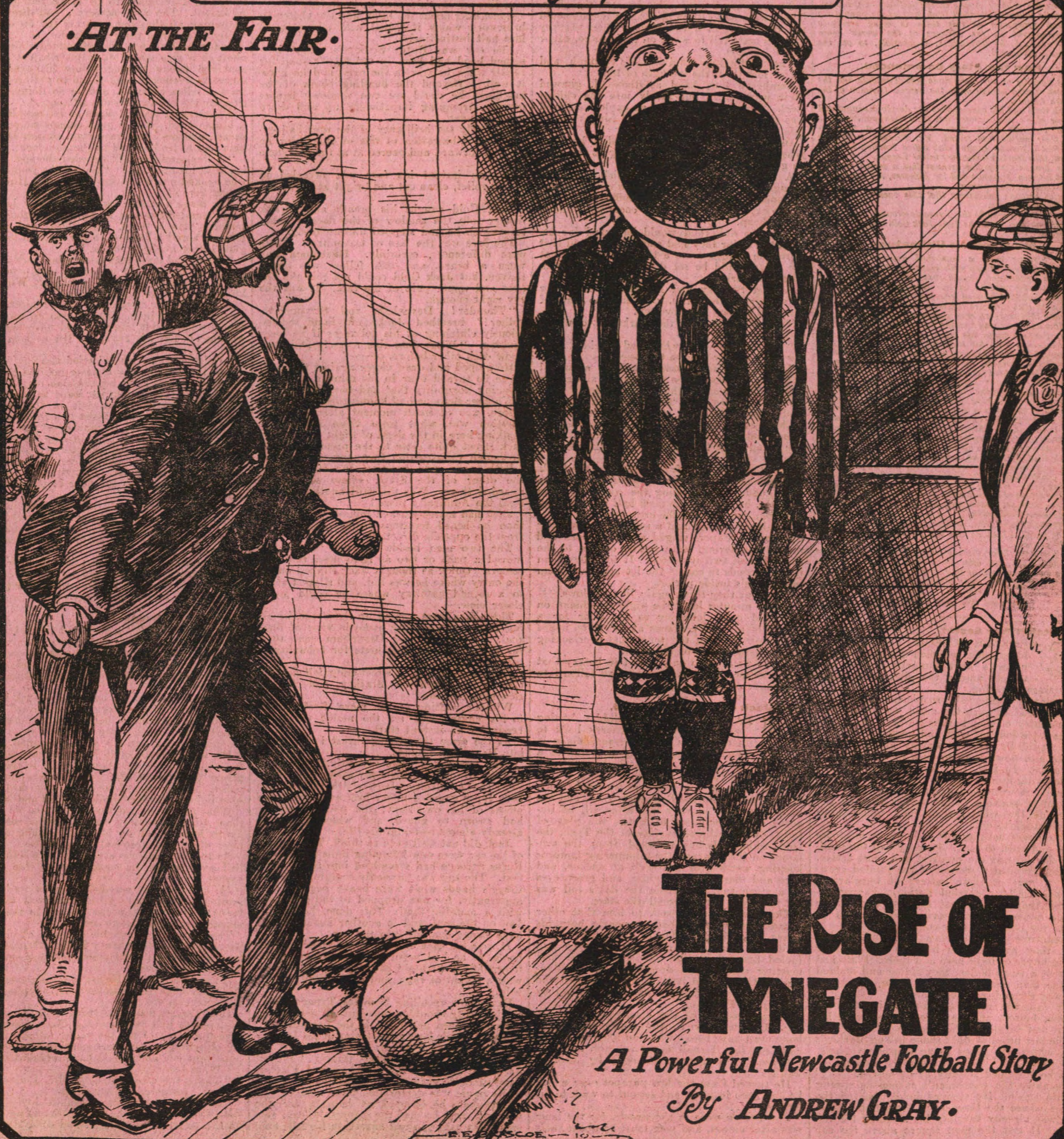


All About Our Great Cricket League. (See Page 730.)

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The Great Saturday Sports Journal

AT THE FAIR.



THE RISE OF TYNEGATE

A Powerful Newcastle Football Story

By ANDREW GRAY.

A BATTLE ROYAL.

A Rollicking Long, Complete Tale of Jack Noble and Pelham School.



Giles stumbled over Trimble's prostrate form, and his followers in turn being upset, piled themselves upon him with crushing force.

THE 1st CHAPTER.

A Rest by the Way—The Enemy Appears.

"T'S not a bit of use us killing ourselves!" groaned Jack Noble, as he wearily wiped away the perspiration trickling down his face. "Nothing but a motor or an aeroplane would get us back to the school before lock-up. It's chiefly your fault, Trimble! If I had a watch like that of yours, I'd—I'd sell the blessed thing for scrap-iron!"

"Would you?" grunted Tubby Trimble, who was in an even more melting condition due to his stoutness. "I dare say you would if you had—but you haven't. You can't blame my lever altogether, either. If you two only knew when you have had enough, and hadn't made such—er—gluttons of yourselves with old Bilberry's apples, we'd have been back long since!"

When there was nothing to excite him, Percy Trimble—Tubby—drawled out his words with aggravating slowness.

Jack Noble glared indignantly at the stout one.

"I like that!" he exclaimed. "Just listen to the old boulder, Mac"—to their other chum Macalpine Macalpine, who lay on his back fanning himself. "Did you ever hear anything so cool? Who was it persuaded us to go out of bounds after 'em in the first place? Why, you old rotter"—throwing a clump of soil at the exhausted Tubby—"if we hadn't waited for you we'd have been in heaps of time!"

"You've gorged yourself to the bursting-point, and got no more action left than a playful rhinoceros. Our fault"—with rising anger—"our fault for saddling ourselves to a slow-going, duck-footed, puffing grampus! We—we could have done the journey quicker running backwards! I tell you what it is, Tubby, my son; you're a blessed hog, nothing less! You've fattened yourself to such a disgraceful extent that the bottom of your waistcoat is beginning to look like the line of the equator drawn across a globe. You amble along like a blessed elephant with a corn, besides—"

But Tubby could stand no more. He cut short the tirade by hurling himself bodily on his chum. The force of the impact sent Jack Noble sprawling.

"Oh, oh, oh!" he yelled. "G-get o-off m-my t-tummy, you m-mammoth!"

Tubby Trimble paid no heed to these cries. "I'll scrag you, Noble!" he puffed. "I'll give you calling me beastly names!"

"Do keep quiet, laddies!" sighed Macalpine. "it makes me verra hot to look at ye floundering about! Suppose you sit still and allow your gigantic intellect to dwell on a subject of more importance. It's time we arranged what we are going to do. We are a good three miles from Pelham, and in less than half an hour the lock-up bell will be ringing."

"In for a penny, in for a pound," said Jack Noble, as Trimble ceased hostilities and allowed him to rise. "We'll catch it now

however we hurry, so we might as well rest here a little longer."

The three chums were in the middle of a long stretch of undulating country. Their exhausted state was partly due to the excessive heat, partly to the rapid progress they had made in endeavouring to get back to Pelham before lock-up.

Billy Brown, the promising offspring of Mother Brown, who kept a tuckshop in Pelham town, had made their mouths water with his descriptions of an orchard owned by an old gentleman named Bilberry; plums that melted in the mouth, apples and pears that were crying out to be eaten, and the result of Billy's descriptive powers was that the trio could not rest until they had sampled for themselves this forbidden fruit.

Unfortunately, the owner of the orchard did not appear to share their ideas about all fruit being common property; in the heated discussion that arose, when he accidentally came across them, they had come off second best, and the marks of his displeasure had been left on their bodies. However, as this meeting had not taken place until they had surfeited themselves, they did not very much mind.

What they most feared was that the old gentleman had recognised them, and the news of their depredatory excursion would reach the ears of Dr. Hillingford, head-master of Pelham.

"Our best plan, laddies, will be to cut through Charbury," said Fighting Mac, when they were quite rested. "We can go through the Gap, cut along High Street, then slink along the footpath. It's quite half a mile nearer that way."

"And fall into the hands of Ned Giles and his gang!" said Jack Noble scornfully. "Not for this chicken! I've had enough rough handling for one day, and there's bound to be a bit of stick at the end of this outing as it is. Old Bilberry has left me jolly sore, I can tell you, and this fat buffer"—pointing to Tubby—"has added his mite. There'll be none of me left if the Head happens to be in a bad temper."

"Oh, don't be so dashed funky!" exclaimed Macalpine irritably. The heat, and the forcible attentions of Bilberry combined, had made all three rather short-tempered.

"I'm not funking!"—indignantly. "I'm no more frightened of Ned and his lot than you are, only I don't feel exactly fit to meet 'em just now."

"We can run."

"So can they"—drily. "Faster than we can in our present state. Don't forget we've got this old slow-coach with us!"

"Run, and be hanged to you!" Tubby snorted. "I don't want you to wait for me. If we do drop across Ned I'll be able to give as good account of myself as either of you!"

"Of course you will, old chap!" Jack Noble said soothingly. "What I really meant was

that our only chance of getting through Charbury safe is by keeping close together. Come along—let's risk it. I expect Ned and his followers will all be busy at work. What do you say?"

"All right, I'm willing!" cried Tubby; and Noble rose to his feet also, grumbling a little. "My shirt feels like a wet rag," he groaned. "I've no more go in me than an Aunt Sally! I'm jolly sorry we ever allowed Billy's yarns to tempt us to go out of bounds."

"The apples were all right!" chuckled Trimble, his mouth watering at the recollection of the feast they had had. "I'd stand one of old Bilberry's thrashings any day to have another go at 'em!"

"Of course, you would!"—disgustedly. "You're so jolly well cushioned with fat that his stick didn't bite into you like it did into me. I'm absolutely black and blue!"

"So am I, laddie," retorted Macalpine; "only I'm not whining. Tubby got more than either—he couldn't be missed. Let's stop quarrelling, my sons, and get a move on!"

Pelham was a typical country town. Excepting on fair days, which happened once a month, the inhabitants seemed to dwell under the influence of a lethargic spell. The Gap mentioned by Macalpine was a narrow road that led from the open country into High Street.

As the boys entered this last main thoroughfare there was scarcely a soul about.

The shopkeepers, with whom trade was never brisk—unless on fair days—were more or less indoors, nodding behind their counters as they waited for the customers that never seemed to come.

The Ned Giles and his gang that the three appeared so reluctant to meet were employed at these establishments. Between these worthies and the boys of Pelham a deadly feud existed. When a meeting did take place, and the number of each side were about even, a noble battle usually took place, in which to be defeated was not to be disgraced.

But the town boys lacked the finer instincts of the schoolboys. It was their chief delight to come across a few of the latter, and, exulting in their superior numbers, roughly handle them. Many were the blackened eyes and gory noses the Pelhamites had received in these unfair encounters; and although when not unevenly matched they managed to give a good account of themselves, the town boys' victories outnumbered theirs.

Lately no meeting of note had taken place. The town boys were lying low.

As Jack Noble, Trimble, and Macalpine raced along High Street, they could see no sign of the enemy. They passed through the little town without having caught even a glimpse of Ned, or a single member of his numerous followers, and it was with a sigh of relief that they arrived at the graveyard.

From there their way lay through the quiet country lanes.

"Thank goodness!" panted Jack Noble, pausing to rest on a milestone. "I'm too jolly well fagged out to raise a hand even had we met the bounders!"

His two chums were in pretty much the same condition.

"My foot!" moaned Trimble, who had been limping. "I do believe old Bilberry's smashed my ankle!"

"Shush, laddie!" cautioned Macalpine.

The wall by which they had paused bordered the graveyard. On the other side of it lay buried the remains of dead and gone Pelhamites. Years ago every available yard had been filled up, and another graveyard had been opened at the opposite end of the town. The younger generation had turned the old place into a playground, racing about over the stones under which the bones of their ancestors rested.

"Shush!" said Macalpine once more, intently listening to some sounds that came from over the wall.

"Ned Giles!" gasped Noble, turning to flee. "Keep quiet, ye idiot!" hissed Fighting Mac. "D'ye want them on top of us? Do as I do—stoop, and run along by the wall!"

Silently they obeyed.

Bang! A ball struck the top of the wall, bounding off into the roadway. There was a series of loud whoops, and then a number of faces looked over. For a moment the owners of these were lost in astonishment at the unlooked-for discovery they had made, then, with yells of delight, began to clamber down.

"Run!" yelled Macalpine. "Run as you have never run before! Get a move on, Tubby; there's thousands of 'em!"

Alarm made Fighting Mac make use of this exaggeration, but at least ten of the town boys, headed by their redoubtable champion, came clattering down the road after the three chums. Had they been in better condition the result of the race would have soon been decided. The town boys were more clumsily shod, and had not had the same practise in running as the Pelhamites. But the trio were already tired out, and made but a poor show.

Jack Noble and Macalpine, both good runners, might easily have outdistanced their buccolic pursuers, had they cared to leave their chum; but the latter, his flesh now a weight of woe, struggled on with little hope of escape, the perspiration running down his fat cheeks.

With elbows dug deeply into his sides, he floundered along, not daring to glance behind. His two chums kept by his side, assisting him as much as they were able.

"Buck up!" urged Macalpine, who kept look-

ing over his shoulder. "Put a spurt on, Tubby! We'll do it yet!"

"Can't! Winded! Ready to drop!" gasped poor Tubby. "Can hardly move a peg!"

"Do the best you can, anyway!" panted Noble, from the other side. "If we let 'em overtake us there'll be a massacre! Pick 'em up!"—angrily, as Trimble nearly stumbled on to his nose. "Pick 'em up, and take longer strides."

Tubby Trimble grunted, and tried to carry out these instructions.

"Look out!" Noble suddenly yelled.

The warning came too late.

With a triumphant yell the leader of the townies gave Trimble a blow that toppled the fat one on to his face. But, thanks to gym training, Trimble knew how to fall, which was more than Ned Giles did. Unable to check himself in time, that worthy found himself tripped up by the foot Tubby quickly thrust out as he rolled aside.

His followers, running in a bunch at his elbow, were in turn upset, and Giles found himself nearly smothered as they piled themselves upon him.

THE 2nd CHAPTER.

The Battle of Charbury—Lecky to the Rescue.

"BACK to back!" Noble cried, as cheerily as he could. "Whatever you do, don't let the bounders separate us! Form a triangle!"

Former experience of these meetings with the townies had taught them the wisdom of keeping well together. Once they allowed themselves to be scattered, the superior numbers of their opponents invariably brought about defeat. So often had this occurred, that the boys of Pelham had lately taken to practising tactics that would assist them to resist attack when taken by surprise by overwhelming numbers, as in the present case.

The townies were soon on their feet again, and eager for battle.

"Look here, you chaps!" called out Noble. "Are you going to fight fair this time? No stone slinging, and no sticks. We'll willingly take the lot of you on if you'll play the game cleanly."

He spoke more for the purpose of giving Trimble time to get his wind than with any other hope.

Giles, whose favourite fiction was impossible yarns of the Wild West, and whose one ambition was to emulate the sayings and doings of his pet, lawless heroes, made no direct reply.

He came tearing towards the dauntless trio with his long arms swinging like the sails of a windmill, his knock-kneed legs describing absurd capers.

"I'm the terror of these parts!" he shrieked, imitating the ways of Outlaw Dan, his model. "I'm the whoopin', howlin', rampagin' champion of Pelham, I am! I'll eat anyone that gets in my way! Where's my six-shooter?"

"I haven't got a six-shooter, either," muttered Noble, made savage by the prospect of more rough handling; "but I've got a handy bundle of fives I'll let you have, you howling ass!"

Giles gave another blood-curdling whoop as he pranced around the little group, his followers looking on admiringly, ready to charge at his command.

"I'm the untamed king of the prairies!" he yelled. "The deadliest, dandiest, snortin' prancer you'll find in a day's march. Sing small, or I'll swallow you, boots an' all!"

"So'm I, my son!" drily remarked Trimble, now recovered, as he let fly with his left. When exasperated, Tubby's blows were like kicks from a mule, and the would-be imitator of Outlaw Dan bit the dust, after the fashion approved of in the books Giles revelled in.

This was the signal for a general opening to the hostilities.

"Close up! Close up!" cried Noble, as the townies, enraged at their leader's downfall, made a wild charge.

Giles was on his feet again instantly, a crimson stream flowing from his nasal organ; but he headed the attack pluckily enough, and made straight for Tubby Trimble.

"I'm the handiest, bulliest, spryest scrapper on this circuit!" he yelled, as he dashed forward.

"You're a rotter!" shouted Tubby, who was beginning to feel in his element. "Want some more, do you, my son? Don't knock, come straight in; you're welcome!"

Thanks to their athletic training, the three chums were well versed in boxing. The town boys, lacking this advantage, charged blindly, striking out at random.

"How's that, umpire?" Noble called out, as his right caught the ambitious assistant to an ironmonger squarely on the chin.

"Same verdict as this, laddie!" grinned Macalpine, sending a butcher's apprentice sprawling.

Trimble met the impetuous charge of the enraged Giles with not quite the same success.

Maddened by the blow he had received, the townies' leader had been transformed into something approaching a likeness to the character he so much admired. Unmindful of the heavy blows Tubby rained on him, he dashed into the fray with a violence that was irresistible. The fat one went down with a thud, nearly carrying his two chums with him. But Tubby on the ground was nearly as dead as Tubby on his feet.

As he fell, he twisted himself round with surprising agility, considering his bulk, and his hands flew out to the pair of ankles so enticingly near. Before he had time to save himself, the rampaging, snorting champion of Charbury,

found himself elevated in the air, carrying confusion into the ranks of his followers as he was hurled backwards amongst them. What few managed to keep their feet drew back hurriedly. "Hurrah!" howled Tubby Trimble, scrambling up to resume his place at the corner of the triangle. "The dandiest, deadliest snorter has snorted in vain this time."

"Bully boy!" breathed Noble in his ear. "I take back all I said about the slowness of your movements, old chappy. A few more little efforts like that, and victory is ours."

"Look out, laddies!" exclaimed Fighting Mac. "Here's more of 'em coming!" From his position he had caught sight of a few more townies rushing towards them, evidently anxious to take part in the scrimmage.

"Let 'em all come!" chuckled Trimble, in no wise dismayed.

"That will make about five to one!" muttered Noble. "Our case seems pretty hopeless! If only some of our chaps would turn up!"

The other two echoed his wish, but prepared to do the best they could, their former fatigue all forgotten in the present excitement.

"If it wasn't quite so jolly hot, I could give a better account of myself," Tubby murmured. "There's rivulets and miniature cascades of perspiration trickling down between my back and my most intimate garment. I wonder what they're keeping off for? They— No, you don't, my son!"

Once again his powerful right flew out, and the courageous butcher's apprentice, who thought he had seen an opening, retired, nursing his cheek.

"Serve you right!" gasped out Giles, who had been busy licking his scattered forces into shape. "Shouldn't charge till I give the word. I'm leader here. I'm the flyest, sprucest—"

"Rats!" yelled Tubby. "Don't go over all that bally rot again. If you mean business, come on, and don't keep us waiting. You shouldn't want much preparation when you are five to one!"

The new arrivals had come up, and arranged themselves by the side of Giles.

"Tell you what," he continued, "if you are absolutely bursting for a scrim, let the rest stand back, and I'll tackle any two of you—Giles and Bamford, if you like."

The leader of the townies hesitated as he looked at his lieutenant, who was still nursing his cheek. The opportunity to give a personal exhibition of his prowess was a tempting one; but at that moment his badly-smitten nose gave a painful twinge that reminded him of the weight of the stout one's blows, and the chance seemed less alluring.

"No!" he growled, as he applied an already soaked handkerchief to the swollen member. "We're all in this. We're going to knock all the snobbery out of you chaps for good, and then send word to the school that they can come and collect the pieces. Get ready, there! When I give the word, 'Charge!'"

"Steady, laddies!" breathed Macalpine. "It looks as if we were going to meet our Waterloo. Keep your end up, Tubby, whatever you do!"

Tubby's reply was an undistinguishable rumble as he squared his elbows.

Noble said nothing. He glared defiantly at the contingent immediately facing him, his teeth set in grim determination.

Giles surveyed the little group with gloating eyes. He was not nearly so brave as he would like others to think, and this was going to be a victory after his own heart, complete, and with small need of personal risk—a smashing-up that would make the Pelhamites tremble at his name for all time.

"Charge!" he roared, as he sprang forward. "I'm the screechin', howlin'—" he began; but got no further.

Fighting Mac silenced his braggardism with a blow that made all his teeth rattle, followed by another on the shoulder that made him stagger.

"Scrag 'em—scrag 'em!" he shrieked, falling back on the words that came handiest. "Give 'em beans, boys!"

He tried to charge Macalpine with his head, but a quick under-cut sent him once more flying backwards.

"We can do a bit of bragging, too, laddie!" panted Mac, as he warded off an unwieldy blow from another townie with the point of his elbow. "Biff, you elephant!" And once more his fist shot out.

Noble was the only silent one of the surging, yelling crowd. His lips were compressed, and his blue eyes were gleaming. Blows fell on his sturdy figure with as much effect as if directed against a wall. One of his eyes was nearly closed, and the other was blinking in sympathy, but he uttered no word, plying his right and left with equal rapidity.

Tubby Trimble, upon whom the heat was telling dreadfully, did his best to follow this noble example, grunting and puffing as he resisted the townies' attempts to separate them.

Once more Giles was obliged to call off his gang. They willingly backed out of reach of the formidable fists, eyeing the trio with fast-growing respect.

Trimble gave a huge sigh of relief at this respite.

"Whew!" he ejaculated, as he wiped his brow with his sleeve. "Another half a tick, and I would have gone under. The silly asses didn't guess how near to victory they were. I'm positively melting into the ground!"

"You certainly feel pretty warm, my mannie!" laughed Macalpine, not daring to turn around. "It's like fighting with your back against a furnace. If it were only a little foggy we could easily escape unnoticed in the steam that would arise. All right, Jack?"

"All! Doing very nicely!" was the reply.

"If this peeper of mine will only last out we'll win yet. One is totally obscured, and there's a partial eclipse over the other. Did you chaps hear the lock-up bell in the distance just now?"

"I did!" Mac groaned. "This is going to be a red-letter day with us."

"I don't care what takes place after if we can only smash up this crowd!" growled Trimble. "We've one little bit of comfort—the Head isn't a bad sort. When he sees the state we're in, he's sure to defer his part of the programme for a day or so. What are they doing now, Mac?"

The townies were clustered in a group fronting Mac, but just out of earshot.

"Dunno. Holding a council of war, I fancy. I wonder if we could make a dash for it?"

"Couldn't run ten yards," was Trimble's groaning reply. "Old Bilberry's jolly near broke my ankle with his dashed ash-plant, and it's dreadfully painful. If we do get out of this, you chaps will have to carry me on a hurdle—if there's any of me left to carry."

"Ware! I fancy they're going to renew the attack!"

"Right-ho, Mac! I'll do my best."

"I'm ready," added Noble.

Giles advanced towards Fighting Mac.

"Look here," he called out, "if you chaps are willing to give in, and own yourselves defeated, we'll let you go with a kick a-piece all round. We'll have to be gettin' back to the shops, and can't waste any more time with you."

Tubby gave a roar as he faced round.

"How generous!" he sneered. "Why, you would-be rampaging, snorting, unutterable, blithering ass, we haven't been anywhere near defeat up to now. Who's talking about caving in? If there's any kicking going to be done, it isn't our persons that will suffer. You may be five to one, but you're a thousand miles off victory. You've had it all your own way too often, my son!"

Giles writhed under the taunt. He glared at the stout one, almost choking with rage.

"All right!" he snarled. "You've had your chance; you won't get another."

"Have we asked for one, you cuckoo? Your particular complaint is swelled head, my son; and the most efficacious remedy is a thick ear. Are you coming? Or shall we come to you? We're ready, aren't we boys?"

"Ay, ay!" answered his chums.

They began to feel anxious to learn what new tactics the townies had decided to employ, but were not long left in ignorance.

Giles and his followers were just fourteen in number, and advanced this time in something like order. Four faced Trimble, five Noble, the remaining five, with Giles at their head, made for Fighting Mac.

The latter regarded this new order of attack with concern. Whilst the townies had been content to charge in one jumbled-up mass they had had a far better chance of beating them off; in the new order, if they could keep it, that chance was considerably lessened.

"Keep your feet!" Noble hissed. "If one goes down we all go!"

This warning was needed.

From the three sides at once the townies charged with a force that could not be repulsed. Tubby Trimble, who by this time was limping badly, went down immediately, and in the wild scramble that took place on the ground was soon separated from his chums.

Giles's followers, howling with glee, now repaid him with interest for all he made them suffer earlier on. Blows fell thick and fast on his bulky person, and, although he so far departed from his former honourable methods to use his feet, they kept him pinned down. Two sat on his chest, the other two clinging to his extremities.

"G-give i-in, c-confound y-you!" he gasped. "G-get off! Y-you're s-smashing the l-life out of m-me!"

They answered with exultant yells as they jerked themselves up and down on his yielding masses of flesh.

"O-oh! O-oh!" he moaned as he despairingly closed his eyes.

In the meantime the tide of battle had turned against the other two also.

Noble, scarcely able to see, fought with bravery like that of one-eyed Horatius, whom Macauley has made immortal, but without that ancient hero's success. One by one his opponents fell beneath the shower of well-directed blows; but as there was no friendly Tiber in his case to carry away their bodies, they were soon on their feet again renewing the attack.

Macalpine also found himself too heavily handicapped. Five to one are tremendous odds, however adept that one may be in the art of self-defence.

What the townies lacked in science they made up for in other ways; and at last a nasty kick on the shins toppled Mac over. And at that moment Noble also succumbed.

The fight was over; the townies were the victors.

Giles could hardly restrain himself for joy. He danced about in a circle, waving his arms.

"I'm the spryest, deadliest rooster on this perch!" he yelled. "What shall I do now, boys?"

"Wipe your nose—it wants it!" rudely interrupted Noble as he lay beneath his captors.

"I'll wipe yours with my fist in a minnit!"

"Do it!"—defiantly. "That's about your mark—hitting a man when he's down! Shut up!"—angrily to Trimble, who was still groaning. "They'll think you're whining!"

"C-can't! T-these c-cads—k-killing me! L-let's c-cave in and t-take our m-medicine."

"Get off him!" commanded Giles.

Trimble's captors obeyed, much to his relief. "Shall we duck 'em in the pond?" suggested Bamford, Giles's lieutenant.

"Let's tickle 'em with switches first!" cried another, who looked out on the world with even less range of vision than Jack Noble.

A cheer greeted this last proposal; and, Giles having magnanimously given his consent, half of them instantly made for the hedgerow to cut the necessary ticklers.

"Stand 'em up!" he called out.

And the three were made to stand upright.

Giles chuckled as he looked at them.

"You ought to be used to the stick," he grinned; "but what old Hillingford gives you will be a fool to what this is going to be."

"We're not going to whine, whatever you do!" Noble answered stoutly.

"Aren't you? We'll soon alter that tune!"

"You're a pack of unwashed, uncivilised hooligans!" roared Tubby, nearly maddened by the pain from his ankle. "We'll pay you back for this if we have to raid the town. You're a set of flat-footed, hobnailed chaw-bacons!"

Giles cut short these insults with a blow from his switch.

"Shut up, you baboon!" he howled, repeating the blow.

Trimble clenched his teeth, resolved not to cry out.

"That's a taste of what's coming," said Giles, with a laugh.

He now proceeded to arrange his much-damaged followers in two lines, between which he intended to make the three run. Sundry pieces of cord had been unearthed, and, with the help of these and numerous handkerchiefs, the three Pelhamites had been so secured that they could struggle no longer.

"This is rippin'!" chuckled Giles, when all was ready. "We are going to do what the redskins tried to do to Outlaw Dan—make you run the gauntlet; only he had the cowboys to rescue him."

At that moment the warning chime of a bell came from the direction of the town as a cyclist rode towards the group at racing speed.

As the three captives caught sight of this grey-clad figure they gave a yell of delight.

"Lecky!" they called out together.

It was undoubtedly the burly captain of Pelham that was tearing towards them. His splendidly developed figure looked to advantage in the close-fitting cycling-costume he was wearing, and he looked the ideal athlete as he sprang lightly from his machine.

With the doctor's sanction he had been away for a few days, visiting his father at a neighbouring seaport. Owing to the scarcity of convenient trains he had taken his new Raleigh to cover the thirty miles that lay between Pelham and his destination, and was now returning.

Although he had not been less than two hours on the road, he looked as fresh as a daisy, his handsome face expressing great astonishment as he saw the plight his chums were in.

"Hallo!" he cried. "Is this a rehearsal for a bioscope, or what? Who are these chaps, Noble?"

"Townies!" quickly answered Jack. "A set of ruffianly cads who have managed to get the better of us after a terrible mill. Nearly five to one, Lecky."

"So I see!"—grimly. "And a promising lot of blackguards they look! Why, the beggars have got you tied up, too!"

"I'm a jelly!" groaned Trimble. "I'm one huge boil!"

"The marks of the conflict seem pretty equally distributed," smiled Lecky, as he surveyed the battered appearance of his chums, then looked at Giles and his tatterdemalion followers.

Here Giles, recovering from his surprise, pushed himself forward.

"We want none of your cheek!" he blustered. "You're just in time to see the wind up of a very nice little friendly entertainment. You're the chap they spout so much about over there, I suppose?"—with a wave of his hand towards the school.

"I certainly do belong to Pelham at present."

"Then you can go back and tell 'em this lot is followin'—in pieces. We're not going to be done out of our little bit of fun after earning it, whoever you may be!"

Lecky made no reply. He was busy calculating the odds against him. Although they bore the marks of the terrific encounter they had taken part in, the townies still looked a formidable crew to tackle single-handed. If he could only set Noble at liberty!

"So this is your Charbury idea of fair play, is it?" he said, speaking scornfully, with the intention of making Giles lose his temper. "Nearly five to one! You're a pretty brave crowd, I must say!"

"Oh, chuck it!" Giles angrily growled. "We didn't ask you to interfere; so clear out before you are made!"

He raised his switch as he spoke; and this was the movement Lecky was waiting for.

The latter was tremendously powerful. In the gym he could raise the 120lb. barbell above his head with ease.

Therefore, when he clutched hold of the hand held threateningly towards him, and gave Giles a sudden jerk, that worthy flew back as if projected from a catapult, carrying disaster with him. One entire row of his followers went down like so many ninespins.

Like a flash Lecky had whipped out his pen-knife and set Noble free, handing him the knife.

"I can manage to hold these beggars back!"

he cheerily called out as he planted himself in the way of the infuriated mob that rushed forward. "Cut Trimble and Mac free, Noble."

The wild charge that was made towards him failed to upset his well-balanced figure. With his feet firmly planted at right angles he delivered his blows with the precision and force of a steam-hammer, every one falling with telling effect.

"Oh! Oh!" yelled Giles's lieutenant as he fell back again. "I'm done for!"

Giles himself was the next to retire, which he did very suddenly, sitting down and looking about him with a bewildered air.

"I'm the dandiest, deadliest—" he began to mumble; then ended with a howl of pain.

His third in command, with gory nose, came hurtling through the air, falling upon him with such force that what little sense he still had was quite knocked out of him.

By this time Trimble and Noble were once more putting in all they knew—getting their own back, as Trimble said.

For a few moments only the townies withstood the terrible punishment the four were inflicting upon them, then turned and fled, leaving their leader and his lieutenant in the hands of the enemy.

So badly were they thrashed that more than one respectable tradesman found himself obliged to carry out his own wares on the following day.

Lecky roared with laughter at the queer figure Trimble cut as he hopped along in the rear of the retreating townies, still dealing out justice.

"Come back! Come back!" he called out. "Let 'em go!"

Trimble obeyed, but not without a few regretful glances behind him.

"Been rubbing it in!" he chuckled as he examined his bruised knuckles. "What shall we do with 'em, Lecky?"—pointing to the discomfited Giles and his second-in-command.

"Just exactly what they intended to do to us," savagely interrupted Noble. "Switch 'em, then throw 'em in the pond!"

The two grew rather white as they heard this unpleasant suggestion.

Tubby Trimble pointed a scornful finger at Giles.

"Look at the rampaging, snorting, untamable champion of Pelham!" he cried. "Why aren't you prancing round now, you ass? You'll be a howling, whimpering, blubbering baby when I've got my wind back, my son!"—to Bamford, who was openly weeping. "They don't blub in the penny dreadfuls, do they, Giles?"

That vanquished hero made a great effort to look unconcerned.

"Shut up!" he roughly called out to his companion in misfortune. "Don't let 'em think we're cowards!"

But his own attempt at bravado was a lamentable failure. He was still a little bewildered from the fall he had had, and for the time being really believed he was taking part in one of the scenes he was so fond of reading about.

"Don't scalp us!" he muttered.

A roar of laughter made him look up. "Did you ever come across such a crack-brain?" cried Trimble. "The ass takes us for Red Indians!"

"Better let them go," said Lecky; "they've had their lesson."

Giles was not too dazed to understand this. He jumped quickly to his feet and pulled Bamford with him.

At a safe distance he turned and shook his fist.

"I'll have my re-revenge!" he yelled, his mind reverting once more to the sayings of his favourite.

"Have your fiddle-sticks! Have your face washed, my son!" Tubby Trimble howled back. "Shall I come and help you along?"

And he made as if to follow them.

They fled.

THE 3rd CHAPTER. After the Battle.

"THE question is, laddies, what had we better do now?" remarked Fighting Mac, when the last of the townies had disappeared. "It's nearly an hour after lock-up, and we can't go back in this state. An apple was the cause of old Father Adam's downfall, now they've got us in a fix."

Lecky chuckled.

"I thought those chaps were not the only cause of you being late," he said. "There's an odour about Trimble that seems strangely familiar—Ribstons or Lord Suffields, I don't know which."

"It's Ribstons!" grinned Noble. "We've been to old Bilberry's for apples."

"And—like Jack in the fairy-tale—we got beans," added Trimble. "The old gentleman caught me a stinger just as I was getting over the wall."

"All right. But first of all let us decide what is the best thing to do. Of course, I ought to bring you up before the Head for breaking bounds; but, under the circumstances, I don't think I shall. It seems to me, kids, you've had enough punishment for your sins. Eh, what? I think the wisest plan just now will be to trot along to old Mother Brown's and have a wash."

"The very thing!" they eagerly exclaimed. "Thanks awfully, Lecky! You're a good sort!"

This meant taking them about half a mile out of the course; but, with Trimble riding

(Continued on the next page.)

Lecky's machine, they soon arrived at the tuckshop.

They found Billy and his mother busily employed in picking flowers to take into Pelham the following morning.

"Lawks o' me!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown, letting the huge bunch of gladioli she had in her hand fall. "Whatever have you young gentlemen been up to?"

"We ran into something, Mrs. Brown," said Tubby Trimble, with a shudder, as he thought of Ned Giles and that would-be hero's hard fist. "Can we have a wash-up, please?"

"Certainly, certainly!"—making for the cottage. "And a nice cup o' tea afterwards, if you have a mind, Master Trimble. Dear, dear me, what a dreadful accident it must have been!" And Mrs. Brown disappeared to make the necessary preparations. "You'll find soap and clean towels beside the bowls."

"What a good sort you are, Mrs. Brown!" cried Trimble. "I don't know what we should do without you!"

"Get away with your nonsense, Master Trimble!" she answered, not ill-pleased. "There'll be a nice cup o' tea and some cake ready by the time you are through."

Jack and his chums got through their washing in double-quick time—bathing their cuts and bruises with many a grunt of pain.

"Are you chaps ready?" called out Lecky from Mrs. Brown's parlour. Whilst they were making themselves presentable he had been having an interview with Mrs. Brown, the result of which was that quite an imposing spread met their delighted gaze.

"My wur-rd!" exclaimed Macalpine.

"Scrumptious!" added Noble, cocking his one available eye at the goodly array of dainties.

"Bully for Lecky!" said Trimble, dropping into his place.

Mrs. Brown's head appeared in the doorway. "Shall Billy run along and let Dr. Hillingford known you are safe here?" she asked.

"Not for worlds, ma'am!" gasped Trimble, springing to his feet. "Dr. Hillingford has a deep-rooted dislike to hearing of anything disagreeable. He doesn't exactly share our ideas about accidents, Mrs. Brown, so you must leave us to break the painful news as gently as we can. Crikey, what an escape!"—as Mrs. Brown vanished. "Suppose the young imp had gone without waiting for permission?"

The chums all paled at the suggestion, whilst Lecky laughed uproariously.

And the feast proceeded.

When they had eaten till they could eat no more, Lecky pushed back his chair, with the suggestion that they had better be getting back to the school.

In another twenty minutes—Trimble riding Lecky's machine—they were standing outside the school gates.

"Here's a stroke of luck, laddies!" whispered Fighting Mac. "The gate is unfastened—left open for you, I suppose, Lecky."

"The front door's bound to be locked," the burly skipper whispered back.

"Let's try it, anyway."

Trimble hopped forward to do so.

"Open!" he signalled.

"Look here," said Macalpine, in an undertone, "would you mind leaving your bike where it is, Lecky? You can easily trot down again to put it away after reporting yourself. Make as much row as you can in walking upstairs, and we'll creep after you. Ten to one he doesn't know we're out!"

"Blessed sauce!" grinned Lecky. But he carried out these instructions to the letter, walking boldly into the doctor's study after knocking. The others tiptoed after him as silently as shadows, with the exception of Tubby, who had to use his hands and knees. When level with the study door they could not resist the temptation to try and learn if the doctor knew of their absence.

"Good-evening, my boy!" they heard Dr. Hillingford say, in answer to Lecky's salutation. "You've had a good time, I hope?"

"Very, sir."

"You found your parent well?"

"Quite well, sir, thank you! He wished me to inform you how sorry he was at not being able to journey this far."

"Thank you, Lecky! Perhaps on the next occasion he makes a trip to this country I may have the pleasure of meeting him. I won't keep you, my boy. You must be tired after your long run. Good-night!"

"Good-night, sir!"

The three listeners began to feel once more jubilant as they heard the skipper's footsteps approaching. They tiptoed a little higher up to await his coming. The study door opened, and the light from within flooded the staircase.

"Lecky!"

It was the doctor's voice recalling him.

"Sir?" answered Lecky, from the doorway.

"You might inform that ragged-looking trio who entered with you I shall require their presence in this room before prayers to-morrow morning. Thank you, Lecky! Kindly close the door again."

"He's a weasel!" groaned Tubby—"a blessed open-eyed old weasel that you can't catch napping. He must have been looking through the window and laughing up his sleeve at us."

Slowly, but no longer on tiptoe, they made for the dormitories, whilst Lecky, all a-grin, went downstairs again to put his machine in safety.

(Another rattling complete Jack Noble yarn next week.)

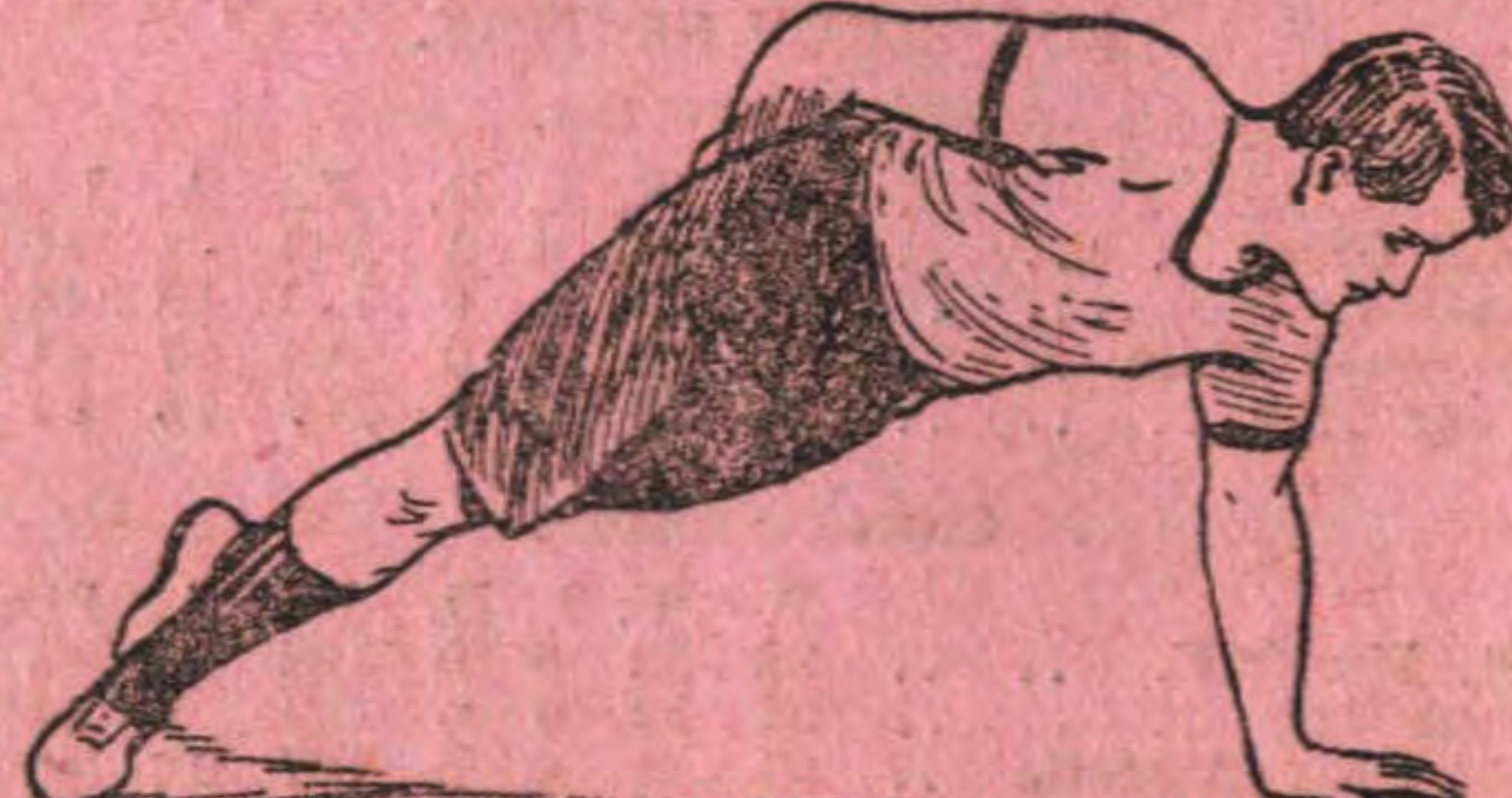
HOW TO BOX.

By JAMES J. CORBETT.

THERE are many forms of exercise which the youth who desires to excel in boxing must go in for as well as ball-punching. One which can be strongly recommended is a great favourite with that fine boxer, Gunner Moir.

Resting the palm of one hand on the floor, he supports himself on that and the sides of his feet, and alternately pushes himself up to the full extent of his arm, and lowers his body again until it is within an inch or so of the floor.

The movements are shown in the two figures



First movement of exercise described in this article.

published this week, and the exercise, although apparently uninteresting, is wonderfully useful in strengthening the arms and many other muscles of the body.

Another good exercise is to lie at full length on your back on the floor. In each hand you should have a dumb-bell weighing not more than three or three and a half pounds. Then gradually come up into a sitting attitude, and sink gradually back. You will find it advisable to first do this exercise without dumb-bells; but as you

become stronger

and more proficient, you can employ a pair, starting with light ones, and gradually increasing the weight.

As an alternative, you can raise your legs to right angles with your body, and subsequently attach a gradually-increasing weight to your ankles, raising your legs with the additional strain.

Your abdominal muscles will be still further strengthened by bending over until you are supporting yourself on your hands and feet.

Now, however proficient you may make yourself in ball-punching, skipping, and the exercises I have touched on above, your progress as a boxer will not have increased sufficiently unless, at the same time, you have studied those many little dodges which are known as ring-craft.

To the boxer, a knowledge of ring-craft is absolutely indispensable. And there are a thousand and one little tricks to learn which can be used to advantage at odd moments, and which will sometimes turn what looks like a defeat into a capital victory.

Of course, a considerable amount of patience will be necessary to learn these dodges. Do not think you are going to map them all out in your head and then face an opponent, and

wipe the floor with him.

Theory is very well, but theory must be converted into actual practice.

Thus, to commence with, take a careful measure of your opponent, and let the first violent onslaught come from him. If he is playing the same waiting game it should be your business to try and trick him into leading.

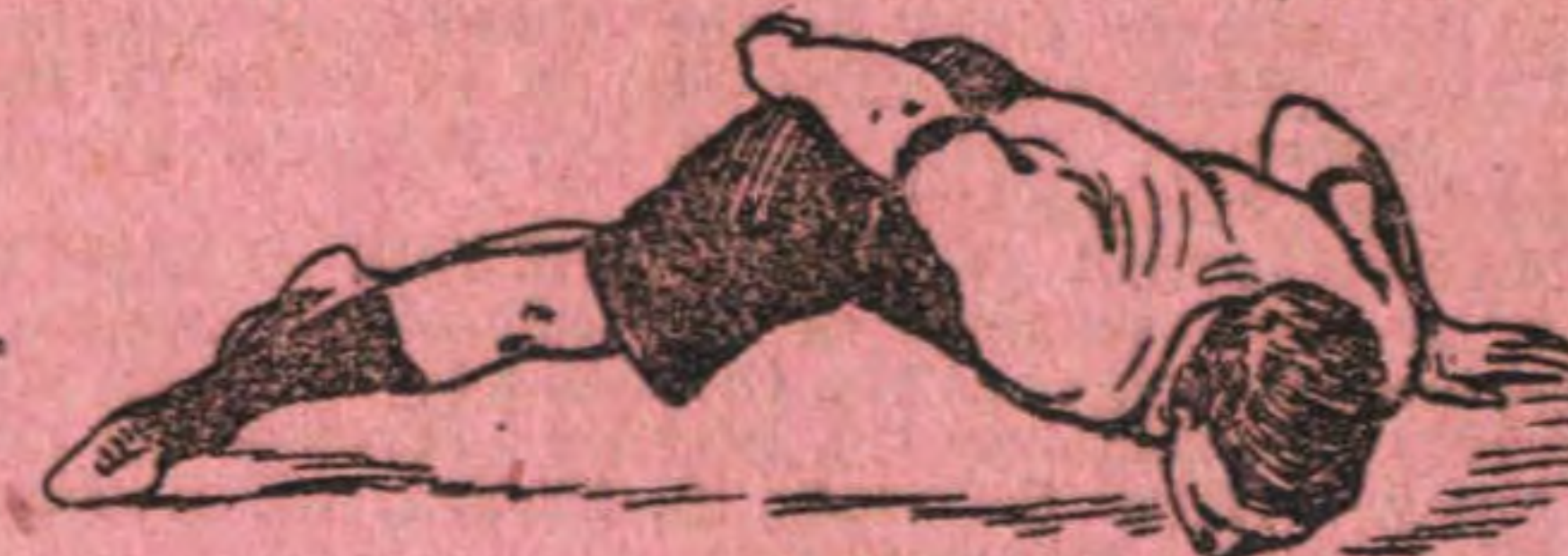
You want to find out, at the earliest possible opportunity, what your opponent is capable of; but, assuming that he goes in for hurricane hitting right at the commencement, be sure to keep out of harm's way until you have taken his measure.

Many fine boxers favour what is known as the American crouch.

They claim many advantages for this crouching attitude. By sinking your chin down on your chest, they contend you are gaining protection for that extremely important point, your jaw.

A stoop, they say, withdraws your body, and so, to a large extent, avoids your receiving stomach punches. Your own blows from this attitude should shoot up from below, for your rival will find them difficult to parry and not easy to judge.

When it comes to your turn to force the fighting, or, as your football scribes say, assume the aggressive, you should go in for close fighting. Here again you see the advantages of the American crouch. You are close up to your man, your shoulders are rounded, and your arms cover up the small space of body which is presented to your opponent.



Second movement of exercise described in this article.

Try the attitude in your next bout and see if you approve of it.

As I have hinted before to readers of THE BOYS' REALM, you should

worry your opponent

as much as possible. Practise, at every possible opportunity, quick, slight movements and tricks with the eyes, hands, and feet, and convey the impression that you are going to execute a lightning-like movement, whereas, as a matter of fact, you are going to do nothing of the kind.

In this way you will often tempt your opponent into making a huge lunge, a rapid jerk, or a spring backwards. And this will take a lot of wind out of his sails, whereas it will leave you untouched.

There is, however, one thing to be careful about. Move quickly out of reach if your opponent lunges out at you, or get your stopping or counter-punch home a little in front of him. And see that you are as careful to time his punches as you are your own.

James J. Corbett

FAMOUS SCOTTISH FOOTBALL CLUBS.

Airdrieonians F.C.

LANARKSHIRE, the "Black County," has come very much to the front in Scottish football circles in these last half a dozen years, and possibly the club from the town of Airdrie, which set the example in season 1902-03 by gaining inclusion into the First Division of the Scottish Football League, may justly claim to be the pioneers of the Lanarkshire Club's leap into prominence.

Airdrieonians as a club are of no mushroom growth, and have a past history which, though pretty much local till recent years, extends way back to the early seventies. The original name of the club was Excelsior, but it was changed to the present designation, which identifies the club with the town of Airdrie, and is

shortened to "Onians"

by their devoted supporters.

The leading light and president of the club for many years was Provost Connor, than whom no more respected personage ever held the reins of office in any club, and his influence helped the team very considerably in their early struggles.

At Mavisbank Park, the first ground occupied by the club, James Connor, son of the provost, made his name as a goalkeeper. Perhaps Connor was the best-known player ever Airdrie produced, and his International cap, gained in 1886 against Ireland, was only one—though the highest—of many honours gained by him.

John McAra, now a responsible official in Glasgow Town Clerk's Office, was a half-back who

gained caps galore

from the Lanarkshire Association, and had more than a local reputation.

Broomfield Park, the club's present ground, is a beautiful enclosure, and in recent years has been adorned with a handsome and well-equipped pavilion, which is the admiration and envy of most provincial visiting teams.

There is no lack of enterprise on the part of the directorate in Airdrie, and their efforts are enthusiastically backed up by the popular and able manager, Mr. Andrew Walker.

In Mr. Alexander Kirkwood, an ex-president of the S. F. A., and the late Mr. M. Rooney, the Airdrie Club possessed two legislators who

were of great service

to the national body, and left their mark in Carlton Place.

Among the players in the earlier days Messrs. R. Macfarlane, Sneddon, Glen, Forsyth, Hill, Reid, and Andrew were prominent; and J. Finlay, F. O'Rourke (now of Bradford City), M. Scott, R. Scott, and A. Thomson have all been awarded their caps for Scotland in International encounters.

While no eleven have ever equalled the magnificent team of 1886,

still, the 1906-07 League team started with the promise of being very little inferior to that famous lot, and at the start of the League competition threatened to seriously endanger the Celtic sequence of wins. For many weeks they remained undefeated, but this early promise was not sustained, though at the finish a most creditable position was secured, the points gained totalling forty-two—one more than the amount gained at the finish of the two following seasons.

THE END.

AIRDRIEONIAN'S F.C. (1909-10).



Photo by Agnew.

McAuley, McTay, Wardrope, A. D. Walker (secretary), Davidson, Rombach, Duncan, Stewart, G. Carrol (trainer), Nicholl, Donaldson, Thomson, McGraue, Webb, and Young.

ALL NAMES READ FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, BEGINNING WITH THE BACK ROW.

Jack Noble & Co. appear in the "B.R." Football Library Every Week. Don't Miss Them!

THE BOYS' REALM, April 2, 1910.