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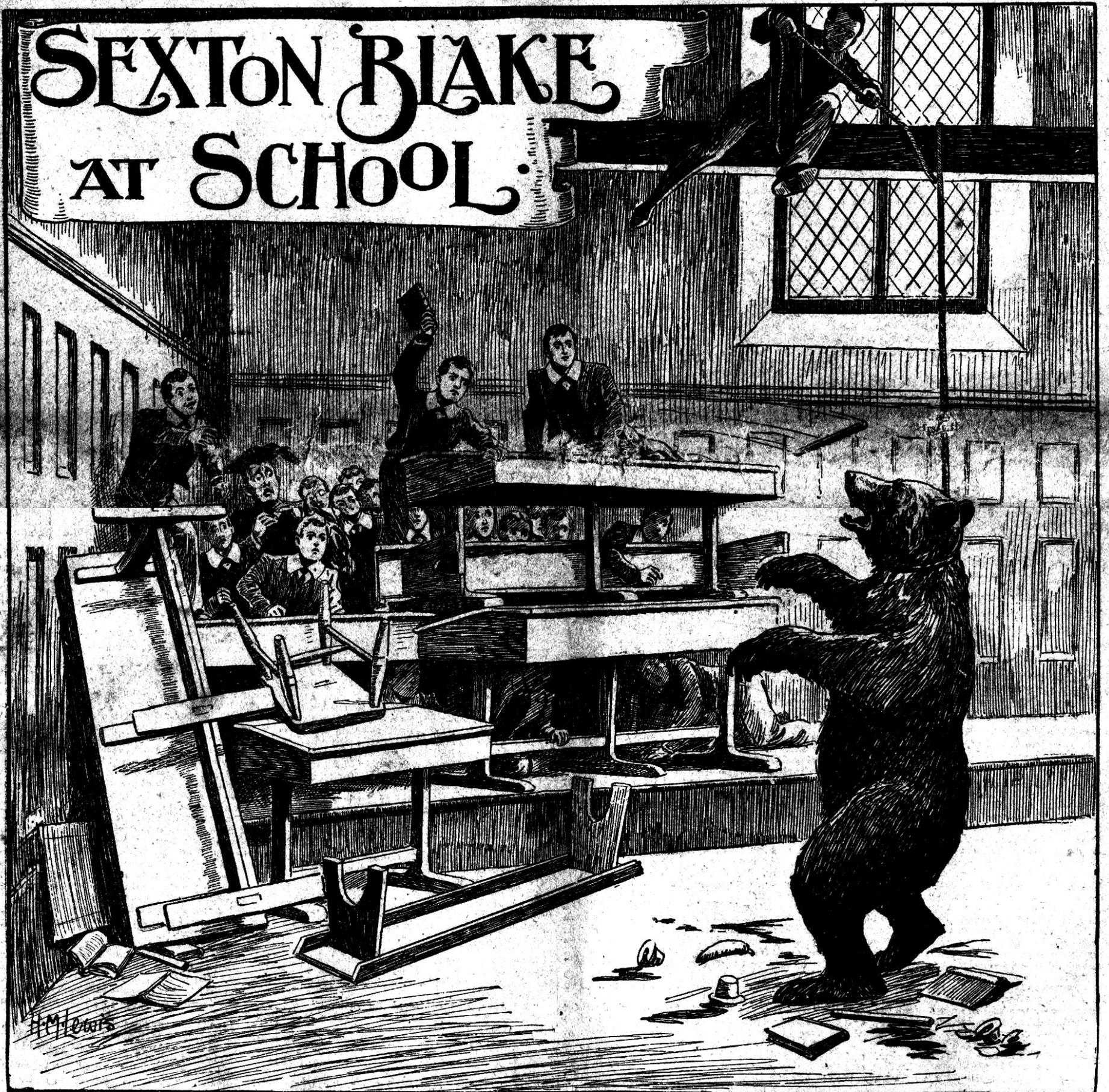
EVERY BOY'S AND YOUNG MAN'S
STORY AND HOBBY PAPER.

No. 241, Vol. V.

EVERY WEDNESDAY—ONE PENNY.

WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 29, 1908.

SEXTON BLAKE AT SCHOOL.



"Let me out!" screamed Mr. Newton, above the din. "Let me out, I say! Blake, hold the brute tight!" "I can't, sir," said Blake. "My hands are cramped already, and I've seven hundred lines to do. I shall have to let go."

Bravo, Cliveden!

A COMPLETE STORY.

Specially
Written
by
CHARLES
HAMILTON.

The Exciting Story of a School
Football Cup-Tie.



The 1st Chapter. The Semi-Final.

"GOAL!"
"Bravo, Poindexter!"
"Goal! Goal! Hurrah!"

The juniors of Cliveden School were clustered round the football ground, waving their caps or throwing them into the air, and yelling themselves hoarse.

A scene of wilder excitement had seldom been witnessed on the school ground. It was the first goal taken in the match, and it had been captured by Poindexter, the American chum and the head of the trio known in Cliveden as the "Combine." But although it was the first goal, it was the end of the match, and in the four or five minutes that yet remained for play, everyone knew that the score would not be altered.

It was one of the toughest junior matches ever played at Cliveden, and the now certain victory of the home team made the youngsters wild with delight.

For close on ninety minutes Cliveden Juniors had been struggling with Carbury Athletic, and the two teams were so evenly matched that it was impossible for the keenest spectator to foretell the end of the struggle—till it came.

Even Trevelyan, the captain of Cliveden, who stood looking on with a group of other Sixth-Formers, had an open mind on the subject.

Carbury were playing up obstinately, and they seemed fully a match for the Cliveden Juniors, and it looked as if only a stroke of luck for either side could prevent the match from ending in a goalless draw.

And the match was an important one to the school. It was the semi-final in the local competition, and if Cliveden won, they would face their last rivals for the coveted South Loamshire Cup; and if they lost—

But one and all refused to think of that possibility. They were not going to lose. To lose, and to be squeezed out of the competition at such a late stage, was unthinkable; and the Cliveden juniors wouldn't think of it.

They were going to beat Carbury Athletic, and then they were going to win the final, and bring the Cup home to Cliveden. Poindexter, as a matter of fact, had already been calculating the cost of a brass band to escort the Cup home on that famous occasion, which he regarded as certain to come off. And so it may be imagined that the juniors of Cliveden watched this match with eager eyes and their hearts in their mouths.

Although the competition was a junior one, there were many clubs in it of a much higher average age and weight than Cliveden Juniors; but, as Pankhurst of the Fourth put it, what they lacked in that way they could make up by better play, and the eleven agreed with him.

And some splendid play the Cliveden team put into this match, holding their own gallantly against heavy charges, keeping their goal clear from the most desperate attacks, and frequently putting that of their opponents in peril.

Price, in the home goal, was frequently called upon to save, and he did it in a really noble manner, no shot seeming too difficult for him.

Unfortunately, the Carbury goalie was equally up to the mark, and the game had worn on to within five minutes of the finish, before that famous goal came from Poindexter's foot, which caused Cliveden to go nearly frantic with delight.

"Goal!"
The roar seemed to shake the air. It was a junior match, but the way the Sixth-Formers round the ground cheered the success of the youngsters showed what a strong feeling of esprit de corps existed at Cliveden.

Trevelyan shouted as loudly as any, and Sixth and Fifth backed him up, Poindexter's old enemies of the Fifth, Crane and Cuffy, clapping their hands frantically.

"Hurrah!"
"Good old Poindexter!"
"Good old Tinned Beef!"

Poindexter's keen, good-humoured face was flushed with pleasure as he walked back to the centre of the field with his comrades.

His chums Neville and Flynn thumped him on the back with speechless delight, and Pankhurst gave him an expressive dig in the ribs which took away what little breath he had left after a terrific run up the field.

"Oh!" gasped Poindexter.
"Splendid, old chap!"
"Yes, but don't cave in my ribs, old fellow, please!"

Pankhurst giggled.
"We've beaten them, Puntbuster! They can't pick up now."

"I guess so."

"Sure, and it's right ye are, Panky, old son," said Micky Flynn. "Faith, I—"

"Line up!" said Dick Neville, who was junior football captain.

"Faith, and I—"

"Ring off, Micky. Look out, kids!"

Carbury kicked off, without much hope of being able to make the score level. And they were right; for the last few minutes of the match petered out in an ineffectual struggle in midfield, and the whistle went with Cliveden still one goal to the good.

The young footballers, fagged, but very pleased with themselves, trooped off the field, sure now of the final.

Carbury naturally felt disappointed, but the game had been too hard and fast for them to feel anything much, except tired.

The Cliveden team were met by an enthusiastic crowd as they made for the pavilion. Trevelyan, captain of Cliveden, shook hands with Poindexter, and Crane and Cuffy slapped him on the back. The juniors crowded round, yelling themselves hoarse and waving their caps. And Lincoln G. Poindexter disappeared amid a roar of cheers that rang from one end of Cliveden College to the other.

The 2nd Chapter. How the Old Firm Made Friends with the Combine.

"WE'RE safe for the final!" So said Dick Neville, as the chums of the Fourth Form at Cliveden sat down to tea in No. 4 study, after a much-needed wash and change following the football match.

The Combine were tired, but it was a pleasant tiredness, following hard work well done. Tea in the study was grateful and comforting, and the little room looked very cosy and cheerful, with the light gleaming on a new, white tablecloth, and the fire bright and ruddy, with the kettle singing on the hob.

Three cheerful faces were round the tea-table. The Combine were in high spirits. Dick Neville poured out the tea, and the fragrant odour of it was wafted through the open doorway to the nostrils of two red-haired juniors who were coming up the passage.

"Safe for the final!" repeated Lincoln G. Poindexter. "That's right enough, Dick. And we shall win it, too."

"Faith, and sure we shall, but we don't know yet whom we have to meet."

"It's according to whether Redclyffe School or North End won to-day," said Poindexter thoughtfully. "We shall know to-night, I expect. And I guess, kids, that we shall have to keep ourselves fit for the cup tie."

"Rather."

"We shall have to— Hallo, you bounders!" Pankhurst and Price looked into the study. Their faces were almost as ruddy as their hair, from the exercise of the afternoon's match. Pankhurst and Price, otherwise known as the

Old Firm, were the Combine's deadly rivals, but as both were in the junior football eleven, they had to come to a truce sometimes. And their looks on the present occasion showed that they had not come for a "row."

"Hallo!" said Pankhurst. "We've got some news, and we thought we'd drop in, in passing, and let you know."

"Faith, and sure it's a nice kid ye are, Panky; and ye're heart's as warm as ye're hair!"

"Let my hair alone, please."

"Faith, and I will. I don't want to burn my fingers!"

"I say, kids, come in to tea," said Neville hospitably. "We've got a good supply, thanks to a tip Poindexter had from his popper."

"Good!" said Pankhurst. "I don't want to look a gift horse in the mouth, but if Poindexter senior has been sending you any tinned beef, I can't—"

"Oh, let the tinned beef rest," said the boy from Chicago. "I guess we've got the best here that can be got from Clivebank tuck-shop, and you're welcome."

"Then we'll join you with pleasure, Puntbuster; won't we, Pricey?"

"Quite so," said Price.

And the red-haired chums of No. 10 study came in, and Neville dragged a box up to the table for Pankhurst, while Flynn wheeled up the armchair for Price.

"Good!" said Pankhurst. "I like this. You kids are not much class as a rule, but you know how to rig up a study feed. I'll always say that for you."

"I guess—"

"It's my turn to guess, Puntbuster. I guess I'll have some of the sausage rolls," said Pankhurst coolly.

Poindexter laughed, and passed the sausage rolls.

"Faith, and what's the news ye've brought?" asked Micky Flynn.

"Why, we've heard the result of the other match."

"Who's won?"

"Redclyffe School. They beat North End this afternoon by three goals to one."

Poindexter gave a whistle.

"Then we shall have to meet Redclyffe in the final," he exclaimed. "And we only beat Carbury by a single goal this time; and North End are quite up to Carbury form."

"We shall have our work cut out to beat Redclyffe," said Dick Neville.

"Quite so."

"I have been thinking about that," said Pankhurst, helping himself to ham and tongue. "And I've thought that it would be a good idea to stop study rows for the next week, and devote ourselves solely to the job of getting fit for next Saturday's final."

"Good idea! We don't have a cup-tie every week."

"It's worth while making a sacrifice, I guess, to carry off the South Loamshire Junior Cup," Poindexter remarked. "We're willing to make it pay, if you fellows are."

"We came along to propose it," said Pankhurst. "Of course, you bounders will have to keep your place."

"I guess that as long as you rotters keep yours there won't be any difficulty."

"Faith! And sure it's right ye are, Puntbuster darling. All Panky and Price have to do is to admit that we're the heads of the Fourth."

"Admit your grandmother!" ejaculated Pankhurst scornfully.

"Quite so," said Price.

"Sure, Panky, if ye—"

"I was going to say—"

"I guess—"

"Oh, give us a rest from your guessing for a bit, young Chicago. I was going to say that if you kids keep your place, and aren't cheeky, there's no reason why there should be any study rows for a week."

"You're starting them already."

"I'm not. I came here with the most peaceful intentions in the world, but I'm not going to put up with any tinned-beef cheek."

"If you say tinned beef again I'll—"

"Rats!"

"Quite so!"

"Sure, and can't ye kape the pace, ye spalpeens?"

"Oh, dry up, Micky!"

"Faith, and I won't! If ye weren't in our study as guests I'd wipe up the flure wid yer red head intirely!"

"Don't let that trouble you," said Pankhurst, jumping up. "I'd like to see any boulder in this study wipe up my head with a floor—I mean wipe up a floor with my study—that is to say"

"Faith! And it's getting mixed ye are, Panky—"

"Don't interrupt me, you wild Irishman."

"I guess—"

"Ring off, Chicago! No tinned beef wanted now!"

"If you can't—"

"Rats!"

"I tell you—"

"And I tell you—"

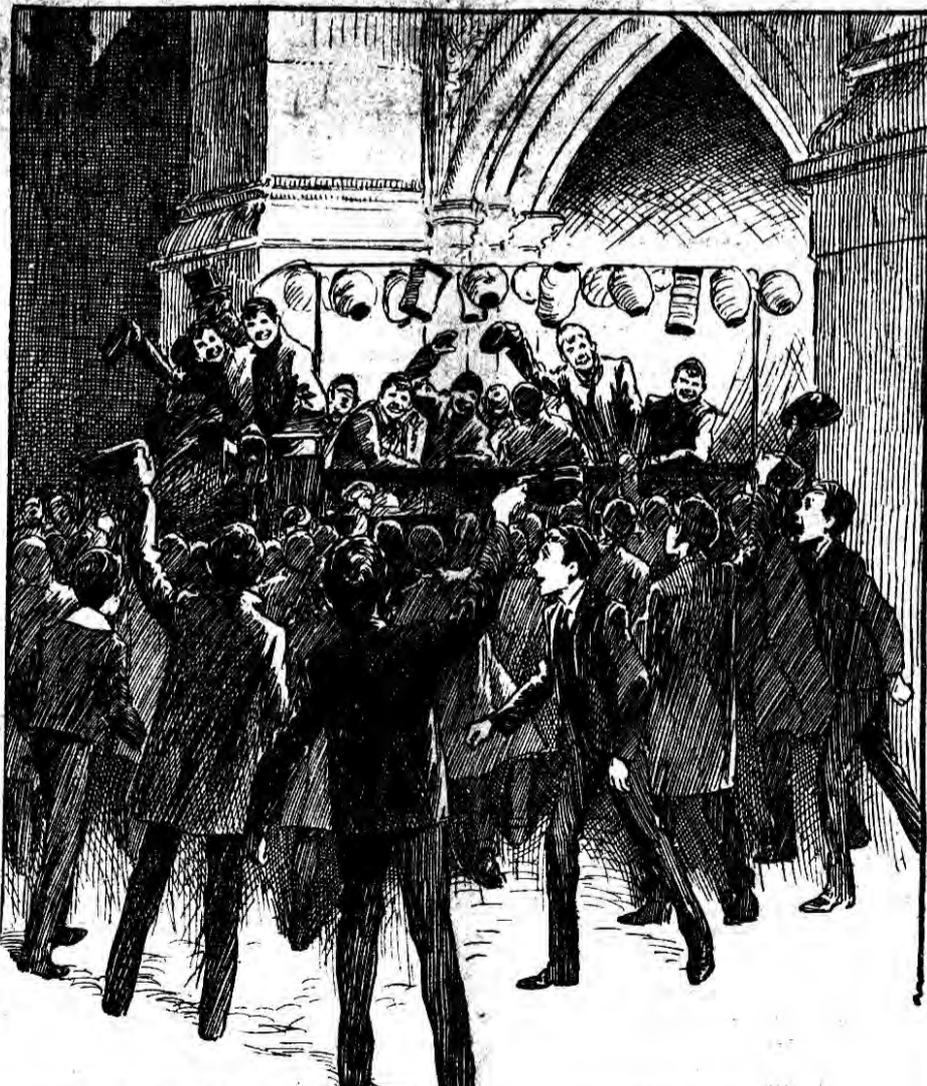
"Sure, and ye're a pair of red-headed spalpeens! Ow!"

Micky Flynn broke off abruptly, as a pat of butter spattered on his mouth. He did not wait to argue, but slung a plate of jam tarts at Pankhurst. Half of them went over Poindexter, and he jumped up, and knocked against Price.

How it came about the juniors hardly knew, but a moment more, and five youngsters were fighting like tigers, and the tea-table was a wreck.

It was a not infrequent ending to meetings between the Combine and the Old Firm.

The tea-table went over with a crash, and the contents of a tea-cup flowed down Price's neck as



THE RETURN— —OF THE VICTORS.

Loud hurrahs rang out as the brake was seen to loom up in the gloom of the road. It was adorned with Chinese lanterns, and presented a gay sight. Juniors were clinging to it wherever it would hold them, and it proceeded at a snail's pace. Some of the fellows were playing tin whistles, some mouth-organs, and the din was tremendous.

he fell amongst the ruins, and Neville's face was jammed into the butter. Micky rolled on to the crockery in the grip of Pankhurst, and there was a terrific crash of china.

There was a furious knocking on the ceiling underneath. Grahame, the prefect, had the room below, and he was the worst-tempered fellow in the Sixth Form at Cliveden. The knocking passed unregarded, and there was a sound of footsteps in the passage, which also passed unnoticed by the juniors.

Then the angry face of Grahame glared into the study.

"What's all this row about over my head?" he roared, swishing a cane in the air.

Pankhurst sat up. His face was jammy and buttery, and a sausage was sticking in his collar, and tea was spilt over his waistcoat and trousers.

He looked at Grahame. "Oh, it's all right, Grahame!" he said. "We just came here to make friends with the fellows in this study."

Even Grahame had to laugh. "So this is how you make friends, is it?"

"Well, you see—"

"How much row would you make if you came as enemies, eh?"

"It's like this—"

"And like this," said Grahame. "You're not going to make a row like that for nothing. If you want to make a row, I'll give you a reason."

And Grahame dashed in among the juniors, lashing out with the cane right and left.

The 3rd Chapter.

Poindexter's Good Idea.

PANKHURST jumped out of the way with a yell as he received a sharp cut, and Micky Flynn roared like a bull as the cane descended upon him.

The juniors were soon all yelling, and the prefect grinned as he laid the cane on. But it was dangerous work to attack the Combine in their own quarters.

Poindexter seized a loaf of bread, and hurled it at the prefect, and Grahame, caught unexpectedly by the rather weighty missile, was bowled over like a wicket.

He sat down upon the broken crockery, and needless to say, he jumped up again in a great hurry.

"Out with him!" shouted Poindexter. "What does he mean by coming into a respectable study like this? Kick him out!"

"Kick him out!"

The juniors scrambled all round Grahame. There were five of them, rather a handful, even for a Sixth-Former, and Grahame had dropped his cane in order to rub the place where he had fallen upon the broken china.

"Together, kids!" shouted Poindexter.

"Righto!" said Pankhurst. "Here goes!"

Five pairs of hands gripped the prefect, and ran him to the door. A shower of kicks behind drove him out, and he went at an involuntary run along the passage.

The door of the study was slammed behind him.

MAKE MORE MONEY!

To the Principal of

"The Boys' Friend"

Correspondence College,

2, Carmelite House,
London, E.C.

Dear Principal,

I have resolved to improve my position in life before the 1st of January, 1909. I am going to work hard in the position I now occupy. At the same time I am determined to gain some expert knowledge; so that, for every shilling I have earned in 1908, I will earn two shillings in the New Year. I mean to try and double my income. I have written my name and address at the foot of this Resolution, and I ask you to send me, without charge, a letter of advice to help me to carry it out, together with your illustrated booklet dealing with your system of postal tuition. The booklet I refer to is the one recently issued by you, showing how to make more money, and how to rise to the top of the tree.

(Signed)

(Address)

Grahame turned back in a fury, but he felt too damaged to continue the contest. He went savagely downstairs to his own study. He met Crane and Cuffy on the stairs, and the two Fifth-Formers stared at his dishevelled state in amazement.

"Hullo, Grahame! Been wrestling with a lawn-mower?" asked Crane.

"Or a motor-car?" asked Cuffy.

"Mind your own business!" snapped the prefect, hurrying on, leaving the two Fifth-Formers chuckling.

"My word, Grahame!" exclaimed Trevelyan, the captain of Cliveden, as he encountered the prefect near his study. "What have you been doing with yourself?"

Grahame scowled savagely.

"Better ask your favourites in No. 4 study," he snarled. "You teach them to disrespect the Sixth."

"Oh, shut up!" said Trevelyan. "More bullying, I suppose. I know how to take your complaints against that study, Grahame."

"You back them up in everything—"

"In resisting bullying, certainly," said Trevelyan. "And I suppose that is what this amounts to. This isn't the first time you've come away from that study looking like a scarecrow, and I advise you to give them a wider berth."

And the captain of Cliveden walked away. A minute or two later he looked into No. 4 study. The juniors were trying to put themselves to rights, and they looked rather dismayed as the glance of the captain fell upon them.

Trevelyan looked at them curiously.

"What sort of a game do you call that?" he asked.

"We came here to make friends."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But these kids were so cheeky—"

"I guess the cheek was on your side."

"Oh, don't talk rot, Puntpusher!"

"Quite so!"

"Faith, and it was ye're own fault intoirely, Panky. Ye—"

"Now, don't you start talking, Flynn. You never leave off."

"Faith! And I—"

"Look here, you youngsters," said Trevelyan seriously. "As you're all playing in the cup-tie next Saturday, I should advise you to stop this sort of thing for the next week at least, and give up the time to footer."

"Faith! And that was our idea, but Panky—"

"We thought of it ourselves, Trevelyan, but Poindexter—"

"Oh, settle it between you," said Trevelyan, laughing, and he went out and slammed the door.

The juniors looked at one another.

"Sure, and the captain thinks we're a set of squabbleome kids, and don't know how to behave ourselves," said Micky Flynn. "All your fault, Panky."

"Your fault, you mean, fathead!"

"Faith! And who are you callin' a fat-head?"

"I'm calling you a—"

"I guess—"

"Oh, rats! If you kids—"

"Oh, shut up—"

It looked as if the row were about to recommence, but Poindexter waved his hand, and pushed back the excited Micky.

"Pax!" he exclaimed. "No need to let Trevelyan think we're a lot of fools. We'll keep the peace till after next Saturday."

"We're willing, of course; but you fellows will have to—"

"Oh, rats, don't argue!"

"I shall argue if I like!"

"Quite so."

"My dear kid, argument will lead to rows," said Poindexter. "We've made this study into a pesky wreck, and my idea is that we go and clean ourselves up—some of us need it—and then have tea in No. 10."

Pankhurst laughed. His good-humour was seldom failing for long.

"Righto!" he exclaimed. "We've got a decent show there, and we'll be glad if you come. And mind, it's pax for a week."

"Agreed."

And the juniors, having come to that settlement, left the study as it was, and removed the traces of the combat, and then adjourned to Pankhurst's study to finish their interrupted meal.

Although the Old Firm could not furnish so elegant a spread as the one that had been spoiled, it was a sufficiently good one, and good-humour and contentment reigned in No. 10.

"I guess this is better than rowing," Poindexter said, as he set down his cup after the fourth filling. "You fellows had better come along after tea and help us put our quarters to rights."

"With pleasure," said Pankhurst politely.

"Quite so."

"That's all right, then. And it's pax for a week; and there's another thing, too. If we're going to win in the final next Saturday, we shall have to take care of ourselves. We must put in all the footer practice we can, and otherwise take care not to exert ourselves too much."

Pankhurst grinned.

"I don't think we've ever been really reckless in the matter of doing too much work," he remarked.

"Faith, and it's right ye are, Panky!"

"Still, one can't be too careful, I guess, with a cup-tie coming on. We're going to give up study rows, and I think we ought to bar fagging—"

"Ha, ha, ha! I don't know what the Sixth will say."

"The Sixth can go and eat coke."

"Faith, and I don't believe they would, Puntpusher!"

"Ass! We're not going to fag, especially for Grahame, nor exert ourselves too much with lessons, either."

"Good wheeze."

"If anybody complains we'll explain to them, and as reasonable persons they will be bound to see that we must take proper care of ourselves."

"Exactly."

"It's agreed, then," said Poindexter, looking round. "No more fagging till after next Saturday, and if there's trouble, we'll all hang together."

"Faith, and I don't suppose it will be a hangin' matter, Poin—"

"Ass! It's settled, kids?"

"Quite so."

"After all, we gave the Fifth the kybosh the time they started trying to fag us, and I guess we can take care of ourselves."

"Rather!"

"It's different with the Sixth, though," Dick Neville remarked thoughtfully. "Fagging by the Sixth is an old institution, and they do more for the fags, in the way of helping them with their work and with the footer, than the fags do for them."

"I guess I know all that. We shall expect to have fags, too, when we get into the Sixth. But it's not fagging on principle that I'm against, you see; only fagging for the next week, when we have to take especial care of ourselves."

"Righto! I'm with you. It will be fun, anyway."

"I guess it won't be fun," said Poindexter severely. "This is a serious matter."

"Ha, ha! I dare say it will be serious for some of us."

"We all stand together—"

"Hallo! What's that?" ejaculated Micky Flynn.

"What's what?"

"Somebody called."

"Let 'em call."

"I fancy it was Blagdon of the Sixth—"

"I don't care if it was Blagdon of the Sixth or any other Blagdon—"

"Faith, there it is again!"

The call, ringing along the corridor, was audible to all the juniors now.

"Fag! F-a-a-a-a-g!"

The 4th Chapter.

Not Quite a Success.

FAG!

All eyes in No. 10 study involuntarily turned upon Lincoln G. Poindexter.

The chum from Chicago had the honour of fagging for Blagdon of the Sixth. Would he have the courage of his principles, and defy the call? Or would the projected week's rest from fagging end in smoke before it had started? his companions wondered.

As a matter of fact, Poindexter wondered, too, for a minute or so. To suggest refusing to fag for a week, and combine to back one another up in carrying out the idea, was easy. But when the Sixth-Former's voice was actually heard calling for a fag, the matter assumed a slightly different aspect.

But Poindexter was blessed with a real American nerve. After one minute of hesitation, he sat down again firmly.

"Another cup of tea, Panky," he said calmly.

There was a murmur of admiration in the study. Pankhurst poured out the tea. Poindexter sugared and milked it calmly, and stirred it with a steady hand. Loud footsteps were heard coming along the corridor, and, in spite of themselves, the juniors felt their hearts beat faster as they heard the steps pass the door. Blagdon of the Sixth was evidently coming to look for his refractory fag, but he did not know as yet that he was in Pankhurst's quarters.

Poindexter drank his tea.

"Another sausage, Puntbuster?" asked Price.

"I guess so."

"Faith, and the baste's coming back," muttered Micky Flynn, a few moments later.

The heavy, angry footsteps were approaching again. Blagdon had evidently been to No. 4, and looked in, and found it empty.

The footsteps came closer and closer, and stopped at the door. Poindexter set down his knife and fork. The door was flung open, and Blagdon of the Sixth looked into the study.

"Have you seen that Yankee—" he began.

"Why, there he is?"

Blagdon simply glared at Poindexter. The American chum rose to his feet.

"I guess you're right, Blagdon," he said.

"Here I am."

"Didn't you hear me calling?"

"I guess so."

"And why didn't you come?" asked Blagdon, coming a step into the study.

"I guess I'll explain—"

"Quick, then. I've no time to waste, and it had better be a jolly good explanation, or you'll get the hiding of your life," said Blagdon.

"You see, Blagdon, I don't mind fagging for you as a rule—"

"Thank you," said Blagdon.

"But next Saturday we have to meet Redelyfie in the cup-tie final, and we think it would be best for us to save ourselves up, as it were, and not exert ourselves at all during the week."

The Sixth Former gasped.

"You—you think what?"

"I think it would be better for us not to exert ourselves with fagging, or anything of that sort, during the week," said Poindexter calmly. "I'm sorry, of course, if you're put to any inconvenience, but that's how the matter stands."

"Oh, that's how the matter stands, is it?" said Blagdon slowly.

"Exactly."

"And all these important members of the college are of the same mind, I suppose?" asked Blagdon, with great patience.

"I guess so."

"Yes, we're all in this," said Pankhurst.

"We stand in together."

"None of you going to fag?"

"Quite so."

"Ahem! It's news to me that the Fourth Form has become head of the school, and the Sixth has to hide its diminished head," said Blagdon. "Are you quite sure that your information on that point is correct?"

The juniors looked at one another.

"Now, Poindexter," said Blagdon. "I'm not going to lick you for your cheek—not because you don't deserve it, for you do; but because you played up so well in the match this afternoon. But if you don't come along instantly now, I'll make you think you were born to be a duster!"

Poindexter shook his head.

"I guess it can't be done, Blagdon."

"You won't come?"

"I can't."

Blagdon made a stride towards the junior.

"Line up!" shouted Poindexter.

The juniors lined up in a twinkling. Five determined faces confronted Blagdon. The senior stopped short and stared at them in blank, sheer amazement.

"Hands off!" said Poindexter. "We don't want a row, but—"

"By Jove! You cheeky young rascals!"

"It's only for a week, Blagdon. Take it calmly."

"I'll—I'll—my word!"

Blagdon turned round and strode from the study, and slammed the door after him. There was silence for a minute.

"I wonder what he's going to do about it?" said Pankhurst at last, rather uneasily.

Poindexter shrugged his shoulders.

"Let him do as he likes. I'm going to finish my tea."

The juniors resumed their tea, but as a matter of fact, they made more show of eating than anything else. It occurred even to Poindexter that he had taken, as he would have expressed it, a big contract on his hands. When the Combine united with the Old Firm, they generally had their way. But there might be a limit, and Poindexter felt that he might have reached it this time.

Five minutes passed, and then there was a sound of many feet in the corridor. The door was flung open, and Blagdon reappeared; and behind him could be seen four others—Grahame, Stacey, Fish, and Monson. They were the seniors to whom the services of the Combine and the Old Firm belonged as fags.

The juniors stood up. This was rather an unexpected move on the part of Blagdon, but the Combine and the Old Firm were not inclined to give in.

"Here we are," said Blagdon quite blandly.

"Here are the young gentlemen who do not wish to tire themselves with fagging for the next week."

"Cheeky young hounds!" growled Grahame.

"We are going to give them a lesson," went on Blagdon. "Not because we're annoyed at all—oh, dear no!—but because we think it our duty to show them that the Fourth is not yet the top Form at Cliveden. Got your canes?"

"Yes, rather!" said four voices in unison.

"Good! Then the show may as well begin."

"Look here—" began Poindexter.

"Faith, and sure—"

"Collar them!"

Five minutes such as the Combine and the Old Firm had never been through before, and the ordeal ended. The Sixth Formers went to the door. Blagdon turned back to smile at the squirming juniors.

"Mind, that was only done from a sense of duty, not because we were annoyed," he said.

"And remember that we're always willing to do our duty, and will keep it up as long as required."

And the humorous Blagdon left the study, and the door closed. The juniors looked at one another with sickly smiles. There was a long silence in the study. Poindexter broke it.

"I guess," he said, looking round, "that that idea of mine is not really so ripping as it seemed at first."

"Just what I was thinking," said Pankhurst.

"Besides, it comes hard on the Sixth. They can't do without us, you know."

"Quite so."

"Faith, and ye're right. Sure it would only be good-natured to fag for the poor dears, as they're so pressing about it."

"I guess so. That idea is off—if you're all agreeable?"

They all were!

The 5th Chapter.

The Day of the Final.

POINDEXTER'S excellent idea had, unfortunately, come to nothing, and the fagging duties were done as usual that week; but the juniors did not neglect to keep themselves fit for the cup-tie.

Football practice was never neglected at Cliveden, but during the week preceding the final the juniors seemed almost to live on the football field, to the verge of overdoing it.

As the Saturday came round, excitement was high at Cliveden College. They had fought their way through the competition to the final tie, so that, however the final ended, Cliveden would not finish badly. But that was not enough, they wanted to win the silver cup, and bring it home to Cliveden; and that they were determined to do.

The eleven were in high spirits and excellent form. They had worked hard to keep fit, and had neglected nothing. The Lower Forms kept them up to the mark, if they had been inclined to neglect anything. Any member of the eleven who had been caught smoking a cigarette the week before the match would have been ragged by his Form.

When Saturday came, the Cliveden juniors could scarcely muster enough patience for morning

lessons. They got through them somehow, and lines fell as thick as the leaves in autumn. But the juniors did not care. They had something more important than lines to think of—they were going to win the final!

The match was to take place at Redclyffe, and the brake bearing the Cliveden team was to leave the school at half-past one. Dick Neville mustered his team with the anxious care of a hen looking after its brood. They were all ready, and all right. The Combine and the Old Firm were in the finest form, and the rest of the eleven looked very fit.

Junior match as it was, Cliveden took quite as much interest in it as had ever been taken in a senior match; and Trevelyan, the captain, was as hearty as anybody. The captain of Cliveden had a seat in the brake, and so had several other Sixth Form fellows, as well as Neville's eleven. When the brake drove into the Close at Cliveden, it was greeted with a cheer. The cheering redoubled when the team came out to take their places in the vehicle.

Eleven good men and true, and Gatty, the reserve, stepped into the brake, then Trevelyan and his friends, and Crane and Cuffy. Cheer after cheer rang out as the brake drove off, and then most of the Cliveden juniors, and a good many of the seniors, made preparations to follow.

On bicycles, or on foot, the lads set out for Redclyffe; and in fact, many of the younger lads had already started. The eleven waved their caps as they dashed out of the gates of Cliveden, and took the road to Redclyffe.

It was a bright, cold afternoon, ideal weather for football. The eleven were in high spirits as they bowled over the short distance that separated them from Redclyffe.

"I guess we're going to win that cup," Poindexter remarked, for about the twentieth time, as the brake came in sight of the gates of Redclyffe. "How do you feel, Dick?"

"Quite sure about it, of course."

"And you, Micky?"

"Faith, and I feel as if I had the cup already in me trousers'-pocket," said Micky Flynn. Pankhurst laughed.

"I don't see how you'd get it in, Micky," he remarked. "Still, we're going to have the giddy cup, and keep it at Cliveden till next season."

"Quite so."

A crowd of Redclyffe fellows were standing round the gates there, waiting for the arrival of the Cliveden team.

They gave the brake a cheer as it dashed up, and made room for it to pass. And the Cliveden contingent arrived in great style at Redclyffe.

Lankester, the Redclyffe captain, gave Cliveden a hearty welcome.

"We are going to beat you, of course," he remarked, as he shook hands all round with the Combine and the Old Firm. "We are not going to let you collar the cup."

Poindexter laughed.

"That is exactly how we feel towards you, Lankester, I guess," he remarked. "We love you very much, and we're going to give you the licking of your lives."

And the Redclyffe captain grinned.

"Righto! May the best team win," he said. "That's good enough for us!"

"Faith, and sure we—"

"Here's your dressing-room, and the kick-off is at half-past two, as you know. Plenty of time to get ready. It will be a good tussle, anyway, which ever side collars the cup," said Lankester.

And the Cliveden team were left to change.

Round the football ground the crowd was thick, and growing thicker. Fellows were arriving from Cliveden every moment, and mingling fraternally with the Redclyffians. Each school was quite confident of victory, so there was a difference of opinion on that point; but the most absolute good-humour reigned. The fellows on either side were ready to cheer for any bit of good play, and that was exactly as it should have been.

There was a buzz as the home team turned out into the field, eleven fine fellows in blue shirts and blue knickers. The referee, in Norfolk jacket and whistle, was already on the ground.

Redclyffe punted an old ball about for a few minutes, and then the Cliveden juniors, in red and white, turned out. The referee looked at his watch.

There was a cheer from the Redclyffians as, after the rival captains had tossed, Lankester was seen pointing towards the goal from which the wind was blowing.

Redclyffe had won the toss, and started with an initial advantage.

The teams walked to the centre of the field, and lined up, with the ball at Dick Neville's foot.

The whistle blew shrilly.

The ball rolled from the Cliveden captain's foot, and the match commenced.

**The 6th Chapter.
The First Half.**

There was a breathless silence round the football ground as the final started. The teams seemed so well matched that it was impossible to predict which side would prove ultimately victorious, but one thing was apparent to all, and that was, that the match would be the hardest-contested of any junior match they had ever seen.

Both sides were trained and tried; both in deadly earnest, determined to win!

The Redclyffe team were the heavier of the two, and in this respect Cliveden had the disadvantage, as in the semi-final. But Cliveden's combination was perfect, and they had a leader who knew his business, and knew it well!

The game was begun by Redclyffe with a great deal of kick-and-rush business, and the visitors were borne back to their goal; but in that goal stood Price, apparently all eyes and hands and feet.

The Redclyffians came with a rush up to the goal, through forwards and halves, and Lankester slammed the ball in.

But Price was all there! Out it went again from his ready fist, only to meet a Redclyffe head, and come popping in again like a cork. But Price's boot met it this time, and it dropped to Greene, the left back, who cleared well, sending the leather humming to the half-way line.

The field rushed after it, but the Cliveden forwards were well up to their work, and they captured the ball and bore it on through the home half, passing and re-passing like clockwork.

A shout rose and swelled as the Cliveden forwards swooped down on the home goal, and Neville drove the ball in.

Was it a goal? No—for the custodian was well up to his work, and he fisted it out again well, and a powerful kick from a back sent it into touch half way up the field.

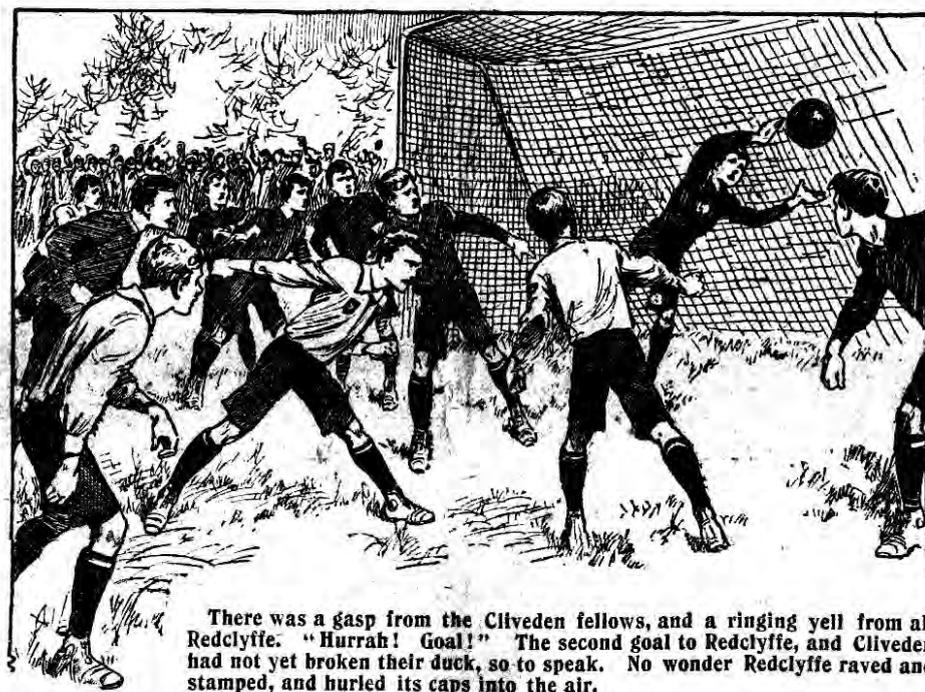
And the spectators breathed again. There was no score as yet, but the game had been lively from the very start, and it was certain that the play, however it resulted, would be well worth watching.

An obstinate tussle in midfield followed, and the ball went frequently into touch, but upon the whole Redclyffe seemed to gain, working their way along almost inch by inch. And at last Cliveden, hard pressed, were forced to give a corner.

There was a hush as the kick was taken. The silence was broken by a terrific roar as the ball, dropping to Lankester's foot, was slammed home before Price had a chance to save.

Redclyffe roared with all its lungs. "Goal!" "Goal! Goal! Hurrah!" "Good old Lankester!" "Bravo, Lanky!"

Price looked grim as he tossed out the leather. He had done his best, but that shot had been too much for him; but his face was as red as his hair, and he could not look Pankhurst in the face.



There was a gasp from the Cliveden fellows, and a ringing yell from all Redclyffe. "Hurrah! Goal!" The second goal to Redclyffe, and Cliveden had not yet broken their duck, so to speak. No wonder Redclyffe raved and stamped, and hurled its caps into the air.

"Buck up, old chap!" called out Pankhurst. "You're doing grandly!"

And Price, from force of habit, answered: "Quite so!"

The ball was kicked to the centre of the field, and the teams lined up again. There was, for a moment, a shade visible upon the brow of Dick Neville.

"Buck up!" was all he said, however. "I guess we're going to," said Lincoln G. Poindexter determinedly, clicking his teeth.

"That's the last goal Redclyffe are going to take." Alas for the American chum's prediction!

A quarter of an hour later, sweeping down the field in a resistless rush, the Redclyffe forwards brought the ball up to the goal, and it came in again, in a low, fast shot that just escaped Price's fingers as he clutched at it frantically.

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The second goal to Redclyffe, and Cliveden had not yet broken their duck, so to speak. No wonder Redclyffe raved and stamped, and hurled its caps into the air without caring whether they came down again or not.

They were counting the cup already theirs, now! Dick Neville set his teeth.

"We're not beaten yet!" he muttered. And the Cliveden team faced the foe again with undiminished pluck.

Neville kicked off, and the Cliveden fellows followed up the kick-off with a determined rush. It was a rush that was not to be denied, and it had behind it all the "beef" that Cliveden could put into the game, and the Redclyffe defence broke before it.

There was a frenzied yell from the Cliveden crowd. "Go it, Cliveden!" "On the ball!"

Poindexter was on the ball fast enough. He dribbled it half up the field before he could be touched, and then he rolled over from a direct charge.

But Neville's foot was ready for the ball, and it went straight on without the loss of a second of time.

Two halves were rushing at Neville, and he knew he would be charged off the ball, but he kept it till the very last moment, and in the nick of time passed to Pankhurst, who was ready for the pass.

Away went the chief of the Old Firm with the ball, amid ringing cheers from the Cliveden crowd.

"Go it, Panky!" "Kick, kick!" While counter shouts rose from the Redclyffe fellows.

"Look out, there!" "Look out in goal!" The custodian was looking out in goal.

He was the only man between Pankhurst and success, and he was on the alert. But Pankhurst, rushing the ball right at him, made a feint of sending it into the far corner of the net, and then suddenly changed his feet and kicked—and the ball was past the goal-keeper before he knew what was happening.

There was a roar! "Goal!" "Good old Cliveden!"

The ball was climbing up the back of the net, and Cliveden had scored. Poindexter thumped Pankhurst on the shoulder as they walked back to the centre of the field.

"I guess that was ripping, Panky," he exclaimed. Pankhurst grinned modestly.

"Well, you got it away from them," he remarked. "I only finished the run—"

"With the cutest kick I've seen for a dog's age," said Poindexter, and he was about to give Pankhurst another hearty slap on the shoulder, when the chief of the Old Firm dodged the demonstration in time.

"Hold on," he exclaimed. "You can worship the ground I walk on, if you like, but I'd rather have my spinal column left in one piece, if you don't mind."

But Neville's foot was ready for the ball, and it went straight on without the loss of a second of time.

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ends, the wind was behind the backs of the Cliveden footballers.

The Redclyffe fellows had to face it now, and now that it was against them, they realised that their extra goal was not so much due to their own wonderful powers as they had supposed.

It was certain, too, that Cliveden were wearing better than their opponents. Their wind was better, and they looked decidedly fresher. And after the re-start they showed that they were fresher.

The Redclyffians tried their old kick-and-rush tactics, but they did not seem to materialise. Cliveden put "paid" to every attempt of Redclyffe to break through, and the visitors' defence was almost perfect.

It was a quarter of an hour before Redclyffe succeeded in getting in a kick for goal, and then it came from a distance, and was kicked out easily by Price.

From a throw in from touch, there was a tough tussle in the midfield, from which the Cliveden forwards broke away with the ball in their possession.

They went through the Redclyffe defence like a knife through cheese, and slammed the leather home.

The Cliveden crowd roared. "Goal! Hurrah!" Cliveden had equalised!

Twenty minutes more to play, and the score equal—and Redclyffe looking more and more blown every minute, while at least five on the Cliveden side looked as fresh as daisies!

The hopes of Redclyffe, which had been so high, began to sink down again to zero. Lankester and his men were putting up a gallant fight, but they were forced to almost cease attacking, and devote themselves to defending their own goal; and all the time the Cliveden attack became more persistent.

"Go it, Cliveden!" rose a sudden roar. The Cliveden forwards were rushing for goal. They had the ball among them, and Redclyffe could not touch it. Right in went the leather—only to be fisted out again by the goalie, more by luck than anything else. A Redclyffe back cleared, but the ball dropped to a Cliveden half, who sent it spinning in again. Again it came out, to meet the head of Lincoln G. Poindexter!

Biff! The fellows were looking at their watches now, for it was close upon time—a matter of minutes at the most. But the roar that rose caused all to look up quickly, as the leather "biffed" from the head of the American chum.

The goalie was seen to grasp at it, to lose his footing, and slide on the turf—and then the leather lodged in the net!

"Goal!" "Cliveden wins!" "Hurrah! Hurrah!"

In the midst of the frantic cheering sounded the shrill peep of the whistle!

The final was over! Cliveden had won—had won the cup!

As the players came off the field a frantic rush was made by the Cliveden crowd. The team were seized bodily and hoisted shoulder-high, and carried round and round the field in triumph, amid hurrahs of cheers.

The news had reached Cliveden. Fellows had torn off home on their bicycles to spread the glad news. Cliveden turned out to the last boy, in the dusk of the evening, to greet the return of the victors.

Loud hurrahs rang out as the brake was seen to loom up in the gloom of the road. It was adorned by dozens of Chinese lanterns, and presented a gay sight. Juniors were clinging to it wherever it would hold them, and it proceeded at a snail's pace. Some of the fellows were playing tin whistles, some mouth-organs, and the din was tremendous. Amid a roar of cheering the brake rolled in at the gates of Cliveden.

Right on it rolled, to stop before the School House, and on the steps of the house stood Dr. Rayne, with a welcoming smile upon his fine face.

He shook hands with Neville and Poindexter, in sight of the whole school. He said something, but what he said was lost in the uproar, for the whole school cheered and cheered again, three times three for the victors, and the same for the Doctor!

It was about the biggest ovation Cliveden had ever witnessed!

And after that reception by their revered Head, the footballers were carried off to a big feed in the common-room, at which the eleven were the honoured heroes; and Trevelyan a welcomed guest. And with that magnificent celebration ended the day of the cup-tie.

They prided themselves upon a good many things at Cliveden, but it is safe to say that the lower Forms, at all events, never prided themselves upon anything so much as upon the silver cup which adorned the junior common-room, and which had been won by the splendid game played by the juniors of Cliveden!

THE END.

THE 8th Chapter.
The Return of the Victors!

"HURRAH!"

The news had reached Cliveden. Fellows had torn off home on their bicycles to spread the glad news. Cliveden turned out to the last boy, in the dusk of the evening, to greet the return of the victors.

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THE END.

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