



The Carrot-Headed Hero!

JOHN BREARLEY



THE FIRST CHAPTER The Smash !

WHACK her up, Sandy ! ”

“ Gettin' nervous, old top ? ”

The youthful driver of the racing, roaring Bentley, speeding up the lonely country road, grinned recklessly at the gleeful challenges.

“ Whack her up ” was it ? He'd show 'em ! Already the local speed-limit had been “ busted ” to smithereens ; the great car was swaying dangerously. But spurred by the laughing jeers of his chums, Sanders of the Sixth at Clayton School, as jaunty a madcap who ever risked his neck at Brooklands in the “ vac. ”, or barged his way in and out of scrums on the Rugger field, rammed his foot down hard on the accelerator. The sleek Bentley fairly leaped from the road like a spur-maddened thoroughbred.

Behind it, half-choked by the dust, an angry A.A. motor-cyclist compressed his lips and cracked on a fresh burst of speed. He knew from experience that if the young fools ahead didn't slow down soon, only a miracle would

*An Exhilarating Yarn
of School-life and the
Rugger Field*

prevent a serious accident. Clayton village was only two miles away now.

“ Hurrah ! That's the stuff ! ”

Clinging to their seats, Paxton and Elliott-Smith, also of the Sixth, cheered riotously. There was a flush in each boy's cheeks and a brightness in their eyes that was due to something else besides speed and excitement ; to the effects, in fact, of the little card-party at the “ Blue Lion ” in Wilton, from which the trio were racing back to school in time for “ call over ” ! Tucked away in Paxton's pocket was a silver-tasselled prefect's cap, and all three boys wore Clayton First XV ties. But hang it ! What was the use of being “ bloods ” at school and pals of a millionaire's son like Sanders if one couldn't have a flutter occasionally ? All three were in their last term at Clayton—and they meant to enjoy it !

Bellowing its vibrant song, the Bentley flashed down the road. A sharp turn rushed towards them ; Sanders swung the steering expertly, flicking the car round the corner almost on two wheels. Then—

Into the middle of the road a little girl

from a neighbouring farm darted out heedlessly in pursuit of a frolicking pup. The huge Bentley seemed to leap round the bend right on top of her. Sobered in an instant, Sanders threw himself on the steering, trying desperately to turn—there was no time to brake. The kiddie, paralysed with fright, screamed and collapsed, covering her terrified eyes.

With a swift stab of horror, even in that split-second, Sanders saw he could not clear her. Next instant he saw something else.

As if by magic, a burly, raw-boned fellow, with a Clayton cap rammed on his fiery shock-head, darted from the hedge, and, leaving the ground in a flying leap, hurled himself at the child. The off-wing of the car brushed him as he streaked in front of it and plucked the girl from under the front wheels; then falling, he rolled over and over out of danger.

Utterly out of control, the swerving Bentley hit the grassy roadside, mounted the bank and tore its way through the hedge. Heavy ploughland greeted it on the other side, bringing its rush to an abrupt halt. The spinning rear-wheels rose in the air, hung there for a second, then the occupants were flung out like so many dolls.

White of face, the A.A. man pelted to the scene. He had seen nothing of the cause of the smash, or the gallant rescue, but flinging himself from the saddle, he was through the hedge in a second.

One glance told him the Bentley was a total loss; its driver lay face down a few yards away, unconscious. Another boy was huddled on the ground, groaning over a curiously twisted leg, while the third sat up groggily, his right arm limp and broken. Of the child and her red-headed saviour, there was no sign.

Sanders' little joy-ride was over!

THE SECOND CHAPTER

The Fifteenth Man!

AT call-over that evening in Clayton School there was astonishment and dismay. The news of the disaster had spread like wildfire. A crowd of boys, returning from a "punt-about" had seen a dusty A.A. man drive swiftly up the drive to the Head's house, and shortly afterwards an ambulance had arrived,

bearing the injured trio to the School sanatorium.

The story was soon told. Elliott-Smith, the only one with any sense left in him after the smash, had confessed everything. It appeared that Sanders, in his lavish way, had ordered the Bentley from town on hire, garaging it secretly in Clayton village. The three had gone joy-riding, stopped for a little flutter in Wilton and, cutting it fine for "call over," had scorched back to school.

Neither Elliott-Smith or Paxton had the vaguest idea of the cause of the smash—and Sanders, the only one who could say, was still unconscious. And that, for the present, was all.

But it was enough for Clayton. In Big Hall, studies and Common-room, the school lifted its three hundred voices and mourned.

The fact that three of the most popular "bloods" in Clayton were badly injured was rotten enough; that they would certainly be expelled later was worse. But—most hideous fact of all!—in four days' time was the match against the Harlequins' "A", the second XV of the famous London club! The match of the season!

There was not a man in the school Fifteen, or the school itself, who had not been counting the days to the Harlequins fixture. Last year the 'Quins had inflicted a frightful licking, outweighing the school in the scrum and beating them for pace and trickiness in the threequarter line. This season, however, the result would be different—*must* be different, for Clayton were acknowledged to be the best school XV in the country.

They had beaten their other school rivals, Uppingham, Rugby and Haileybury with glaring ease. The backs were all fast and clever, and in Dawson, the skipper, eleven stone of wire and whipcord, Clayton had one of the quickest, pluckiest scrum-halves that ever whipped the ball from the feet of charging forwards and slung out bullet-like passes to his partner at fly-half. But it was in the scrummage that the real strength lay—eight tall, muscular fellows from the Fifth and Sixth, trained to a hair, and fast enough and heavy enough for once to hold their own even against the full-grown men of the London club.



A red-headed fellow leaped in front of the car, plucked the child from under its very wheels, and falling, rolled over and over out of danger.

And now that fast and powerful pack was weakened. Its three "stars," Sanders, that dashing, skirmishing wing-forward, and the hefty, hard-tackling, hard-shoving Elliott-Smith, and Paxton, lay bandaged and helpless in the "San." Small wonder that prep. was neglected that night and groups of boys drifted from study to study in deepest gloom.

It was ghastly, putrid luck!

Meanwhile, in one of the Sixth Form studies, "Sphinx" Dawson, chin in hand, frowned at a paper on the table before him.

It was very rarely that the skipper of Clayton football ever betrayed his feelings. He had won his nickname as a solemn-faced new boy in the Second Form, and it had clung to him all the way up the school. But now, in the privacy of his study, there was worry in his face, and his quiet steady eyes were troubled.

Nor was it the loss of his three best forwards that was worrying him so much. That was bad enough, true; but in place of Elliott-Smith and Paxton, he could promote French and Peed from the Seconds—two sturdy Fifth-Formers who would push in the scrum till all was blue. It was the "sub" for Sanders that was the trouble; Sanders, who from the back row of the pack could break away like lightning, hurtling into the opposing three-quarters, harassing them, spoiling their attacks with his whirlwind tackling before they could get started. Or, when the school had the ball, turning himself into an extra raider, a long-striding, clever and powerful runner.

That was the snag. And Dawson conned it over long and carefully. The awkward part of it was, too, that there was a fellow in the school every bit as good as Sandy; stronger and harder to pull down if anything. But—

Sphinx Dawson's jaw suddenly hardened. Picking up his pencil, he ran his eye for the last time over the fourteen names on the paper, and, with a firm hand, added the fifteenth. He got up then, instinctively squaring his shoulders.

"Paddy plays!" he murmured to himself. "And if the school don't like it, they can lump it. I'm skipper, and I want to beat the 'Quins!"

He left the study quietly and strode across to the Head's house.

Half an hour later "Inky" Parsons, the captain's fag, strutted into Big Hall with the team list in one grubby paw. Barely had he pinned it to the notice-board than there was a general rush to see the names, and Parsons disappeared beneath a crowd of juniors and middle-school men.

"Don't barge, you asses! Ow! You're kik-killing me!"

Heedless of Parsons' outcries, a freckle-faced Shell man elbowed his way first to the board. He gave a shout.

"French is in!"

"Good!"

"And Peed!"

"Hear, hear!"

Two sturdy fellows who had been biting their lips nervously in the rear suddenly grinned at each other. They waited for the third name. Wright, probably, or Henson. They were the next best in the Second XV.

Then, in a shout of sharp surprise, followed by a gasp, and then complete bewildered silence, came the voice of the announcer with the third name.

"Pad-dy Flanagan! Flanagan's playing against the 'Quins!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER Sphinx Dawson Gets Angry!

"WHA-AT's that?"

Before any of the startled crowd could speak or move, into their midst strode a tall, scowling senior, followed by another Sixth-Former—both members of the First XV. Roughly the newcomer bullocked his way through the mob, and the juniors, who knew Smithson of Hayter's House to their cost, cowered away from his path hastily.

He bent to read the list. When he looked up again, his face was scarlet.

"M-my hat, it's right!" he snapped to Jenkins, the school's stolid full-back, beside him. "That low-down, guttersnipe foul's in the team for Saturday. Dawson must be mad!"

"Tha-anks!" drawled a placid voice at his elbow; and wheeling, Smithson found himself

staring into the calm eyes of Sphinx. He scowled sullenly.

"D'you mean you're really going to play that—that scholarship outsider?" he growled.

Dawson smiled.

"And what's a man's scholarship to do with his Rugger, Smithson?"

The school captain eyed the other coolly, waiting amid an expectant hush for an answer. He had his own opinion of Smithson, and it was not a good one. The fellow was a hefty, well-built forward, and a really dangerous man when things were going well, or he could play to the gallery. But more than once Dawson had noticed him slacking in the tight mauls and shirking his share of the donkey-work, although he was clever enough to escape disapproval.

"Flanagan's an Irish lout!" muttered Smithson at last.

"And you're a silly ass!" rapped Dawson with a suddenness that electrified his listeners. "Ever since Flanagan came to this school you've ragged him with your rotten snobbery—because he's the only scholarship boy in Clayton, and your people are wealthier than his. No, don't go!" he said sharply, as Smithson swung away, raging. "You've asked for trouble a lot. Now you're goin' to get it—publicly!"

In an effort to smooth things down, big Jenkins broke in mildly.

"But, I say, Sphinx!" he murmured. "Paddy can't play. Hasn't the Head barred him from footer this term?"

"Yes, he has!" exploded Smithson viciously. "And Dawson knows it. Flanagan's a raving lunatic at Rugger; not fit to play with gen—decent fellows. You remember him in the School House match against ours? He lost his temper like a guttersnipe, caught Hawkins and me unawares and knocked us clean out. That's why the Head barred him. No wonder!"

Dawson's eyes were like steel points.

"And why did Paddy lose his temper, Smithson?" he asked softly.

"Why?" Smithson shrugged. "Ask me another!"

"As you pretend not to know, I'm going to tell you—and these others, too. Flanagan

lost his hair in that House match because you and Hawkins hacked and tripped him, tackled him without the ball—and whispered 'Scholarship cad' and 'Charity Mick' all through the game!"

The throng gasped. Instinctively everyone fell back from the glaring Smithson. Jenkins' heavy face grew dark.

"First I've heard of that!" he growled, glancing curiously at the school captain. Never before had anyone seen Dawson so flushed and bitter. "Go on, Sphinx!"

"I mean to. Paddy's a wild Irishman. He doesn't know his own strength, and that bizney nearly broke his heart. For two months he's been the most unpopular fellow in the school. We've sent him to Coventry for dirty play; he's been warned off footer and mooches round the countryside alone for exercise. You jeer at his shabby clothes, Smithson, and his brogue—you've even set the fags hissing him. By Gad, if I had known at the time why Paddy hit you in that match, instead of only finding it out three days ago, I'd have run you before the Head myself there and then! That's flat!"

The big senior sneered and tried to laugh. The hostility in the faces around him, however, hit him like a blow. Some of the juniors even started to hiss. He gave an angry snarl.

"We do love our charity boy suddenly, don't we? But while we're so high an' mighty, Dawson, hadn't you better consult the Head before Saturday?" he finished blandly.

Dawson only smiled at that. He had recovered himself again as quickly as he had lost control.

"I've done so!" he said. "I told him the full yarn as I heard it—but without names!" Smithson, who had gone white, breathed again. "And Paddy's to play against the 'Quins!"

Contemptuously, Dawson ignored his chagrined opponent and turned to the crowd.

"You chaps, we've all done Paddy a dirty trick. When he comes on the field on Saturday, give him a yell!"

"You're thunderin' right!" snorted Jenkins vigorously, and a shout of agreement went up.

Then Dawson waved his hand.

"Right. Now, all of you—scat!"

They "scatted." Quickly the group broke up to spread the latest sensation round the school, and Dawson sauntered thoughtfully away to his study. As he turned into the Sixth Form passage, a heavy step sounded behind him; a nervous hand plucked at his arm. He swung round to see the cause of all the rumpus—Paddy Flanagan, huge, shabby and untidy as usual—staring at him wistfully.

"Dawson! I—is—is it threue? Am I playing against the 'Quins on Saturday? Ye aren't pullin' me leg—?"

Sphinx grinned. He was no fairy himself, but the strapping six-footer with the anxious freckled face and auburn hair dwarfed him as he did every other Claytonian save Smithson and the injured Sandy. Paddy Flanagan was a giant compared to the rest of the school.

"Yes, Paddy. The Head says you can play. But"—Dawson laid a hand on the Irishman's arm—"no more fighting. The Head's giving you one last chance. Any more rows and—"

Flanagan shook his red fighting-top, letting forth a yell that echoed through the house.

"Wirroo! Rugger again! Sphinx, darlin'," he cried earnestly, "I'll be as good as gold. Sure, the 'Quins can walk over me dead body—and I'll never say a worrrd!"

And he raced back to his study like the madman he was, leaving his skipper chuckling quietly.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

The Big Game!

"SCHOOL! Schoo-lll!"

"Keep 'em out, Clayton!"

"Tackle low, School. Sit on 'em, Clay-ay-ton!"

Three hundred voices, feverish with excitement, broke into a fresh roar of encouragement and appeal. Right on the school "twenty-five" line, grim, panting Clayton forwards and brightly-coloured Harlequins were queuing up in double files for a "line-out," while behind them the school three-quarters, almost level with the forwards, watched their tricky opposite-numbers like cats.

The Harlequins were pressing like fury.

Past half-time—only twenty minutes to go, and no score yet! Verily the game of the season! The school, huddled round the ropes, were hoarse with cheering, tearful with anxiety; while on the field itself, the Fifteen, outweighed and outpaced, were silently and doggedly playing the game of their lives.

Warned by Clayton's reputation, the 'Quins had brought down an extra powerful side; a scratch lot, but very fast and heavy. But still—there was no score!

"Mark your men, School!"

Each player glanced for a second at his marker in the line-out; then the ball was thrown in from touch, figures leaped in the air, arms and clutching hands flew upwards.

A weighty Harlequin, jumping high, pulled the "pill" down one-handed, ducked his head and tried to bullock through by sheer weight. Not a hope! A great red-headed forward in black smothered him fiercely, crashing him to the turf; the leather rolled clear, and round came both gasping packs, barging and fighting for possession.

"Oh, well tackled, Paddy!"

The Harlequin scrum-half, a little chunky man, dived in, scooped up the ball, whirled to sling it to his speedy "threes." Before he could do so, Dawson, calm-eyed, more sphinx-like than ever under the grime and sweat, "nailed" him in his tracks as he had done fifty times before already, and the two vanished under falling bodies.

Again the ball was heeled; this time another Harlequin, the burliest of their pack, picked it up and plunged through. A tall school forward tried to grab his shoulders instead of his knees. He was handed-off vigorously.

Groans from the touch-lines.

"Go low, Smithson!"

"Low, you chump! Wake up!"

Smithson picked himself up, scowling. The big 'Quin had fought his way clear and slung the ball out on the blind side of the scrum to where a racing wing-threequarter took it in his stride. He swerved round the school winger, handed Jenkins off; the white line loomed up only ten yards ahead.

Yells, cheers, the thud of pounding feet. He was over—over—it was a try.

"Paddy! Flanagan! Take him, Paddy!"

Out of nowhere seemingly leaped the red-haired, raw-boned Claytonian. Two yards from the flying Harlequin his feet left the ground, his fiery head disappeared between outstretched arms. At full toss he dived at the runner's flashing knees, bringing him down heavily to save that certain score. The desperate forwards followed up hard, but Dawson got there first, snapped up the rolling ball and screw-kicked out of play.

"Well kicked, Sphinx!"

And a thunderous roar:

"Well tackled, Paddy! Good old Flanagan!"

The Irish boy, heaving himself up, trotted up-field for the line-out, a little grin on his red, grim face. Smithson, catching that grin, grunted. Throughout the weary, hard-fought game the school had been chanting Flanagan's name uproariously—he had come into his own once more, the finest, fiercest forward in the tough Clayton pack, and as clean as they make 'em!

Roughly handled time and again, he had fought back with all his strength and weight, smiling always, rallying and stiffening the others by his whirlwind tackling and dribbling. The Harlequins wanted the ball "out"—wanted it heeled at all costs to feed their hungry, crouching sprinters in the three-quarter line. But Clayton weren't having any.



Two yards from the flying Harlequin, Paddy leaped clear of the ground in a headlong dive and grasped the runner round the knees.

"Keep the ball *tight*, School!" Dawson had ordered. "If their bally threes get it often—good-night!"

So Clayton were keeping it tight; dribbling and pounding down the touchlines, Welsh fashion; spreading out like demons the moment the 'Quins did attack. And always Flanagan was first to the ball or man, with one big foot over it to keep it in the scrum-mage while his big, hard body and long arms fended off the striving visitors.

Without the ball the London threequarters were useless. Every time the Harlequin forwards heeled, Dawson, moving like a streak, squashed their scrum-half flat; then the school pack would wheel and come round, diving in like terriers, tackling like bulldogs.

Still there was no score.

Gradually the battle of Big Side raged to a pitch that sent the crowd delirious with thrills.

There came a scrum in midfield ; Dawson had the ball waiting to slip it into the arch made by the heaving, straining packs.

" Coming in left, School ! Wheel and take it ! " he barked.

The ball went into the Clayton back-row ; stuck there. In a perfectly drilled wheel, the forwards screwed the 'Quins off their balance and, with Paddy, Smithson and French in the van and the lolloping oval just ahead, went storming through the visiting threequarters in a solid black squad. Men threw themselves on the ball in vain ; it was twitched from beneath their writhing arms and bodies and taken onwards, while the crowd yelled their heads off.

Coolly the Harlequins full-back darted in front of the avalanche, scooping the ball from Paddy's toe. Smithson was the next man up—he should have downed the defender there and then. Instead, for some reason he appeared to hesitate ; missed his tackle once more. A hollow moan burst forth as the full-back wriggled away and cleared his lines with a mighty kick to touch.

There were grunts of disgust from the breathless forwards ; harsh criticisms from the touchlines. Forty precious yards gone to waste ! Dawson frowned impatiently, and for the first time in his career ticked a man off on the field of play.

" For goodness' sake, Smithson, " he jerked, " go low, man ! "

In a frenzy of spite, the disgruntled scrum-mager whirled on him.

" It—it's that infernal charity bounder always in the way ! " he spluttered. Dawson's face paled with anger. Then a big, muddy paw slapped Smithson on the shoulder and an Irish brogue butted in gently :

" Sure, it was my fault intoirely then, Sphinx. Smithson would have tackled the spaldeen only I barged against him as he doived ! "

It was a lie—a howling lie ! But Paddy told it with a calm apologetic grin and Sphinx almost believed him. Only by the sudden look of shamed surprise that crept into Smithson's flushed face did the Clayton skipper realise the Irishman was swallowing the

shouted insult, soothing his persecutor down so that the team shouldn't suffer.

Quick to see the position, Dawson nodded briskly.

" Sorry, Smithson—I was mistaken. Forget I spoke. Into it again, chaps ! "

The incident was over in a few seconds ; but the school had noticed it and buzzed with comment. No fault of Paddy's this time ; he was grinning like a Cheshire cat. And to everyone's surprise, Smithson, chin up and eyes agleam, began suddenly to play like a lion refreshed, chucking himself into the thick of it magnificently.

Time slipped by ; bit by bit the school's team-work asserted itself over their heavier but scratch opponents. Paddy, slamming through three tacklers, gained fifteen yards ; an unexpected raid by the school backs was only checked on the Harlequin line. A minute later Dawson saw the referee glance at his watch and his jaw hardened.

The school simply *must* win ; somehow, someone had got to carry that ball over that distant line. A scrum was formed on the half-way line. He threw the ball in smoothly.

" Heel now, Clayton ! " The order snapped like a whiplash. Out came the ball cleanly, Sphinx whipped it up, sold the dummy to the opposing scrum-half, and swerved through the breaking forwards and raced away.

The crowd shrieked.

" Daw-son ! Clay-ton ! Run, run, run ! "

Head thrown back, Sphinx dodged and weaved his way through. A racing wing-threequarter bore down on him—he knew he hadn't speed enough to draw clear. Despairingly he looked round for someone to pass to, and gasped with delight to see Paddy Flanagan, hands ready for the pass, pounding up just behind him.

Next moment the Harlequin had tackled him. Falling, Sphinx swung the ball out and saw Paddy take it beautifully, hand-off the full-back and drive onwards, fighting towards the line, the frantic 'Quins grabbing for his shoulders and legs.

He'd do it—no, they'd got him. For another yard or so Paddy staggered, amid pandemonium. Then a cry, half-gasp, half-sob, reached him from outside the pack.



Handing off the full-back, Paddy rushed onwards, fighting towards the 'Quins line.

"With you, Paddy ! With you !"

It was Smithson—cleverly in position and running free. The sight spurred Paddy to a last great stride. With a heave that shook an opponent from his powerful thighs, he flipped the ball clean and straight into Smithson's hands.

The last he saw before going down under a torrent of black and coloured shirts was the tall senior bowling over a tackler and falling, ball outstretched—over the Harlequins line.

"Try ! Try ! Try !"

The touchlines went crazy. Panting with excitement, the Clayton men stood while Jenkins took the kick at goal. The whistle shrilled as he planted the ball squarely between the sticks; it shrilled again next instant and the match was finished.

Clayton, 5 points ; Harlequins "A," nil ! Through the mist of weariness before his

eyes, Paddy became aware of Smithson holding out a diffident hand. He was mumbling something.

"Thanks, Paddy ! I've been a goop !"

Truly all things are possible at Rugger !

Grinning all over his mud-stained face, the scholarship boy hugged him boisterously. And with that, the school burst the ropes, lifted Smithson up, Paddy up, and the Sphinx as well ; and the Harlequins joined in to help them do it.

The shouting procession headed towards the pavilion.

That evening Paddy Flanagan sat alone in his study, silently admiring the new cap on the table before him—the black velvet, silver-tasselled cap of Clayton's First XV. Presently, as a quiet knock sounded on the door, he snatched it up hastily.

Visitors had been rare in Paddy's study for the last few weeks. In quick surprise he shouted, "Come in!"

Sphinx Dawson entered. Behind him, furtively grinning, was Smithson, of Hayter's House. There was a conspiratorial air about both seniors; and Sphinx's voice was soft and guileless.

"Paddy, where were you—last Tuesday?"

Flanagan stiffened slightly.

"Eh? Why I—I forget—"

"You didn't by any chance dive in front of Sandy's car?" pursued Dawson sweetly. "You didn't snatch Farmer Nicholls' kiddie from under the wheels and afterwards run her home, did you?"

The Irishman's face was a study.

"I didn't—I wasn't!" he stammered; and Dawson's eyes gleamed.

"That's funny. Because Sanders recovered enough this afternoon to tell the Head that you did; and old Nicholls has just described the rescuer; a chap from Clayton; huge, freckled face, red hair—"

"Oh!" mumbled Paddy furiously. "The spaldeen promised he wouldn't and—"

"You old blighter! Grab him, Smithy!" chuckled Dawson, leaping in at the words.

In a flash, Paddy was hustled out of his chair and forced to the window by four strong arms. Smithson flung it open; they rammed him out till his head and shoulders were in the open air.

Below in the quad the school stood waiting, silently. At the sight, Paddy almost fainted. But Sphinx, holding him tight, roared aloud.

"Here he is, School! The giddy, caroty-headed hero! Now cheer, you beggars!"

For the second time that day Paddy Flanagan, the school's "outsider" for the past two months, heard his name shouted by three hundred voices in a solid yell:

"Good-old—Paddy!"

Nor was it until he had ungratefully chucked his friend Smithson under the table, pitched Dawson into the armchair and bolted for his life, that the cheering ceased.

But whether he liked it or not, the scholarship boy from Connaught had become a Clayton "blood."



*Warbled, Chanted, or Otherwise Perpetrated
by H. Skinner, W. Stott and S. J. Snoop, the
Remove "Gay Dogs".*

In the woodshed slyly lurking
Three Greyfriars "gay dogs" we.
Outdoor games we're gladly shirking;
Penny nap's our mark, you see!
What-ho, for the life of a "blade"!

Cards and cash on upturned boxes—
That's the stuff for merry sport!
Eyes alert, as keen as foxes,
Lest by Wingate we are caught;
For such is the life of a "blade"!

To fragrant "gaspers" we're partial;
We can't see why smoking's banned,
Until Quelchy, looking martial,
Whacks us till we understand!
Then sad is the life of a "blade"!

Sometimes, when the fancy takes us,
"Cross-Keys"-ward at night we go;
Gamble till the luck forsakes us,
Then return with spirits low,
Repenting the life of a "blade"!

On "gee-gees," too, we like to bet,
Stabbing race-lists with a pin;
And so we find ourselves in debt—
No horse of ours tries to win!
For hard is the life of a "blade"!

Three weary, weedy slackers, we,
Short-winded, pale and tired.
A hopeless, helpless, dingy three,
Deserving to be "fired"—
Result of the life of a "blade"!