

Our Correspondence College *Is Now Open!*

THE BOYS' FRIEND 1D

EVERY TUESDAY.

The object of THE BOYS' FRIEND is to Amuse, to Instruct, and to Advise Boys.

No. 242.—VOL. V. NEW SERIES.]

ONE PENNY.

[WEEK ENDING JANUARY 27TH, 1906.

REDCASTLE & Co.

A Fine Story of School Life.
BY David Goodwin.



A MOTOR RUN! As the motor-car with the helpless boys in tow swept through the village, the inhabitants rushed out and greeted the three with a roar of laughter.

(SEE NEXT PAGE FOR THE OPENING CHAPTERS.)

The Best of a Bad Bargain.

THE last person Bunce had dreamed of meeting was Dalton. Algy stared open-mouthed, glad even of a moment's respite. Dalton dipped two fingers into his watch-pocket and drew out the slip of blue cardboard. "I've had the dickens of a job to find you, Bunce," he said. "However, there's no time like the present. Here's your ticket, and I shall be glad to relieve you of £50."

"I'll soon tell you if it's one of my briefs," he added, holding out his hand for the ticket. "Nay, nay," returned Dalton genially, "not so, but far otherwise. I'll have the £50 first, if you don't mind." "Woddyer mean?" said Bunce, in a hurt voice. "Don't yer trust me?" "Yes," said Dalton, "just as far as I can throw you." "D'yer know who you're torkin' to?" said the bookmaker, thrusting his face forward fiercely. "Of course," replied Dalton, in severe tones. "Honest Bob Bunce, of Linghamurst." "Well, then, that's all right, ain't it? You oughter ha' come to me

on Monday. I was at the Spotted Dog, as I said I should be. That's always settlin' day. You'll 'ave to wait till next Monday now." "Not at all," said Dalton; "you said that you always pay on the nail. I remember you're not only called 'Honest Bob Bunce,' but 'Ready-Money Bunce' as well. What an enviable reputation to have, eh? Now's your time to live up to it, Mr. Bunce. I think £50 is the exact amount." "Will you 'ave it now, or wait till you can get it?" replied Bunce, who, being fairly cornered, did not know what else to say. "Ow many o' them young beggars of pals o' yours are in this deal, eh?"

"Look 'ere, Bunce," said Dalton, grimly, "you've heard, I suppose, what happened to your precious partner, Gentleman Jack?" Bunce gave him a very ugly look, but made no reply. "You do? Well, you start playing monkey tricks with me or my friends, and what he got is nothing to what will happen to you." "Oh," said Bunce ferociously, "do you want a scrap, then, yer young cock-sparrer? D'yer think you an' your blessed mates are goin' to handle me? Am I afraid of a kid that wants its nose wiped? I'll show you how I—"

with you in quite a different manner. If you don't pay out, you shall be shown up right round the country. I'll have you warned off every race-course in England. Mind, I'm not talking through my hat. I have friends who can get it done. I've only to put it in their hands, and your career, even as a third-rate bookie, is at an end." Mr. Robert Bunce climbed down. "Why, I never said I wouldn't pay, did I?" he whined. "You know very well, guv'nor, that a bookie always has to brass up, even if it ruins him—if he don't, he's done." "Only it always puts an honest bloke's back up bein' threatened, an' I'm sorry for what I said."

THE FOURTH FORM AT WESTMOOR

A Fine Story of School and Football.

By Charles Hamilton.

Author of "Football Fortune," the highly successful serial now appearing in our Saturday companion, "The Boys' Realm." Id. weekly.



THE 1st CHAPTER.
in the Football Field.

"B "Good old Tommy!"
"Bravo!"
Tom Conroy flushed with pleasure as the shouts rang across the football-field.

Swift and true the ball had gone in from his foot, baffling the goalkeeper, and lodging in the net, and he had scored the first goal in the match.

It was only a Fourth Form practice match, but it excited a keen interest at Westmoor, especially among the lower form boys.

For on the morrow the Westmoor youngsters were to play the junior eleven at St. Hilda's, and upon the result of this practice match depended the final selection of the team.

And as the goalkeeper threw the ball out, the same remark was made by a good many of the Fourth Formers thronging round the football-ground.

"That settles it about old Tom! It's Kenny who will have to stand out."

And Tom Conroy, as he lined up with his comrades, thought the same, and the thought made his eyes sparkle, and nerved him for fresh efforts.

He had been only one term at Westmoor, but he had already made his mark in lower form football. To play for his school was, of course, the height of his ambition, but he had hardly dared hope to attain it. Now it seemed almost certain.

But there was one member of the Fourth team who gritted his teeth as he heard the shouts greeting Tom's success.

If Tom Conroy played in the morrow's match, Gerald Kenny would not be wanted. It was not only the disappointment that worried Kenny, though that was keen.

He had been so cocksure about it, so certain that the eleven could not go to St. Hilda's without him, that he looked forward to being mercilessly "chipped" if he were left at home; and the fact that Tom was comparatively a new boy added to his resentment.

"But I'll get even with him yet!" he muttered to himself, with a scowl. "That goal was only a fluke, though those fools can't see it. I'll show them!"

And when the play was resumed Kenny put his best foot foremost, as the saying is. But it was perfectly clear to everybody but himself that he was not nearly up to Tom Conroy's form.

And when Tom gave O'Connor, the captain, the pass which enabled the latter to score a fresh goal, Kenny realised that his chance was gone.

The knowledge of it made him spiteful. Instead of playing the game, he tried to keep the ball away from Tom, and succeeded to such an extent that Conroy had no further chance of distinguishing himself before half-time.

But in the interval O'Connor tapped Kenny on the shoulder.

"You won't play in the second half, Kenny!" he said curtly.

Kenny turned crimson with rage.

"Why not?"

"Because I saw your little game. I can understand your feeling annoyed with Conroy for cutting you out, but any decent chap would take it like a sportsman. You can't do that, so you can keep out."

"I hate the hound!" hissed Kenny.

"If he had not come to Westmoor this term, I should play St. Hilda's to-morrow."

"No doubt about that; but, you see, he is here, and I am going to play the best man; and as you can't control your beastly temper, you will stand out of this match!"

And O'Connor, refusing to listen to argument, put a fresh player in in Kenny's place for the second half.

Kenny, after changing his clothes, joined the crowd of lookers-on, a dark scowl upon his face, and black bitterness in his heart.

He received very little sympathy, for he was one of the most unpopular boys at Westmoor, and he stood alone there in silent wrath.

But even he, in spite of his temper, could not help seeing that Tom Conroy was playing splendid football.

Yet another goal fell to Tom during the next quarter of an hour; and though there were several Fifth Formers in the scratch team that was playing the juniors, they could not get the better of Tom Conroy.

"I say, Kenny, ain't he splendid!" exclaimed Georgie Gibbs, who was standing near Kenny. "We shall lick St. Hilda's juniors to-morrow with Conroy playing."

Georgie was the champion duffer of the Fourth Form at Westmoor, as

was sufficiently proved by his making that remark to Gerald Kenny.

It was barely out of his mouth, when a howl of anguish followed it. Kenny had taken hold of his ear between thumb and forefinger, compressing it as in a vice.

"What did you say?" asked Kenny pleasantly.

"I said— Oh—oh! Don't; it hurts!"

"Does it? Perhaps that hurts, too!" suggested Kenny, giving his ear a twist.

"Oh, oh, oh!" groaned poor Georgie.

But the next moment a hand dropped on Kenny's shoulder. He swung round and faced Monsieur Renaud, the French master at Westmoor.

"How dare you bully vun smaller boy?" exclaimed Monsieur Renaud indignantly. "Not a vord! I see vat you do, and vy you do it. You are a bully. Go back to ze school at vunce!"

"But, sir—"

"Not a vord!" said Mossoo, with a wave of his fat hand. "Go, or I will report you to Dr. Langham for vun caning!"

And Gerald Kenny, his scowl blacker than ever, stuck his hands in his pockets and went sullenly towards the school.

He did not miss much, however, for not seeing the end of the match, for it was followed by quite an ovation for Tom Conroy, which certainly would not have given Gerald Kenny any pleasure.

THE 2nd CHAPTER.

The Trials of Mossoo.

"CIEL! I have no more of ze patience! If you do not stop to talk of zat football, and gif me attention, I take ze cane!"

Monsieur Renaud was taking the Fourth in French. His post, at the best of times, was no sinecure. On

this special occasion he was driven almost to despair.

For the boys were full of the reigning topic at Westmoor—football.

The result of the practice match, the prospect of the coming tussle with St. Hilda's, and the possibility of a row between Tom Conroy and Gerald Kenny absorbed their attention. A buzz of suppressed talk ran through the class.

Mossoo, as Monsieur Renaud was familiarly termed at Westmoor, was inclined to tear his scanty locks. He was one of the best-natured of little men, but this was too much for his patience.

"Kenny, you vas talking!"

"Me, sir?" exclaimed Kenny.

"Yes, you!"

"You are mistaken, sir."

"I see your lips move demselves!"

"I always do that when I'm thinking deeply, sir."

"I hope you not tell me vun lie!"

said Mossoo, who knew Kenny of old.

"But if you not do it, don't do it again, zat's all. Conroy, I am glad to see zat you pay attention. You are ze best boy in ze class. Dere is a time for football and a time for vork. Gibbs!"

"Sir!" said Georgie, starting.

Georgie Gibbs was giving the next boy to him a thrilling account of the brutality of Kenny when the French master's voice interrupted him.

"You have not listen to zat vich I have said!"

"Oh, Mossoo Renaud, I haven't missed a vord!" exclaimed Georgie.

"Den tell me vat vas ze last sentence zat I say."

Georgie looked up at the ceiling and down at his boots. Failing to find inspiration in either of those places, he turned red and sat silent.

"You not listen, and you tell untruth. Zat is cowardly. Vat you mean by telling me zat you listen?"

"That was only a—a figure of speech, sir!" said Georgie feebly.

There was a giggle from the class.

"Ciel! Zat boy is stupid as nefer vas. Dis vat I say, Gibbs. Listen.

"Votro pere a-t-il trouve son frere? Tell me ze English of zat."

Again Georgie consulted the ceiling and his boots, and again they failed to afford him relief.

"You not know zat?"

"Yes, I think I know," said Georgie, "but—but I can't call it to mind."

"I tell you. 'Has your father found his brother?'"

"He hasn't lost him that I know of, sir," said Georgie innocently.

"Vat?"

"He hasn't lost him."

The whole class burst into a joyous giggle. Georgie's stupidity was joy to them, though it might be death to his unfortunate instructor.

Monsieur Renaud gripped his hair with both hands.

"Is it zat you are such great fool, or zat you pretend?" he cried.

"Oh dear, what's the matter now?" exclaimed Georgie. "I've told you the truth, sir. If my father has lost his brother, it is since I heard from him last, and I don't know anything at all about it."

"I say not zat your father lose his brother."

"Well, you asked me if he had found him, which amounts to the same thing, sir. He couldn't be found if he wasn't lost, could he?" said Georgie, with the air of one who propounds a perfect poser.

Mossoo groaned.

"I not tink zat any boy so stupid. I say to you: 'Votro pere, a-t-il trouve son frere?' I haf explain. Now give me ze English of zat sentence."

Georgie reflected intensely, and Kenny, leaning towards him, said in a faint whisper:

"I'll tell you, Gibbs. It means, 'Does your father eat frogs?'"

Georgie brightened up wonderfully. In his extreme simplicity he never thought of doubting Kenny's good faith.

"I know, sir!" he exclaimed.

"Speak!"

"Does your father eat frogs?" said Georgie cheerfully.

For a moment Monsieur Renaud could not believe his ears.

He did not know that Kenny had taken poor Georgie in, and he could only construe the speech into a piece of deliberate impudence.

"Vat?" he gasped at last. "Vat you say?"

"Does your father eat frogs, Mossoo?"

The class was roaring, much to Georgie's amazement. He could see nothing special to laugh at.

"My father! Frogs!" ejaculated Mossoo. "It is no mistake. I really hear dose vords wuz my ears! Ciel, zat I should be so talk to in ze class zat I teach! Come here!"

"What for, sir?"

said Georgie, in dismay, as Mossoo picked up the cane.

"You vas too stupid for me to teach French, but I teach you manners. You are ze vorst boy in ze class. Come here!"

Tom Conroy fixed his eyes upon Kenny. He had heard the whisper which led poor Georgie into his predicament, and, as a matter of course, he expected Kenny to own up now that



Before the referee could blow the whistle Tom Conroy charged the goalkeeper, and sent man and ball flying into the net. Westmoor had won the great match.

THE FOURTH FORM AT WESTMOOR.

(Continued from the previous page.)

his joke had got Gibbs into hot water. But Kenny showed no sign of intending to do so.

Tom passed him a slip of paper over the form. Kenny looked at it and read:

"If you don't own up, I shall give you away."

Kenny read it, and scowled like a demon. But he knew that Tom would be as good as his word, and he rose in his place, just as George reached the master.

"Excuse me, Monsieur Renaud, but I must tell you that I told Gibbs to say that."

Kenny had some hope of getting off as cheaply as George Washington, when that famous personage confessed that he did it with his little hatchet. But Mossoo was not so forgiving as Washington senior.

"Oh, you told him to say that?" he exclaimed. "Den you can come here and take ze caning vich I did intend to give him."

And Kenny had to take it, and Mossoo, who could not forgive the frogs, laid it on pretty hard, too. Kenny's hands were very sore when he went back to his seat.

He gave Tom Conroy a savage scowl when the class was at last dismissed.

"I'll pay you out for that, you sneak!" he snarled.

"You ought to have owned up," retorted Tom. "Any decent fellow would have done it. You had no right to get George caned for your fun."

"You're a saint, of course!" sneered Kenny. "You are putting on a good many frills because you have succeeded in ousting me from the footer, but I'll get even with you."

"I don't see that you have anything to resent about that," said Tom. "O'Connor chose me, and, of course, I want to play for the school quite as much as you do. But if you feel aggrieved, and want to have a row, there's the gym, and I'm quite willing to put the gloves on with you."

But that was not Kenny's intention at all. He preferred a safer way of avenging himself, and he swung away without replying to Tom's remark.

THE 3rd CHAPTER.

A Little Joke on Mossoo:

"SAY, Gibbs!"

George was passing Gerald Kenny's study when the door opened, and Kenny put his head out.

George stopped, eyeing the bully rather warily. But Kenny's manner was very friendly; it would have seemed suspiciously friendly to anyone less simple than George.

"Yes, Kenny. What do you want?"

"Come in here. I want to speak to you. It's about Conroy."

George at once assented. He liked Conroy, as did nearly all the Form. He wondered what Kenny had to say about him.

"Look here, Gibbs, you'd like to do Conroy a favour, wouldn't you?"

"Just rate," said George.

"Well, he has asked me to ask you to do something for him."

George's eyes opened wide. He knew that Conroy was not on very good terms with Kenny.

"Why couldn't he ask me himself?"

"Because—because he has to do an imposition to-night, and he's awfully busy, and can't spare a second. He said you'd be sure to do it for him."

"So I will," said George. "What is it?"

"You know where cooky keeps that tin of cayenne pepper; you know, the one Jimson got into a row for sneaking for a trick on a new boy."

"Yes I could put my finger on it."

"Well, Conroy wants you to get it for him. You're to bring it to me, and I'll take it to him. He's got a big joke to work off on Mossoo. I don't quite know what it is, but it's a regular screamer. You'll do it?"

"I might get caught below stairs," said George doubtfully.

"No, you won't. You are so sharp—much sharper than any other boy in the Fourth, though they don't give you the credit for it. I can see it, though."

"Well, I think I am pretty keen, Kenny," said George, with a satisfied grin. "I know a thing or two, don't I?"

"You do, Georgie. You'll get that tin!"

"All right, I'll manage it, you see."

And George Gibbs went off, Kenny grinned.

"I wonder if there was ever such a silly ass as that chap on the earth!" he murmured. "Well, if he doesn't get copped, I fancy I shall be able to make Mossoo sit up for that lathering he gave me, and spoil Conroy's little game for to-morrow."

It was about ten minutes before George returned. He had been successful, and he handed his prize to Kenny, with a grin.

"I've done it," he said. "But what is Conroy going to do with it?"

"It's some joke on Mossoo, as I said. That's all I know. Keep it dark."

"All right," said George knowingly.

And having, like the cat in the fable, pulled the chestnuts out of the fire, he scampered off, and confided to two or three of his chums, in strict confidence, that Conroy had a big joke on, up against the French master.

Conroy, who was grinding away at a Latin imposition, remained in blissful ignorance of the use Kenny was making of his name.

Monsieur Renaud was in his study. He was preparing some examination papers, and was deeply immersed in his task when a sudden sound smote upon his ears.

Tap!

"Come in!" called out Mossoo irritably. He did not like being interrupted.

But the door did not open.

Thinking he had been mistaken, the Frenchman bent to his task again. He had no sooner settled himself, than there came a fresh tap at the door.

"Come in wiz you!" cried Mossoo angrily.

The door remained unopened. Then Mossoo divined that somebody was having a little joke with him. He rose, and reached down a cane.

"Vait till dere come anoder tap," he murmured. "Zen I vill roosh out, and zat joker he vill be very sorry for himself, I tink."

His idea was that some mischievous boy was tapping and then scampering off. As a matter of fact, Kenny was leaning over the banisters of the staircase that ascended to the next storey, and the tapping came from a pegtop tied on the end of a long string, which he swung against the door from his coign of vantage.

Tap!

Mossoo had crept quietly to the door, and as the tap sounded on the panel, he tore it open and rushed out into the dim corridor.

"Now I haf you!"

"No one was there."

And as Mossoo halted and stared about him in wonder, from above came a stinging, blinding shower of something that caught him full in the face.

Mossoo did not need telling what it was.

It was pepper—the strongest cayenne!

"Atchew! Atchew! Atchew!"

Mossoo staggered about in anguish, sneezing terrifically.

The noise at once brought masters and boys to the spot in a crowd to see what was the matter. The sight of the little fat Frenchman, doubled up with sneezing, was irresistibly comic, and a yell of laughter rose from all.

"Atchew! Ciel! Dis is awful painful, fearful! I sneeze—atchew—atchew—chew—chew! I die—I am keel! Atchew—aytishoo—oo-oo!"

"Whatever is the meaning of this?" broke in the stern voice of Dr. Langham. "Monsieur Renaud, I beg of you to calm yourself. What has happened?"

"There is a smell of pepper, sir," said Kenny. "Mossoo must have spilt some pepper on himself."

The unfortunate Frenchman was sneezing as if for a wager, and could not find his voice to reply.

"There is certainly a smell of pepper," said the doctor. "This is some stupid practical joke. Monsieur—"

"I am blind—I am choke—I am keel!" exclaimed Mossoo. He staggered towards the doctor, and caught hold of him for support, and sent a cloud of pepper into his face. "Sair, it is a barbarous joke! Vy, now you sneeze, too!"

"Aytishoo—aytishoo!" went the doctor.

"Please keep your distance, Monsieur Renaud," he gasped. "You are

simply covered with pepper. Dear me—aytishoo!"

George Gibbs dug Tom Conroy in the ribs, with a joyous chuckle.

"This is a jolly good wheeze," he murmured. "Oh, I shall die!"

And he went off into a roar.

Tom looked at him in amazement. "What do you mean, Georgie? I had nothing to do with this."

George winked.

"What did you want the tin of cayenne pepper from the kitchen for, then?"

"You're dreaming, or off your dot!"

"Oh, all right, Conroy! I won't give you away."

"Monsieur," cried the doctor, "can you tell me who smothered you with pepper in this disgraceful manner?"

"I see notings. Atchew! I hear a tap at ze door, and I tink it a joke. Chew! I open ze door and come out, and zen ze peppair come. I see notings."

"The culprits shall be found," said the doctor sternly.

"I think Gibbs can throw some light on the matter," said Mr. Leigh, who had heard George's remarks to Tom, poor George having been unaware that the master was standing just behind him. "Gibbs, stand forward!"

Very unwillingly, George did so.

"I don't know anything about the matter, sir," he said. "I never went to the kitchen, and I didn't wait till the cook was in, looking and take the tin of cayenne."

George had a most reprehensible habit of telling enormous fibs whenever he found himself in a fix, but he had also the misfortune of never being believed; and, indeed, he never opened his mouth without giving himself away.

"Gibbs," said Dr. Langham sternly, "you are not telling the truth! How dare you attempt to deceive me, sir? Did you play this trick upon Monsieur Renaud?"

"No, sir; said George, rubbing his eyes with his sleeve; "I didn't, sir."

"Do you know who did?"

George was silent.

"Answer me, boy!"

"No, sir," said George desperately. Between his fear of sneaking and his terror of the doctor he was frightened almost out of his wits. He firmly believed that Tom Conroy had played that trick on Monsieur Renaud, and he was determined not to give his hero away.

"Allow me," said Mr. Leigh. "What did you mean, Gibbs, by saying to Conroy that this was a jolly good wheeze?"

"Did I say that, sir?"

"Certainly you did."

"I must have said sneeze, sir," ventured George—"a jolly good sneeze, sir."

A giggle went softly through the crowded corridor. Even the doctor's stern face relaxed and Mr. Leigh coughed.

"I heard Gibbs speak to Conroy in a way that certainly implied his belief that Conroy had done this," said Mr. Leigh.

The doctor looked at Tom.

"Did you do this, Conroy?"

"No, sir," replied Tom promptly.

George gave a gasp, and stared at Tom with wide-open eyes. He had never known Tom to tell a lie, but this certainly seemed to him one. His amazement was so plainly to be seen that everyone saw what was in his mind.

The doctor's brow grew very stern.

"Take care, Conroy! Do you deny knowing anything of the matter?"

"Absolutely, sir," replied Tom fearlessly.

And George murmured "Great pip, what a whopper!" not meaning to be overheard, but being overheard by nearly everyone present.

The doctor turned to him again.

"You fetched the pepper, Gibbs?"

"No—that is, yes," stammered George.

"And you threw it over Monsieur Renaud?"

"No," said George. "I didn't."

"Who did, then? Did Conroy?"

George began to cry; but it was clear that no answer would be extracted from him.

"Very well. As you admit having fetched the pepper, I shall punish—"

O'Connor stepped forward. He gave Tom a glance as he did so—a glance of contempt that stung him to the quick.

"May I speak, sir?"

"Certainly, if you can throw any light on this matter."

"Gibbs is trying to shelter Conroy. Conroy ought to speak up; and, as he doesn't, I think it is my duty to tell you the truth."

"Go on!"

"Gibbs has told several boys that

Conroy had some big joke on against the French master, and that he was helping him. It seems pretty clear that Conroy got him to fetch the pepper, and then threw it over Mossoo. I wouldn't give him away, only it's cowardly of him to keep mum and see Gibbs punished. He rounded on Kenny to-day for doing the same thing."

"I know nothing of this joke," said Tom steadily. "George is mistaken, and what can have put the idea into his head I cannot guess."

"Oh, Tom!" gasped George.

"Gibbs, once more, was it Conroy?"

George shed copious tears, but did not reply.

"You refuse to admit it, Conroy?"

"I did not do it, sir."

"A moment," exclaimed Mr. Leigh. "The pepper was in a tin. Where is that tin now?"

He picked up a paper bag which lay on the stair—"The pepper was evidently ejected from this over Monsieur Renaud. Noble," he added, addressing a Sixth Form boy, "Go to Conroy's study, and see if the tin is there."

"Very good," said the doctor.

Noble went and quickly returned with the tin in his hand.

"Where did you find it?"

"Under the table in Conroy's study, sir."

"It is perfectly clear," said the doctor, with a frown. "Conroy, I am surprised at your conduct. I believed you an honourable lad. That you should tell falsehoods with such effrontery, and seek to throw the blame of your wrongdoing upon another lad, who is too loyal to betray you, I should at one time have deemed impossible. What punishment to inflict upon you I cannot yet decide. You will come into my study before school to-morrow morning."

And the doctor stalked away. The crowd dispersed, everyone avoiding Tom Conroy. He walked away, white and almost dazed.

THE 4th CHAPTER.

A Bitter Blow.

WHEN the Fourth went up to their dormitory that night, Tom Conroy found himself still carefully avoided by his form-fellows. He went to George Gibbs as the latter was taking his boots off, looking the picture of woe.

"George," he said, gently enough, "what man you think I played that trick on Mossoo?"

George only looked at him tearfully, and made no reply.

"Let him alone, Conroy," called out Kenny aggressively. "You're not going to bully him!"

Tom turned on Kenny with flashing eyes.

"I am not bullying him," he said; "and you had better not meddle, Kenny. I'm not in a humour to stand any nonsense."

"I don't care what humour you're in. You're a rotten cad not to own up when the doctor was down on George!"

"I did not own up because I knew nothing of the occurrence."

"Rats!"

"That was too much for Tom, already very sore. He rushed at Kenny, and sent him flying on to his bed with a right hander."

"Now, come on, if you want some more!" he said, between his teeth.

"Shut up, Conroy!" exclaimed O'Connor, rushing between them.

"You sha'n't touch Kenny. We may want him to play in the St. Hilda's match to-morrow."

Tom turned pale.

"You don't mean that you are going to leave me out?"

"I fancy I sha'n't have much choice about it. The doctor is certain to gate you for what you did this evening, and for telling lies about it."

"So you believe that I told lies, O'Connor?" said Tom, in a strained voice.

"I know you did. It was a good trick, but you ought to have owned up when you saw another fellow getting into a row over it. The doctor will gate you, and serve you right. If he does I can't play you against St. Hilda's, that's certain; and I don't know that I want to play such a howling cad, either!"

Tom, very white, but silent, turned away and got into bed. It was no use fighting O'Connor; besides, the whole dormitory believed the same thing, and he could not fight them all.

His sleep that night was very broken and troubled. To a lad with so high a sense of honour as Tom had it was intolerable to be suspected of falsehood, and of the meanness of wishing to throw the blame of what he had done upon another. And the thought

of losing his cap for the junior eleven was enough to make him miserable.

In the morning, however, he went to the doctor's study with a firm step. Dr. Langham received him with grim coldness.

"I have thought over your conduct, Conroy," he said. "You have hitherto held so high a place in your form, and your character has been so good, that I shall not administer a flogging, as I at first intended. You will forfeit all holidays for the remainder of the term, and will write out a thousand lines of Caesar. I am dealing with you very leniently, and I hope you will take the lesson to heart. Not a word! Go!"

And Tom went from the study, with drooping head and heavy heart.

It was all over! The day he had longed for had come, to bring him the bitterest disappointment of his young life.

The Westmoor Junior team was going to St. Hilda's, and going without him! In spite of himself, the tears rose to his eyes.

O'Connor met him a few minutes afterwards, with Kenny.

"Are you gated?" asked the captain of the Fourth.

Tom nodded. He could not trust himself to speak.

"I am sorry, Conroy; but it's your own fault," said O'Connor coldly. "We shall want you, Kenny. Lucky you're in pretty good form."

"I reckon I shall do as well as Conroy would!" exclaimed Kenny.

"No, you won't, no, half," replied O'Connor grumpily. "Conroy staying out may lose us the game. However, you are the next best man I could pick, and you'll have to do."

Whereat Kenny scowled. But he was to play, that was the great point; and he gave Tom a look of triumph as he walked away.

The Fourth got through their morning's lessons somehow. When at last the welcome dismissal came, the boys trooped out in high spirits. One was apart from all the rest; it was Tom Conroy, hitherto the most popular boy in the Fourth. He was generally regarded as having acted like a sneak, and, though not exactly sent to Coventry, nobody spoke to him if he could help it.

He listened with a swelling heart to the talk of the coming match and the endless discussion of Westmoor's prospects.

When at last the brake came round which was to drive the junior eleven over to St. Hilda's, Tom watched the eleven eleven take their places in it, and his eyes were moist.

Kenny gave him a glance of ill-natured triumph as he took the place which should have been Tom's, but the boy hardly saw it. He was so miserable that the petty malice of his enemy could not add to it.

Amid a chorus of cheering the brake rolled out and away. They were gone!

Nearly all the Fourth Form at Westmoor had gone, too, to see their champions tackle the picked juniors of St. Hilda's. Tom remained alone in the old quadrangle, and he went, with slow and heavy steps, indoors and to his study.

But there was one boy at Westmoor who was more miserable than Tom Conroy. It was George Gibbs. He felt that he had been the cause of Tom's downfall, and he could not forgive himself. He believed that Tom had played the trick on Monsieur Renaud, and he felt that he had betrayed him. He did not accompany the eleven to St. Hilda's. He remained alone at Westmoor, and presently he came timidly into Tom's study.

"I say, Conroy, I'm awfully sorry!" he said. "If I'd known how it was going to turn out, I'd have bitten off my tongue before I'd have said a word!"

"Oh, get out!" said Tom, exasperated. "You're the biggest fool at Westmoor! What put it into your head that I played that trick over you? You've spoiled everything for me by your stupidity, so clear out!"

Tom may be excused for being in a hasty temper with George just then. Gibbs went out without a word, but looking so woebegone that Tom's heart melted the next moment.

"Oh, hang it!" he muttered irritably. "I shall get the dumps if I stick here, and I can't do that rotten impud. I'll take a turn in the quad."

He felt better in the keen, wintry air. But he was very lonely and very unhappy. He looked at his watch presently, and calculated that the eleven were at St. Hilda's.

"They'll be kicking off directly, and without me!" he groaned.

"Conroy!"

He started and looked round. The French master was standing there looking at him.

"Yes, sir!" he said, a trifle sullenly.

"You look ver' sorry," said Mossoo.

"Vat is it? Because you lose holiday?"

"It's the match, sir," explained Tom. "I was to have played against St. Hilda's."

"Vy you tell vat was not true?" said Mossoo, with a shake of the head.

"Zat peppair—zat was painful to me, but I forgave zat, but vy you tell vat you call crammer? Zat is vy you stay in mon garcon."

"I suppose it's no use telling you again that I was innocent," said Tom, wearily. "I have no more idea of who threw that pepper over you than the man in the moon has."

Monsieur Renaud looked at him searchingly. He had always known Tom to be truthful, yet the evidence against him seemed too strong. He walked away with a very thoughtful expression. When he entered the school, a sound of sobbing fell upon his ears, proceeding from one of the deserted class-rooms. Monsieur Renaud had the tenderest heart in the world. He pushed open the door, which was ajar, and went in. It was poor George Gibbs who was crying there all alone.

"Vat is ze matfair, garcon?" said Mossoo gently. "Vy you not go wiz ze oders to ze game?"

Then a thought struck him. He sat down beside the boy.

"Now tell me, Gibbs," he said quietly; "are you quite sure zat it was Conroy zat trow ze peppair over me? You speak in confidence to me; you was trust your master."

"I didn't mean to give him away, but now I've been and prevented him going to the match," sobbed George.

"Zen you are sure it was Conroy? You speak in confidence, mind."

"Yes, sir," said George.

"You fetched ze peppair from ze kitchen for him?"

"Yes, sir."

Mossoo was puzzled. This seemed clear enough. But he went on:

"Did he tell you he vas to trow it over me?"

"Oh, no, sir. He didn't tell Kenny what it was for?"

"Kenny? Vat has Kenny to do wiz it? I ask you if Conroy tell you?"

"No, sir; he didn't speak to me about it at all."

"How? He not speak to you? But he asked you to fetch ze peppair?"

"No, sir. He asked Kenny to ask me."

"Kenny!" Mossoo began to see light. "Zat is, Kenny told you zat?"

"Yes, sir."

"But Conroy did not ask you—he did not speak to you about it?"

"Not a word, sir."

"Zen, suppose—suppose Kenny was tell a vat you call crammer—and say zat Conroy ask him ven Conroy not ask him at all?"

George gave a jump.

"I never thought of that, sir."

"Is Kenny Conroy's friend?"

"No, sir; his enemy."

"I tink I see zat ting clearly," said Mossoo. "Come wiz me and tell ze doctor all zat. I tink it vas not Conroy trow ze peppair at all, but zat Kenny."

It was new light to George. Willingly enough he accompanied Mossoo to Dr. Langham's study, and related there the particulars of his talk with Kenny in the latter's study. The doctor frowned darkly as he listened.

"This is an exceedingly simple youth," he exclaimed. "He has been practised upon by a very cunning and unscrupulous boy. It is perfectly clear that Kenny is guilty. He received the pepper which Gibbs took the risk of obtaining, and there is no evidence to show that Conroy received it of him. I am aware that he is playing in Conroy's place at St. Hilda's to-day, so his motive is perfectly plain. As for the tin which was found in Conroy's study, that might easily have been placed there

by Kenny. Until now, I thought that Gibbs had been sent by Conroy to fetch the pepper. If I had known that it was Kenny who had sent him, I should have formed a very different opinion of the matter. Please fetch Conroy here."

Tom soon came, wondering what he was wanted for. His face brightened up as he listened to the doctor's explanation.

"I am satisfied of your innocence, Conroy," the doctor concluded. "Kenny is undoubtedly the guilty party. I am sorry I suspected you. You are, of course, free to go to St. Hilda's now, if you choose."

"Thank you, sir," Tom looked at his watch. "Thank you, sir; but it's too late. The kick-off is in ten minutes, and there's no chance of getting there in time for the match."

The doctor looked very concerned.

"I am truly sorry, Conroy," he said. "It is very—"

Monsieur Renaud waved his chubby hands excitedly in the air. The hoot of a motor-horn had floated in from the quadrangle.

"Ve are saved!" cried the Frenchman dramatically. "Zat is ze motair-bike of Mistare Leigh. He vas to give me a run in ze trailair. He shall take Conroy to ze football in-stead."

And he rushed from the room. A hasty explanation with Mr. Leigh followed, and the master willingly assented to the Frenchman's suggestion.

Tom, hardly knowing, in his joy and excitement, whether he was on his head or his heels, collared his football things and got into the trailer, and the master mounted his cycle. With a hoot and a whir away they went, leaving Mossoo gesticulating with joy that his favourite scholar—restored now to all his old favour, now that his innocence was proved—was not after all to miss what he called "ze football."

THE 5th CHAPTER.

The Juniors' Football Match.

"THEY'RE a strong lot," said O'Connor, as he looked over the St. Hilda's Juniors, and there was a shade on his face as he made the remark.

"We shall beat them," said Kenny.

"I hope so."

The Westmoor youngsters went into the dressing-room that had been assigned to them, and changed into their football garb.

"Now, look here, kids," said O'Connor, when he was ready to lead his team out on the field. "You'll have to buck up. We've got to win. It's the biggest bit of ill-luck in the world that we haven't got Tom Conroy—meaning no reflection on you, Kenny. But he was in such grand form yesterday! However, it can't be helped, and we must win without him. Hallo! What's the rumpus?"

There was a buzz of voices without, and a figure dashed into the dressing-room.

"I'm in time?"

"It was Tom Conroy."

"Why—what?"

Mr. Leigh had followed Tom in at a more leisurely pace. Tom, without troubling to answer questions, was bundling into his football things.

"The truth has been discovered!" exclaimed Mr. Leigh, fixing a stern glance upon Kenny. "It has been proved that Conroy is innocent of the affair of last night, and I am thankful that I have been able to bring him here in time to play for Westmoor."

"Innocent!" exclaimed O'Connor. "Then he was telling the truth all the time?"

"Certainly."

"But who is guilty, sir? Is that known?"

"Yes, it is known."

Kenny turned a sickly white under the master's gaze. Every eye followed the direction of Mr. Leigh's, and fixed upon him.

"Kenny!" cried O'Connor. "Was it Kenny?"

"Let Kenny himself, answer that question," said the master sternly.

The wretched boy hid his face in his hands. Even his effrontery was not able to face the eyes bent upon him.

"You cur!" cried O'Connor wrathfully. "So that was 'your little game'? You wanted to keep Conroy at Westmoor, so that you could take his cap for the Eleven. You cur!"

"He will be punished," said Mr. Leigh. "Conroy's sentence is transferred to him. Kenny, you will immediately leave here and return to Westmoor. Your holidays are stopped for the rest of the term, and you will write out a thousand lines of Caesar. Go immediately!"

And Kenny, without a word in his own defence—feeling that it was useless—changed his clothes again, his face pale as death. At the very moment of triumph he had been foiled, he knew not how. But he knew now what he had not realised before, that the way of the transgressor is hard. Hardened as he was, the contempt and disdain in the looks of his former comrades cut him to the quick.

"Pheep! It was the whistle!"

Instantly all thoughts of Kenny and his treachery were banished from the minds of the Westmoor footballers.

"Ready, Tom?" cried O'Connor.

"Just a tick," panted Tom, who was moving at lightning speed.

O'Connor moved towards the door. Tom was ready in a moment more. The Westmoor contingent sallied out into the field, to be greeted by a ringing cheer from their school-fellows.

The Westmoor boys were astounded to see Tom Conroy there in the school colours, but the news of what had transpired soon went round, and there was not one of them who was not glad to see him playing for the school.

The St. Hilda's boys had mustered strongly to see the match, so there was a big crowd round the field—Saints and Westmoor lads mingling in high good-humour.

The "Saints" team was, as O'Connor had said, a strong one. Their captain, Gardner, who played centre-forward, was a big, powerful fellow, and the rest were a first-class team for a lower form. O'Connor knew that Westmoor would have their work cut out to win, and he was more thankful that Tom Conroy was included in his ranks after all.

O'Connor shook hands with Gardner, and the two skippers tossed for choice of goals, and Gardner had the best of it. He chose his goal, from

which a brisk breeze was blowing. The Westmoor fellows had to kick off against it.

O'Connor was centre of the Westmoor forward line, and Conroy was his inside-left. The team looked very fit as they lined up in their red and white. St. Hilda's had blue jerseys and white knickers.

With the wind in their favour, the Saints started the game well, speedily driving the Westmoors well back into their own half. With a fine concerted bit of play, well worthy of a higher form, the young footballers drove their way through the visitors' defence, and after some rapid short passing, St. Hilda's centre kicked for goal.

The Westmoor goalie saw it coming, and made a gallant attempt to save, but the turf was slippery, and he fell on his knees, and the leather shot right into the net.

There was a loud cheer from the St. Hilda's boys. A goal for the home side, in the first ten minutes of the game. Their faces grew cheerful with the confident anticipation of victory. But the Westmoor lads had a determined look as they walked back to the centre of the field. That goal, instead of depressing them, had put them on their mettle, and they meant that it should not happen again. And, inspired by the example of O'Connor and Conroy, they "bucked up" with the right goodwill.

In spite of the fact that the wind was against them, they worked their way up the field, and with sterling play, brought the ball fairly to the mouth of the home goal. There the Saints made a vigorous defence, and the struggle was watched with breathless interest by both Westmoor and St. Hilda's boys.

The crowd of players opened at last, as the ball flew out from a Westmoor forward's foot, but a cheer rang from the St. Hilda's crowd as the goalie fisted it back into the mecle.

But in a flash, as it seemed, it was sent in again, and the goalkeeper, who was looking for a soccer ball and not a flash of lightning, darted at it too late!

From every Westmoor lad round the field a yell went up.

"Goal!"

And another shout followed: "Bravo, Conroy!"

"Good old Tommy!"

It was Tom's goal, and O'Connor patted him on the back as the St. Hilda's goalie sent the leather hurtling out.

"Good old Tom! I'm jolly glad we've got you!"

And the lad's face flushed with pleasure. He was cleared in the eyes of his form-fellows, and he was playing the grand old game, and he had taken a goal for his school. He

wanted nothing more to make his happiness complete; nothing, that is, but the victory of his side, and that he was determined should come, if he could help to bring it.

And he did his best, and a splendid best it was. He seemed like lightning on the move, and the St. Hilda's forwards could not touch him. And just before half-time another delighted yell from the Westmoor boys announced another goal for the school, and though Tom had not kicked it, it was he who had baffled the St. Hilda's backs and given O'Connor the pass which materialised in a goal.

"Good old Tommy!" shouted the Westmoor fellows, as the players streamed off at half-time.

And in the dressing-room O'Connor gripped his hand.

"I haven't had a chance to say so yet," he exclaimed; "but I beg your pardon, Tom, for ever being 'ara enough to think badly of you, and I want you to forget all about it."

Tom smiled cheerfully.

"That's all right, old chap. By-gones are by-gones. I fancy we shall beat the Saints."

"I fancy so," said O'Connor, with intense satisfaction. "But if you were not here, Tommy, I reckon it would have been a bad case for us."

And O'Connor's words were true. In the second half St. Hilda's made a desperate effort to recover their lost ground. The change of ends had given Westmoor the advantage of the wind, but the Saints came on gallantly, and almost before the red-and-white team knew where they were, St. Hilda's had equalised.

Loud cheers greeted this feat of the home team. The score was now two and two, and only five minutes gone of the second forty-five. It was anybody's game, or looked so. Ten minutes of brisk but uneventful contending followed, and then the Westmoor forwards got away in a fine rush, and scattering the defence to the winds, they slammed the ball into the St. Hilda's goal.

Again the visitors were one ahead, and the home team were hard put to it to equalise. But they did it at last, after a hard fight, which left both sides pretty well spent. The ball went into the Westmoor goal from St. Hilda's inside-right.

It wanted now only ten minutes to time, and both sides were breathing hard and heavy. That last tussle had taken it out of most of them, though they were all game to the end. Neither side could get going after the restart, and the minutes ticked away, and it began to look as if a draw was inevitable. Some of the spectators strolled away to spread the news that St. Hilda's Juniors had drawn with the visitors from Westmoor.

It was in the last three minutes of the game that the play suddenly woke to new life, with one of the delightful surprises that the great game is profuse with. The left wing of Westmoor got away with the ball, streaking through the opposing side like lightning. The halves were hopelessly beaten. Tom gave the ball to outside-left, received it back from him, and let O'Connor have it, with a swiftness and precision that baffled the St. Hilda's backs.

O'Connor sent in the leather, and the goalkeeper, with a spring like that of a tiger, caught it. In a second more it would have been hurled forth. But that second was not granted him. For with instant promptness, Tom Conroy charged, and charged goalkeeper and ball right in together.

Pheep! It was the whistle!

Westmoor had won, with just one second to spare!

And with the victory of the Westmoor Juniors over the Lower-Form Champions of St. Hilda's we conclude our story of Tom Conroy, the hero of the Fourth Form at Westmoor.



"Atchew! Atchew! Atchew!" Mossoo staggered about in anguish, sneezing terrifically. The boys roared with laughter.

THE END.
(Another fine, complete story or Tuesday next. Look out for it.)

ARMY BOYS.
Openings for Boys in the Ranks.

IN these days of keen competition, when any decent vacancy has a horde of applicants, boys might do worse things than adopt the Army as a profession. A lad has only to make up his mind to be steady in habits, cheerful in disposition, respectful to his superiors, and attentive to his duty to ensure promotion, even to the rank of commissioned officer.

Boys usually enlist with the intention of becoming bandmen—drummers in the Cavalry and Artillery, or drummers or buglers in the Infantry. If, however, on attaining the age of eighteen years he does not desire to continue in any of these positions, he may be transferred to the ranks, and take his chance there, where, if the duties are somewhat heavier, the prospect of promotion is better.

Some lads, again, are posted to the regimental offices to train as clerks, or to the regimental workshops—namely, tailors', harness-makers', carpenters', or smiths'. In all these

cases, boys whose fathers are still serving, or who have been soldiers themselves, have a prior claim to enlistment.

But of late years a still more promising opening has been made for lads to take up soldiering as a profession. The very elaborate fittings now used in guns, gun-carriages, and military vehicles have created a demand for skilled artificers of a high class.

To meet this demand recruiting has been opened at Woolwich for lads to be specially trained for these positions, and at the spacious workshops connected with the Ordnance College in the Royal Military Repository

about 150 boys are now learning their trades, under the supervision of some of the best foremen selected from the Royal Arsenal.

These boys are specially enlisted, the age limit being from 14 to 15½ years. They must pass a medical examination by an Army doctor as to their physical fitness; must have passed, or be in, the 6th Standard in their last school; must bring their parents' or guardians' written consent to their enlistment; must produce a copy of certificate of birth and two testimonials from some reliable person, such as their clergyman, schoolmaster, or last employer. They also agree to

serve for twelve years the first three of which would be spent at Woolwich, learning their trades. At the expiration of the three years, if then over 18 years old, they will be attached to units as qualified artificers, receiving extra pay, and having good opportunities of earning additional money by doing private work for officers, etc.

When the twelve years are passed, they may, if they desire it, re-engage for the full term of twenty-one years, when they would be entitled to a pension according to the rank they have obtained by that time.

(To be continued.)