps, and lay on the table whatever you find in them."

"Yessir."

Ransome submitted, with a whirling brain. All was lost now; he knew that. His career at St. Dolly's was drawing to a close.

Phipps commenced his task. The first thing he brought to light was the whisky-bottle, which was bulging out of one of Ransome's pockets. The Head started as he saw it, and then started again as a box of cigarettes was laid beside it.

"Are these the private papers you were removing, Ransome?" he asked bitterly.

The cad of the Sixth could find no words to reply.

Phipps's groping hand came upon a bundle of papers in Ransome's inside breast-pocket, and he laid it on the table.

Dr. Cranston took the papers in his hands.

"It is my duty to examine these, Ransome," he said. "Do you give me your permission to do so?"

"No!" muttered Ransome, through livid lips.

"Then I can only conclude that they contain some proof of your guilt."

"I am not guilty!"

"We shall see. With or without your permission, I shall examine these papers," said Dr. Cranston sternly. "If they should, indeed, prove to be private papers, concerning only yourself, I am sorry; but I cannot accept your statement without proof."

"I—I—"

Ransome's voice died away.

The Head was already examining the papers.

The cad of the Sixth stood like one stunned, waiting for the blow to fall.

Dr. Cranston's brows were darkening more and more.

The first paper he took up and separated from the rest was a coarse sheet, with stains of liquor and a smell of tobacco about it.

It was written in a rude, crabbed hand, which the Head had some difficulty in deciphering, and signed "Jimmy Crew."

Dr. Cranston raised his eyes to the face of the writhing youth before him. He had read carefully through the letter from beginning to end.

"This letter is signed by a man calling himself Jimmy Crew, Ransome. Who is he?"

"A—chap in Okeholme."

"There is a bad character in the village, who does bookmaking, known by that name," said the Head. "This is the same, I suppose?"

Ransome was silent.

"I take it that it is the same, as you do not reply. He makes reference in this letter to five pounds which you handed him to be laid on a horse called Ben Bolt for the Burford Stakes."

Ransome licked his dry lips.

"From the date, it appears that you laid this large bet on the same day that the banknote was found in Redfern minor's study. Are you prepared to explain and prove how you came into possession of that sum of money?"

Ransome did not speak.

"Five pounds is a large sum, even for a senior," said Dr. Cranston. "You could not have such a sum without remembering perfectly clearly how you came by it. Are you prepared to explain?"

Still the unhappy Sixth-Former did not speak.

Of what use was it to speak? The truth was known; lies could not save him now. He stood with downcast eyes and throbbing heart.

He was lost!

"Very well," said the Head quietly. "As soon as the police arrive from Okeholme, I shall direct them to visit this man Crew, and charge him with being your accomplice in the theft of the banknote. If he did not know that you came by it dishonestly, he will be able to prove it; but I suspect that he did know. In any case, the truth will come to light."

Ransome groaned aloud.

(To be concluded next week, when our grand new serial, "Dick Mascot's Schooldays," commences.)