

Complete Boatrace & Jack Noble Yarns.

The Boys' Realm. 1^o

The Great Saturday Sports Paper.

THE RISE OF TYNEGATE



*The Great
Newcastle
Football Story
By
ANDREW GRAY*



NUMLEY'S PUNISHMENT.

A RATTLING COMPLETE STORY OF JACK NOBLE
AND PELHAM SCHOOL.

THE 1st CHAPTER.

Fighting Mac Has a Find.

"I THINK that will be about enough!" exclaimed Jack Noble, captain of Pelham Thirds, as he let fall an armful of old drawing and other books on to the floor of his study. "Phew! I had a job to get 'em! Old Snarky tried to assert himself, as usual. He said the Head had strictly forbidden anyone to cart 'em away, once they had been put on one side for destruction. I told him to go and eat coke, and—Lawson, fat-head, you are sitting on that half of a buttered bun I left behind me!"

Lawson minor, the mild-eyed, jumped up as if shot.

"So I was!" he ejaculated, staring blankly at the crushed mess. "I thought there was something wrong with the beastly chair. You're such an untidy beggar, Noble! You're always leaving things in the most unlikely places. Why couldn't you have taken the rotten thing with you? You take the blessed bun for carelessness!"

"I think you have taken the bun!" chuckled Bob Russell, the joker. "More'n half of it's ornamenting your second-best whereabouts, old chap! It's made quite a good impression on you, I can see. You'll be carrying that grease spot to the end of your—end of the term, I mean. Why waste time shouting at Noble? You ought to know he's the most untidy chap in the school. Now, if it'd been my bun, I shouldn't have left it about like that!"

"Boo-oo-oo!" screamed Noble. "At him, chaps! How dare he run down his captain like that?"

Russell made a wild dive under the table. "Heave-ho, laddies!" cried Fighting Mac, tugging at a protruding leg. "Swing on to the other one, Jack. Give a hand here, Jones and Mellvaine. Run round to the other side, and grab hold of his wrists. Heave-ho! See-saw the beggar from one side to the other. We'll let the rotter see if he can blacken Noble's character like that! Altogether, now. Heave-ho—heave-ho!"

"Ow! Wow! Ouch!" One of Russell's kicking feet had caught Lawson minor in the most tender part of his anatomy. He collapsed in a heap, both hands tightly clasped in front.

Bob Russell fell with a thud, his captors having simultaneously let go their hold as the study door banged violently open.

"Hallo!" called out Lecky, captain of the school, gazing at the scene of disorder with displeasure. "Is this how you chaps prepare trail for the paper-chase? Only half an hour left, and I want two bags full! What have you been doing, Russell?"

Bob had emerged from his ineffectual retreat, gingerly fingering his damaged nasal organ. "What have they been doing, why don't you ask?" he rasped out. "The idiots have taken every bit of skin from my nose!"

"No doubt you deserved to lose it," remarked the captain calmly.

Russell grinned. "I'm not growling," he answered; "only they needn't have been quite so raggy. They caught me under the table."

"Well, drop rotting!" exclaimed the captain irritably. "We must get that trail cut up, I tell you. If we can't get away by three, we'll have to be content with a four-mile spin instead of six. You got the paper, I see, Noble."

"Yes. Will it be enough?"

"Enough? You've got sufficient there to lay a trail for Cody's flight from London to Manchester! Get up on your pins, Russell; you, too, Mac. I left instructions for two bags of trail to be cut up, and you waste precious time by fooling about!"

"Your lordship's lordly will shall be obeyed," said Fighting Mac, scrambling to his feet, and executing a profound salaam. "Would your good graciousness like to wipe your lordly feet on your wormlike servant?"

"By the by, Noble," said Lecky, ignoring Mac's pleasantry. "Mr. Slaney wants you. He asked me to send you along."

"Bust him!" said Jack. "What's he want, I wonder?"

And he toddled off. The remaining Third-Formers sat down in the middle of the floor, commencing to cut up the paper at a surprising rate. For the next twenty minutes nothing could be heard but the click, click of rapidly-manipulated scissors, Lecky himself lending a hand.

"That will do," he remarked, at last, when the result was threatening to hide the workers from view altogether. "You chaps can buck up when you like. Once you start rotting,

there's no knowing—What have you found, Mac?"

That individual was holding a half-sheet of notepaper in his hand, his eyes opened to their widest extent as he scanned its contents.

"Listen to this, laddies!" he gasped, then began to read aloud:

"I have been reading with interest the school magazine you sent to me. My darling boy, I can quite understand why you did not mention it in your letter. I appreciate your modesty. Throughout its pages I find flattering allusions to J. N. 'J. N. outwitted the goalie, and added another beauty to Pelham's score.' I cannot quite understand what that means, but it must have been something clever. 'J. N. promises to be the best centre-forward Pelham's ever had.' And so on. 'My darling Jim, when—'"

"That's all there is," concluded Mac, as he let the paper drop.

For a few moments no one spoke. Then, as they gradually began to understand the words they had been listening to, their wrath broke out.

"The cad—the sickly, knock-kneed sneak!" hissed Bob Russell.

"The swivel-eyed cuckoo!" shouted Lawson minor.

"The bounder—the rotter!" added the finder of the note with equal energy.

"Whoa! Steady!" cried Lecky. "How do we know it is not all a mistake? I dare say Numley has made it clear to his mater long before this he is not the J. N. alluded to. To his doting parent it is only natural there should be but one J. N. in existence, so the mistake is pardonable. Of course, Numley would write and explain the abbreviation means Jack Noble, and not Jimmy Numley."

"Not he!" snorted Mac indignantly. "The bounder's been bluffing his mater. He thought it a good chance to make himself look big, so took advantage of it. Why did he send the school mag. along otherwise?"

Lecky's handsome face wore a perplexed look.

"At any rate," he announced, "we have no right to read another chap's letter. It must have got amongst the waste paper by accident. We'll have to keep mum about the matter. Noble and he come from the same place. Numley's mater fairly worships Jimmy, though we think him such an ass. I believe there is some sort of an understanding between Noble and her. Jack has promised to watch over her darling Jimmy."

"But it's such a rotten, mean hoax, Lecky!" spluttered Mac. "All the mag. says about Noble is true, of course. He is the smartest footer player we have in the juniors. It's a shame for this snivelling Jimmy Numley to make his mater believe he is the great J. N. I'll tell you what, chaps. We can keep mum about this; at the same time, we must pay him out."

"How?" they all eagerly asked.

"By making him play footer. The sight of a ball makes the idiot shudder. As skipper, you can put who you like in the team, Lecky. When you post up the list for our match on Saturday afternoon, just shove his name down instead of mine."

"That will mean certain defeat when we meet Todd's lot."

"Never mind, Lecky; it will be worth it." "I'll think over it," said Lecky, and hurried them into their running clothes.

THE 2nd CHAPTER.

Numley is Honoured.

THE affair soon leaked out, as things so quickly do in large schools.

To the seniors it was a matter of small interest, but the indignation amongst the members of the Third was very great.

Like Mac, the majority firmly believed Numley had been guilty of trying to pass off the achievements of the great J. N. as his own.

Jack Noble was the idol of the Third, and had proved himself to be the finest all-round athlete amongst the juniors.

Numley, in the same Form, was quite a different stamp a scraggy, mournful-looking youth, who kept himself very much to himself, pursuing his studies at every available opportunity, without displaying the least interest in any branch of school sport. His one relaxation seemed to be a game of draughts—when he could cajole anyone into playing with him. Numley was of a most gentle, sensitive disposition, shrinking before the good-natured chaff of his school chums, as Mac often remarked, like a winkle into its shell.

The only one who could claim to be in his confidence was Jack Noble. Their homes were within a stone's throw of each other. They had entered Pelham together, and Noble had faithfully promised Numley's one anxious parent he would keep a watchful eye over her timorous offspring. As far as he could, Noble kept his word. Unfortunately, the two boys had very few interests in common, and were more often apart.

At the same time, the knowledge that he was under Noble's protection often sufficed to save

Numley from being the subject of many a rough jape. But this suspected audacious annexation of Noble's honours aroused quite a furore of bitter feeling against the scraggy youth. To healthy, right-minded boys, underhand work of any description is peculiarly abhorrent. In this particular case, Numley's conduct seemed specially obnoxious.

He and Noble appeared to be the only two unaware of the whispering going on in the indignant Third. The members of that Form were nursing their resentment, waiting to prove to the studious Numley the enormity of his supposed offence.

The first inkling the latter had that he had become an object of interest to the Third, who hitherto had been content to overlook his existence, was when he sidled up to a small crowd clustered about the gym door, deeply interested in the list containing the names of the team for the approaching match.

"Mum's the word, laddies!" hissed Mac, who was the centre of the group. And his companions silently made way for the usually unobtrusive Numley.

"Why, Lecky's gone and put my name down!" the scraggy youth exclaimed when he had glanced over the list. "What ever made him do that? I understand as much about footer as—as old Oliver Cromwell understood about aeroplanes! It must be a mistake!"

"No mistake about it!" retorted Fighting Mac grimly. "There's your name, 'J. Numley,' as plain as afternoon tea. You'll have to play!"

"But—but—"

"There can be no buts about it, laddie, unless you intend to butt the leather into the net. Lecky's word is law. So is his written mandate. You can't back out, I tell you."

"I haven't touched a footer since I came to Pelham."

"The sooner you begin the better, then. Lecky knows what he is about. He is always on the look-out for new talent. He must have spotted you, noticed your amazing physical perfections and concluded you were just the chap to strengthen the team."

"What does right-wing mean, please, Macalpine?"

Mac stared at the questioner in blank-eyed astonishment. Such ignorance of the noble game was beyond his comprehension.

"What does right-wing mean, laddie?" he echoed. "It means, my son, that that is the position all goody-goody youths play in. Those whose angelic disposition has caused their wings to begin sprouting."

Numley did not even smile.

"What will I have to do?" he asked, with a worried look.

"Do? You must rush 'em, my mannie! Pass the ball when you can't shoot yourself."

"Shoot myself?"

Mac groaned.

"This isn't a suicide club, idiot! This is a footer-team! Shoot the ball, or pass it!"

"Pass it?"

"He thinks it's like hunt the slipper!" muttered Lawson minor derisively.

At that moment Noble strolled up.

"Hallo, hallo hallo!" he called out cheerily. "What have we here? Gathering of the clans, debating society, or—?" He caught sight of the list, and ran his eye quickly over the names.

His astonishment equalled Numley's.

"Why, this is champion!" he cried, slapping that blushing worthy's shoulder with great heartiness. "I had no idea, Jimmy, you had taken up footer!"

"He hasn't," grinned Mac. "Footer's taken him up. Lecky has honoured him by placing his name amongst the eleven, and now he wants to back out. Don't you, Jimmy?"

"I—I hardly know. You see, I have never played before."

"You can't begin too soon, Jimmy!" cried Noble. "It's a tiptop game, and you'll soon grow to like it. It's a little queer, though, that the skipper should choose you when he has such a crowd to pick from."

"Can't be helped!" Noble continued, with decision. "You have been picked to play, Jimmy; you must do the best you can. It's an honour, my boy, if you'd only believe it. Come along to the field, and I'll coach you up a bit. Half an hour's punting will put you in rare form."

Numley reluctantly allowed himself to be led away to the recreation-ground, where he spent the next half-hour in abortive attempts to emulate the dexterity with which Noble kept the leather sphere on the move. At the end of that time he was more firmly convinced than ever footer was not in his line. So was Noble, but was too kindhearted to say so.

THE 3rd CHAPTER.

The Match.

HEEP! Pheep!

Clegg, of the Sixth, had generously consented to officiate as referee, and he was prepared for a warm time.

The team representing Todd's Academy was a much bigger set of fellows than Pelham's Thirds, but the juniors set themselves to the gigantic task of conquering them with indomitable courage. Throughout the season they had managed to hold their own fairly well. While they could keep their feet, and did not allow themselves to be scattered by the superior weight of their opponents, they were all right. What they lacked in stature they made up for in skill, and a grim determination not to be disgraced even if they did happen to meet with defeat.

All the school had assembled to witness the struggle.

At right-wing Numley stood shivering in his thin costume.

What to do now he was actually on the field, with the ball already on the move, he did not clearly know. Noble had instructed him to keep his face directed towards the enemy's goal, and when he got the chance, either pass the ball, or urge it in that direction.

But for the first five minutes the ball seemed to be anywhere and everywhere excepting near his side of the field. And it was so dreadfully cold!

What little wind there was came from the east, cutting like a knife.

He wistfully thought of his cosy den, the botanical specimens he had intended to rearrange, and countless other congenial tasks he had wanted to do that afternoon. Now he was on the field he might as well do the best he could for his own side.

He dreaded making an exhibition of himself. He followed the ball's flight from point to point with eager eyes, devotedly wishing the game might terminate without it once coming near him.

(Continued on the next page.)



Numley tried to shrink aside to avoid the charging form of Jenkins. But he was an instant too late, and was sent hurtling to the ground.

He kept pace with his fellow-forwards more to keep up his circulation than with any hope of distinguishing himself. He began to grow interested in spite of himself, and after a little while felt an irresistible desire to have just one good kick at the elusive sphere. How he envied Noble of his sturdy, well-built figure! It had never occurred to him before what a puny, miserable specimen of boyhood he himself was.

He glanced down at his bony knees, and at his thin sticks of legs, then looked across at Noble's bulging calves, and groaned. All at once he saw the ball coming in his direction. It came hurtling across the field from the opposite wing.

Before he could realise what had happened it was at his feet, and before his suddenly blurred vision might forms came leaping towards him, wild-eyed and energetic.

"Shoot, shoot! Run, run!" howled the onlookers.

Poor Numley took the last part of this advice. He ran as he had never run before, leaving the ball untouched behind him.

It was the jeers and hootings that arose that made him realise he had lost his opportunity.

"Sticks! Fathead! Blind worm!" shrieked the incensed members of his own Form, wild at such an exhibition of what they took to be cowardice. But it was not the latter that had made Numley bolt, it was panic.

When he recovered his senses he had reached the reverse side of the enemy's goalposts, with a clamorous mob of yelling juniors barring his further progress.

"Go back, you silly cuckoo!" squealed little Gavin, of the First Form. "You added-headed clothes-prop, go back, can't you?"

Numley raced back to his former place, trembling all over with agitation. He resolved he would not make such an ass of himself again if the ball came near a second time. He shot an apologetic, embarrassed glance across at Noble. That individual happened to be very busy just then, and had no time to think of his friend. He had rescued the ball from the too-attentive forwards of Todd's Academy, and had already broken through their formidable defence.

"Hurrah, hurrah! Play up, Pelham! Mow 'em down, Noble!" yelled his delighted admirers. On the opposite side of the field another group began to chant:

"Jack's the boy for work, Jack's the boy for play."

The backs bore down upon Noble like giants whose fortress is being stormed. Noble stopped. With a deliberate movement he tipped the ball across to right-wing. Neatly passed, and without further obstacles to impede its progress, it fell with a tempting rebound exactly in front of Numley.

This time he did not intend to leave it unmolested.

"Kick it, kick it! Centre, centre!" he heard them yelling on every side.

Shutting both eyes, he drove at the dancing ball with his right foot, putting all the strength he could into the effort. Where it went to he did not care. He had had one good kick, and was quite satisfied.

The violence of the effort lost him his footing. When he opened his eyes he was sitting in the middle of a small pool, and heard Noble's cheery voice roaring in his ear as his friend helped him to his feet. The humming in his head prevented him making out what it was the crowd were yelling. He could only hear Noble's loud voice.

"The cleanest shot I've ever seen!" that worthy was shouting. "The finest goal that has been scored this season! You've drawn first blood for our side, Jimmy!"

"W-what's h-happened?" Numley stammered.

"What's happened, old chap? You knocked their goalie clean off his pins! Brushed right against his ear, then bang into the net the ball went. Champion shot, Jimmy, my boy! Didn't I say you'd soon tumble to the game? Pull yourself together! There's the ref's whistle going!"

Phoop! Phoop!

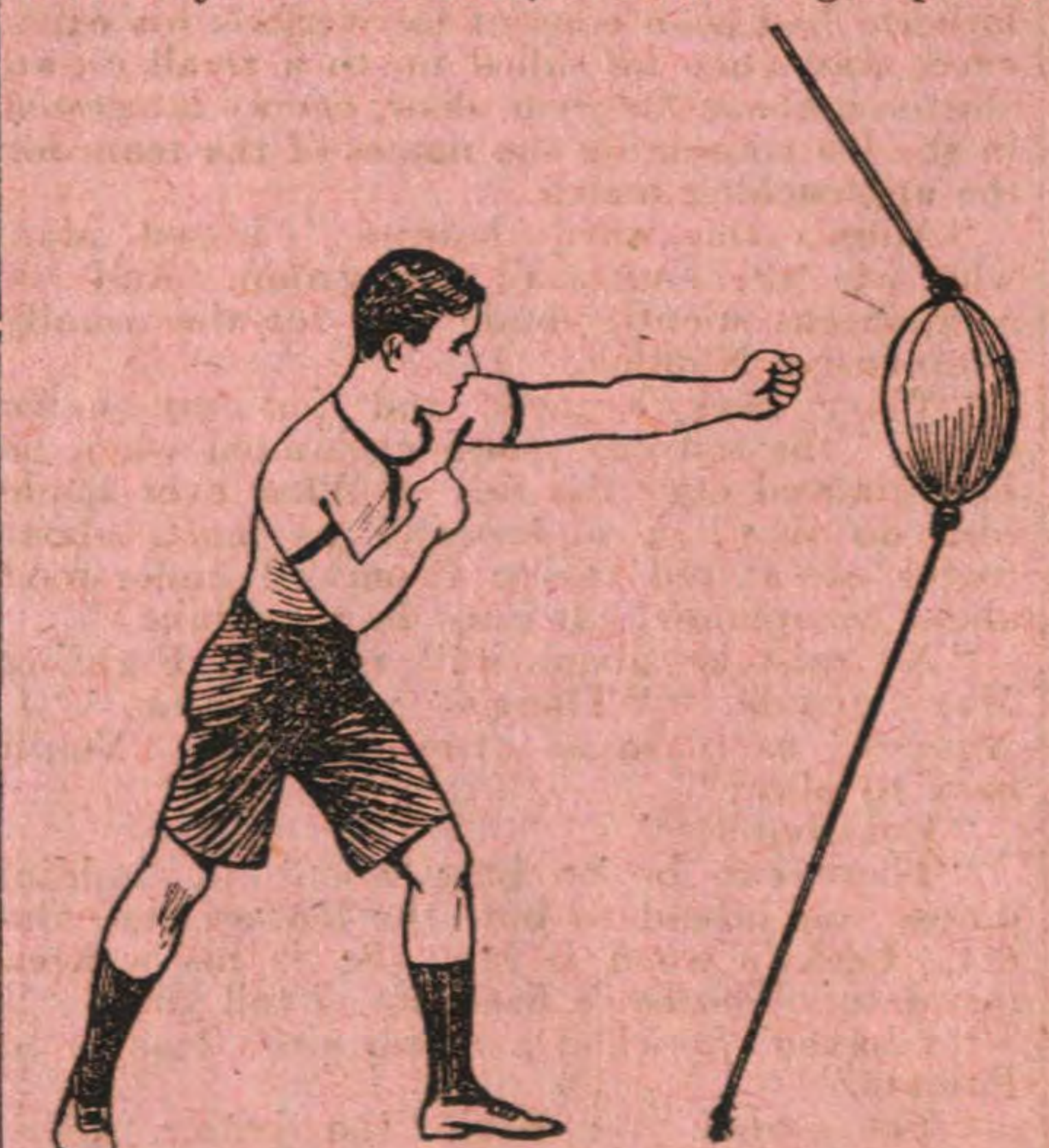
Numley staggered across to his place, too dazed to understand what had taken place. In some mysterious way, he knew, he had distinguished himself, but found little or no satisfaction in the knowledge.

The beastly ground had been so wet! There was a horrid, moist patch on his thin pants, and he could feel the icy water trickling down.

Ugh! How cold he was! The others did not appear to feel it. Noble, he could see, had a fearful-looking red scar on his right shin, but was playing faster than ever. The shouts of the now jubilant members of his Form were as a discordant chorus in his ringing ears, very much like their usual senseless caterwaulings. If that wretched ball came near him again he would leave it severely alone; he would—

Smack! Something wet and disagreeable caught him a terrific bang on the side of his face, making his head buzz. From out the sky, it seemed to him, long-legged Jenkins, of Todd's Academy, was descending upon him. Poor, bewildered Numley tried to shrink aside to avoid contact with the whirling giant.

Crash! He had a dim vision of Jenkins's distorted face very near his own; a confused glimpse of



PUNCHING BALL EXERCISE. (See "How to Box," on page 703.)

about a thousand wildly-leaping figures all making in his direction; then he fell over with a thud, his head resting in a muddy pool.

THE 4th CHAPTER.

Suspense.

FOR days there were gloomy faces in the Third Form at Pelham, a disquietude that spread itself over the entire school. In the apartment allotted to invalids poor Numley lay in the grip of pneumonia, consequent from his exposure to the severe weather on the day of the match. His mother had been hastily summoned, and had already been nearly a week at Pelham.

Riotous games were strictly forbidden within the vicinity of the school. Macalpine, Russell, & Co. were feeling very bad about the matter. Had they let the affair of the accidentally discovered accusing slip of paper drop, they would not have had this terrible thing hanging over their heads.

Poor Jimmy Numley was seriously ill. Three or four times each day, outside the door of the sick-chamber, a bulletin was posted; but so far but small hope of his recovery was held out.

On the sixth morning, very early, Macalpine was tiptoeing down the passage leading to the sick-room. He was anxious to learn the latest news. Half-way down the passage he met Noble creeping back. The centre-forward placed his fingers warningly to his lips when he saw Mac approaching, signalling with his other hand for him to go back.

Noble's face was very white. He was blaming himself for the illness threatening to

carry off the boy he had pledged his word he would look after.

He might have known a sickly, undeveloped kid like Numley, clad in thin footer togs, was not fit to face the keen east wind that had been blowing across the field on that particular day, much less face Todd's rough lot.

He dreaded the moment he would have to face Numley's mother. What would she think of him? What would she say? Although their ages were about the same, Numley had always seemed such a helpless kid in his estimation. Besides, he had pledged his word he would keep his eye on him.

Bluff, good-natured Jack Noble was sorely troubled. Willingly he would have changed places with the sick boy, had such a thing been possible.

Nearly all the Form were assembled in the general-room, anxious to hear the verdict. Macalpine's solemn face elongated to an even greater extent as Noble joined the group.

"What news, laddie?" he hoarsely whispered.

"Bad! Worse than ever! Temperature a hundred and six, and still going up. Delirious, too. There will be a change about midday—for better or worse."

They heard the dread news without comment, then began to slowly file away to where the rest of the school were assembling for prayers.

Jack Noble did not immediately follow. He sank into the nearest chair, resting his head on his hands as he stared blankly across at a map on the opposite wall.

What a thoughtless, neglectful, inconsiderate cad he had been! He thought of the day when Numley and he had set out together for Pelham; how, at the station, Mrs. Numley had wildly clung to her boy, then drawn him—Noble—on one side, making him promise to make things as easy as he could for Jimmy. And this was how he had kept that promise!

True, Jimmy had turned out an aggravating little beggar, always preferring to grub amongst such idiotic things as birds' eggs, butterflies, plants, beetles, and such-like useless things, instead of frequenting the gym., running with the harriers, or playing footer.

He thought, with a shudder, of the one miserable half he had spent when, mindful of his promise, he had sought out Numley; of the hours they had spent meandering about the country lanes collecting the filthy things Numley called "specimens," winding up the wasted afternoon by poring over a rotten old draught-board.

A tap on the shoulder aroused Noble from his meditations. It was Lecky.

"Well, Noble?"

"That you, Lecky?"

"Don't say he's worse, Noble!"

Noble nodded.

"Much worse!" he groaned. "Nearly a goner! Temperature going up with leaps and bounds. Change expected about midday."

Lecky moaned.

"If I could have only guessed," he cried, "I wouldn't have put him in the team!"

THE 5th CHAPTER.

All's Well That Ends Well.

WATCHFUL eyes were on the outlook when the doctor's carriage drew up in front of Pelham, and watchful eyes followed the medical man's form as he disappeared within the school. An hour or more must elapse before they could hope to hear of the result of the change that was expected to take place in the invalid's condition.

Snark, the porter, had promised to bring them the news as soon as it was known. Very few lessons had been got through that morning. After breakfast the Head had disappeared.

After one or two vain attempts to keep up the usual routine, the Third had been dismissed to the recreation-ground, where they now were, one half of them standing in a group, the other half making feeble attempts to punt an old footer about.

In the group were Jack Noble, Macalpine, Lawson minor, and Bob Russell, to be joined later on by Lecky, the burly school captain.

"It's worse than waiting your turn at the dentist's!" exclaimed Mac, with a wry face. "Anything would be better than this for filling the time in. Shall we go into the gym. for an hour, or form sides, and have a game of footer?"

But no one seemed willing to agree to either proposal.

Jack Noble's face had brightened a little since early morning. He was feeling more cheerful. The latest bulletin showed that the patient's temperature, though still very high, had remained unaltered for some hours.

There was every hope when the change did take place it would be for the better. But, as Mac had remarked, the ordeal of waiting was fearful.

There was a wild rush when Snark at last appeared. There was no need to ask if the change had taken place, and if it was satisfactory. The porter's face was just one broad beam.

"The doctor says he will do now," he announced, when he could make himself heard. "The danger's all over. In a week or two he'll be as well as ever. I'm to tell you, young gentlemen, there's to be no noise near the school for the next few days."

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Good old Snarky!"

Snark found himself hugged with as much gratitude as if he himself had been instrumental in bringing about the change for the better. He good-humouredly shook himself free of the clutching arms, and went back to resume his duties.

"Now," cried Noble determinedly, when the tumult had lessened. "I want to know who was responsible for the rotten jape of putting Jimmy in the team, and what he had done to deserve it? If I had thought more seriously about it at the time, I might have guessed there was something in the wind."

Mac, Russell, & Co. were expecting this question. They could see by Noble's face that he suspected they knew a great deal about the affair. It was Lecky who stepped forward and told the reason. He felt it was his duty.

"I must confess, Noble, that I am principally to blame. I allowed myself to be persuaded into putting his name on the list. None of us ever guessed there would be such a serious ending to the affair. We have all made up our minds we will make it right with Numley when he is better. We—we wanted to teach him a lesson!"

"Teach him a lesson! What had the poor, harmless chap done?"

"Let Jack see that piece of paper, Russell."

Noble took the fragment of notepaper which Bob silently extended, quickly reading the few words it contained. When he had finished the perusal he tore the paper into tiny fragments, glaring his indignation at the abashed coterie.

"So that was the reason, eh? If you knew Jimmy's mater as well as I do you would understand that letter better. It was a mean trick to read it. One of the best old ladies that ever lived! They are as poor as church mice since his father died; and how she contrives to keep Jimmy here is a mystery, only she is bent upon giving him a first-class education. She worships the very ground he treads upon, and doesn't see him with our eyes. Of course, she took the J. N. the mag. mentions to be her Jimmy. What mater wouldn't have made the same mistake? You might have guessed the mag. had been sent to her with that intention."

"It was a rotten thing to do, anyway, laddie!" muttered Macalpine. "Why did he send the mag. along at all if he did not wish to claim another chap's honours?"

"He didn't send it! You chuckle-headed, short-sighted, miserable lot of rotters, if you must know, I sent it!"

And, with his head held very high, the usually pacific Noble strode away, leaving his bewildered chums and Lecky, the good-natured captain of Pelham, to digest this piece of news as best they could.

Certainly Lecky never felt more uncomfortable in all his life.

THE END.

(Another splendid Jack Noble yarn next week. See the Boys' Realm Football Library for a Grand Long Complete Tale of Pelham School. Now on Sale.)

THE PRIDE OF PLACE.

Which is the Most Important Man in a Team?

By WALTER WHITTAKER, Clapton Orient's Famous Goalkeeper.

WHICH is the most important man in a football team?

This question is being discussed constantly by the hundreds upon hundreds of youths who are members of football clubs.

Of course, being a goalkeeper myself, it is only natural that in answering the question I should plump solid for the man between the posts.

But, in case there should be some who do not agree with me, I had better set about producing arguments in support of my contention.

First, then, the goalkeeper is a man who has to act solely on his own initiative. He must be born, and not made. All the training in the world will not make a man a brilliant custodian unless he has a natural aptitude for it.

In the forward line success depends upon combination. Frequently, of course, a man acts "on his own," but, speaking broadly, suc-

cess rests upon the dovetailing of one man's work with another.

Suppose a forward, a half-back, or even a back makes a serious error of judgment, in an instant it is forgotten. But let a goalkeeper be faced with a sprightly forward careering down the field at a breakneck pace!

The forward, we will say, obtains possession of the ball near the halfway line. Tackled by the opposing forward, he tricks him easily, and encounters a half-back, who meets a similar fate. Then comes the back, who also falls before that electric rush, and only the goalkeeper intervenes between the flying forward and success. The whole match may depend upon the custodian's coolness and courage. If he fails, woe betide him!

If any other member of the team makes a mistake, it can be rectified, or covered up; but not so in the case of the goalkeeper. One slip, and all is over.

A successful goalkeeper must be without

nerves. His resources must be without limit; and I think I am justified in saying that he must be more brainy than his colleagues. He must be full of pluck, and often he has to rush into danger where a forward would fear to tread.

When people see a goalkeeper walking up and down the goal-line with folded arms, play being at the other end of the field, they are apt to make remarks about "a soft job," and think he is the least-worked individual in the team.

But in an instant the venue of play is changed. The opposition side rushes down the field, and the custodian is the centre of a whirl of activity and danger.

A goalkeeper, however, has the chance to cover himself with glory such, perhaps, as falls to the lot of no other player on the side. He has fine opportunities for initiation. He can devise original methods and moves, which, if successful, win him more praise than would fall to the lot of a forward, back, or half-back.

He can clear similar shots in different ways, just like a bowler at cricket can change his methods. His hands are as important as his feet, and the very fact that the laws of the game allow him to use his hands adds to his responsibility.

Looking at the game in front of him, the goalkeeper should be quick to notice any infringement of the laws by the opposing team. He must keep his temper under the most trying circumstances.

The general idea of the spectator is that a man who takes a penalty-kick and the man whose duty it is to try and stop it share the feeling of responsibility equally. This is not so. If the shot fails to score, the crowd sympathise with the man who has taken it; but they seldom show this feeling towards the conquered custodian as the ball, like greased lightning, flashes past him into the net. Only men who have had to stand in front of penalties know what penalty-kicks are. They cannot be described properly.

The custodian is the recipient of more criticism than any other man in the team. He usually receives less commendation, for if he plays a brilliant game, he has simply done his duty, and if he plays badly, he is getting old, going off, or "ought to be pensioned"; and if he is beaten by shots that no man on earth could stop, he has "thrown the game away."

Poor goalkeeper! His worth will never be appreciated.

Take my word for it.

WALTER WHITTAKER.

"The Pelham Pageant," A Laughable Long, Complete Jack Noble Story.

See the "B.R." Football Library. Now on Sale—1d.