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The **Boys' Herald** 1d

EVERY BOY'S AND YOUNG MAN'S
STORY AND HOBBY PAPER.



No. 229, Vol. V.

EVERY WEDNESDAY—ONE PENNY.

WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 7, 1907.

SIDNEY DREW'S GREATEST SUCCESS!



Purple Star had fired his last cartridge, the rifle slipped from his hands, and he fell from his horse. The gallant steed picked him up and bore him away, the thunders of applause stifling the baffled howls of the pursuers. Derek Grey's presence of mind and quickness of wit had saved the situation. (A stirring incident from this week's grand chapters.)

The Cliveden Paper-chase



A STIRRING STORY,
TELLING
HOW PANKHURST
AND PRICE
WERE
"DONE" AGAIN.

The 1st Chapter.

Pointexter Proposes a Paper-chase.

LINCOLN G. POINDEXTER suddenly smacked his thigh with a report like a pistol shot. Dick Neville and Micky Flynn, who were busily at work at the table in No. 4 study, at Cliveden, started simultaneously, and there was a spattering of blots over their foolscap sheets.

Dick Neville jumped up wrathfully. "You howling ass!" he cried. "Look what you've made me do!"

"Ye blithering lunatic!" howled Micky Flynn. "Look at my exercise! What on earth did you do that for?"

"Ha, ha—I mean, sorry!" said Pointexter.

"I'll sorry you. We—"

"I guess it's no good getting excited about it," said Pointexter, with a pacific wave of the hand. "It can't be helped. You shouldn't be so clumsy."

"Clumsy! Why you—"

"Peace, my infants. I thought of something suddenly, and—"

"No need to make us jump out of our beastly skins if you did."

Pointexter grinned.

"Sorry, kids. But I say, it's a ripping idea, you know. We're going to get up a football match in the Fourth against a team captained by Pankhurst or Price."

"We know that."

"And we've been doing a lot of sprinting lately, to get into form."

"That's no news."

"And it occurred to me—"

"It's occurred to me that if you make me jump like that again there'll be a dead American found in this study."

"It's occurred to me," said Pointexter, unheeding, "that a paper-chase would be about the proper caper."

"H'm!" said Dick Neville thoughtfully.

"I suppose you know what a paper-chase is."

"Yes, I think so," said Neville sarcastically.

"I fancy I have some faint idea. We have 'em pretty often at Cliveden. I've run in paper-chases before you were born—at any rate, before you came to Cliveden. We were having runs here while you were living on the family tinned beef in Chicago."

"Oh, give the tinned beef a rest," grinned Pointexter. "Anyway, you haven't had a paper-chase since I've been at Cliveden. What do you think of it?"

"Jolly good idea," said Micky Flynn. "I sha'n't be able to run, though, after that twist I gave my ankle in the practice match yesterday. But I'll meet you coming home and kill the fatted calf for you."

"It's a good idea," said Neville with a nod. "We shall get the practice and test our form in a long run across country, and there will be plenty of fun in it, too. Pankhurst and Price will have to be in it, too."

"That's the idea—the whole of the Fourth Form; at least, all the members of the two elevens," said Pointexter. "If any of the Shell care to join the pack they can. As the heads of the Fourth Form, we shall get up the affair."

"Ha, ha! You won't get Pankhurst and Price to admit that."

"Anyway, the idea's ours, and they can come into it or stay out, as they like. I'll go along to No. 10 and propose it to them, while you write out that stuff over again. No good taking that kind of thing to the Form master."

"You horrid bounder, you ought to write it out, as you—"

"Oh, rats! I'll trot along to No. 10."

And Lincoln G. Pointexter trotted along, leaving his chums to re-write the spoiled papers. This they did good-humouredly enough, for although warm words might be used in No. 4 study the cordiality of the Cliveden Combine was never really ruffled.

Pointexter whistled cheerfully as he strode

along the passage to No. 10 study. There dwelt Pankhurst and Price, the Combine's great rivals in the Fourth Form at Cliveden. Pankhurst and Price called themselves the Old Firm, and they kept their end up with great energy against the Combine.

The door of No. 10 was open, and Pointexter gave it a kick to open it further, and strode into the study. The next moment he staggered back with a sharp exclamation. Some heavy round object had flown through the air and "biffed" upon the American boy's nose with a heavy "biff."

"Ow!" roared Pointexter. "What the—who the—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Pankhurst and Price. The two red-headed youths who constituted the Old Firm were doubled up with merriment at Pointexter's expression as he rubbed his damaged nose.

"Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!"

Pointexter's eyes gleamed. He left off rubbing his nose and went for Pankhurst. In a moment he had that youth's red head in chancery, and was damaging Pankhurst's nose. The head of the Old Firm wriggled and roared.

"Leggo! Price, pull the beast off! Oh! Leggo!"

Price rushed gallantly to the rescue.

He grasped Pointexter by his back hair and dragged him off. The boy from Chicago turned round, and one of the famous Pointexter left-handers laid Price on the carpet.

But before he could turn to Pankhurst again, that youth had collared him and twisted him over, and he sat down quickly, and Pankhurst sat on him.

"Pointpusher, you ass—"

"I guess—"

"What do you mean by going for us like a howling lunatic?" demanded Pankhurst. "It

would serve you right if we wiped up the floor with you."

"I guess I'm not going to have things heaved at my nose," said Pointexter.

"Ha, ha! It was an accident."

"Accident be hanged! I—"

"You stopped my devil with your nose," explained Pankhurst, grinning.

"Your what?"

"My devil! We were playing diabolio, and I was passing to Price."

"Oh, I see! I guess you'd better be a bit more careful with your pesky devils," said Pointexter, as he rose to his feet, Pankhurst kindly getting off his chest. "I came here to propose to you fellows—"

"Better ask mamma," said Pankhurst. "I'm so young."

"Oh, don't rot. I came to propose a paper-chase. We are getting one up for the next half-holiday, and Neville and I are going to be the hares."

"Price and I could do the trick better."

"If you can run I guess you'll have your chance," said Pointexter. "If you can catch us we'll admit that you are up to our form—but I guess that won't happen."

"Won't it?" exclaimed Pankhurst and Price together.

"Waal, are you going to try?" asked Pointexter. "It's for Wednesday afternoon, and most of the Form will be in it."

"Oh yes, we'll run you down if you like," said Pankhurst. "Let me give you a little advice, Pointpusher. Take care of your diet if you're going to run, and don't devour any of the paternal tinned beef."

"Oh, rats!" said Pointexter, and he quitted the study, leaving Pankhurst and Price laughing.

The 2nd Chapter.

Grahame the Prefect Looks for Trouble.

THE suggestion of the paper-chase caught on, and nearly the whole of the Fourth Form at Cliveden joined willingly in it. A good many fellows of the Shell, and some of the Third, also announced their intention of joining the pack. It was settled that Dick Neville and Lincoln G. Pointexter were to be the hares. They had settled it themselves in advance, and rival claimants for the honour would probably have found a fistful encounter upon their hands.

Pankhurst and Price having agreed, there was no more to be said. And certainly Dick and



Right through the farm-yard ran Dick and Pointexter, and there was a wild clattering and scattering of ducks and geese and fowls. A burly farmer jumped into their path with a long cart-whip in his hand. "Stop, you young varminths!" he shouted. "Sorry we've no time," gasped Dick; "we'll come in to tea another day, thank you!"

Lincoln G. were ideal hares. Dick Neville had always been one of the finest sprinters in the form, and Lincoln G. Pointexter, with his slim, wiry form and sound wind, his keen sight and iron determination, was about the best companion Neville could have had for the run.

It was upon a Monday that Lincoln G. had proposed the paper-chase, and after school that day he and Dick took a little run over the proposed course, to get the lay of the land well into their minds. The run was to be a ten-mile one, five miles out and five home, and the course would be a varied and somewhat difficult one. But as Pointexter said, the harder the work the greater the fun. Those who could not "stick it out," could give it up, and the fewer in at the death the more honour for the hares.

And on Tuesday there was a terrific tearing up of paper, newspapers, magazines, old exercise books, anything and everything, for the "scent."

"We shall want two big bags full of the scent,"

Dick Neville remarked. "It's surprising how much old paper you can use up when you tear it small. We haven't enough, and we shall have to get some more from somewhere."

"There's the pictures on the wall in No. 10," suggested Micky Flynn.

"Ha, ha! I wonder what Panky and Price would say!"

"We must scare up some from somewhere," said Pointexter. "We—hallo, Grahame! Come in, old chap. Tea's just over or we'd ask you to have a cup."

Grahame the prefect came in scowling. Grahame was the worst-tempered prefect at Cliveden, and he was down upon No. 4 study with a tremendous "down." And especially was he down upon the cool youth from Chicago, whose nerve was very irritating to the bully of the Sixth.

"You young villains!"

"Ain't he polite?" said Dick Neville. "You'd always know Grahame by his nice way of speaking. He's understudying Lord Chesterfield, you know, and—"

Grahame came nearer to the juniors. His right hand was behind him.

"Who's been scattering torn paper in the passages?" he exclaimed. "The doctor has spoken about the place being littered with torn paper, and I've got to look into it. I needn't ask who it was, though. You three, of course."

"No, it wasn't," said Pointexter. "We've been tearing up a lot of paper, but we've only been doing it in the study here."

"Don't tell lies," snapped out Grahame. "You—"

Pointexter's eyes blazed.

"I guess a chap must be a pretty mean kind of a skunk to think a fellow is telling lies," he remarked, with his usual drawl. "And I guess—"

What Pointexter guessed was never known, for, at that moment, Grahame's hand came out from behind him, and revealed the fact that there was a cane in it. The cane descended upon Pointexter's shoulders with a sounding thwack, and the boy from Chicago jumped up with a yell.

"Thwack! Thwack!"

Dick and Micky received a sharp cut each before they knew what was coming. In a moment the three juniors were on their feet, glaring at the prefect, half-minded to rush at him and down him, prefect as he was, and risk the consequences. If Grahame had struck again, there would certainly have been retaliation, but although he had intended to, their savage looks made him think better of it. He lowered the cane.

"That's a lesson for you," he exclaimed. "Mind, all that paper's got to be picked up in the corridor, or I'll report you to your Form master, and you'll get something warmer than I've given you."

And Grahame walked out of the study and slammed the door. Dick Neville rubbed his shoulder ruefully.

"That's what I call nice," he remarked. "What is home without a prefect?"

"We shall have to pick up all that paper that some silly ass has dropped about," growled Micky Flynn. "We shouldn't be listened to if a prefect reported us. I'm getting fed up with that baste, Grahame. I—"

Pointexter smacked his thigh with a ringing smack.

"Hallo, at it again!" exclaimed Neville. "What's biting you this time?"

"I've got an idea."

"You seem to be getting 'em thick an' fast," said Dick Neville. "Get it off your shirtfront, my son."

"We're in want of more paper for the scent—"

"I know that. Get on."

"And we owe Grahame a one—a very big one—suppose we kill two birds with one stone."

"Eh? I suppose you're not going to propose that we tear Grahame up to use him for scent in the paper-chase?" demanded Dick.

Pointexter grinned.

"Not exactly. But you know that Grahame is what he calls a sporting chap—that is, he makes bets with some blackguards in Clivedale on the races—which the Head would expel him for if he knew—"

"And a pity he doesn't."

"I guess so. But as I was saying, Grahame is a sporting ass, and he keeps a file of sporting papers in his study. I've seen them, because I've fagged for him, you see. He's got a lot of them: he keeps them so as to refer to them, you know, about the form of the horses he puts his money on, and they're the apple of his eye. When I fagged for him last, it occurred to me that it would be a jolly good thing if I shoved them into the fire."

"So it would, and no mistake."

"You see, he's in bad ways, and that would help to cure him. It would be a good deed, and might save him from being expelled some day."

"Quite likely. But—"

The Cliveden Paper-chase

(Continued from the previous page.)

"So my idea is to kill two birds with one stone—or rather three—save Grahame from his evil ways, give him one back for what he's given us—and, at the same time, get the scent we want for the paper-chase."

The next moment Poindexter was staggering under the slaps on the back bestowed by his admiring chums.

"Good wheeze!" chuckled Dick Neville.

"Good wheeze, my boy," cackled Micky Flynn.

"Ripping! Spiffing!" cackled Micky Flynn.

"Sure and ye're a jannus, Poin."

"Right you are," gasped Poindexter. "Don't bust my spinal column, though. You've knocked all the pesky wind out of me."

"Come on," exclaimed Neville. "No good losing time. We've got to get that paper picked up before the cad reports us."

The Combine left the study. They had a long and worrying task in picking up the fragments of paper which some careless junior had left scattered about the passage. They were all the more exasperated by it as they had had nothing to do with leaving it there, and they felt sure that Grahame knew it. But their time was coming.

The painful task was ended at last, and then the three chums made their way to Grahame's study. They were in a mood for stern reprisals, and besides, as Poindexter said, their intended action was really for the prefect's good. And the scent for the paper-chase had to come from somewhere.

"We'll see if he's here, first," murmured Dick, as he tapped at the door of the study. It was jerked open by the prefect, who glared at the Combine.

"What do you brats want?"

"If you please, Grahame," said Dick, humbly, "we've picked up all the paper in the passage."

Grahame smiled grimly.

"You've saved yourselves a licking, then. Be off."

And he slammed the door in their faces. The Combine grinned at one another. They had found out what they wanted to know without awakening the prefect's suspicions.

"We've got to get him out of the study somehow," whispered Dick. "We can't leave it till to-morrow. The meet is just after the morning school, you know. And it's getting towards bedtime now. How are we to get the brute out of his den?"

Poindexter wrinkled his brows in thought.

"We'll get Panky and Price to help. They'll lend a hand in a good cause like Trojans. Come along to No. 10."

The 3rd Chapter.

Grahame Gets a Surprise.

GRAHAME, the prefect, scowled as he sat at his table. Grahame had reason to scowl, though he did make his thin, sour face look more ill-favoured than ever. Grahame was worried, and the fact that his worries were entirely of his own making was no consolation to him. The fact was that the prefect was uncertain as to which horse to back for a certain race, and a friend of his in the book-making line was waiting in the village inn to hear from him. Grahame had had some heavy losses lately, and he saw difficulties ahead unless he could retrieve them, and so he was worried. If "the powers that be" at Cliveden had known of his worries, he would probably have been expelled by way of comfort, and he would certainly have got what he deserved. The caning of the Combine had relieved him a little, but it had not settled his difficulties.

The sound of a heavy bump on his door made him start with sudden rage.

Bump! bump!

Grahame sprang up and darted to the door and threw it open. Two juniors were struggling furiously in the passage, apparently engaged in a deadly conflict. By the rich auburn hue of their hair Grahame knew that the two were Pankhurst and Price.

"I'll skin you!"

"I'll bash your nose!"

"Yah! I'll pulverise you, Price!"

"I'll give you beans, you boulder."

For a moment Grahame stared at them in sheer astonishment. Pankhurst and Price had never been known to quarrel before. They had been staunch chums, and it was not on record that they had ever exchanged a really angry word. Yet here they were, fighting like demons in the passage, and bumping recklessly against the door of the worst-tempered prefect at Cliveden.

"You young scoundrels!" shouted Grahame.

"What do you mean by making this row here!"

"He broke off with a yell.

Pankhurst, hitting out blindly, had caught the prefect a terrific right-hander just above his watch-chain, apparently under the impression that he was hitting Price.

And then Price landed out with equal energy, and Grahame caught a fearful upper cut under the chin, and staggered against the door-post.

"Take that, Price, you boulder!"

"Take that, Panky, you beast."

It was Grahame who had taken them, however.

The prefect, as soon as he regained his balance, sprang at the struggling juniors, his sour face aflame with rage.

"You young hounds—I'll teach you—"

"Hullo, buzz off," exclaimed Pankhurst, dodging Grahame's outstretched hand. "Get moving."

The juniors got moving in double-quick time. They went down the passage as if they were hares in a paper-chase, and Grahame, boiling with wrath, followed them.

Away went Pankhurst and Price, with the enraged prefect hot on their track, and the next minute Poindexter and Neville whipped out of a doorway and darted into the prefect's study.

"Quick!" gasped Dick. "We've only got a few minutes."

"I guess that's enough. I know where to find the things."

Poindexter darted to the couch under the window. It was made to open like a box, and he threw aside the cushions and lifted the top.

Inside reposed a heavy pile of sporting papers. The American boy had them out, and under his arm, in a twinkling. The sofa lid dropped and shut with a bang.

"Come on, Dick! I've got 'em!"

The chums raced out of the study. As they disappeared round a corner Grahame came back from a fruitless chase of Pankhurst and Price, who had easily dodged him in the passages.

The prefect did not see the chums. He went into his study and slammed the door.

Poindexter and Neville lost no time in getting back to No. 4. Micky Flynn was at the door waiting for them. He gave a whoop at the sight of the bundle of papers under the American's arm.

"Arrah! ye've done it, then!"

"What do you think?" grinned Dick. "Hullo, Panky, you got away all right?"

"Yes," said Pankhurst, coming up breathing hard, with Price at his heels. "We dodged the boulder, didn't we, Pricey?"

"Quite so," panted Price.

"Well, come in, and help us tear up these papers. We had better lock the door, in case of accidents, though I don't suppose Grahame will discover the loss yet."

They locked the study door, and then the five juniors set to work tearing up the papers captured from the prefect's study.

They had no compunction on that point.

The bully deserved punishment, and the papers were of a kind that ought never to have been in a boy's possession.

"Sporting Tips!" said Dick. "Sporting Notes!" "Paddock Gems!" "Racing Life!"

Gr-r-r! Nice kind of literature to feed a young and growin' prefect's mind on. This is really very nice and considerate of us, kids."

"I hope Grahame will see it in that light when he finds his precious papers gone," grinned Pankhurst.

"Well, he can't be a bigger brute than he is now, anyway," said Poindexter. "We may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb."

"Quite so," said Price—his usual remark.

They soon made havoc of the sporting papers. Pink and white fragments multiplied in the baskets as they tore and tore and tore again.

Dick Neville began to cram the torn paper into the bags the hares were to carry. By the time the last of the sporting prints was finished, the bags were crammed to the brim.

"Good!" said Dick Neville, with much satisfaction. "That was really a ripping idea of yours, Puntbuster, and we're much obliged to you two redheads."

"Eh?"

"Sorry! You two auburn-haired youths!"

cried Dick. "We'll give you a run for your money to-morrow. Micky can't run, so he's going to get tea ready in the Study for us when we get in, and you two had better join us, as it will be a good feed. That is, of course, if you get in in anything like time."

"I guess they'll be a couple of hours behind us."

"Do you?" said Pankhurst, with a gleam in his eyes. "Time will show. If you outrun us we'll give you best; but, of course, you won't have a show."

"Quite so."

And the friendly foes, after making final arrangements for the morrow's meet, parted.

The 4th Chapter.

Hare and Hounds.

MORNING school was voted a bore the next day by everyone concerned in the paper-chase for the afternoon; but like all things, it came to an end at last, and the juniors were free. In twos and threes they strolled down to the meeting-place, most of them already in their running flannels, with coats round them.

Trevelyan, the popular captain of Cliveden, was to time the start, and he was promptly on the ground.

The meet took place on the edge of the moor, close by Cliveden School. A pretty good crowd had collected to see the start, many of the Upper Form boys of Cliveden honouring the affair with their presence, as well as a number of villagers.

Dick Neville and Poindexter came up, with their bags of scent slung across their shoulders, looking very fit and trim in their flannels.

Trevelyan nodded to them pleasantly.

"Start in three minutes, youngsters," he said cheerily.

"Righto!" said Neville. "We're ready!"

"I guess so."

"Mind you get home first, darlings!" exclaimed Micky Flynn, who had come to see the start, though the damage to his foot in a recent match prevented him from joining in the hunt.

"If ye let Panky and Price catch ye I'll never forgive ye."

"Ha, ha!" said Pankhurst, who was there with his chum, ready, in good time. "I'm afraid those kids will die unforgiven then, Tipperary."

"Bogorra, I—hallo! Hallo! What does Grahame want in such a hurry?"

Every eye was turned towards the school, from the direction of which the prefect could be

seen running rapidly towards the meet. He was shouting something, which became audible as he drew nearer.

"Stop them!"

"What's the matter, Grahame?" asked Trevelyan, looking up from his watch. "Are you speaking of Poindexter and Neville?"

The Combine exchanged a glance. They could tell from the expression upon the prefect's face that he had discovered the loss of his precious papers.

"Yes," panted Grahame, coming up. "Stop the young scoundrels! I—"

"They start in one minute. What's the matter?"

"They have taken some papers from my study—some valuable papers—"

"How do you know?" asked Trevelyan, who knew Grahame too well to attach too much credence to any of his statements. "Did you see them?"

"No, but I know they did it. I know—"

"What were the papers?"

"Some—some old newspapers I was keeping for—reference," said Grahame, stammering a little. "They were valuable to me."

The captain of Cliveden looked at the chums.

"Have you taken any papers from Grahame's study, youngsters?"

Dick Neville was about to speak, when Poindexter made him a sign to be silent. Dick understood that the American youth had some plan for getting out of the scrape.

"What papers is Grahame speaking of?" he asked. "We've taken old papers from wherever we could find them to tear up for scent. If Grahame could tell us the names of his papers we could say."

"What were the papers, Grahame?"

"I—I—they—what does that matter?" snapped out the prefect angrily. "I say they took a bundle of papers out of my study—out of the sofa chest. I know they did it."

Poindexter shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't see that there's anything for me to say," he remarked. "If Grahame can give us the names of the papers Trevelyan will know that he is telling the truth, and not merely inventing an excuse to pick upon us, as he's always doing."

"Why can't you do that, Grahame?" asked Trevelyan, pushing the prefect back, as he strode savagely towards the American boy with upraised fist. "Let Poindexter alone. If you have lost any papers I suppose you know what they are."

"That's quite immaterial—"

"Not at all. I suppose the youngsters have collected up all the old papers they could find to make scent, and—"

Grahame gritted his teeth.

"If they've torn up my papers I'll—"

"Look here," said Poindexter, "if we've torn up papers belonging to Grahame, as we may have done, we've got the pieces in the bags here. He can look, and identify some of the fragments if he likes."

"Do as he says, Grahame."

The prefect turned red, and made no motion to approach the bags which the hares obligingly held open for him. It was as much as his career at Cliveden was worth to identify any part of a racing paper as his property.

"Well, Grahame!" exclaimed Trevelyan impatiently. "Are you going to do it?"

"No, I'm not. I—"

"Then stand back, you're wasting time."

"They have taken my papers."

"You said that before."

"Is that your property?" asked Poindexter, taking a fragment from his bag, upon which the title "Racing Life" was printed.

Grahame turned scarlet.

Trevelyan looked quickly from one to the other. Perhaps a glimmering of the facts came into his mind.

"Did you get that from Grahame's study, Poindexter?"

"I don't see why we should be called upon to condemn ourselves," said the American boy. "We don't deny or affirm anything. It's for Grahame to find proof as the accuser, as he'd know if he knew anything about law. Let him look in the bags."

The prefect muttered something between his teeth and strode away. He realised that he had made a fool of himself, and that if the matter went any further it would be the worse for himself.

Trevelyan looked at his watch.

"Time!"

The hares, grinning cheerfully, started off across the moor. They were to have five minutes start, and the pack waited eagerly for the interval to elapse.

Poindexter and Neville disappeared behind a clump of aloes, and every eye was then fixed upon Trevelyan.

"I say, isn't it time?" ventured Pankhurst.

Trevelyan shook his head. A few seconds later, however, he closed his watch with a snap.

"Time!" he said. "Off you go!"

And the hounds started running, with Pankhurst and Price well in the lead. Pankhurst sent a cheery call from his bugle ringing across the moor, and it came to the ears of the hares, and warned them that the hounds were on the track.

The 5th Chapter.

The Run.

THERE goes Panky's bugle!" exclaimed Poindexter, as the ringing note from behind fell upon his ears. "They've started!"

The hares paused on the summit of a swell to look back. They could see the pink shirts of the hounds dotting the green of the moor streaming in pursuit.

"There's Panky!" exclaimed Dick, as the red head of Pankhurst came into view amid the

gorse. "He's at the lead. And there's another red head just behind. I tell you, kid, Panky and Price will be the hardest stickers."

"But they won't catch us, I guess."

Leaving the trail of torn papers behind the hares descended the further side of the swelling ground, and ran on lightly and steadily towards the river.

They paused on the bridge to look back, and again caught sight of the pink shirts, and a note from the bugle showed that their own colours had been seen against the grey stone of the bridge.

"Come on, Puntpusher!"

They ran on, putting on a little more speed now, for the last bugle-note had been nearer. They wound round the foot of the low hill, and Dick, who knew the ground like a book, suddenly turned to the left, and led the way up the acclivity through a narrow lane. In the hollow runs of the lane were still traces of the last fall of snow. The air was keen and frosty, and the afternoon was an ideal one for a paper-chase—dry and cold and hard.

The hares began to breathe harder as they breasted the slope.

They came out on the high ground, and a gleam of pink showed up in the lane behind. Then Dick led the way through lane after lane, winding and turning, and wherever they went the trail of torn paper remained to guide the hounds. Suddenly they came out into open ground, and to Poindexter's amazement and dismay there were the hounds, running hard, and only a dozen paces distant.

There was a shout from the hounds, and a gasp from Poindexter.

"Dick, we've—"

"It's all right!" grinned Dick. "We're a good mile ahead of them, kid. They've got to follow the paper trail."

"Oh, yes, I forgot that."

And Poindexter grinned too. The hunt was not, of course, by sight, but by scent. Wherever the paper trail led, the hounds had to follow, even if they saw the hares within arm's length to right or left. Anything was allowed to the hares except crossing their own trail. Two or three thoughtless hounds left the track and started towards the hares, but Pankhurst's voice promptly called them back.

"Keep to the trail, asses!"

Dick and Poindexter stood grinning, and they kissed their hands, as the pack tore on. Pankhurst and Price grinned back at them cheerfully enough. The hares took a rest while the pack ran on, and finally disappeared from sight. Then they resumed their way at a leisurely pace.

"We've gained half a mile," observed Dick. "That's the best of knowing the ground well. We've given them a hard run so far. We'll take it easy till we get to the old Priory, where we turn homeward."

Poindexter nodded. The old Priory of Cliveden was the objective point of the run. It was a good five miles from the school, and there the hares intended to rest a little before turning back. They had gained a good deal already, and deemed themselves entitled to take matters more easily now.

But they took them a little too easily as it proved.

The pack had made good pace, and though some of the shorter-winded runners had dropped out, a good score were still sticking to Pankhurst and Price, who came on tirelessly. Hidden by the rough ground and the trees, the hounds gained, and suddenly came in view of the hares scarcely a hundred yards ahead.

Pankhurst gave a terrific view-halloo.

"My hat!" gasped Dick Neville. "Pointbuster, we're a pair of silly asses! If they catch us—"

"Run for your life!" yelled Poindexter.

The hares broke into a desperate spurt.

They had been careless, and they seemed destined to pay for it. To capture them on the outward run had hardly entered into the calculations of Pankhurst and Price. But it seemed possible now, and Pankhurst's bugle rang out a note of hope. It would be a triumph for the Old Firm that could never be argued away by the Combine. Pankhurst and Price raced on with every ounce of speed in them, and their followers backed them up well. Three or four more dropped out of the race, but there were fifteen or sixteen sweeping on behind the chums in full cry.

"Buck up!" panted Dick. "We've got to dodge them or bust something."

Speed alone would not do it now. Stratagem was wanted, and as he ran, Dick Neville rapidly turned the possibilities over in his mind.

"This way, Poin!" he shouted suddenly.

He swerved sharply off into a cart-track leading down into a farmyard. A man in a smock frock stared at them as if amazed at their action.

"I say," gasped Poindexter, "the folks may not like this, and we shall scatter the fowls, and no mistake."

"Can't be helped! Hallo, there's Farmer Turm-mutt, and he looks annoyed. Can't be helped! If we leave trouble here for the hounds it will save our bacon. They can argue with Mr. Turm-mutt. Come on."

Poindexter grinned as he comprehended Dick's device. Right through the farmyard they went, and there was a wild clattering and scattering of ducks, and geese, and fowls. A burly farmer jumped into their path with a long cart-whip in his hand, his face crimson with rage.

"You young rascals, get off my land! I'll—"

Farmer Turm-mutt did not like Cliveden boys. He knew them of old. And the audacity of the youngsters in dashing right through his farmyard and scattering paper scent behind them under his very eyes almost took his breath away.

"Stop, you young varmints!"

"Sorry we've no time!" gasped Dick. "We'll come in to tea another day, thank you!"

"Tea! I'll tea you! I'll tea you to—"

"Ow!" roared Dick, as the whiplash curled round his legs, stinging the bare skin terribly. "Ow, chuck it!"

But the angry farmer only lashed again, and Poindexter got the next cut. But that did not stop the desperate hares. They dodged the farmer, and dashed on. Mr. Turmutt, boiling with rage, sprinted after them.

A six-foot fence loomed up before the boys, but there was no way of avoiding it.

"Jump!" panted Dick. "No way out!"

Poindexter set his teeth. The crack of the whip behind lent them fresh energy. They rose to the leap gallantly. Dick cleared the fence and came down on his feet lightly in the field beyond. Poindexter caught his foot in the top rail and went headlong, landing on hands and knees.

The farmer could hardly essay such a leap. He stopped and shook his fist furiously at the boys through the fence. But his attention was called off from them the next moment by the hounds pouring into the farmyard.

Dick turned and gave Poindexter a hand up.

"Hurt, old fellow?"

"Oh, no, it's nothing." Poindexter's knees were bruised, and his palms were cut, but he was not the fellow to make a fuss about it. The hares gave a glance back through the fence. The hounds were swarming in the farmyard, and the farmer was rushing to stop them. Dick gave a breathless chuckle.

"That will keep Panky busy for a bit," he murmured. "Come on! Now's our chance!"

The hares raced on again. They crossed a field and came out into a lane, and headed for the Priory. Behind them a terrific uproar was rising from the farmyard.

The 6th Chapter.

Rough on the Hounds—Still Running!

PANKHURST and Price came bursting into the farmyard on the trail of the torn paper, reckless of what might await them there. Where the Combine had led, the Old Firm could follow, that was all they knew or cared about.

But there was a lion in the path in the person of Farmer Turmutt. If he had been enraged by the crossing of his ground by a couple of juniors, it may be imagined what his feelings were like when sixteen fellows came swooping in.

He rushed into their path, brandishing his whip. "Stop! Get out! Get off my land!" he roared.

"Oh, blow your old land!" yelled Pankhurst, as he got a cut round the legs. "We're not going to take any of it away with us. Stop that, you blithering lunatic! It hurts!"

"Get back!"

"It's a paper-chase, old son, and we're bound to follow the scent. We shall be gone in a minute," exclaimed Gatty.

"You'll be gone in a second or you'll get a hiding," shouted Mr. Turmutt, cracking the whip. "Just you come on a step and you'll see."

The pack had halted in dismay.

The burly farmer looked dangerous, and those who had already tasted the whip did not feel inclined to come to close quarters with it again.

"Look here, old fellow," exclaimed Pankhurst, "don't be a silly ass, you know! We must follow the scent. We must—"

"Get off my land!"

And Mr. Turmutt advanced upon the pack, his long whip making painful play among the slightly-clad legs of the hounds. Perhaps the farmer had reason to be exasperated by the invasion of his farmyard, but certainly the hounds could not be expected to give up the chase. Anyway, Pankhurst and Price didn't intend to.

"Get off my—"

"Come on, chaps!" said Pankhurst, desperately. "If he won't let us pass, we've got to down him, that's all!"

And Pankhurst rushed boldly at the brawny farmer. Price was after him like a shot, and the Cliveden fellows set their teeth and followed. It was the only thing to be done, and they could not hold back where their leader led.

The stout farmer gasped with amazement. He hadn't expected a drastic measure like that. Pankhurst caught a terrific lash from the whip, but the next moment he had hold of the farmer, and was clinging to him desperately, shouting to the others to come on. Price gripped the farmer's wrist and hung on, and Mr. Turmutt could not use the whip. The other juniors hurled themselves upon him.

The stout gentleman struggled furiously, but numbers prevailed. Pankhurst tripped him up, and down he went, the juniors clinging to him and sprawling over him. Pankhurst caught up the whip and threw it into a pond near at hand.

The farmer gasped for breath under the swarming juniors. He hardly knew what was happening, the sudden attack having almost scattered his slow wits.

"Come on!" cried Pankhurst.

The juniors jumped up and rushed on. Pankhurst had seen the fence, and he was ready for it. He ran right on, while the farmer was gasping on the ground, and cleared the fence with a leap. Price was after him in a second, and the two dashed on. After them came one after another the best jumpers of the Fourth.

Farmer Turmutt staggered to his feet.

Half a dozen of the hounds had baulked at the fence, and halted. The farmer dashed towards them, and they promptly dodged him, and he chased them out of the gate. They were out of the running now. But Pankhurst and Price and eight others were in full cry.

"There they are!" gasped Pankhurst suddenly.

Far ahead, now, over woods and fields, could be seen the ruins of the ancient Priory of Clive-

dale. Several huge masses of masonry stood out black against the grey, winter sky. And on top of one of the fragments, looking back, were the hares.

Poindexter and Neville had made the best of their start.

The delay in the farmyard had given them a chance to recover their ground. While the pack were dealing with Mr. Turmutt, the hares had covered the ground at a splendid pace, and fully recovered all that they had lost by their over-confidence.

They had reached the ruins of the Priory, the turning point in the run, pretty well blown. They clambered on the highest fragment to look back, and saw the pink shirts of the pack streaming across a field at a great distance back.

Dick gasped and sank down on the masonry.

"That was a narrow shave for us, Poindexter!"

"I guess so," said the American chum, "and all our own fault, too. But we've got a start again, and I calculate we shall keep it back to Cliveden."

"I've been thinking," Dick remarked reflectively, as he sat leaning back against the stone, in a glow of warmth from the run, "Grahame knows the course, doesn't he?"

"I believe so. What about him?"

"It's occurred to me that he might meet us going back, and drop on us. It would be just like one of his caddish tricks. He can't make a fuss about the papers in case it comes out that they were sporting papers. But he won't let us off cheaply."

Poindexter nodded thoughtfully.

"I say, it would be no joke to meet that bullying brute, Dick, when we're blown with the run at the finish!" he remarked.

"We shall have to be on the look-out, that's all," said Dick. "After all, there are two of us, and if he interferes, we sha'n't mince matters with him, prefect or no prefect."

"I guess so, Dick."

Dick Neville rose and took another look at the pack. He counted them rapidly as they ran nearer and nearer.

"Eight of them now," he exclaimed. "I can see a couple tailing off a long way back."

"Pankhurst and Price are there, of course."

"Oh, yes, in the lead, too." "Time we started again."

The chums left the ruined Priory, and set out at a swinging trot on the homeward run. They followed a footpath through a wood, leaving the scent clear behind, and had just come out of the wood on the opposite side when a bugle note rang through the crisp air.

"Panky again! They haven't stopped at the Priory."

"No, they're sticking it out well."

"Which way now?"

"Follow me."

Dick turned down a rough track leading away from a pleasant lane. Poindexter looked dubious, but he trusted to his chum's guidance, and followed. Dick glanced at him.

"Yes, I know it's a rougher road than the other," he said, "but it will be just as rough for the hounds as for us. But that isn't why I've taken it."

"What's the idea, then?"

"You see it's a chalky road, and the paper doesn't show up on the white dust. The hounds will lose time here, I fancy."

"Good. I never thought of that."

The white paper did, indeed, show little on the white road. When the hounds came streaming out of the wood Pankhurst halted in doubt. The hares were well enough ahead by this time, and the track was for the moment lost.

"This way!" exclaimed Greene. "Up this track! There's the paper!"

"Come on!" called out Price, and Pankhurst gave a note on his bugle to call in the hounds who had scattered to look for the trail.

But the going was slower now. They knew that the hares might have left the track at any point, and as the paper was hard to see, they had to run slowly and keep their eyes on it. But fortune favoured the hounds at last. Pankhurst gave a sudden exclamation of delight.

"Look there! I fancy they never reckoned on that! Put the speed on!"

For now there was pink paper mingled with the white, and the pink showed up well on the dust.

"Good old 'Pink Un'!" chuckled Price. The hares had evidently come upon the fragments of a pink sporting paper among the rest in the bags. It was a material help to the pack. They ran on more swiftly. The note of the bugle rang to the ears of the hunted hares.

"There they are!" shouted Pankhurst. "Come on!"

The 7th Chapter.

A Close Finish.

THREE miles more!" gasped Dick Neville, as the bugle-note fell upon his ears. "My hat! It will be a run now, Poindexter!"

Poindexter set his teeth.

"We've got to win! Come on, Dick!"

Right gallantly the hares went down the road. It was the high road they were on now, and it led them back to Clivebank village. Their feet seemed scarcely to touch the ground as they sprinted on.

The bags were getting empty now. Three miles more to home, and the prospect was that it would be a close finish—very close. But the chums were determined to win. They were fighting for the honour of the Combine.

Ta-ra-rart-a-t-t-ara-ara-a!

"Panky again! That chap sticks it out like a Trojan! He deserves to win!" panted Dick. "But he sha'n't! Put your beef into it, Poindexter!"

Right on, and on, and on. They turned from the road into a winding lane, and from that to another, keeping on in the direction of the village. In the setting sun a sheet of water gleamed ahead. They ran on to the margin of the river.

Dick Neville uttered an exclamation of dismay. "The plank's gone!"

Poindexter gave a whistle.

The stream was usually crossed by a plank, but it was gone now. Dick's brows contracted. The water was deep at that point. He looked at Poindexter.

"It's a dozen feet or more, Poindexter—but it's that or a licking!"

Poindexter's reply was to toss his bag of scent to the opposite bank and plunge in.

Dick Neville followed the next moment.

Splash! splash!

They struck out gallantly, and in a minute or less were clutching at the reeds on the opposite



"Got them!" panted Pankhurst, making a desperate clutch at Dick's shoulder. Dick made one more effort, and went staggering onward, and Pankhurst's clutch missed by an inch. The next moment the hares were rolling on the ground, utterly fagged and spent, and Pankhurst and Price staggered against the gateway. "We've won!" howled Micky Flynn.

bank. Dick scrambled ashore and gave a hand to Poindexter.

"That knocks Price out, at all events!" he gasped. "Price can't swim!"

They ran on. On the top of a rising ground they looked back. Splash! splash! Two fellows had plunged in, and the rest had halted on the bank. And among those who had halted were Pankhurst and Price.

"Panky's not going to funk it, surely!"

The American boy gave a yell.

"Funk it! Look at him! Bravo, Panky!"

"Bravo!" shouted Dick, the next moment.

For Pankhurst had plunged in, and Price had followed, and Pankhurst was swimming across with his chum clinging to his shoulders. It was risky work for Price, who could not swim, to cross water twelve feet deep, but he hadn't hesitated for a moment.

"Good old Panky!" exclaimed Dick. "My hat! I'm proud of him! He'll be in at the death if anybody is! But come on!"

The hares darted on, on the road to the village. Pankhurst and Price crawled out of the water and shook themselves like mastiffs. The other two who had crossed were already on the chase. Four had given it up, and were going down the stream towards the bridge.

"Run! Run!" gasped Pankhurst. "We'll do it yet!"

And the Old Firm dashed on, and soon passed the two other hounds, and sprinted with deadly determination on the track of the elusive hares.

Poindexter and Neville came out into the village street, and passed through Clivebank like a flash. Then they turned into the lane that led up to the school.

"The last lap!" gasped Dick.

Dusk was falling on the countryside. The hares dropped the scent from the rapidly-emptying bags as they ran. Dick looked back over his shoulder as a bugle-note rent the air.

"Two!" he exclaimed. "Only two, Poin!"

"Pankhurst and Price, of course?"

"Of course!"

It was near the finish now. The hunt was left to the rivals now—the Combine against the Old Firm. Which would win?

A shadow loomed out from under the trees, and a hand clutched at Dick Neville.

"Now, you young cad—"

It was Grahame's voice. Dick reeled with the grip on his shoulder. He was almost too spent to resist.

"Grahame!" he gasped. "Hands off! Don't you see how close they are!"

"I'll give you—"

"You coward! Let me go! Let me—"

Biff! Poindexter was not stopping to argue. He charged right at Grahame like a bull, and butted the prefect in the chest.

Grahame went reeling and staggering. Poindexter staggered, too; his head was singing with the concussion. There was a loud splash. Grahame, unable to save his balance, had tumbled headlong into the ditch beside the lane.

Dick Neville gave a gasping laugh.

"Come on, Poin, before he gets out!"

"I'm coming!" gasped Poindexter.

His head was swimming, but he dashed on bravely. The hares vanished up the lane in the dusk, but the encounter, brief as it was, had cost them precious moments. The hounds were close behind. Grahame crawled out of the ditch, mad with rage, and two running figures bumped right into him in the growing dusk.

"Got them!" roared Price, clutching Grahame by the hair.

"You—you cheeky young rascal!"

"That's not them!" chuckled Pankhurst. "It sounds like Grahame—come on! Get out of the way, Grahame, can't you, fathead!"

The furious prefect made a blow at him, but Pankhurst dodged it. The chums of No. 10 ran on, and the prefect, muttering emphatic things below his breath, tramped dismally to the school, mud squelching in his boots at every step.

The hares were on the last hundred yards now. Micky Flynn was standing in the gateway, with a good many other fellows who had collected there to see the hunt come in. He was watching the road anxiously, and he gave a whoop at the sight of the two running figures.

"Here they are!"

"One spurt more, Poin!" gasped Dick, as he heard the rapid patter of footsteps behind.

"I—I—I—" Poindexter was staggering. "Dick, old man—"

Neville turned back in consternation.

"Poin! You're not cracking up now—on the last lap!"

"My—my head—it was charging that brute did it!" groaned Poindexter. "I—I'm sorry, Dick. Run on—don't let them catch both."

Dick Neville set his teeth.

"Hold on to my shoulder, Poin, and run! I'll take your weight—I'll grip you so—can you stick it?" he cried anxiously.

"I—I guess so!" muttered Poindexter.

They dashed on. Dick was half-leading, half-carrying his chum. Poindexter made a last terrible effort, and Dick put out all his strength. They dashed up to the gate.

"Got them!" panted Pankhurst, making a desperate clutch at Dick's shoulder as the chums reeled into the gateway.

But Dick made one more effort, and went staggering onward; and Pankhurst's clutch missed by an inch.

The next moment the hares were rolling on the ground, utterly fagged and spent, and Pankhurst and Price staggered against the gateway.

"We've won!" howled Micky Flynn.

He tossed his cap wildly into the air. The hares had won—by an inch. The gate was the finish, and Dick and Poindexter had reached it just in time. One second more, and the hounds would have had them.

"I—I—I—you've won!" gasped Pankhurst, his heart beating in great thumps as he reeled against the gate. "But—but it was a near thing."

Dick Neville sat up.

"But we did it," he managed to utter. "We did it, Panky! But—but I admit you nearly had us, and you made a jolly good run. Help us in, you chaps!"

Willing hands helped the exhausted hares into the house, and others did the same for the hounds. What they wanted was a good rub down and a change, and after they had had it they felt much better.

They were fagged, but they were all right; only Poindexter feeling a touch of a headache. The rest of the pack came in in twos and threes for the next hour, to learn that the hares had won by the skin of their teeth.

The Combine had won; but the victory had been so narrow a one that defeat was no disgrace to the Old Firm. After they had changed their clothes the rivals met at the festive board in No. 4 study, where Micky had prepared a really ripping tea. And they discussed that meal with the keen appetite engendered by a long run in the winter air, and thus amicably ended the great Cliveden Paper-chase.

THE END.

(In next Wednesday's issue, besides long instalments of all our popular serial stories, there will appear another grand, complete school story, in which all the characters who have figured in the tale you have just read will appear. It is entitled "The Fourth Form Reformers," and tells how the old firm and the combine amalgamated to put down a money-lending business that was being most unfairly carried out by one of their school-fellows. It is a grand story, and readers should not fail to order next week's BOYS' HERALD a day or two in advance.)