

REAT
WAR
STORY.

OUR
STAMP
CORNER.

TWO
SCHOOL
TALES.

CIVIL
SERVICE
CLASSES.

THE BOYS' FRIEND 1^D

EVERY
TUESDAY.

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

No. 275.—VOL. VI. NEW SERIES.]

ONE PENNY.

[WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 15, 1906.]



BRITAIN INVADED!

A
STIRRING
WAR STORY.
By
JOHN TREGELLIS.

SAM'S ESCAPE FROM CAPTIVITY.
In that one glance upward Stephen saw the big boatswain with a furious face standing at the rail above, and swinging an oar above his head for a deadly blow at the cadet. Near him, and starting forward, was the Kaiser Wilhelm himself.

PRISONERS OF THE EMPEROR.
FOR a moment the two cadets could hardly realize it. But one glance was enough. The tall, square frame, grim face, steely eyes, and upward twisting moustache, like the horns of a bull, were beyond mistake. They stood before the great War Lord of Europe—the most ambitious monarch since Napoleon's time, general of 4,000,000 trained soldiers.
Sam and Stephen, after the first surprise, looked him in the face and waited with beating hearts for him to speak. The same thought occurred to both—they wished they were armed, and the Kaiser, too. Before them was the man who, without warning, and like a thief in the night, had thrown his legions across the water to strike home at the sleeping British Lion. Behind those sharp eyes was the brain that had turned Essex into a shambles and brought the sword through the land.
"Well," said the deep voice sharply "who are these?"
"The British prisoners we have just taken out of the water, your Majesty," replied the boatswain, saluting.
The Kaiser looked keenly at the boys, and his glance seemed to take in not only their faces, but every stitch of their clothing from top to toe, as they stood there, dripping and disheveled.
"They are mere children," said the Kaiser. "Why are they brought before me?"
"Your Majesty asked to see them," stammered the boatswain. "It is thought they had some hand in the stopping of the yacht."
"Impossible!" said the Kaiser, looking at the boys again. "You are in uniform!" he said abruptly to Sam. "What is your regiment, if any?"
(Continued on the next page.)

NEXT WEEK: Another Tale of Calcroft School, by SIDNEY DREW. NEXT WEEK!

The Foes of the Fifth.

A SCHOOL STORY.



THE 1st CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Manners.

MANNERS, the captain of the Fifth, spotted the new boy as he strolled under the elms in the quadrangle at St. Edith's. Manners bore down upon him.

"Hallo! You're the new kid?" The new boy looked at him, and nodded.

"What's your name?" "Blake," said Manners. "I'm captain of the Fifth. Come along."

The new boy stared. "Thank you. I'm very comfortable where I am."

"You'll be a little less comfortable," said Manners, "if you don't hop along sharp. You are going to field for me, do you see? There's no other fag handy, and you may as well learn what you've got to do in the beginning. Get a move on you."

Blake did not stir. "Excuse me," he said politely, "I have just seen Mr. Raleigh, the master of the Fourth. I learned from him that we juniors are expected to fag for the Sixth, but he never said anything about fagging for the Fifth. Anyway, I can't come now, as I'm waiting here for a chap who's promised to show me round St. Edith's."

Manners gasped. "What the new boy said was quite correct. The Fifth Form were not supposed to fag the juniors, the privilege being reserved solely to the Sixth, by the unwritten laws of St. Edith's. But of late the Fifth had assumed the privilege, and they enforced their claim with a strong hand, and there were few Fourth Formers bold enough to stand against the usurpation."

To hear a new boy, on his first day at St. Edith's, state his views upon the subject so calmly was a bit of a shock to Manners.

"You can't come!" he said, with terrifying distinctness. "Do you know whom you're talking to? I'm the captain of the Fifth!"

"Yes, you told me that before," said Blake, with a nod. "I don't want to hit you—"

"Thanks!" "But I shall, and pretty hard, if I have any more of your cheek!" shouted Manners, completely losing his temper. "Are you coming?"

"No, I fancy not." Manners said no more. He felt that the time for talking had gone by, and that the time for action had arrived. He reached out to seize the new boy by the ear.

Blake's fist had struck him upon the nose with a force that brought a rush of water to his eyes. But Manners felt more surprised than pained. He realised that he had to deal with a junior of a new order, and he changed his tactics. He came for the new boy again with his fists clenched and his eyes gleaming.

Blake recoiled a pace or two. "I don't want to quarrel with you," he said pacifically. "Now please—"

next moment—he never quite knew how—Manners was lying on his back, looking up into the foliage of an elm.

He rose slowly to his feet, after lying still, dazed, for a full minute. Blake was gone; Manners caught a glimpse of him, strolling away with Blagdon of the Fourth. Manners did not feel inclined to follow up the affair just then. He pressed his handkerchief to his nose, where the "claret" had been freely tapped, and moved away, the most astonished boy St. Edith's had ever seen.

THE 2nd CHAPTER.

In the Cricket Field.

BLAKE seemed perfectly cool and unconcerned as he walked away with Blagdon. The latter was chuckling with huge delight.

"How did you do it?" he said. "Do you know who it was who punched? It was Manners, and he's the cock of the walk in the Fifth. I say, Blake, he'll simply skin you for dotting him on the boko like that."

"I hope I shall be there when he expects the skinning," said Blake carelessly. "You know how to handle the gloves?" asked Blagdon.

"Yes, rather; where I come from I was considered pretty strong in that line. I know I'm only a junior, and Manners is a head taller than I am, but all the same I fancy I could give him a tussle for his money. If he bothers me again—"

"If!" ejaculated Blagdon. "Why, he won't rest till he's made you sit up. The other fellows in his Form would rag him to death if he put up with it. But what was it you were rowing about?"

"He wanted to fag me." "I thought so. Manners is the head of all that; if it wasn't for him, and his friends Craig and Towle, the Fifth might give it up. You know it's against the rules, and we juniors naturally stand on our rights, but the prefects don't care, and only the Hillington takes any interest in the matter. And he can't have his eyes everywhere."

"Who's Hillington?" "That's the Captain of St. Edith's, and a jolly good fellow. He wants to put down the innovation, but he can't do everything. There's a lot of big fellows in the Fifth, and they're unruly. But some of us Fourth Formers have made up our minds that we won't stand it. Will you be with us?"

"Rather!" said Blake. "I'll fag for the Sixth, if that's the rule. But the Fifth can go and eat cokes."

They were in the playing-fields now. A match was being played between two Fourth Form sides, and Blake and Blagdon stopped to look on.

"You're pretty strong on cricket here?" asked Blake, watching the game with sparkling eyes.

The play was of a very high order for juniors. "Rather," said Blagdon, "and we're doing our best to make up a strong Fourth Form team in the Fourth. We meet the Fourth Form team from Clivedale College next week, and I captain our side. If we beat Clivedale—"

"Well, if you beat Clivedale?" he asked. "It's a secret," said Blagdon, "among our Form. I mean, we don't want the Fifth to get to hear of it yet. If we beat Clivedale we're going to challenge the Fifth to a match, and see if we can beat them. What do you think of that?"

"What a stunning idea! What chance do you reckon you would have against a Fifth team?" "Well, naturally things would be against us, in a way. But the fact is the Fifth have been careless, while we have been working like niggers to make ourselves fit. I think it's possible that we shall just pull it off. By the way, how do you shape at the game?"

"Pretty fair, I believe. But your team's filled up, I suppose?" "Not if I can find a better man," replied Blagdon, with emphasis. "Why, I'd stand out myself to let a better bat in. Come along and let's see what you can do. We are weakest in bowling."

"That's my strong point." "Good! Let us see." The scratch match was just finishing. Blagdon called to an Irish lad, who tossed a ball to Blake. Blagdon went to the wicket himself.

"Play!" With a keenness and accuracy seldom seen in a junior, Blake sent down the ball, and took the wicket. Blagdon gasped with amazement. He was the best bat in the Fourth, and it was a new experience for him to have his balls down first ball.

A dozen or more juniors gathered round, and looked on with great interest as Blake continued to bowl several of the best bats in the Fourth eleven stood up to him, but there was not one whose wicket did not fall in a single over. Desmond held out longest, his balls going down at the sixth ball from the new bowler.

"Bravo!" cried Blagdon, slapping Blake on the back. "You'll do! You're just the man we wanted, and if you bowl like that against Clivedale, we shall win hands down."

A bell began to ring, and the boys trooped in to calling-over. Blake caught sight of Manners. The Fifth Former's nose was swollen and red, and many curious individuals were seeking information as to the cause. Manners returned snappish answers, even to his two chums, Craig and Towle. Manners gave Blake a vengeful glance which seemed to tell of stored-up wrath to be let loose at some future period upon his devoted head.

Blake, however, seemed quite unconcerned. Not so Blagdon. He had caught some whispered words among Manners, Craig, and Towle, and had taken the alarm.

"There's mischief brewing, Blake," he remarked later. "I fancy those bouders are thinking of paying a visit to our dormitory tonight after lights out, to get even with you for flattening Manners's boko."

"Let 'em come," replied Blake. "It's about time they were taught that they can't bully the Fourth. Let 'em come, and I'll make 'em sorry for themselves."

To which Blagdon assented, albeit a little doubtfully.

THE 3rd CHAPTER.

A Night Attack.

GOOD-NIGHT, boys!"

"Good-night, sir!" Mr. Raleigh extinguished the light, and the door closed. The master had glanced up and down the row of white beds, but naturally had not perceived that some of the boys had failed to discard their clothing. As soon as the door closed, Blake sat up in bed. He was in his shirt, trousers, and socks.

"You really think those Fifth rotters will be here to-night, Blagdon?" he asked. "I'm pretty sure of it, and I've kept my things on in case," replied Blagdon. "If they try to rag you, I'm going to stand by you for one."

"And meself for another!" exclaimed Desmond. "Play!"

And several more voices chimed in. "Right-ho!" exclaimed Blake. "That's the right sort. So long as they try to rag us and fag us we're all the foes of the Fifth, and we ought to stand shoulder to shoulder. All of you who are game for a

tussle, get your weapons ready. They may be here any minute."

Blake's handling of a Fifth Former had made a deep impression upon his own Fourth fellows, and the juniors were readily inclined to accept him as a leader, a position for which his energy and force of character fitted him. His directions were obeyed at once, and six or seven lads, the boldest spirits in the Fourth, armed themselves with pillows and stuffed stockings for the expected fray.

They had not long to wait. There was a sound without in the corridor, and the door was quietly opened. Manners appeared, carrying a cycle-lamp in his hand, and behind him came Craig and Towle. The latter had a cane in his hand.

"Shut the door," said Manners. "We don't want the masters to hear him howling. Don't be frightened, my little dears; we ain't burglars, we've only come to pay a visit to the new kid, and if the rest of you keep quiet you won't be hurt. Why, what are all you kids doing out of bed?" he continued, in surprise, as he saw the party that had gathered round Blake.

"We were waiting for you," said Blake coolly. "I fancy you've bitten off more than you can chew this time, Manners."

Manners scowled. The sight of six or seven lads armed for war rather disconcerted him. But he could not retreat now without loss of prestige, and that was not to be thought of. He set the lamp down upon a washstand.

"Now, Blake, you are going to have a hiding," he announced. "You can take it quietly, or you can make a row, but you're going to have it. You other fellows get back into bed, or— Oh, oh, corks!"

A sponge, dripping with water, came with splendid aim from the hand of Blake, and caught the captain of the Fifth full in the mouth. He staggered back half choked.

"How's that, umpire?" exclaimed Blake. "I'll show you!" yelled the enraged Manners.

He rushed at Blake. A swipe from a pillow met him and bowled him over like a ninepin. "Go for 'em!" shouted Blake.

The juniors, strong in numbers, rushed forward, and Craig and Towle were sent flying under a shower of blows. Towle got in some sharp cuts with the cane, eliciting agonised howls from the recipients; but a bolster brought him down, and Blake wrenched the cane from his hand. He promptly applied it to the person of Towle, who rolled over on the floor yelling.

Manners rushed at Blake again, but Blagdon tripped him up, and he fell almost at the new boy's feet. Blake promptly sat upon him, pinning him face downwards, and Desmond adding his weight, the captain of the Fifth was helpless. A



The batsman snicked the ball away and started to run. But a rear went up from all sides. "Caught!" Blake had safely landed the ball at long slip.

THE FOES OF THE FIFTH.

(Continued from the previous page.)

part of him was exposed to attack, and here Blake brought the cane into play, dusting Manners's trousers till he howled for mercy.

Craig and Towle made a gallant attempt at rescue, but numbers were too much for them, and they were driven off, battered and beaten. Manners's howls rang through the dormitory.

"Let me up!" he roared. "You cowards, hitting a chap when he's down."

"What did you intend to do?" demanded Blake. "I'm not hitting you, I'm caning you, my son! What did you mean to do to me?"

Manners did not answer that question, for the best of reasons. "You are going to have a hiding," continued Blake, mimicking Manners. "You can take it quietly, or you can make a row. But you're going to have it."

"You little beast, I'll—!" Thwack, thwack, thwack! Manners roared and wriggled. At last Blake took pity on him.

"Have you had enough?" "Yes, yes, yes!"

"Will you apologise for coming into our room without permission?" "No, I won't!" Thwack! "Yes, I will."

"And promise not to do it again?" "No—yes!" "Honour bright!" "Yes."

"Let him get up, chaps." So Manners was jerked to his feet. He was exhausted, dishevelled, and sore.

"I'll pay you out for this, Blake!" he cried. "I'll— Oh, I'll pulverise you."

"Let me know when you're going to do it," said Blake, "and I'll be there. Just at present, you can make tracks, for we want to go to bed. Remember, we have your word!"

"If it wasn't for that—!" "Oh, rats! If you want more trouble, I'll meet you anywhere to-morrow!"

"Do you mean to say you'll have the cheek to stand up to me—a Fifth Former?"

"Oh, yes, if you like," said Blake coolly. "A chap can only die once, you know. And possibly you're not such a little tin god as you think you are!"

"To-morrow!" exclaimed Manners majestically. And he stalked forth from the dormitory with his disconsolate comrades at his heels.

"Well, that was a blessed frost, anyhow!" exclaimed Towle, rubbing some of the places where the cane had made him sore. "We shall be the laughing-stocks of the school!"

"I'll pay him out to-morrow," said Manners.

"Will you?" said Towle. "To my mind, that new kid looks like particularly hot stuff, and I fancy he knows how to handle himself in a scrap."

"I suppose you don't think that a Fourth Former kid could lick me?" demanded Manners hotly.

"Well, anyway, there isn't much glory to be got from it, if you lick him. And if he should lick you, we shall be chafed to death. You oughtn't to fight him!"

"Not unless you're absolutely certain of knocking him out," said Craig.

"Hang it," said Manners angrily, "I am certain!"

"Well, I'm not," persisted Towle. "Better let the thing slide, and not mention it again if he doesn't, and in the meantime, do some slogging in the gym, and get into first-class form. Of course, it's bound to come sooner or later, but then you'll be able to give him socks."

And Manners, upon reflection, admitted that this was good advice.

THE 4TH CHAPTER. The Clivedale Match.

BLAKE was prepared for hostilities on the following day, but Manners did not come near him. The new boy was a little puzzled at first, but he was content to let the matter go. He was about the coolest and most independent lad that had ever set foot in St. Edith's, but he was not in the slightest degree of a quarrelsome nature. So long as Manners let him alone he was content.

And he had other things to think of now. Blagdon's idea of training hard and challenging the Fifth to a cricket match met with Blake's whole-hearted approval. It was the best and most British way of scoring off the rival Form, to defeat them in the playing-fields.

Blake threw himself into the plan with all his energy. He was taken into the Form team at once after his exhibition as a bowler, and his abilities in that line attracted the notice of Hillingdon, the school captain, and the champion cricketer of St. Edith's. More than once the captain of the school came to look at the juniors practising, and gave Blake a word or two of approval.

The meeting with Clivedale juniors was an affair of great moment to the Fourth Formers of St. Edith's. Blagdon's hopes were high.

"The beat us on their own ground," he told Blake. "We shall have our revenge this time, I fancy. And then to make the Fifth bouncers sit up! But I say, have you spotted Manners's little game?"

"No. What's he up to?" "Why, he's slogging away every evening in the gym, with the gloves. What's he getting himself into such condition for all sudden? Take my word for it, Blake, he's only lying low, and means to drop on you presently!"

Blake whistled.

"Well, I rather wondered at his taking a back seat so quietly," he remarked. "The best thing I can do is to follow his example, so just you hop along to the gym, to-night, old son, and put the gloves on with me."

A good deal less had been heard lately about fagging for the Fifth. Blake had set his face against it, and always encouraged his Form-fellows to resist.

It was difficult for the Fifth Formers to enforce their authority while their captain hesitated to tackle the champion of the Fourth. A conflict between Manners and Blake was inevitable, and its result would have far-reaching effects upon the Lower Forms in the school.

Warned of Manners's design, Blake took good care to keep himself in form, but his chief attention was given to cricket. The Clivedale match was his, and Blake, now boy as he was at St. Edith's, was as keen on it as the boy of longest standing in his Form.

Wednesday was a half-holiday at St. Edith's, and on Wednesday afternoon the Clivedalers were due to arrive. The junior match was, as we have said, a very serious matter indeed to the Fourth Form. The Fifth affected to smile at it.

"Are you coming down to see the babes at play, Towle?" Craig asked, having carefully noted that he was in Blake's hearing.

"Oh, rats! I've something better to do," said Towle. "Still, I hope the children will amuse their 'ickle selves!"

"They call it cricket," said Manners. "My word, cricket!"

Blake flushed just a little bit.

The three observed it, and grinned gleefully.

"Oh, my maiden aunt!" said Manners. "It will be a game!"

"Oh, rats to you!" broke out Blagdon, who was with Blake, angrily. "What do you chumps know about cricket, anyway?"

"Let 'em alone," said Blake. "They're feeling a bit sore after the whacking we gave them the other night. Let 'em talk—they can't do anything else!"

Manners flushed scarlet.

"I'll jolly soon show you about that!" he exclaimed, striding towards Blake. "Just you come down to the five-cour, and—"

"And you'll do wonders, I suppose," said Blake, putting his hands behind him. "I'm not coming now, thank you. I've got something else on for to-day. You've been long enough coming up to the scratch, and now you can wait another day!"

"I'll punch your confounded head!"

"No, you won't! I'll fight you after the match. Come, now, don't be a cad—if you can help it!"

Manners cooled down.

"All right," he said. "I don't want to put you off your form for the match. I forgot that. But to-morrow I'll give you the biggest hiding you've ever had!"

"If you can do it, you're welcome!" said Blake, and he walked away with Blagdon.

Shortly afterwards the Clivedalers arrived. They were a fine set of juniors, and their captain—Herring—was a big athletic Upper Form boy. All the Fourth Form at St. Edith's thronged round the junior

match ground and a good many seniors.

"I say, there's Hillingdon looking on," Blagdon said to Blake. "He knows the game will be worth watching. Yes, and there's Manners and his cronies. They've come, after all!"

"We'll show them something good," said Blake, "and I fancy they'll feel a bit sick when they get our challenge. Oh, I hope we beat Clivedale!"

"We must beat them!" said Blagdon determinedly.

To be a single innings match. St. Edith's won the toss and elected to bat. Blagdon opened the innings himself, with Desmond. The St. Edith's batting was very good, but the Clivedale bowling was also of a good quality, so the wickets went down for an average number of runs. The score was at forty for four wickets, when Blake donned pads and gloves and went out to take his innings.

Blake was a good, reliable batsman, if not brilliant, and he added thirty to the score before he was bowled by Herring. The St. Edith's juniors cheered him heartily as he went back to the pavilion.

"A jolly good innings," said Hillingdon, captain of St. Edith's, when the juniors were all down for an even 100.

But Herring and his merry men were determined that they would go one better.

The Clivedale innings opened auspiciously. Desmond bowled an over against Herring, which gave Clivedale sixteen. Blagdon took the ball and started bowling from the other end and took a wicket with the last ball of the over. But the Clivedale score had jumped to thirty-two. He tossed the ball to Blake.

"Go and show 'em something!" he commanded.

Blake grinned.

"Right! I'll do my little best, anyhow!"

And he went on to bowl against Herring. That bowling was something of a revelation to the Clivedale fellows. Herring stopped the first ball dead. He stopped the second, and locked a little worried. The third whipped his off stump out of the ground and brought down his bats.

And the St. Edith's juniors shouted gleefully.

"Bowled! Oh, well bowled!"

Herring stroled off looking disgusted. Another Clivedaler took his place, and the last ball of the over left his wicket in a wrecked condition.

Blake grinned as he chuckled the leather to Blagdon.

"How's that?"

"First-rate!" said Blagdon joyfully. "You've settled their best two bats. That's a bit of an eye-opener for Manners, too. They can't bow like that in the Fifth. We'll have 'em on the hip, my son. We'll make 'em sing small!"

The Clivedale innings, though it had started well, could not be called a success. Against all the bowlers but Blake they did pretty well. But whenever Blake had the ball they mourned the loss of wickets.

"Last man in!" grinned Blagdon, when the visitors' score was at seventy. "Go and give him the ky-bosh, Blake!"

And Blake gave his arm a swing from the socket and went on to bowl his last over. The last over it proved, for the wicket went down at the second ball, and Clivedale were all out for seventy.

St. Edith's juniors had won by thirty runs and their glee was exuberant. They made much of the visitors, and the Clivedalers went off in their brake well-pleased with their performance, if somewhat sore with their defeat.

"Ge-e-lorious!" said Blagdon to his new chum when it was all over. "We shall challenge the Fifth, Blake—no mistake about that. They have the advantage of us in a general way, but they have no bowler who can hold a candle to you. We'll challenge 'em!"

"They may refuse to meet us," said Blake thoughtfully. "Derogatory to their dignity as a senior Form, and that sort of thing!"

"Let 'em try that game," said Blagdon. "We'll chip 'em till they have to play. Besides, I fancy Hillingdon would put his foot down."

And that evening the challenge was carefully written out in Blagdon's study and sent to the captain of the Fifth.

THE 5th CHAPTER. The Fight.

BLAKE Blake turned his head at Manners's voice. Morning school was over on the day following the Clivedale match. Manners had spotted Blake in the quadrangle, and hurried up to him. The Fifth Former's face was dark with anger.

"Hallo!" said Blake coolly. "I suppose you're at the bottom of that silly letter about a challenge?"

"Do you think we are going to play a parcel of kids?"

"Afraid of getting licked?" queried Blake cheerfully.

Manners scowled.

"Look here," he snapped. "Are you ready for that meeting? I am if you are. If you don't want to funk it, come down to the five-cour, where there's a quiet place where we can have it out!"

"No objection in the world," said Blake, looking at his watch. "We have twenty minutes, clear, and that will be quite long enough for me to knock some of the conceit out of you."

"You can make up your mind to a hiding!" said Manners, marching off.

"Hallo, Blaggy!" called out Blake. "I want you and Desmond. Get a sponge and a towel, will you? Manners means business, and it's as well to be prepared."

In a few minutes the juniors, with a dozen more, joined the Fifth Former at the rendezvous, a quiet spot where interruption was unlikely. There were several of Manners Form also there to see fair play.

Craig was his captain's second, and Towle acted as timekeeper. A ring was formed, and the two adversaries stripped and stepped into it. The great advantage which Manners possessed was evident to all. He was a head taller than the junior, and broad in proportion, and, naturally, longer in the reach. There was, however, a wiry compactness about Blake which gave promise of a good fight.

"Time."

The opening round showed that both combatants knew something of the noble art of self-defence. Blake's activity was evidently superior, and he feinted and dodged with a rapidity his adversary could not equal. But Manners had strength on his side, and when he got a blow home it told terribly.

Three rounds were fought, with pretty equal punishment on both sides. Blake, if anything, fared the worse. In the fourth round Manners rushed in and laid Blake on his back with a heavy drive. Blagdon and Desmond looked serious, but Blake was game.

"You won't chuck it up?" said Blaggy doubtfully, as he sponged his principal's heated face after the round.

Blake shook his head decidedly.

"Not while I can stand," he replied.

And he faced the Fifth Former again. It was by this time apparent to all that Manners had "bellows to mend," while Blake's wind seemed to be perfect. Manners, too, had an eye closed, and his vision was by no means clear.

Blake sailed in and drove his gasping antagonist round the ring. He landed suddenly, and Manners fell into the trap, and the next instant both Blake's fists were planted full in his face one after the other. Manners went down as if he had been shot.

"Hurrah!" shouted the juniors.

Manners was looking very groggy when Craig picked him up. He looked round in a dazed way, and was evidently in a bad state.

"Time!" called Towle.

Blake stepped up. He looked the worse for wear, but he was as fresh as paint in action. Manners came forward more slowly.

The captain of the Fifth fought hard in that round, but all his verve was gone. He fought on because he realised how much was at stake, and he determined not to give in while he could stand, but the hope of victory had well-nigh died in his breast.

Blake saw his advantage and he gave the Fifth Former no time to recover. He pressed him hard, forcing the fighting, and Manners received blow after blow, giving but few in return, and those feeble ones.

But he fought to the end of the round, and then almost collapsed into his second's arms.

"You're done," said Craig. "You can't go on again."

Manners snapped his teeth.

"But I will!"

"It's no good—you're licked!"

"Confound you, I'll do as I like," growled Manners.

"Craig gave a shrug.

"You can make an ass of yourself if you like, I suppose, but it's no good."

"Oh, shut up!" said Manners. Towle's eye was on his watch. Although his sympathy was, of course, with Manners, that did not affect him as timekeeper, and he was strictly impartial.

"Time."

Blake stepped out. Manners followed his example, staggered, and fell. It was clear that it was done for.

Towle replaced his watch in his pocket.

"Fight's ended," he said. "Blake has it."

Craig picked Manners up. He was not very sympathetic.

"I told you so," he remarked.

"It was an unfortunate remark, and it was more than Manners, sore with defeat, could stand."

"Oh, you know too much!" he snapped, and he smote Craig on the nose with a smite that made him sit down in a hurry.

"Oh, you beast!" gasped Craig.

Manners went off, leaving on Towle's arm. Craig went away sulking, and Manners, Blake was escorted to a bath-room, where he went to bathe his bruised body by a cheering crowd of juniors.

A Fourth-Former had met the captain of the Fifth, and licked him in a fair fight!

It was a wonder of wonders, and was likely to be long remembered at St. Edith's.

The champion had been pretty hardly used in the encounter, it was true; but his wounds were gained in the cause of his Form, and were, therefore, in a sense, badges of honour, though Blake himself found them very painful ones.

"Well, you've done it!" exclaimed Blagdon, as he helped Blake to don his jacket after the necessary ablutions. "Manners will have to sing small after this, and I imagine we've heard the end of bullying by the Fifth. Hallo, there goes the ball! We're just in time!"

THE 6th CHAPTER. The Challenge Accepted.

BLAGDON was not quite right in his anticipation. The defeat of Manners certainly made the Fifth "sing small" to some extent, but it made most of them angry, too, and some of them spiteful. It was not pleasant for a senior Form to have to "sing small," and the feeling between the two was worse after the fight than before.

Manners was not satisfied with his defeat. He was training arain, with the view of putting the matter to the test a second time. The claim to the right of fagging the juniors, instead of being given up, was enforced more than of late; and though Blake himself was not interfered with, his Form-fellows had a good deal to complain of.

"We've got to bring them to their senses," said Blake grimly; "and we can only do that by making them accept our challenge, and licking them in the cricket-field."

"But they've refused," said Desmond.

"Suppose we speak to Hillingdon, suggested Blagdon. "He's a sportsman, and he'd make 'em step up and take their fodder."

Blake shook his head.

"No, I've got a better plan than that. You two can come with me to see Manners—a sort of deputation, you know."

The same evening, when prep was over, the three juniors entered the corridor upon which the Fifth Form studies opened. Blake tapped at Manners's door.

"Come in," sang out Manners, who was "at home."

Blake opened the door, and walked in, followed by his chums, Manners and Craig, who was with him, stared at the visitors.

"Hallo! What do you want?" asked Manners, casting his eye towards a cricket stump.

"Only a little jaw," said Blake cheerfully. "We, the Fourth Form of St. Edith's, have challenged your Form to a cricket match."

"Like your cheek," said Manners. "I don't see where the cheek comes in. Of course, you'd have no chance to speak of—"

"Of course not!" sneered Manners. "So if you're afraid—"

"Afraid!" "Yes, afraid! That's the log and short of it. You stand on your dignity as a senior Form because you are afraid of being licked."

Manners breathed hard.

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"Oh, go on!" he said. "I'll get up presently and crack this cricket stump on your napper. Go on!"

"Now, I want to talk business. You claim to fag the Fourth, and we don't allow your claim. You haven't made much of a success of it so far."

Manners glared.

"But I'll tell you what we'll agree to," said Blake. "You'll meet us at cricket, and if you beat us, we'll say no more on the subject for this term. If you get licked, you give up your claim to fag us. Now, that's a fair sporting offer."

Manners looked undecided. He did not believe that the juniors could beat him at cricket, though Blake's bowling had certainly impressed him. But he didn't like to give in.

"Oh, rats!" said Craig, who had less confidence in his Form eleven than the captain had. "You, clear out, and don't be cheeky, kid."

"You dry up," retorted Blake. "You're dead in this act; it's for Manners to do the talking. Now, Manners, give us a reply, and play the man. Be sport, old chap."

"I'll think it over," said Manners. Blake shook his head in a most decided way.

"Not good enough," he said tersely. "We want your answer now."

"Then you'll have to wait," snapped Manners, "for you won't get it!"

"Wait a bit," said Blake calmly. "I'm not done yet. If you refuse still, we are going straight to Hillingdon to lay the matter before him as captain of the school. I fancy you know what he'll say when he finds you are fudging a match with a lower Form."

Manners and Craig looked at one another. This was a new development. Blake's offer was so sportsmanlike that it was pretty certain that the captain of St. Edith's would insist upon its being accepted. It was better to give in gracefully than to be brought to heel by the captain of the school.

"I'll let you have my answer to-night, Blake," said Manners at last uneasily. "Will that do?"

"Oh, all right," said Blake. "You won't forget?"

"No."

"Then tooral-oo for the present," and the juniors quitted the study.

Towle came in at the same time, and he looked rather surprised at the sight of the unusual visitors.

"Hallo, what's the bother?" he asked.

Manners explained.

"We shall have to accept," said Towle. "They're already saying all over the school that we funk the meeting, and I've been expecting Hillingdon to round on us. And between ourselves, old chap, it does look bad."

"We have to consider the dignity of the Form."

"Yes, that's all very well," said Towle, "but we don't consult the dignity of the Form by letting the juniors think we are afraid of them, and that's what it amounts to. You don't think we shall get licked, do you?"

"Hang it, no!"

"You didn't think you'd get licked at fisticuffs," said Craig; "but you were, you know."

"I fancy we're all right," said Manners, ignoring Craig's remark.

"It's against reason for a junior team to beat us. I admit, though, that Blake's bowling is wonderful for a kid. He can take wickets."

"Well, it's settled we accept," said Towle. "If Blake brings Hillingdon into the matter, we shall have to, so we may as well do it with a good grace. If you like, I'll go over and tell the young rascals your decision, Manners."

"You can if you like."

"So a few minutes later Towle knocked at Blake's door to announce that the Fourth Form's challenge was accepted, and that the match should be played the next half-holiday. The three juniors, who were together there, received the intimation with becoming gravity, but Blake broke into a chuckle when the door closed upon Towle.

"We've done them," he said. "I thought that would bring Manners to terms. Now, my sons, we've got to play up like Jessops and Graces and Ranjits and Frys, and knock the Fifth eleven into the middle of the twenty-first century. We've agreed to say no more about the fagging this term if they lick us, and we shall have to keep our word. Therefore, we must win. You see, I've got Manners on the hip. If they drop their pretensions for this term, they'll find it hard to begin again next. A precedent will be established, as the

lawyers say. So we've got to beat them. If any member of the team doesn't play up like a county champion, I'll thump him afterwards till his mother won't know him."

THE 7th CHAPTER.
The Form Match.

MANNERS, having accepted the challenge of the Fourth Form, was not inclined to leave anything to chance, and in the few days that remained before the match, he kept his men hard at practice. But the Fifth Form eleven, as a matter of fact, was not a first-class one, and the natural superiority of an upper Form was not so conspicuous as it might have been. Added to that, the men were all of an average, and there was no batsman or bowler much better than the rest; they had no champion player, as the lower Form had.

Manners was obliged to confess that he had no bowler to equal Blake, but he was confident that in batting, the Fifth would beat the juniors hollow. His efforts to get the team into fighting form were not very heartily seconded by the men themselves. They were inclined to underrate their opponents, and to be cocksure about the result of the match. To train hard for the purpose of meeting a junior Form seemed absurd to most of them, and it was all Manners could do to make them toe the mark, and they did not at all acquit themselves to his satisfaction.

Meanwhile, Blagdon and Blake left no stone unturned to get their men into the best possible condition of fitness. And the junior players put their whole hearts into the thing. To be an upper Form was glory worth fighting for, and then a victory would settle the vexed question of fagging. Naturally, the lower Form eleven meant to strain every nerve to win. And that determination was worth wickets to them.

A great deal of interest was taken by all Forms in the forthcoming match. Hillingdon, the captain of St. Edith's, looked into Manners' study the day after the arrangement was fixed.

"So you're going to meet the Fourth, Manners?" he said grimly.

"Yes," said Manners, "we're going to show the kids how to play cricket."

"I shouldn't wonder if they show you something," said Hillingdon. "Don't be too mighty sure about the result, my boy. I'm glad you've accepted; it was beginning to look as if you funk'd the meeting."

"Oh, that was rot, of course."

"Of course!" agreed the captain of St. Edith's. "But it looked like it. I hear that the question of fagging the Fourth is to be settled by this match. That's a real sporting offer, and it will have to be adhered to. You know, I've always been down on fagging by the Fifth, which is against all the old rules at this school. If the juniors beat you, Manners, you'll be put upon your honour to see that there's no more of it. That will be a satisfactory settlement."

"Hang it," said Manners uneasily, "you speak as if the kids have a chance."

"They have a chance."

"Well, we shall see," exclaimed Manners. "You're thinking of the fact they showed against Clivedale. But the Alvedalers were only a junior eleven."

Hillingdon nodded.

"Well, as you say, we shall see," he remarked. "But if you'll take a word of advice from one who knows something about the old game, Manners, you'll keep your men up to the mark as much as you can. It won't be a walk-over for you, you can take my word for that."

Manners knew very well that Hillingdon's judgment was to be relied on, and the captain's words left him with an uneasy impression. His anxiety, however, was not shared by any other member of the team, excepting Craig. Most of them laughed at the idea of being matched by the Fourth, and looked forward to the game with easy confidence.

Saturday, the day fixed for the meeting of the Form elevens, dawned bright and clear. The Fourth Form were in a flutter of excitement during morning work, and lines were freely showered by their master upon inattentive pupils. Little they cared for that, however. For the present there was nothing to be thought of but the Form match.

It was perfect weather for cricket. The ground was in the most satisfactory state. A single innings match had been decided upon, and the stumps were pitched pretty early in the afternoon.

Almost the whole school collected to see the tussle. The Fourth Formers were in an eager mood, the Fifth inclined to take the whole thing as a joke. Hillingdon came down with most of the Sixth, and presently the doctor himself appeared upon the scene. Blagdon judged Blake.

"I say, old fellow, we've got an audience," he said. "If they lick us, that precious asses we shall look, for biting off more than we can chew."

"They won't lick us," said Blake determinedly. "They sha'n't lick us. We've simply got to win. And we are in splendid form, Blaggy."

He glanced over the junior team with an eye of pride, and, indeed, the young cricketers did look in splendid form, sturdy figures in spotless white, with keen, plucky faces and steady eyes. "I say, you chaps, are we downhearted?"

"No."

The response was hearty and unanimous.

The Fourth won the toss, and Blagdon decided to bat first. There were smiles of confidence on the faces of the Fifth-Formers as they went out to field. Manners put Craig on to bowl against Blagdon's wicket. The Fourth were opening with Blaggy and Blake.

Blagdon's wicket did not fall in that over. It ended with four runs to the credit of the Fourth. Towle bowled against Blake, and could not touch his wicket. But in the third over, Blagdon was caught out in the slips. He had scored but ten, and left

with a downcast face. And the Fifth Form grinned.

Blake, however, was still there. He was steady and reliable at the wicket, and though his greatest skill was with the leather, he handled the willow with great force and skill. He was responsible for forty runs, when at last he was stumped with his bat only a couple of inches off the crease.

The juniors cheered his feat as he went out. Forty runs was good, and it had helped the Fourth score on to very respectable figures.

Blaggy thumped him on the back as he came into the pavilion.

"That's right, Blake. I fancy none of the others will get near that figure, though. I had rotten luck myself."

Blake nodded sympathetically.

"That's so. But I fancy we shall touch the hundred, Blaggy, and if we do that, I sha'n't grumble. We shall have to see to it that the Fifth don't come up to our score in their innings, and we're strongest in bowling, you know."

"Yes, that's where we shall come in. Hallo, there goes Desmond's wicket!"

The junior score was at seventy-five when Desmond left.

There remained now three wickets to fall, but the batsmen to come were the least reliable of the junior team, and Blake and his chum were looking serious.

And not without cause, for in the next over a junior wicket went down to a lightning ball from Towle, and a Fourth Former came out with a downcast face and an unused bat. And from the Fifth fellows round about came ironical queries as to the price of duck's eggs, till the luckless batsman hid his blushes in the pavilion.

Then the batting looked up again, and the score was at eighty-eight, when another wicket fell. Manners slung the ball to Towle.

"They're not going to touch the hundred," he said. "It would be only merciful to put them out of their misery, Towle."

Towle grinned, and went on to bowl. But luck did not favour him, and the batsman lived through that over, and added six to the score. Then Manners bowled from the other end, and there was a clatter of falling balls.

Blake and Blagdon looked at one another.

"All out for ninety-four!"

"Never mind," said Blake. "The bowling is where we come in. If the Fifth touch ninety-four, you can use my head for a football!"

THE 8th CHAPTER.
A Glorious Victory.

INTEREST in the match was very keen when the Fifth Form opened their innings.

The Fourth had knocked up as many runs as could be expected against a senior team, and had, in fact, acquitted themselves very well, considering everything. But there were few of the spectators who doubted that the Fifth Form total would pass the figure reached by the juniors.

"Ninety-four!" sniffed Manners.

"Rats! We shall do it for four or five wickets."



"Oh! Oh! Ouch!" A sponge dripping with water came with splendid aim from the hand of Blake and caught the captain of the Fifth full in the mouth.

And that was the general opinion. But the junior eleven did not look at all downhearted as their captain led them out and placed them to field.

The Fourth Form gave them a cheer. The batsmen took up their stand. Blake had sent a couple of trial balls down to the wicket-keeper. He felt himself in his best form, and was prepared for a fight to a finish.

Desmond took the first over. The batsman stood in an easy attitude, confidence in his looks, a humorous expression in his eyes. That expression was short-lived.

The ball came down, and he snicked it away, and started to run.

"Caught! Oh, well caught!"

The batsman stopped, and stared at Blake, who was at long slip.

The junior fieldman was grinning. Up from his hand went the ball to come down again into his palm with a smack.

The Fourth Form were cheering wildly, and even the Fifth, like the Tuscans of old, could scarce forbear a cheer.

The senior batsman had been caught out first ball of the first over, and it could not be said that the innings had opened well.

"A blooming fluke!" growled Manners.

But it was no fluke, it was a bit of clever fielding, and the cheers of the spectators showed that they realised the fact, whatever the batting side might think about it.

The luckless batsman went off, looking extremely crestfallen, and now the juniors retorted the inquiry their adversaries had made in simi-

lar circumstances in the previous innings.

"What price duck's eggs?"

The howl followed the Fifth Former into the pavilion. And there he found scant comfort.

"Well, you are a silly cuckoo!" said Manners.

Another man went in, and the over continued. The batsmen now were especially careful of that part of the field where Blake stood, and there were no more catches for the junior. The over finished, the field crossed over, and Blagdon told Blake to bowl.

Willingly enough the junior took the ball.

"Give 'em socks!" said Blagdon impressively.

And Blake replied: "What-ho?"

There was a buzz among the juniors when Blake went on to bowl. They knew what he could do, and they expected to see things now. And their expectations were fulfilled. They did see things.

The batsman was wary. He stopped the first ball, and he stuck the second through the slips for two.

Blake sent down the third with a twist on it that was a conundrum to the batsman, and it broke in with an unexpectedness that completely baffled the man with the bat.

"Clack!"

The middle stump was whipped clean out of the ground, and there was no need for the umpire's laconic "out!"

The batsman toddled away to the pavilion with a blushing countenance.

"Look out for something you don't at all expect," was his not very lucid advice to the next man in.

The next man in did his best. Twice he sent the ball away, and twice a couple of runs rewarded him. But the last ball of the over eluded his bat in some mysterious way, and his balls were on the ground in a twinkling.

He went out with four to his credit.

The Fifth Form were beginning to look a little blue now. Their confidence had evidently been misplaced. There was more in the juniors than they had deemed. With three wickets down for eight runs, Manners and his men had nothing to boast of, and it looked dubious whether they would succeed in equalling the ninety-four of the junior team.

"Buck up, you fellows!" said Manners.

The fellows bucked up. The innings brightened a little, and runs were scored. Presently Blagdon took a wicket, and Manners himself went to bat. Great things were expected of Manners, and he did make the fur fly a little. He lived through an over bowled by Blake, and the fifth score came up to sixty.

"Got him out, Blake," said Blagdon, tossing the ball to his chum after an over which gave the Fifth Form six more. "I rely upon you."

"I'll do my best."

Blake sent down the ball with a vim, but Manners was ready for it, and the crack of the bat was followed by the far flight of the ball, and Manners did not run. For it was a boundary, and the score was at seventy now.

Blake's eyes gleamed.

He was on his mettle now, and all that he knew he threw into his bowling, and this time the captain of the Fifth was not so fortunate.

There was a clatter of falling balls. And the umpire's verdict was followed by a roar from the Fourth Form of St. Edith's.

"Out! Hurrah!"

Manners looked glum. He had done well for his side, but he was anxious about what was to follow. And his anxiety was well founded. Blake was in wonderful form, and he had disposed of the best bat on the Fifth Form side. More was to follow.

Craig was next man in. He faced Blake a little nervously, and he failed to stop the first ball. Clatter went the wicket, and the wicket-keeper grinned. The white-coated umpire advanced to pick up the balls.

"Duck's eggs are cheap to-day," grinned Blagdon. "Go to, Blake, old son!"

And Blake did "go it" with a vengeance. Next man in was wary and watchful, but his wariness served him little. For the ball broke in just where he did not expect it, and the next instant his wicket was in ruins.

The Fourth Form cheered themselves hoarse.

Blake had performed the hat trick! Hillingdon led the cheering. The

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THE FOLS OF THE FIFTH.

(Continued from the previous page.)

performance was really a fine one. And Blake was not finished yet. Towle was next man in, and with the last ball of the over Blake sent him pointless home. Four wickets in one over! No wonder the juniors cheered Blake till the air rocked with the sound.

The Fifth Form score was still at seventy, and there it was fated to stick. Manners had given up hope now, and the innings petered out dully. All down for seventy was the final result.

The Fourth Form at St. Edith's had beaten the Fifth by twenty-four runs!

The field was invaded by a surging crowd of excited juniors, who carried Blake on their shoulders round the field.

Halloo! long shock hands with Blake, and then Manners came forward, looking a little downcast, but speaking up like a man and a sportsman.

"You've beaten us fair and square," he said frankly. "I didn't think you could do it, and if we had been a bit more careful to get fit, I don't know— But never mind that now. You've pulled it off, and we own up. And we stand by the agreement we made; there'll be no more fagging by the Fifth. But we'll meet you again on the cricket field, and see if our Form can't make a better show."

The vexed question of fagging was settled now, and a better feeling grew up between the two Forms. Cricket rivals they were, and remained; but it was a healthy rivalry, and did both Forms good, and the Fourth Formers were no longer the Foes of the Fifth.

(A next week's Special Issue of THE BOYS' FRIEND, not her splendid long, complete story of *Catcraft School*, but *Sidney Drew*, entitled *Pogson's Birthday*, will appear. Henry St. John's grand new story of school life, entitled *The School Against Him*, also commences next week. Please order your copies in advance.)

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TO those readers of THE BOYS' FRIEND who are interested in football, either as players or as followers of one of the great professional clubs, I would like to draw immediate and special attention to our companion paper, "The Boys' Realm," published every Saturday, price one penny, and sold by every newsagent in the kingdom. The issue of "The Boys' Realm," which is now on sale, is a Special Mammoth Football Number consisting of twenty-four pages—the same size as THE BOYS' FRIEND—price one penny.

First of all there will be found in this mammoth issue the first instalment, ten thousand words in length, of a wonderful new story of football and adventure entitled "For League and Cup," in which is told how the famous and Blue Crusaders fared in the First Division of the League, and in their fight for the greatest of all football trophies—the English Cup. The first instalment of "For League and Cup," together with the specially-drawn front page, occupies nearly five pages of this week's issue of our companion paper.

Those readers who like to read about Sexton Blake and his clever assistants, Tinker and Pedro, the dog detective, will find in each issue of "The Boys' Realm" a capital long complete tale of the great detective, this week's yarn being entitled "The Case of the German Prince."

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Other excellent yarns, each of which can be commenced to-day, now appearing in "The Boys' Realm" are: "Imprisoned For Life"; a powerful story of Prison Life, by the ever-popular Henry St. John; "His First Term," a fascinating story of Slapton School, by John S. Finemore; "Off Duty Yarns," a complete tale of Soldier Life in India, by W. Murray Graydon. Other tales, in which school life and sport football are dealt with in a most fascinating manner, are entitled respectively, "Rugby Rivals," and "The New Chum."

But this long list does not exhaust the list of attractions in the current twenty-four-page issue of "The Boys' Realm," as the following list of instructive and interesting articles will show: "The Association Game—How to Play Forward," by W. L. Baskett; "Bassett's Corner," being a weekly chat with the Juniors; "The Rugby Game and How to Play it," by J. H. Rogers; "Football Notes"; "Football to-day"; Your Editor chats about the Coming Season's Prospects; "The Romance of Sport"—All about the Great Boat Race Between Harvard and Cambridge, and "Men and Their Methods," a series of articles about Prominent Football Players.

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